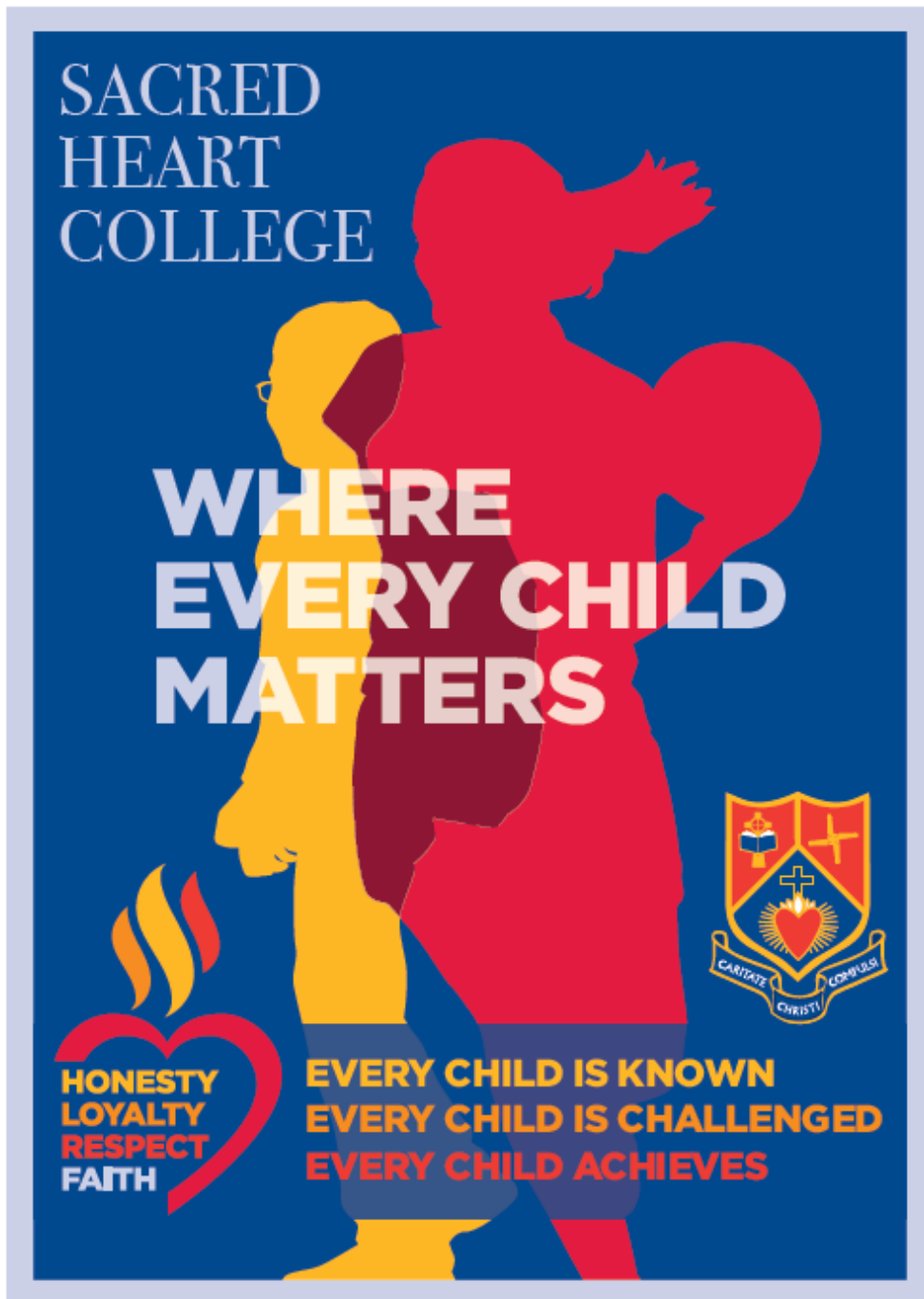


# Sacred Heart College



## Anti-Bullying Policy

## **Introduction**

This anti-bullying policy has been drawn up following consultation with pupils, parents/carers and staff. Sacred Heart College seeks to create a safe and caring environment for all pupils and staff.

In line with our Catholic Ethos, Sacred Heart College promotes an inclusive school community and recognises that every pupil has the right to be educated in an atmosphere which is free from fear and intimidation. All students and staff are treated with respect regardless of individual difference including, but not limited to, culture, race, religion, beliefs, sexual orientation, gender orientation, appearance, ability or disability.

