Holy Family Junior School

Bí Cineálta Policy

to

Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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The Board of Management of **Holy Family Junior School** has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

This policy fully complies with the requirements of *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* 2024.

The board of management acknowledges that bullying behaviour interferes with the rights of the child as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We all, as a school community, have a responsibility to work together to prevent and address bullying behaviour and to deal with the negative impact of bullying behaviour.

We are committed to ensuring that all pupils who attend our school are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our pupils is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our pupils and we are fully committed to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

We confirm that we will, in accordance with our obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

"We confirm that we will take all steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent all bullying or harassment of our students in whatever form and however motivated.

Catholic schools have a distinctive understanding of the human person, recognising that every person is created in God's image and likeness and has inherent dignity as a child of God. This is the basis for ensuring that everybody in our school is treated with respect and care, in accordance with the Catholic Schedule.

As a Catholic school, we are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual. No human person is to be devalued and everybody has a part to play in the school community, regardless of difference."

Definition of bullying

Bullying is defined in *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying* and *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* as targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society. The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

Each school is required to develop and implement a Bí Cineálta policy that sets out how the school community prevents and addresses bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

Section A: Development/review of our Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour

All members of our school community were provided with the opportunity to input into the development/review of this policy.

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	31st March 2025 4th April 2025	Microsoft Forms Survey Bí Cineálta Half Day Closure
Pupils	April 2025	Class survey/discussion, insights from which were recorded on a Microsoft Forms Survey for pupils document
Parents Parents' Association Meeting	1st April 2025	Microsoft Forms Survey for parents/guardians
Board of Management	1st April 2025	Microsoft Forms Survey for BOM
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	2nd April 2025	Microsoft Forms Survey for wider community
Date policy was approved: 12th June 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by the school. These include strategies specifically aimed at preventing online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

In developing preventative strategies which this school will use to prevent all forms of bullying behaviour, we come from the context of our Catholic ethos where inclusivity permeates the school in a real way.

This school takes positive steps to ensure that the culture of the school is one which welcomes a respectful dialogue and encounter with diversity and difference, by

ensuring that prevention and inclusivity strategies are given priority and discussed regularly at board of management and staff meetings.

The dignity and the wellbeing of the individual person is of paramount concern in our Christian response. This school will listen closely to and dialogue with parents, thereby building a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, trust and confidence.

In continuing to develop prevention strategies, this school will listen to young people and parents, to help establish their particular context and needs. Frequent periods of reflection and engagement by the school, young people and parents, will be used to discern appropriate supports for young people in this school and to help inform future prevention strategies.

- ## Culture and Environment

  1. **Create a positive and inclusive school culture where all pupils feel safe, respected, valued and that they belong, and where diversity is celebrated**
  2. **Promote positive and respectful relationships across the school community**
  3. **Create opportunity to be the trusted adult for a child through genuine engagement and relationship building of staff with that child**
  4. **Teach relevant language explicitly to ensure access for all to information and messages about bullying**
  5. **Encourage open communication between pupils, staff, and parents/guardians**
  6. **Encourage pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour. Promote a 'telling' environment**
  7. **Promote a positive culture of open communication between parents/guardians and teachers, that encourages parents and guardians to promptly speak to the teacher regarding any concern, big or small that they may have about their child (open door policy)**
  8. **Promote a shared understanding across the school community of what bullying is and the impact it has on the pupils involved**
  9. **Consistently monitor the physical environment of the school, endeavouring to provide the safest physical spaces possible**

10. **Establish clear expectations for behaviour. Positive behaviour is praised ('catch him/her being good') and school rules are enforced consistently**
11. **Prompt investigation of inappropriate behaviour to avoid escalation and reoccurrence**
12. **Support and Implement effective routines/transitions**
13. **Promote a culture of nurture: two nurture rooms with an all-staff whole school nurture approach**
14. **Review of pupil wellbeing on the agenda at every staff meeting with emphasis on children who may need extra care and attention**
15. **Display messages and signs for pupils and staff in the school that promote friendship, inclusion, kindness, multiculturalism and anti-bullying reminders**
16. **Ensure effective leadership conducive to promoting and maintaining an anti-bullying culture and environment**
17. **Development, maintenance of, and promotion of positive school culture through whole school weekly assemblies**

