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Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour , Holy Family N.S

The Board of Management of Holy Family N.S 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. When students experience bullying behaviour, it can have a severe and profound impact on them in both short and long term. 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 students who attend our school are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our students is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our students 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 students 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, in accordance with our obligations under equity legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the 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 each person in our school is treated with respect and care, in accordance with the Catholic Schedule.

"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 as defined in the Bí Cineálta Procedures/Cinealtas Action Plan

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.

Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

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Section A

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

Who	Time-Frame Consulted	Method
Staff	May 2025 Ongoing engagement	Bí Cinneálta staff meeting/workshop A variety of methods including staff training
Students	Ongoing throughout the year. May 2025	Curricular areas, school culture. Questionnaires, posters
Parents	May 2025	Letter & Questionnaire
BOM	Once a term	Every BOM meeting
Wider School Community As appropriate	_____	
Date approved		
Reviewed		Annually

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by this school to address all forms of bullying behaviour, in whatever form and however motivated, including online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment.

"In developing the 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 our 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 our 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 further 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"

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)

Culture & Environment

We aim to maintain a positive and inclusive school culture where students and staff experience a sense of belonging, feel connected and are supported. Open communication between staff, parents, students and B.O.M. help to foster a collaborative approach in relation to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. Students can shape the school culture by promoting kindness and inclusion. The Leadership Team and each staff member has a responsibility to develop and maintain a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable. Parents can help foster an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated by promoting empathy and respect. Certain visuals and posters in the school will reflect a sense of belonging, equality and kindness for all of our students. Weeks such as Catholic schools Week, Friendship Week/Kindness Week/Creative schools Week/Active schools Week/Garden Week/ Seachtain na Gaeilge and many other whole school events will help foster team-work and belonging. Other programmes that may be used such as Zippy's Friends, Friends for Life, Lust for Life, Zones of Regulation, Mindful Matters, Making the Links and curricular areas such as SPHE, RSE, Webwise lessons and more, will help develop self esteem, build resilience, strengthen wellbeing and help create awareness which are useful measures in the prevention and the addressing of bullying behaviour in our school.

Communication-A safe Environment where children feel safe to communicate about bullying

We aim to create a safe environment where reporting of bullying behaviour is encouraged.

A trusted adult

Students who witness bullying behaviour should be supported and encouraged to report the behaviour to a trusted adult in the school. The trusted adult should, without delay inform the class teacher.

Safe Spaces in the School

Creating safe spaces in the school support the psychological safety of the students and is an important measure in preventing bullying behaviour. The school may take the following simple measures to help create safe, visible spaces in our school:

- remove visual barriers such as posters from areas where bullying may not be seen
- The staff on supervision duty at break will aim to ensure hidden spaces are monitored and supervised during play-time.
- the use of the sensory room and garden can hugely benefit pupils and create a sense of belonging and safety within the school.
- The display of artwork/signage and posters aimed at enhancing positive school values around the school and in each classroom can also help children feel a sense of belonging and increase awareness with regard to equality, respect and diversity. This can also help create safe spaces and act as a preventative measure in addressing bullying behaviour.

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Supervision

Appropriate supervision is an important measure to help prevent and address bullying. Schools are required to take all reasonable measures to ensure the safety of their students in school at school based activities.

Curriculum Teaching and Learning

The SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education) and RSE (The Relationships and Sexuality Education) Curricula, aim to foster students' wellbeing, self-confidence and sense of belonging. This curricular area aims to develop students' sense of personal responsibility for their own behaviour and actions. Students social and emotional learning skills are developed through a variety of class and grouped lessons which also provide opportunities to foster inclusion and respect for diversity.

Policy and Planning

The wellbeing of the school community permeates through our plans, policies and procedures in Holy Family N.S. Supporting the participation of students and parents in developing or reviewing policies where possible along with the staff, can help increase awareness and ensure effective implementation.

