



Holy Family Junior School

Anti-Bullying Policy

March 2024

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Code of Behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Holy Family Junior School has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall Code of Behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013.

2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

a) A positive school culture and climate which

- is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
- encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
- promotes respectful relationships across the school community;

b) Effective leadership

c) A school-wide approach

d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact

e) Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that

- build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
- address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying

f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

g) Supports for staff

h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and

i) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

3. In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows:

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

4. As this is a primary school, the teacher investigating and dealing with child to child bullying in Holy Family Junior School is normally the class teacher or the teacher on yard duty. *(See 6.8.3 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.)*
5. The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the staff of Holy Family Junior School are as follows: *(See section 6.5 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.)*

Procedures that help prevent bullying:

- Positive classroom rules
- Weekly assemblies
- Simple and appropriate yard rules
- Yard rule reminders
- Yard supervision

- Positive behaviour follow up –‘children to mind’ on agenda of staff meetings
- Role play and drama
- Social stories
- Buddy system
- Individual Behaviour Plans
- Refer to Anti-Bullying Website for up to date ideas and research
- Clear and open communication between all staff members
- Pupils with special needs will use social stories to support them with peer interaction
- Celebration of diversity

Programmes that help bullying by fostering empathy, respect, resilience, self-worth:

- Circle Time
- Incredible Years Programme
- Stay Safe
- Relations and Sexuality Education
- SPHE programme
- Fun Friends
- Friendship terrace (Developmental Language Delay Special Class)

Partnership/Communication with Parents/Guardians

- Newsletters
- School Website
- Information Meetings
- Parental involvement
- Parent/Teacher meetings
- Individual Education/Behaviour Planning meetings
- Relevant homework
- Parents’ Association activities

6. The school’s procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies to be used are as follows: *(See section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for primary and Post-Primary Schools.)*

All staff will be mindful that we are a Junior School and pupils will be treated in an age-appropriate manner. The use of the word 'bullying' at this stage is unhelpful.

Investigation, Follow-up, and Recording

- The primary aim for the relevant teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame);
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- All reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly;
- Non-teaching staff such as secretary, special needs assistants (SNAs), school's traffic wardens, caretaker, are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;
- Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;
- All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way;
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher will seek answers to questions of
 - What happened?
 - Did you use 'helpful hands, kind words'??
 - How do you think the other person felt?
 - Would you like if someone was mean to you?
 - What needs to be done to make things right?
- This will be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner;
- If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved will be encouraged to meet as a group if appropriate. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened.

- The investigation is still at the informal stage and it is hoped that in the majority of cases, the issue will be resolved without having recourse to the more formal stage.

Formal Stages

Stage One

- In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template at Appendix 1. This record will be retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template at Appendix 1 does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal at an earlier stage.
- The relevant teacher/principal will inform the parents of the child being bullied and the parents of the bully that there is an investigation of a bullying case involving their children
- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
 - ✓ Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
 - ✓ Whether any issues between the pupils have been resolved as far as is practicable.
 - ✓ Whether the relationships between the pupils have been restored as far as is practicable; and
 - ✓ Any feedback received from the pupils involved, their parents or the school Principal;
 - ✓ It will be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school;
 - ✓ Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures;
 - ✓ In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

- ✓ At least once every school term the Principal will provide a report to the BOM setting out the overall number of bullying cases reported by means of the attached school bullying form and confirmation that all cases are being dealt with in accordance with procedures.

Recording

The purpose of this record is:

- To aid memory by recording details of the incident
- For clarity in assessment of the situation
- For planning and intervention
- In the very unlikely event that the action taken at this stage, proves not to have resolved the issue, the teacher will proceed to stage two.
- It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

Stage Two

The Principal will arrange to meet with the parents of the child who is seen to be bullying and separately with the parents of the victim of bullying. The children themselves may be required to attend part or all of these meetings. The child should be able to see that parents and school are working together in his/her interest, so the co-operation of the parents is essential. Initially meetings will be carried out on a weekly basis, with the teacher, principal, parents and child. If progress is being made, longer intervals between meetings may be decided upon. The child who is the victim of bullying will also meet with the Principal and his/her parents. The aim of such a meeting(s) will be to address emotional needs and devise strategies for the child to deal with the bullying. This may involve reinforcing the programme being covered in class, or other strategies.

Stage Three

It is the duty of the school to provide a safe environment for all the children. Should the above interventions fail and the bullying continue, a programme of appropriate sanctions may be implemented by the Principal in consultation with the parents and Board of Management. Sanctions implemented aim to encourage positive behaviour and support the esteem of the child. These sanctions may include a period of suspension during which there will be ongoing consultation with the parents to decide on appropriate action(s) to be taken in the best interests of the child.

Suspension for any period of time will be reported in writing by the Principal to the Chair of the Board of Management.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying will include the following and will be revised on a regular basis (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

- Provide opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience (as per SPHE programme).
- Encourage friendship and small-group team-building exercises focused on affected students.
- Close monitoring of pupils (those bullying and those being bullied) on yard in the weeks following an incident of bullying.
- Play therapy to be made available to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.
- Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour will be encouraged to discuss them with teachers.

8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

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

9. 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, race and membership of the Traveller community.

10. This policy was presented to the Board of Management of Holy family Junior School at the June meeting 2014 and ratified at the October meeting 2014.

11. This policy will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year (Appendix 2) Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: *Allen Flynn*
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: *Miriam Lowe*
Principal

Date: 14th March 2024

Date: 14th March 2024

Date of next review: March 2025

Appendix 2 Checklist for annual review of the Anti-bullying Policy in Holy Family Junior School

The Board of Management (the Board) will undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist will be used for this purpose.

	Yes /No
Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff ?	
Is the Board satisfied that school staff is sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____

Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the Anti-bullying Policy

To: _____

The Board of Management of _____ wishes to inform you that:

- The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of _____ [date].
- This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in **Appendix 4** of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed _____ Date _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____ Date _____
Principal

Appendix 3 Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group: _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))*

Pupil concerned	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))*

Playground	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corridor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toilets	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

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6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

Damage to Property	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intimidation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Isolation/Exclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical Aggression	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name Calling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

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9. Details of actions taken

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Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____