- ## **Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)**

  1. **Education and prevention strategies**
  o Explicit teaching of what bullying is and is not, and of what to do if you experience or witness bullying
  o Explicit teaching of relevant language (BICS - Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills and CALP - Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency), to ensure access for all to learning that fosters empathy, respect, resilience and self-worth
  o Positive classroom rules
  o Simple and appropriate yard rules
  o Weekly assemblies
  o Role play and drama
  o Social stories
  o Buddy system
  o Classroom Support, School Support and School Support Plus Plans
  o Understanding and celebration of diversity and multiculturalism, exploration of difference, and the resulting promotion of inclusion
  o Extra-curricular programmes – GAA skills, heritage in our schools, TAP, Creative Clusters, homework clubs. outside visitors to the school e.g.

the doctor, book authors, the gardai etc., trips outside of school e.g. GLOR, the library, shops etc.

2. **Methodologies and programmes that help bullying by fostering empathy, respect, resilience, self-worth**

o Circle Time
o Play, role play and playfulness
o Small group work, building a sense of connection, belonging and empathy
o Emotional coaching
o Promotion of pupil voice
o SPHE programme
o Relations and Sexuality Education
o Incredible Years Programme
o Stay Safe
o Walk Tall
o Nurture for all
o Fun Friends
o Friendship terrace (Developmental Language Disorder Special Class)

- **<u>Policy and Planning</u>**

    1. Explicit teaching of relevant language across the school, pertaining to pupil wellbeing, sense of belonging, self-esteem and personal safety
    2. Develop a clear and consistent Bí Cineálta anti-bullying policy that is enforced by all staff members
    3. In collaboration with pupils, develop, promote and prominently display a pupil friendly Bí Cineálta policy
    4. Review and update the Bí Cineálta anti-bullying policy regularly
    5. Promote pupil voice to enable pupil participation in the development and implementation of school policies and plans
    6. Consistently follow our school procedures for reporting and responding to bullying incidents, as outlined in our Bí Cineálta policy
    7. Enable staff to engage in anti- bullying Teacher Professional Learning (TPL) both in-school and externally when it is available, to prevent and address bullying behaviour

8. Related School Policies
- Acceptable Use Policy - developed to ensure that access to technology is strictly monitored
- Code of behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Policy and risk assessment
- Supervision Policy/Procedures
- SEN policy
- Wellbeing Policy Framework
- School Communication Policy

- ## **Relationships and Partnerships**

1. **Partnership/Communication with Parents/Guardians**
   - HSCL teacher led support: supporting the active participation of parents/guardians in school life, including those who may find it difficult or daunting to engage with the school due to for example being unfamiliar with the education system or due to language or cultural barriers
   - Information Meetings
   - Parent-Teacher meetings – informal and formal
   - School Support planning meetings
   - Relevant homework – e.g. Stay Safe booklet
   - Positive news regularly shared with parents/guardians by teachers e.g. happy grams, chat at the classroom door
   - Parental in-school involvement – maths trails, school garden, school concerts, in-class activities
   - Parents' Association activities – fundraising, parent-child courses, P.A. support at school events e.g. sport's day, Induction evening for new parents/guardians
   - Newsletters
   - School Website

2. **Partnership/Communication with Holy Family Senior School**
   - Weekly meeting of principals
   - A shared language and approach in preventing and addressing bullying behaviour
   - Annual handover meetings of pupils moving form First Class in Holy Family Junior School to Second Class in Hoy Family Senior School

o Visits to and from Holy Family Senior School for concerts, shows, parades, sporting events etc.