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour:

- Policy on Assembly, Dismissal and Dispersal of Students
- Policy on Supervision
- Bí Cineálta Policy
- Code of Behaviour Policy
- AUP Policy

Relationships & Partnerships-staff/parents/children/Outside Agencies

Strong interpersonal connections are a vital part of effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

- Involving students in school based activities
- school committees
- GAA Coaching
- Zumba dancing
- Music Workshops
- Active Schools Week
- Creative schools week
- Seachtain na Gaeilge
- Gardening Week
- Catholic Schools Week
- Talks from visitors- e.g on internet safety
- PA involvement-cake sales, fundraising, school supported events (sponsored walks, sport days, graduation days, open days, sacraments, concerts)
- School Tours
- Grandparents' Day

Preventing Cyberbullying Behaviour

Though technology provides many positive opportunities for education, the increase in the use of technology has led to students becoming increasingly vulnerable to cyberbullying or unacceptable online behaviour.

Our school will proactively address these challenges in the following way:

- promoting safe digital literacy in each class group at an age appropriate level
- fostering safe online environments-If children use the internet in school, under the guidance of the teacher it is monitored and supervised.
- engaging with web wise lessons on internet safety with the children at an age-appropriate level.
- Implementing the SPHE and Stay Safe programme
- Having regular conversations with students about respecting others online
- Implementing the AUP Policy
- Facilitating 'Internet Safety Talks' where possible for children or adults
- Holding an Internet safety Awareness Day

Preventing Homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour

All students including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students have a right to feel safe and supported in school.

The school will aim to create an inclusive school climate where each child is equal and valued.

Preventing racist bullying behaviour

Some strategies to address racist bullying in our school are as follows:

- fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated, visible and on display
- conducting workshops if possible for students/staff or parents to raise awareness of racism
- encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist bullying behaviour
- inviting visitors /speakers to the school that reflect diversity
- Ensuring that library books and textbooks reflect diversity

Preventing Sexist Bullying behaviour

Our school supports gender equality through many measures including the following:

- the staff aim to model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex
- the school aims to ensure that all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex
- the school aims to engage in opportunities to celebrate diversity and equity.

Preventing sexual harassment

Holy Family N.S has a zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment. Sexual harassment should never be dismissed as teasing or banter.

Strategies to prevent sexual harassment include some of the following:

Implementation of the SPHE

- challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment where appropriate

See Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta Procedures

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Class teacher/SEN Teacher(s)

Principal

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

- >ensure that the student 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 student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- >take action in a timely manner
- >inform parents 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:

The Steps taken by the school to determine if bullying behaviour has occurred.

(1) Identify if bullying behaviour has occurred

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred and the type(s) of bullying that has occurred, the teacher should consider the following: what, where, when and why?

If a group of students is involved in the bullying behaviour, each student should be engaged with individually first and then as a group is clear about each other's views. Students may also be asked to write down the account of what happened. Each student should be supported as appropriate.

At the group meeting each student should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is heard.

The 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.

Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

(2) Identify the type(s) of bullying behaviour that has taken place

Types of Bullying

Bullying can take many forms, which can occur separately or together-these can include the following but this is not an exhaustive list:

Physical Bullying

Physical bullying behaviour e.g pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, tripping etc. or severe physical assault. Personal property can be a focus for bullying behaviour e.g damage to belongings such as books, bicycles, colours, pens, clothes, lunch boxes, drink bottles etc

Verbal Bullying

Continual name calling which hurts, insults or humiliates the student is bullying behaviour. Repeated name calling or comments which cause harm to another student or group of students include referring to a student's accent, voice, academic ability, race, ethnic origin or physical appearance and are considered to be examples of bullying. This is not an exhaustive list.

Written Bullying Behaviour

Written bullying behaviour includes writing insulting remarks about a student in public places in the school building and grounds. Passing notes or drawings which are insulting about a student or group is also bullying behaviour.

Extortion

Bullying behaviour can involve extortion-extortion is where something is obtained through force or threats.

Exclusion

Exclusion bullying behaviour occurs when a student is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded or ignored by a student or group of students.

Relational

Relational bullying occurs when a student's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. The following are some examples: Non verbal gesturing, malicious gossip, spreading rumours, giving a particular student the "silent treatment", saying things like "Do this or I won't be your friend any more" (trying to control the other), not permitting the same student, repeatedly, to play in a game or be part of an activity causing the student to feel unwanted and isolated.

Online Bullying Behaviour(Cyber Bullying)

Cyber bullying is carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as texts or instant messaging, social media platforms, e-mails, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chatrooms, and other online technologies.