The policy is linked to the school's pastoral care, child protection, health and safety and positive behaviour policies, seeks to create a safe and caring environment in which effective teaching and learning can take place and all pupils are given the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

## **Context**

This policy is informed and guided by current legislation and DE guidance listed below:

### **The Legislative Context:**

- [The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2016;](#)
- [The Education and Libraries Order \(Northern Ireland\) 2003 \(A17-19\);](#)
- [The Education \(School Development Plans\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2010;](#)
- [The Children \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1995;](#)
- [The Human Rights Act 1998;](#)
- [The Health and Safety at Work Order \(Northern Ireland\) 1978;](#)

### **The Policy & Guidance Context**

- The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 Statutory Guidance for Schools and Boards of Governors (DE, 2019);
- [Pastoral Care in School: Promoting Positive Behaviour \(DE, 2001\);](#)
- [Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: A Guide for Schools \(DE, 2017\);](#)
- [Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland \(Dept. of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, 2016\);](#)
- [Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland Policies and Procedures \(SBNI, 2017\) ;](#)

## The International Context

- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (UNCRC).

## Aims of the Policy

The aim of the anti-bullying policy is to make sure that pupils learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment where they can fulfil their potential without fear of bullying behaviour.

This policy will ensure that Sacred Heart College meets its statutory duty under the Education and Libraries (N.I.) Order 2003 and The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 to take measures to prevent and respond to all forms of bullying behaviour consistently and coherently should it occur.

The policy will:

- Ensure that there is an agreed understanding by all stake holders - pupils, parent/carers and staff of what constitutes bullying behaviour;
- Ensure that pupils, staff and parents/carers are aware of the schools anti-bullying policy;
- Create an environment where pupils feel safe to report bullying behaviour;
- Make sure that parents and carers know how to raise a concern about bullying behaviour;
- Ensure an appropriate response to all reported incidents of bullying behaviour;
- Provide support to students who experience bullying behaviour;
- Encourage students who have engaged in bullying behaviour to adopt positive attitudes towards others and engage in positive behaviour;
- Put in place monitoring and review procedures following incidents of bullying behaviour;
- Provide up to date training for school staff and governors.

In the policy singular terms such as “pupil” and “bullying incident” are used but these terms also refer to more than one pupil or more than one incident. As bullying behaviour is often a group behaviour it requires interventions both with individuals and with groups.

## Guiding Principles

At Sacred Heart College, Every Child Matters. Through our Anti-Bullying Policy, we aim to promote and sustain an anti-bullying culture to protect the children in our school from harm and to safeguard their happiness and welfare so that they can learn in a relaxed and a safe environment. The principles and purposes of our policy are pastorally infused into the curriculum, underpinned by our Catholic Ethos. Staff will foster self-esteem, self-confidence,

self-respect and worth among pupils and promote respect for others, respect for differences and respect for the property of others throughout the day to day running of the school. At Sacred Heart College:

- We are committed to creating a school environment for our young people which is free and safe from bullying;
- We believe in a society where bullying is unacceptable and where every child and young person is safe and feels safe from bullying;
- We believe that every young person should be celebrated in their diversity;
- We are committed to a preventative, responsive and restorative anti-bullying ethos across the whole school;
- We value the views and contributions of children and young people, we will actively seek these views and we will respect and take them into account;
- We understand that everyone in our school community has a role to play in taking a stand against bullying therefore staff will receive training regarding bullying prevention including effective, appropriate strategies for intervention.

### **Definition of Bullying**

The College uses the legal definition of bullying for Northern Ireland as defined by the 2016 Anti-Bullying Act;

**Bullying includes but is not limited to the repeated use of**

- (i) any verbal written or electronic communication**
- (ii) any other act, or**
- (iii) any combination of those,**

**by a pupil or a group of pupils against another pupil or group of pupils, with the intention of causing physical or emotional harm to that pupil or group of pupils.**

**For the purpose of subsection (1) “act” includes omission.**

**The phrase ‘is not limited to’ in the definition means that the College has legal discretion to define a one off incident as bullying behaviour. For example, this could happen in a case where the behaviour takes the form of electronic communication. Repetition can occur through the repeated viewing or sharing of a post even though there is only one post.**