3. **Partnership/Communication with our wider school community**
   o Acknowledgement of the importance of positive relationships across the whole education community to promote empathy, understanding and respect.
   o The meaningful involvement of the Board of Management, staff, pupils and their parents/guardians in the development, implementation and review of their school's Bí Cineálta policy and pupil friendly version is essential to effectively prevent and address bullying behaviour.
   o Distribution of newsletter to wider school community
   o School Facebook page sharing positive news and pupil achievement daily
   o Conducting workshops and seminars for pupils, school staff and parents/guardians, when possible, to raise awareness of the impact of bullying e.g. Cyberbullying talk

• <u>**Preventing Cyberbullying**</u>

Online access for pupils in Holy Family Junior School is always supervised by a staff member with Oide Technology In Education level 4 content filtering for broadband access, offering a balance between educational resources and safety. While pupils in Holy Family Junior School are aged from 4-7 years, it is important that we provide them with an age-appropriate education that supports the prevention of cyberbullying. This can be achieved through:

1. Implementing the SPHE curriculum and other preventative programmes and methodologies (see page 3 - Education and prevention strategies) to promote friendship, inclusion, kindness, diversity and development of self-esteem in our pupils
2. Having regular conversations with pupils about developing respectful and kind relationships online
3. Promoting or hosting online safety events for parents/guardians who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online
4. Adhering to and communicating our Acceptable Use Policy to our pupils, parents and guardians

- ## **Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour**

All pupils including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender pupils, have a right to feel safe and supported at school. Strategies to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour include the following:

1. Creating a safe, inclusive environment for all pupils regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity
2. Encouraging pupils to speak up/tell/respond when they hear unkind words

- ## **Preventing Racist Bullying Behaviour**

Strategies to prevent racist bullying behaviour include the following:

Fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where pupils "see themselves" in their school environment:

1. Having the cultural diversity of the school visible and on display
2. Encouraging pupils to speak up/tell/respond when they hear unkind words
3. Ensuring that classroom resources, reading material and multimedia resources represent appropriate lived experiences of pupils and adults from different national, ethical and cultural backgrounds
4. Providing supports to school staff to respond to the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language and for communicating with their parents/guardians
5. Providing supports to school staff to support pupils from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma pupils, and to encourage communication with their parents/guardians
6. Inviting speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds

- ## **Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour**

Strategies to prevent sexist bullying behaviour in the future include the following:

1. Ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat pupils equally irrespective of their sex

2. Ensuring all pupils have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex
3. Celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contributions of all pupils
4. Encouraging parents/guardians to reinforce these values of respect at home

- **<u>Preventing Sexual Harassment</u>**

While pupils in Holy Family Junior School are aged from 4-7 years, it is important that we provide them with an age-appropriate education that supports the prevention of sexual harassment in the future. Age-appropriate strategies to prevent sexual harassment include the following:

1. Promoting positive role models within the school community
2. Challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

- Bí Cineálta Anti-Bullying Policy

- Child Safeguarding Policy and risk assessment

- Acceptable Use Policy

- Supervision Policy/Procedures

- Special Education Teaching Policy

- Code of Behaviour

- School Communication Policy

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour is (are) as follows:

Class Teachers and In-School Leadership and Management Team

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

> ensure that the pupil experiencing bullying behaviour is heard and reassured

> seek to ensure the privacy of those involved

> conduct all conversations with sensitivity

> consider the age and ability of those involved

> listen to the views of the pupil who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation

> take action in a timely manner

> inform parents/guardians of those involved

The steps that will be taken by the school to determine if bullying behaviour has occurred, the approaches taken to address the bullying behaviour and to review progress are as follows (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

The actions below are taken from

Appendix C Guide to Addressing Bullying Behaviour Bí Cineálta Guidelines - June 2024

Identifying if bullying has occurred

Bullying is defined in Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying and Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools **as targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society.** The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour you should consider the following questions:

1. Is the behaviour targeted at a specific pupil or group of pupils?
2. Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?
3. Is the behaviour repeated?

If the answer to each of the questions above is Yes, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour and the behaviour should be addressed using the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

Note: One-off incidents may be considered bullying in certain circumstances. A single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and thus becomes a repeated behaviour.

