

## POLICY TO DISCOURAGE BULLYING IN OUR SCHOOL

Bullying is the unprovoked, repeated physical or emotional hurt caused to an individual by the behaviour of another. It is a basic right of each student in this school to receive his/her education free from such unprovoked hurt.

Bullying may take a number of forms. It may be verbal (such as name –calling or spreading rumours), it may be physical (such as pushing or spitting) Bullying may be isolating another pupil. Bullying may also take the form of sexual harassment.

*\*\*Bullying may take place directly or may be indirect using text messages/images or the internet. [For this reason Holy Cross College has strict guidelines for use of the internet and use of mobile phones is forbidden by pupils in the school]*

Our **Anti-Bullying Policy** provides guidelines for the prevention of bullying and for intervention if a problem occurs. The aims of this policy are threefold:

1. **To reduce the incidence of bullying in our school;**
2. **To thus improve the atmosphere and increase pupil’s learning experience;**
3. **To create a safe learning environment.**

We regard bullying as a serious misdemeanour. This is stated clearly to all pupils.

**The following strategies are in place to deal with this issue:**

### Proactive Measures

- All members of the school community will endeavour to create an ethos of respect and care for each other.
- In class pupils will develop skills to help develop confidence and effective communication.
- Through the curriculum pupils will learn problem solving and conflict resolution skills.
- The form teacher will discuss the issue of bullying and the relevant school policies and procedures.
- All members of the school community (pupils, staff and parents) are encouraged to speak out and report incidents involving themselves and others.
- Posters will encourage pupils to seek help.
- Anti-bullying posters will be displayed in the school.
- Peer Mentors will be available at lunchtime and Break-time for pupils to talk to and to lookout for any signs of bullying.
- The pastoral and guidance teams will provide support for pupils.
- Bullying will be monitored by use of surveys and questionnaires.
- The school will take part in anti-bully campaigns.

### Reactive Measures

- All reports of alleged bullying will be documented.
- The victim will be interviewed by the Form Teacher to establish the nature of his/her distress and his/her perception of the causes.
- The Form Teacher will interview the bully/bullies to establish his/her perception of the situation. .
- An assessment will be made; this is likely to involve recommendations for revised behaviour.
- Parents will be informed
- If necessary counselling will be provided by the Guidance Team.
- Both the victim and the bully/bullies will meet with the Form Teacher/counsellor to assess the situation and consider ways of ‘moving on ‘.
- The form teacher will monitor the situation for as long as necessary.
- In the case of a serious or ongoing n bullying the Head of Year will be informed by the Form teacher. If necessary the Vice principal will also be informed and will liaise with the students and parents to work towards a resolution to the matter.

**Incidences of “Cyber Bullying” have been identified as significant by pupils in the school.** For this reason, and to safeguard our pupils and staff, the use of all mobile phones is prohibited within the school building.

As a school, we will endeavour to resolve conflict between pupils. However, it is important to also recognise that it is impossible for the school to ‘police’ the activities of pupils outside of school and we rely on parents to monitor pupils’ use of telecommunication technology to help minimise bullying and safeguard their children.

It is also noteworthy that use of mobile phones and the internet to threaten or cause offence is a breach of the law and as such may be reported to and dealt with by the relevant legal authorities.