Examples of bullying behaviours;

- Physical aggression – including hitting, kicking, tripping, punching or shoving. It may also take the form of physical assault. In extreme cases weapons may be used;
- Verbal bullying behaviour where the voice is used as a weapon and it includes name calling, teasing, racist remarks, putting down or threatening, mimicking and suggestive remarks. Anonymous phone calls are also a form of verbal bullying;
- Intimidation where aggressive body language and tone of voice is used e.g. facial expressions, “looks” (“daggers”) which convey aggression and dislike;
- Exclusion where an individual is purposely isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the group. It may be compounded by the spreading of rumours, circulation of notes, whispering insults or writing derogatory remarks on boards, walls or public places;
- Extortion where money is demanded. Pupil lunches or dinner/meals allocation may be taken. A pupil may be coerced into stealing;
- Damage to property or belongings such as school books, clothing, personal property such as sports gear may be damaged, hidden or stolen;
- Cyber bullying such as the sending of abusive text messages, e-mail messages or the use of social networking sites;
- Adult behaviour, unwittingly or otherwise where expressions or gestures are used which are intimidating or threatening. This can include the use of sarcasm or negative comments with regard to a pupil’s physical appearance or background. It also includes humiliating a pupil who is academically weak, outstanding or vulnerable in a way.

Pupils who have experienced bullying behaviour may show changes in their behaviour. These may include becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, stomach aches, headaches, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school, possessions or clothing missing, increased requests for money, unexplained bruising, bed wetting or not eating. In some cases, bullying can lead to self-harm. Pupils must be encouraged to report bullying incidents. Teaching and ancillary staff must be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it and in accordance with this policy.

The phrase **emotional harm** is defined as distress or anxiety intentionally caused by scaring, humiliating or affecting a pupil’s self-esteem.

The phrase **physical harm** is defined as intentionally hurting a student causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts.

The term **omission** is defined as being where a pupil is deliberately left out and where there is a wilful failure to include a student. Examples of this could be where a group of students purposefully exclude a student from a group of friends in an activity or group work in lessons.

### **Terms of reference**

The College will use the following terminology when applying the Anti Bullying policy; pupil displaying bullying-type behaviour (PDB), and pupil experiencing bullying-type behaviour (PEB). Language such as bully, victim or perpetrator will not be used since it is not considered appropriate and avoids labelling and stereotyping individual students and puts the focus on behaviour.

### **Motivating factors**

A number of factors or combination of factors may motivate a student to demonstrate bullying type behaviour towards another student. Examples include

- Religious beliefs
- Political opinions
- Race/ethnicity
- Age
- Disability
- Academic ability
- Sexual orientation
- Gender orientation
- Physical appearance
- SEN
- Social status
- Family circumstances
- LAC status

### **Vulnerable students**

The College recognises that some groups of students may be more vulnerable than others to bullying type behaviour. This includes, in particular, SEN children and LGBTQ students.

The pastoral curriculum draws attention to the vulnerability and the needs of such students as part of the College preventive measures.

### **Principles for Dealing with Bullying Incidents**

A pupil/parent who reports any incident of bullying or a pupil who is experiencing bullying will be listened to, and taken seriously.

It is desirable that the pupil reporting the bullying incident will not have to tell the story repeatedly. The person to whom the pupil experiencing the bullying incident speaks is responsible for passing the facts on and writing an account of what the pupil reported.

Staff will refer to the agreed flowchart to inform the process of completing a BCAF. It is important to note that the ethos of the Anti-Bullying policy is preventative and restorative. Staff will refer to strategies within the NIABF Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource.

### Preventative Measures

The focus for all anti - bullying work at Sacred Heart College is prevention. We aim to prevent bullying involving a registered pupil at our school –

- I. On the premises of the school during the school day e.g., school building and grounds;
- II. While travelling to or from school during the school term. Pupils attending our school are expected to behave appropriately at these times, as outlined in our Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy;
- III. While the pupil is in the lawful control or charge of a member of the staff of the school e.g., school trips, visiting the chapel, participating in external events, etc.;
- IV. Education provision arranged on behalf of the school and provided away from the school premises e.g., Education Other Than At School Centres, Post 16 Collaboration.

Sacred Heart College has established and will maintain the following strategies which aim to promote a strong anti - bullying ethos within the school and the wider school community.

