



HOLY FAMILY JUNIOR NATIONAL SCHOOL

River Valley, Swords, Co Dublin.

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ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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 the **HOLY FAMILY JUNIOR NATIONAL 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* (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 wider school community. It 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;
 - Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-
 - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
 - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic 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.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

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

4. The role of parents with the Anti-Bullying Procedures.

The central role of parents is highlighted in this area, as they are often the first adult in whom a child will confide.

Parents are asked to report cases of bullying to the class teacher who will follow the school's Anti-Bullying Procedures, by taking the appropriate measures and informing the Principal. The Principal will meet with the pupils, and with the parents, to facilitate a resolution. Meetings will be documented.

The primary aim in addressing bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved. We recognise that instances of bullying invoke feelings of hurt and resentment in both child and parents. However, we request that parents support the school's Anti-Bullying Procedures with a view to achieving a restorative resolution between the children.

With reference to cyber-bullying, it can occur at any time and in any place, and most often outside school. It is reported that in many cases parents struggle to promote appropriate online behaviour, check their children's IT usage, or ensure their children stay safe while on-line. In conjunction with our Parents' Association, we encourage parents to foster an open approach to the IT usage at home and to be fully aware of the capabilities of any device they allow their children use. Allied with the monitored school

usage, home monitoring from a young age aims to create an open attitude to using IT and contribute to an attitude of self monitoring. Our Parents' Association can provide help and support in this area and we encourage parents to support the association.

5. The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

The class teacher will generally be the relevant teacher to whom cases of bullying should be reported. Reports to other school staff will be passed to the relevant teacher.

The class teacher takes appropriate measures and follows the procedure laid out in this policy regarding reports of bullying behaviour.

6. Education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school.

The prevention of bullying is an integral part of the written anti-bullying policy of this school.

Effective practice includes prevention and awareness raising measures across all aspects of bullying and involves strategies to engage pupils in addressing problems when they arise. In particular, such strategies need to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils.

As self-esteem is a major factor in determining behaviour, this school, through both its curricular and extra-curricular programmes, provides pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth.

The school offers the following programmes as part of the school curriculum.

Grow In Love Programme,

The SPHE Programme with its components RSE, Stay Safe and Walk Tall

These programmes focus on developing the pupil's awareness and understanding of bullying, including its causes and effects.

The following school policies, plans and procedures have a bearing on this Anti-Bullying Policy

SPHE Plan

Record Keeping

Health & Safety Policy

Child Protection Policy

Inclusion Policy

Code of Behaviour & Discipline

Home/School Links Policy

Special Education Needs Policy

RSE Policy

IT Acceptable Usage Policy

Prevention and awareness raising measures also deal explicitly with **cyber-bullying**. The best way to address cyber-bullying is to prevent it happening in the first place.

As a Junior National School, the access to information and communication technologies is generally class based and monitored. Our Acceptable Usage Policy details the levels of supervision in place when on line.

While pupils do not need a mobile phone while in school, we recognise that some parents provide their children with phones for outside hours. While in school, pupils are not permitted to use their mobile phones which should be switched off and be kept in a school bag.

Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of **identity-based bullying** for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) include improving inclusion, focusing on developing social skills, paying attention to key moments such as transitioning from the Junior School to the Senior School and cultivating a good school culture which has respect for all and helping one another as central.

This school's prevention and awareness raising measures are appropriate to the type of bullying and take into account the age and gender of the pupils involved.

We work to raise the awareness of bullying so that all members of the school community understand what bullying is and how the school deals with bullying behaviour.

7. School procedures for consistent investigation, follow up and recording of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies)

1. Teachers are best advised to take a calm, unemotional, problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents/guardians. Teachers will keep the Principal informed.
2. Such incidents are best investigated outside the classroom situation to avoid the public humiliation of the victim or the pupil engaged in bullying, in an attempt to get both sides of the story.
3. All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all persons concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.
4. Seek answers to questions of **what, where, who** and **why** when analysing incidents of bullying behaviour. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example for dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
5. If a gang is involved each member should be interviewed individually and then the gang should be met as a group. Each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear about what everyone else has said.
6. If it is concluded that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the **Code of Behaviour and Discipline** and try to get him/her to see the situation from the victim's point of view.
7. Each member of the gang should be helped to handle the possible pressures that often face them from the other members after interview by teacher.
8. Teachers who are investigating cases of bullying behaviour should keep a written record of their discussions with those involved.

