Anti-Cyber Bullying Policy

HOLY TRINITY
NATIONAL SCHOOL
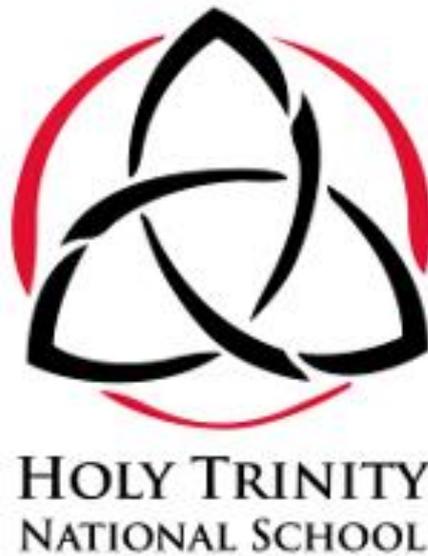
Issued by Board of Management

Jun 20th 2017.

Cyber bullying

Cyber bullying includes (but is not limited to) communicating via electronic means with the objective of causing hurt, fear, embarrassment, humiliation, alarm and/or distress to one or more persons.

Cyber bullying includes the use of mobile phones and the internet with the objective of upsetting someone.

It may take the form of general insults or impersonation, defamation or prejudice-based bullying.

Unlike other forms of bullying a once-off posting can constitute bullying.

While bullying involves a repetition of unwelcome behaviour the **Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, September 2013,** states that

> *"…in the context of these procedures placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour."*

While this policy addresses issues related to cyber bullying of students (i.e. situations in which one or more students are the victim[s] of bullying) the policy also applies to teaching and other school staff.

This policy applies to activities and events that take place:

- o During school time (including break times);
- o Going to and from school;
- o School tours/trips; and
- o Extra-curricular activities.

Holy Trinity N.S. reserves the right to take action against bullying perpetrated outside the school which spills over into the school.

What is cyber-bullying?

There are many types of cyber-bullying. The more common types are:

1. **Text messages** – can be threatening or cause discomfort. Also included here is

   '**Bluejacking**' (the sending of anonymous text messages over short distances using bluetooth wireless technology)

2. **Picture/video-clips via mobile phone cameras** – images sent to others to make the victim feel threatened or embarrassed
3. **Mobile phone calls** – silent calls, abusive messages or stealing the victim's phone and using it to harass others, to make them believe the victim is responsible
4. **Emails** – threatening or bullying emails, often sent using a pseudonym or somebody else's name
5. **Chat room bullying** – menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in a web-based chat room
6. **Instant messaging (IM)** – unpleasant messages sent while children conduct real-time conversations online using MSM (Microsoft Messenger), Yahoo Chat or similar tools
7. **Bullying via websites** – use of defamatory blogs (web logs), personal websites and online personal 'own web space' sites such as You Tube, Facebook and Ask.fm– although there are others

Explanation of slang terms used when referring to cyber-bullying activity

1. '**Flaming**'**:** Online fights using electronic messages with angry and vulgar language
2. '**Harassment**'**:** Repeatedly sending offensive, rude, and insulting messages
3. '**Cyber Stalking**'**:** Repeatedly sending messages that include threats of harm or are highly intimidating or engaging in other on-line activities that make a person afraid for his or her own safety
4. '**Denigration**'**:** 'Dissing' someone online. Sending or posting cruel gossip or rumours about a person to damage his or her reputation or friendships
5. '**Impersonation**'**:** Pretending to be someone else and sending or posting material online that makes someone look bad, gets her/him in trouble or danger, or damages her/his reputation or friendships
6. '**Outing and Trickery**'**:** Tricking someone into revealing secret or embarrassing information which is then shared online
7. '**Exclusion**'**:** Intentionally excluding someone from an on-line group, like a 'buddy list'

This list is not exhaustive and the terms used continue to change.

Aims of policy

1. To ensure that pupils, staff and parents understand what cyber bullying is and how it can be combated.
2. To ensure that practices and procedures are agreed to prevent incidents of cyber-bullying.
3. To ensure that reported incidents of cyber bullying are dealt with effectively and quickly.

Supervision and monitoring of pupils

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place in the school to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

Prevention of harassment

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified, i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability or race.

Procedures to prevent cyber-bullying

- Staff, pupils, parents and Board of Management of Holy Trinity N.S. will be made aware of issues surrounding cyber bullying through the use of appropriate awareness-raising exercises at least once per year.
- Awareness of various forms of bullying will be explored in Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE).
- The school will periodically engage a speaker to facilitate a workshop on cyber bullying for all senior classes.
- Staff CPD (Continuous Professional Development) will assist in learning about current technologies and issues raised in cyberbullying.
- Parents will be provided with information and advice on cyber bullying through the school website.
- Pupils and staff are expected to comply with the school's policy on the use of computers in the School. (Acceptable use of the Internet Policy).

- Holy Trinity N.S. endeavours to block access to inappropriate web sites, using firewalls, antivirus protection and filtering systems. Pupils may access the internet, only with the permission of and in the presence of a member of staff.
- Pupils are not permitted to have mobile phones in school, unless with express permission from the Principal. (Mobile Phone policy).
- Parents and pupils are advised via this policy that it is illegal for a child under 13 to register with and use Facebook. There are also restrictions on many other social media sites.
- Pupils, teachers and parents will be urged to report all incidents of cyber bullying to the school authorities.
- All reports of cyber bullying will be investigated, recorded and addressed.

The Gardaí may be contacted in cases of cyber bullying.

Procedures in the *Code of Behaviour* / **Anti-Bullying Policies** will be followed to deal with cases of cyber bullying. Sanctions for children engaging in cyber bullying are the same as for any type of bullying within the school.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on June 20th 2017

Signed: Mary White Chairperson