- Promoting our school's Catholic ethos;
- Raising awareness of Rights and Responsibilities;
- Recognising and rewarding positive behaviour;
- Implementation of the Religious Education and Learning for Life and Work Curriculum;
- Promoting our College Values;
- Liaison with our School Chaplain;
- Promotion of positive emotional health and well – being (e.g., mindfulness programmes);
- RSE Programme;
- Behaviour for Learning Policy;
- Pastoral Care and Safeguarding Policy;

- The School Buddy System;
- Focussed assemblies to raise awareness and promote understanding of key issues related to bullying;
- Involvement in meaningful and supportive shared education projects, supporting pupils to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity;
- Lessons on Internet Safety, including understanding how to respond to harm and the consequences of inappropriate use;
- Participation in annual Safer Internet Day and promotion of key messages throughout the year;
- Online Safety Training for staff and Governors;
- PSNI Community Liaison will work closely to advise staff and speak directly to year group assemblies, form classes and individuals, as appropriate;
- Staff will engage with the Youth Service and Reach who will deliver responsive and preventative programmes;
- Development of Junior Leadership and Whole School Leadership teams to support the delivery and promotion of key anti – bullying messages within school;
- Designated Teacher, Deputy Designated Teacher, Principal, whole – staff and Governor annual Child Protection and Safeguarding training;
- Comprehensive Child Protection and Safeguarding arrangements in place;
- Anti - Bullying training for staff, pupils and Governors;
- Regular review of Pastoral Care, Child Protection And Safeguarding, Special Educational Needs, Anti – Bullying, Promoting Positive Behaviour, Health And Safety, RSE, Acceptable Use Of The Internet, Photographic Images Of Children and Mobile Phone policies;
- Ensure that all staff (teaching and non-teaching), parents and pupils and all members of the school community are aware of the school’s Positive Behaviour Policy;
- Accessibility of pertinent policies to parents and pupils – noticeboard and website;
- The Anti-Bullying Policy will be explained to all pupils;
- Vigilant supervision and effective break and lunch time management – e.g., split lunchtimes, playground zoning;
- Provision of a variety of lunchtime activities;
- Increased vigilance of more vulnerable pupils;
- Provision and promotion of extra – curricular activities aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks. E.g., After – Schools GAA, soccer, STEM, music, drama;



- Newcomer co-ordinator works to create an inclusive environment for all, establishing friendship networks for Newcomer pupils;
- Promotion of Gaelic games to help establish friendship networks;
- Effective parental communication;
- Staff are vigilant, and provide a listening ear to pupils;
- Staff monitor pupil behaviour and are alert to indicators of possible bullying behaviour;
- Use of outside agencies – NSPCC, PSNI, Childline, Behaviour Support Team, C2k, Public Health Agency, Safeguarding Board for NI, REIM, Child Protection Support Services, Gateway, CEOP, ABSIT (EA), Safeguarding Board for NI;
- ICT Co-ordinator co-ordinates the implementation of the E-Safety policy;
- Annual participation in NIABF's Anti Bullying Week activities;
- Love For Life Programme;
- Pastoral Teams & SENCo (as appropriate) create RRAPs as required;
- Activities and lessons to promote Children's Mental Health Week;
- Transition procedures at various stages;
- Other Staff Training opportunities e.g., Trauma Informed Practices;
- Development of a culture where pupils take pride in their school and are viewed as ambassadors within their community. This includes regular reminders of the positive behaviour expectations of pupils whilst travelling to and from school;
- Expectations for behaviour on bus and outside school;
- Regular contact with transport providers (Private & EA) to ensure effective communication and the early identification of any concerns;
- Bus Monitors;
- Promotion of key anti – bullying messages and awareness of behaviour expectations of pupils amongst the local community, including information on how to raise any concerns with the school.

## Responsibility

Everyone in the college community has a responsibility for creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all its members. Pupils, parents and the staff of Sacred Heart College work together to:

- Foster positive self esteem;
- Behave towards others in a mutually respectful way;

- Model high standards of personal pro-social behaviour;
- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying behaviour;
- Inform the school of any concerns relating to bullying behaviour;
- Refrain from being involved in any kind of bullying behaviour, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity;
- Refrain from retaliating to any form of bullying behaviour;
- Intervene to support any person who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so;
- Report any concerns or instance of bullying behaviour witnessed or suspected, to a member of staff;
- Emphasise the importance of seeking help from a trusted adult about bullying behaviour when it happens or is observed;
- Explain the implications of allowing the bullying behaviour to continue unchecked, for themselves and/or others;
- Listen sensitively to anyone who has been bullied, take what is said seriously and provide reassurance that appropriate action will be taken;
- Know how to seek support-internal and external;
- Resolve difficulties in restorative ways to prevent recurring bullying behaviour and meet the needs of all parties.