9. In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred the Principal will arrange a meeting with the parents/guardians of the two parties involved as appropriate. An explanation will be given of the actions being taken and the reasons for them, referring them to the school **Code of Behaviour and Discipline**. Ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions taken by the school will be discussed.
10. Arrange separate follow-up meetings with the two parties involved with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the victim is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect.
11. An Anti Bullying Day/Week will raise awareness about bullying behaviour, support friendship and looking out for each other.

A consistent and clear approach to dealing with bullying when it occurs is essential to effective practice.

A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school.

Individual teachers must take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy.

Points for consideration:

- (i) 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);
- (ii) All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. 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;
- (iii) Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;
- (iv) Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible;
- (v) It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;
- (vi) Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- (vii) All interviews should 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;
- (viii) In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils;

- (ix) Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;
- (x) It must also 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;
- (xi) Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect;
- (xii) 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**
- (xiii) 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 parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
 - Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and
 - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;
- (xiv) 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;
- (xv) In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Procedures for recording bullying behaviour

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

- (i) While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same;
- (ii) If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- (iii) The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 1** to record the bullying behaviour when he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred. The recording template at **Appendix 1** must be completed in full and

retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. 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 or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

8. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying

Supports for pupils affected by bullying

A programme of support for pupils who have been bullied is in place. Such pupils may need counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed.

A programme of support for those pupils involved in bullying behaviour is also part of the school's intervention process. Pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those with low self-esteem, opportunities will be developed to increase feelings of self-worth. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

Details of the school's programme for working with pupils affected by bullying are set out in this anti-bullying policy. Section 5

It is important to note that bullying behaviour can be part of a continuum of behaviour rather than a stand-alone issue and in some cases, behaviour may escalate beyond that which can be described as bullying to serious physical or sexual assault or harassment. To ensure that any such cases are dealt with appropriately, this school's anti-bullying policy provides for appropriate linkages with the overall code of behaviour and provide for referral to be made to relevant external agencies and authorities where appropriate. In cases where a school has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil, the advice of the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) will be sought.

Referral of serious cases to the HSE

In relation to bullying in schools, *Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011* (Children First) and the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* provide that in situations where "the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school must consult the HSE Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan".

Serious instances of bullying behaviour should, in accordance with the Children First and the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, be referred to the HSE Children and Family Services and/or Gardaí as appropriate.

The *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* also provide that where school personnel have concerns about a child but are not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, the Designated Liaison Person must seek advice from the HSE Children and Family Social Services.

9. Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti- bullying policy

The effectiveness of the school's anti-bullying policy will be reviewed in the light of incidents of bullying behaviour encountered and at regular intervals.

The template in **Appendix 1** for recording and reporting bullying to the school Principal or Deputy Principal will be a valuable and readily accessible source of data in relation to bullying behaviour in the school. Data gathered from these reports will be regularly (at least once in every school year) collated and analysed with a view to monitoring levels of bullying behaviour and identifying any particular issues that require attention or any significant trends in behaviour. A record of this analysis is retained and made available to the Board of Management.

At least once in every school term the implementation and effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy will be included as an agenda item for staff meetings.

At least once in every school term, the Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out:

- (i) the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template at **Appendix 1**) since the previous report to the Board
- and**
- (ii) confirmation that all cases referred to at (i) above have been or are being, dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy and the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools*.

The minutes of the Board of Management meeting must record the above but in doing so must not include any identifying details of the pupils involved.

The Board of Management will undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation by the school. A standardised checklist to be used in undertaking the review is included in **Appendix 3**. The school must put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement identified by the review.

Written notification that the review has been completed must be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A standardised notification which must be used for this purpose is included at **Appendix 4**. A record of the review and its outcome must be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department and Inspectorate.

10. 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.

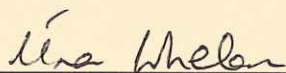
11. Prevention of Harassment

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.

This school policy was formulated by the Principal and Staff and ratified by the Board of Management of Holy Family Junior National School.

This policy will be reviewed as and when necessary.

Signed: 
Mrs Úna Whelan, Chairperson
Board of Management, Holy Family J.N.S.

Dated: 02/12/2024