If the answer to any of these questions is **No**, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred teachers should consider

what, where, when and why?
- ✓ if a group of pupils is involved, each pupil should be engaged with individually at first
- ✓ thereafter, all pupils involved should be met as a group
- ✓ at the group meeting, each pupil should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views
- ✓ each pupil should be supported as appropriate, following the group meeting
- ✓ it may be helpful to ask the pupils involved to write down their account of the incident(s)

Where bullying behaviour has occurred/ approaches taken to address the bullying behaviour

- ✓ parents are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with schools, in addressing bullying behaviour. Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the pupils involved must be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to consult with them on the actions to be taken to address the behaviour
- ✓ it is important to listen to the views of the pupil who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- ✓ a record should be kept of the engagement with all involved
- ✓ this record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known (see Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the Bi Cineálta procedures), where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the pupils involved and their parents
- ✓ the record should include the views of the pupils and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour

Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred

- ✓ the teacher must engage with the pupils involved and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement
- ✓ important factors to consider as part of this engagement are the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the pupils involved
- ✓ the teacher should document the review with pupils and their parents to determine both if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of pupils and their parents in relation to this

- ✓ the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased should also be recorded
- ✓ any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted
- ✓ ongoing supervision and support may be needed for the pupils involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased
- ✓ if the bullying behaviour has not ceased the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the pupils involved and their parents. A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased
- ✓ if it becomes clear that the pupil who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school's consideration should be given to using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant pupil, their parents and the school
- ✓ if a parent(s) is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools. they should be referred to the school's complaints procedures: https://holyfamilyjuniorschool.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/January-2024_Parental_Complaints_Procedure_final.pdf
- ✓ if a parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions have had a negative effect on the pupil. The Office of the Ombudsman for Children can be contacted at ococomplaint@oco.ie.

The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

Approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour

Given the complexity of bullying behaviour it is acknowledged that that no one approach works in all situations. In each individual case an approach/approaches best suited to its own circumstances will be implemented and reviewed. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying behahviour is as follows:

- ✓ Managing the bullying behaviour through close monitoring, staff collaboration, guidance to pupils involved, with extra teaching and

supervision resources when required, and in collaboration and partnership with parents/guardians.

✓ Supporting the pupils who have experienced bullying behaviour, displayed bullying behaviour and witnessed bullying behaviour

✓ Continuing to implement whole school prevention strategies to promote a positive school culture where pupils feel safe, respected and valued

✓ Helping and guiding pupils towards improved self-esteem

Supports

Support from outside agencies is available to help prevent and address bullying behaviour. They will be applied for as needed. These include the following:

✓ National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)

✓ Oide

✓ Webwise

✓ National Parents' Council

✓ Dublin City University (DCU) AntiBullying Centre

✓ TUSLA

Requests to take no action

A pupil reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than "look out" for them. The pupil may not want to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They may feel that telling someone might make things more difficult for them. Where this occurs, it is important that the member of staff shows empathy to the pupil, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the pupil to work out together what steps can be taken to address the matter and how their parents will be informed of the situation. It is important that the pupil who has experienced bullying behaviour feels safe.

Parents may also make schools aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action. Parents should put this request in writing to the school or be facilitated to do so where there are literacy, digital literacy or language barriers. However, while acknowledging the parent's request, schools may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with pupils and parents. The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented. If the bullying behaviour is a child protection concern the matter will be addressed without delay in accordance with *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.*

This record will be placed in the pupil's school file. This will assist our school's pupil support team, in providing a consistent and holistic response to support the wellbeing of the pupils involved. Response strategies and associated supports will be included in a classroom/school support (plus) plan.

Section D: Oversight

The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting. This update will include the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting, the number of ongoing incidents and the total number of incidents since the beginning of the school year. Where incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred, the principal will also provide a verbal update which will include where relevant, information relating to trends and patterns identified, strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant. This update does not contain personal or identifying information. See Chapter 7 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

This policy is available to our school community on the school's website and in hard copy on request. A pupil-friendly version of this policy is displayed in the school and is also available on our website and in hard copy on request.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed, following input from our school community, each calendar year or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this policy refers.

Signed: _____   Date: _____

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: _____   Date: _____

(Principal)