### **Reporting A Bullying Concern**

All reports of bullying behaviour will be responded to in line with this policy and feedback will be made to the person who made the report. No information about action taken in relation to a pupil can be disclosed to anyone other than the pupil and his/her parents/carers and relevant staff members.

### **Pupils Reporting a Bullying Concern**

In Sacred Heart College, pupils are encouraged to raise concerns with any member of staff, including teaching and non - teaching. Pupils can report bullying concerns:

- Verbally - talking to a member of staff
- By writing a note to a member of staff

Any pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing bullying behaviour. Through the preventative curriculum we focus on the 'getting help' message rather than 'telling'. As such pupils are encouraged to 'get help' if they have a concern about bullying that they experience or is experienced by another.

## **Parent/carers reporting a bullying concern**

Parents and carers have the responsibility to raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour with the school at the earliest opportunity. Parents and carers should also encourage their children to act appropriately to bullying behaviour and to not do anything to retaliate or 'hit back.'

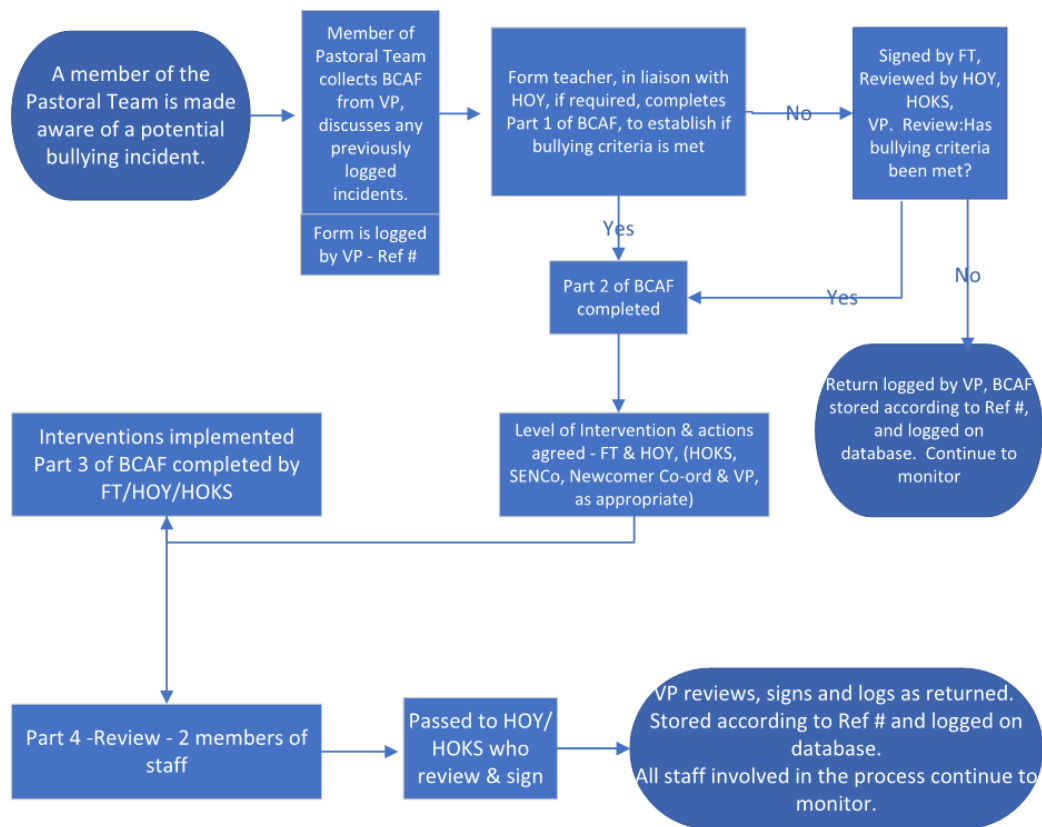
- All bullying concerns should be addressed to an appropriate member of the pupil's pastoral team;
- Depending on the potential level of bullying behaviour, the appropriate members of the pastoral team will agree on the lead teacher(s) in addressing the allegation;
- If the parent/carer is concerned with how the issue has been addressed, this should be referred to the Head of Key Stage, Vice Principal or Principal, as appropriate;
- Where the parent remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the school's complaint procedure should be followed. Copies of our school's Complaints Procedure are available from the college office and on our website.

