**WILLOW PARK SENIOR SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

**CODE OF PRACTICE HARASSMENT POLICY**

## INTRODUCTION

Willow Park Senior School is committed to providing a safe, caring and nurturing environment (as part of the larger family) for all members of its community (staff and students). In the light of this, Willow Park Senior School regards all forms of bullying to be in violation of the school’s ethos. Every pupil in Willow Park Senior School is entitled to an education free from fear and intimidation. Bullying is not tolerated in Willow Park Senior School.

## 1. DEFINITION OF BULLYING

1.1 Bullying is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another party or parties.

1.2 Bullying behaviour includes, but is not limited to physical aggression; damage to, or interference with, property; extortion; intimidation; abusive telephone calls/text messages; isolation; name-calling or "slagging".

1.3 Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, although not condoned, can scarcely be defined as bullying which is systematic and/or ongoing.

## 2. AIMS OF POLICY

2.1 To raise awareness of bullying as an inappropriate, uncaring mode of behaviour

2.2 To ensure that pupils, teachers, parents/guardians, ancillary staff, when aware of a bullying incident, feel comfortable in reporting such incidents

2.3 To put in place a programme of support for those being bullied and those involved in bullying behaviour

2.4 To evaluate the effectiveness of the school policy on anti-bullying behaviour on a regular basis

## 3. OBJECTIVES

The aims will be achieved through:

3.1 The holding of Friendship Week events organised by the Deputy Principal in consultation with class tutors.

3.3 The reinforcement of the School Policy by the Deputy Principal at assemblies

3.4 The vigilance of the teaching and ancillary staff in identifying bullying incidents

3.5 The work of the Student Support Group and the Class Tutors, who meet with boys in small groups, and on occasion individually, to establish a relationship of trust, thus providing a confidential support service.

3.6 Informal (pastoral-based) class discussions between the class tutor and his/her class at regular intervals throughout the year to allow students to discuss how they are getting on.

3.7 The full implementation of the S.P.H.E. and Wellbeing programme through a class based and cross-curricular method to maximise the impact and educational potential of the programme.

3.8 Communicating with the parents through the Parents’ Association Committees and at group and individual meetings.

4. IN THE EVENT OF A BULLYING INCIDENT

4.1 The first point of contact for parents/guardians should be the Deputy Principal.

4.2 The Principal, Student Support Group and class tutor (and where deemed necessary all teaching staff) should be informed by the Deputy Principal of serious cases of bullying.

4.3 The procedure for dealing with serious disciplinary issues should be applied

4.4 Should it be deemed necessary, counselling for both the target of bullying and the transgressor should be made available.

4.5 If deemed necessary, meetings with the relevant parents/guardians should be arranged.

4.6 All reports of bullying, no matter how trivial, should be noted, investigated and dealt with by the Deputy Principal. In this way, pupils will gain confidence in reporting such incidents of injustice. This confidence factor is of vital importance.

4.7 Willow Park Senior School discourages retaliation; it makes the situation worse rather than better. It is our policy to develop in pupils a willingness to walk away from confrontation and find non-aggressive ways of dealing with problems. Pupils are actively encouraged to inform an adult (Deputy Principal, class tutor, chaplain or any other member of staff they feel comfortable with/trust) of any difficulties so that appropriate action can be taken.

4.8 The Deputy Principal and class tutors have devised a programme of strategies to combat bullying, which include role-play, effective communication exercises, poetry, artwork and, structured classroom discussion based on videos regarding bullying, as part of the programme of Friendship Week. A review meeting is held by the Deputy Principal and class tutors after these events, to address the effectiveness of the strategies employed, but more importantly to discuss the disclosures of any incidents of bullying. The Pastoral Team is informed of the content of these discussions by the Deputy Principal and appropriate action is taken.

5. SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF BULLYING

5.1 The following signs/symptoms may suggest that a pupil is being bullied:

* Anxiety about travelling to and from school; requesting parents to drive or collect them, changing route to school or avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school;
* Unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend or mitching;
* Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school;
* A pattern of reported physical illnesses (e.g. headaches, stomach aches);
* Visible signs of anxiety or distress; stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting or bedwetting;
* Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour; this may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays;
* Spontaneous out of character comments about either pupils or teachers;
* Missing or damaged possessions;
* Increased requests for money or stealing money;
* Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing;
* Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him.

These signs do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied. If repeated or occurring in combination these signs do warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the pupil.

6. WHERE & WHEN DOES IT HAPPEN.

6.1 Bullying commonly occurs in the following locations and time-slots:

* On the way to and from school; on the bus, Dart or in local shops.
* Between classes; in toilets, corridors, assembly areas or the yard
* During class; sneering, isolation or interference with books
* In changing rooms before or after school sports.

6.2 With the vast majority if not all school students having smartphones cyber-bullying has now become a nationwide issue. Willow Park Senior School addresses this issue through SPHE, Wellbeing and a Digital Citizenship workshop as part of Friendship Week.

7. CONCLUSION

Willow Park Senior School uses a whole-school approach to bullying whereby parents, staff and pupils promote an environment where all pupils can be happy in the school community. The school rules – Be Caring, Be There, Be Truthful, Be Grateful – underscores this policy and promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility amongst all members of our community. We strongly disapprove of vulgar, offensive or abusive behaviour, and we actively promote respect for the dignity of the individual, qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding, and an awareness of the interdependence of people in group and community. Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, with the school management to act in preventing bullying behaviour by any member of the school community.

This policy was revised and updated on October 16th October 2018