This may include the following:

- sending/sharing nasty, offensive, intimidating and insulting messages or images via text message, email, direct message, website or apps.
- posting information considered to be personal, private or sensitive without consent
- making/participating in creating fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other students
- excluding repeatedly the same student from an online activity

See chapter 2, section 2.5 of the procedures.

Criminal Behaviour

Bullying behaviour can be considered criminal behaviour under certain circumstances and legal consequences can apply. The age of criminal responsibility in Ireland is 12 years. There are more details of this area in chapter 2 section 2.3 of the Bí Cinnéalta Procedures.

Child protection

Some bullying behaviour may become a child protection concern. In determining when bullying behaviour should be reported to Tusla by mandated persons(Teachers) in the school, the following factors should be considered:

- the impact on the child
- protective/appropriate action taken by the parents
- protective/appropriate action taken by the school
- engagement with NEPS if appropriate

See chapter 2, section 2.5 of the procedures

(3) Identify the places that the bullying can take place

In addressing bullying behaviour it is important to note where and when the bullying has taken place

Bullying behaviour can take place anytime or anywhere online or offline, however there are certain places and times where bullying could be more likely to occur e.g

- dark or hidden areas inside or outside
- In the classroom when out of sight of the teacher or SNA -This can be as subtle as behaviour such as giving a nasty glance, look, sniggering, whispering comments, isolation or nasty gesturing
- Play-time- e.g exclusion, verbal or physical etc
- On field trips/tours/excursions e.g exclusion, verbal, physical etc.

This is not an exhaustive list.

The school will aim to ensure in as much as is possible the supervision and monitoring of students' behaviour while in the school building, at break times, in admission, dispersal and assembly times and at all school based activities inside or outside the school.

See chapter 2 section 2.6 of the Bf Cinneálta procedures

Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour (Chapter 6)

The school community which is B.O.M., Staff, students and parents, has a responsibility to work together in partnership to prevent and address bullying.

The class teacher has particular responsibility in addressing bullying behaviour which involves the children in her class.

The following principals must be adhered to when addressing bullying:

- ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to 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 student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best address the situation
- inform parents of those involved as soon as possible
- seek to support the student experiencing bullying behaviour and the student displaying bullying behaviour

Bullying which occurs when students are not in school

A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools will do their best to support the students involved. Where the

bullying behaviour continues in school, schools will deal with it in accordance with the BÍ Cineálta Policy/Procedures.

Requests to take no action

Students may ask the teacher not to take action in case the child is identified-it is important to show empathy to the child and talk to the child about contacting his/her parent(s).

Parents may also make schools aware of bullying behaviour and specifically request that the school take no action. Parents should put this request in writing to the school. However, while acknowledging the parent's request, schools may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

See Chapter 6, section 6.3 of the procedures.

Determining if bullying has ceased

The class teacher must engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 days after the initial engagement with them (When the bullying behaviour was identified and the parents contacted). This is to review progress following initial intervention and whether or not the bullying behaviour has ceased. Even though bullying behaviour has ceased, ongoing supervision and support may be required for the student who has experienced bullying and the student who displayed the bullying behaviour.

If bullying behaviour has not ceased then the teacher should review strategies/interventions used to address the bullying in consultation with the students and parents and agree to meet again over an agreed timeframe until the bullying has ceased.

If it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display this behaviour, the school will continue to apply the Code of Discipline in this regard.

Recording Bullying Behaviour

All incidents of bullying behaviour should be recorded by the class teacher. This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with students 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.

The record should document

- the form (section 2.5) and type (section 2.7), of the procedures.
- where and when the bullying took place
- the date of the initial engagement with the children and parents once the class teacher has identified that bullying behaviour has occurred
- The record should include the views of the students and the parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour.
- The review with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour as ceased and the views of the parents and students to this
 - 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.
- Any engagement with external agencies should be noted e.g NEPS
- Any record keeping will be in line with the school's data protection policy

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See Section 6.5 of the Bí Cinneálta procedures.

Complaints Process

If a parent is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with the Bí Cinneálta Procedures they should refer to the school's complaints procedures. See section 6.6 Bí Cinneálta procedures.

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 student 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, each calendar year or as required.

Signed: Date: Denis O'Brien
(Chairperson of board of management)

5/6/2025

Signed: Date: Orla Burke
(Principal)