**If anyone, other than a member of staff, parent or pupil has a bullying concern about a pupil in our school he/she should contact the Vice Principal / Principal directly.**

## **Responding To A Bullying Concern**

Staff in Sacred Heart College will respond to bullying behaviour promptly and effectively, in an assertive and confident manner, with an expectation of change being achieved through implementing the procedures set out in our Positive Behaviour and Anti - Bullying Policies.

The processes outlined below provide a framework for how the school will respond to any bullying concerns identified. Each member of the Pastoral Team has an important role to play in addressing the alleged bullying.



Using the NIABF Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource, the member of staff responsible shall...

- Gather information, clarify facts and perceptions;
- Check records for previous incidents;
- Identify any themes or motivating factors;
- Identify the type of bullying behaviour being displayed;
- Part 1 of the BCAF will be completed by an appropriate member of staff;
- The information gathered will be checked against the legal definition of bullying in this policy and will be determined whether bullying has taken place.

**Procedures to follow when the criteria for bullying behaviour have not been met.**

- Parents/carers are engaged and kept informed, as appropriate;
- Refer to Positive Behaviour Policy and record the behaviour incident;
- Select and record appropriate intervention(s) and actions;

- Tailored interventions will be implemented to reduce the level of unacceptable, anti-social behaviour(s) to ensure behaviour does not move into bullying behaviour;
- Together staff and pupils, as part of the Code of Practice, track, monitor and assess progress to determine, on the information generated, the efficacy of the intervention(s) and outcomes;
- Continue review cycle until agreed outcomes are achieved.

### **Procedures to follow when the criteria for bullying behaviour have been met**

- Parents/carers are engaged and kept informed, as appropriate;
- Complete Part 2 BCAF;
- Follow Anti Bullying policy;
- Select, implement and record appropriate interventions for all pupils involved, including appropriate interventions, consequences and sanctions not listed in the Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource;
- Update BCAF Part 3;
- Together staff and pupils, track, monitor and assess progress to determine, on the information generated, the efficacy of the intervention(s) and outcomes;
- Review and record outcomes on BCAF. Complete BCAF – Part 4;
- Select and implement further interventions as necessary.

When responding to a bullying concern, college staff shall implement interventions aimed at responding to the behaviour, resolving the concern and restoring the wellbeing of those involved. Where appropriate, school staff may implement sanctions for those displaying bullying-type behaviour.

### **Support for Pupil Experiencing Bullying-type behaviour (PEB)**

Pupils will feel supported when they are listened to and their opinion is taken account of when creating a plan. A common concern for pupils is that alleged bullying may increase when staff become aware of potential bullying. The solution-focused, restorative ethos of the policy and procedures will help pupils become more confident in reporting potential bullying and will support a more positive outcome for the PEB. Support for the PEB(s) may involve:

- Increase staff monitoring of potential times/places of concern;
- Review seating plans in classes;

- Discussing and agreeing a tailored action plan which would involve pupil(s) in agreeing interventions, relevant success criteria, outcomes, etc.;
- Keeping a record of the agreed action plan in part 3 of the BCAF;
- The school will take account of the interventions contained in NIABF's Effective Responses to Bullying and the strategies in DE SEN Resource File - Understanding and Managing Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties;
- Ongoing dialogue to ensure that the strategies identified and agreed result in greater resilience, development of coping skills and promotion of positive relationships;
- Staff and pupils together tracking and monitoring progress to ensure the efficacy of the interventions is maintained and kept under review;
- Progress being regularly reviewed and updated in the BCAF and outcomes shared with key partners;
- Engaging with relevant supporting agencies e.g. Youth Service, Post Primary Behaviour Support Team, Autism Advisory Information Services, Educational Welfare Service;
- Review at Pupil of Concern Pastoral/SEN meeting;
- Support with restorative practice;
- Creating a Team Around the Child (TAC);
- Creating a Safety Plan;
- Referral to school counsellor;
- Review stage on COP, Boxall profile and IEP.

### **Support for Pupils(s) Displaying Bullying-type Behaviour (PDB)**

It is important to approach the PDB with a mindset of 'seeking to understand' in order to ensure the supports are appropriate. Pupils may not be aware of the impact of their behaviour. Pupils will be supported to develop awareness and skills to become reflective in terms of the impact of behaviours and to address potential underlying causes of displaying bullying-type behaviour. It is important that pupils understand the right of every pupil to feel safe and happy in school and that everyone has a responsibility to support this right.

Support for the pupil(s) displaying bullying behaviour may involve:

- Increase staff monitoring of potential times/places of concern;
- Review seating plans in classes;
- Implementing Positive Behaviour Management Policy;

- Communication with parents;
- Discussing and agreeing a tailored action plan which would involve pupil(s) in agreeing interventions, relevant success criteria, outcomes, etc.;
- Keeping a record of the agreed action plan in part 3 of the BCAF;
- Following initial assessment and confirmation of bullying behaviour an appropriate intervention will be chosen from the NIABF's Intervention Levels and corresponding interventions from Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour;
- A Risk Reduction Action Plan being completed & implemented;
- Ongoing dialogue to ensure that the interventions/strategies identified and agreed result in the reduction/removal of unacceptable behaviour(s), the enhanced ability to empathise and the restoration of relationships;
- Staff and pupils together tracking and monitoring progress to ensure the efficacy of the interventions is maintained and kept under review with positive feedback given;
- Progress being regularly reviewed and updated in the BCAF and outcomes shared with key partners;
- Engaging with relevant supporting agencies e.g. Youth Service, Post Primary Behaviour Support Team, Autism Advisory Information Services, Educational Welfare Service;
- Review at Pupil of Concern Pastoral/SEN meeting;
- Support with restorative practice;
- Creating a Team Around the Child (TAC);
- Referral to school counsellor;
- Review stage on COP, Boxall profile and IEP.

## Recording

The Board of Governors must ensure a record is kept of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying involving a registered pupil at the school, (Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016).

Sacred Heart College will centrally record all relevant information related to reports of bullying concerns, including:

- How the bullying behaviour was displayed (the method);
- The motivation of the behaviour;
- How each incident was addressed by the school;
- The outcome of the interventions employed.

Records will be stored on CPOMS and paper copies will be stored in a locked cupboard in the Vice Principal's office. Access will be restricted to those members of school staff with a legitimate need to have access.

All records will be maintained in line with relevant data protection legislation and guidance and will be disposed of in line with the schools Retention and Disposal of Documents Policy.

Collated information regarding incidents of bullying and alleged bullying behaviour will be used to inform the future development of anti-bullying policy and practice within the school.

### **Professional Development of Staff**

Sacred Heart College is committed to ensuring that staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school ongoing CPD provision. All staff (teaching and non – teaching) receive annual Child Protection and Safeguarding Training. Governors receive refresher Child Protection and Safeguarding Training every three years. CPD records are kept and updated regularly.

### **Monitoring and Review of Policy**

It is the responsibility of the Board of Governors, in liaison with the Principal, to monitor the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy.

To appropriately monitor the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy, the Board of Governors shall:

- maintain a standing item on the agenda of each meeting of the Board where a report on recorded incidents of bullying will be noted;
- identify trends and priorities for action;
- assess the effectiveness of strategies aimed at preventing bullying behaviour;
- assess the effectiveness of strategies aimed at responding to bullying behaviour.

This policy will be reviewed at intervals of no more than 3 years. However, the policy will be reviewed following any incident which highlights the need for review and/or when directed by DE considering new guidance. Amendments may be made in response to issues arising from a current situation or from data generated to identify existing behavioural patterns and trends.

This Anti Bullying Policy shall be reviewed as required, in consultation with staff, pupils, parents, Governors and the wider school community on or before June 2022.



**Links to other policies, including, but not limited to:**

- Pastoral Care;
- Child Protection And Safeguarding;
- Relationships And Sexuality Education;
- Health And Safety;
- Learning for Life and Work;
- Positive Behaviour;
- Special Educational Needs;
- Reasonable Force And Safe Handling;
- Acceptable Use of the Internet;
- Photographic Images Of Children;
- Mobile Phones;
- Educational Visits;
- Staff Code of Conduct.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chair of Governors

