HOLY FAMILY JUNIOR NATIONAL SCHOOL
River Valley, Swords, Co Dublin.

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Holy Family JNS 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 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.

Definition of bullying

Bullying is defined in Cineáltas, 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.
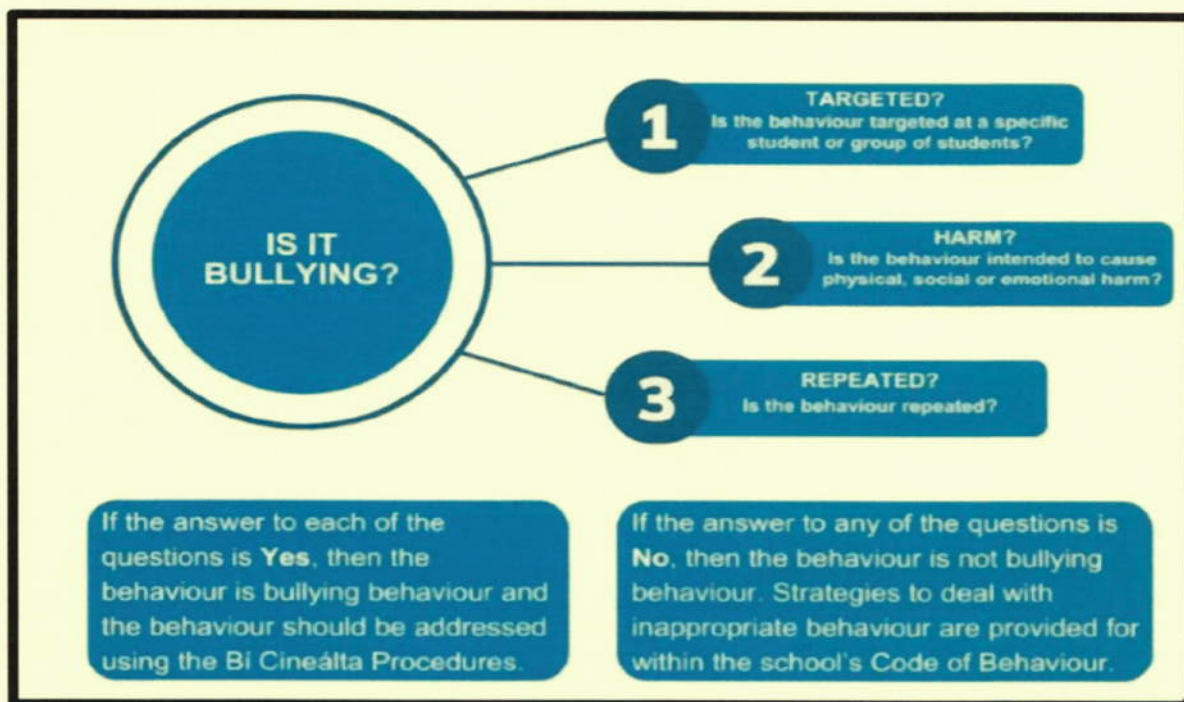
Section A: Development/review of our Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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 e.g. Teachers, SNAs, Secretary, Caretaker, Cleaners.	02/2025	Questionnaire
Students	02/2025	Questionnaire
Parents	02/2025	Questionnaire
Board of Management	02/2025	Questionnaire
Wider School Community, e.g. School Warden, GAA Coach, Parents' Association	02/2025	Questionnaire

Date policy was approved: 7th April 2025
Date policy was last reviewed: n/a

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

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 the wider school community. It is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour. This also includes online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment.

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

Strategies to be followed in Holy Family JNS when preventing bullying behaviour:
- Foster a positive and inclusive school culture and environment is essential to prevent and address bullying behaviour. The school environment should be a space where students and school staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported.
- Relationships between all members of the school community should be based on respect, care, integrity and trust. Open communication between the patron, boards of management, school staff, students and their parents help to foster a collaborative approach and shared responsibilities in relation to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.
- The school leadership team influences the school culture and set the standards and expectations for the school community when preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.
- Each member of school staff has a responsibility to develop and maintain a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and to take a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.
- Students can shape the school culture by promoting kindness and inclusion within their peer group and maintain a positive and supportive school environment for all.
- Parents, as active partners in their child's education, can help foster an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated through promoting empathy and respect.
- The concept of "a trusted adult" can be an effective strategy to encourage students to report if they or another student is experiencing bullying behaviour. Staff could support this strategy by letting students know that they can talk to them.
- The Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE), Stay Safe and Walk Tall curricula aim to foster students' well-being, self--confidence and sense of belonging and to develop students' sense of personal responsibility for their own behaviour and actions. Students' social and emotional learning (SEL) skills can be improved through the SPHE curriculum. Examples of

resources that can be used as part of teaching SPHE are included in the Resources Guide which accompanies these procedures.

➢ Engaging in appropriate teacher professional learning courses can support school staff to prevent and address bullying behaviour. School staff should also share their experiences and examples of best practice. There is a range of training available for school staff which relates to promoting inclusion and diversity in schools.

➢ Strong interpersonal connections are a vital part of effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. These interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as parents' associations and student support teams i.e. The Green Team.

➢ An Anti Bullying Day will raise awareness about bullying behaviour, support friendship and looking out for each other. This will be included as a day during Friendship February.

➢ Create a bank of vocabulary and phrases for the children to help verbalise when someone is unkind or if something happens to them so that the word, "Bullying" isn't used in the wrong context.

➢ Conflict resolution read aloud books for young children.

➢ Continue with the Yard Stars.

➢ "Catch you Being Kind" and/or "Tree of Kindness" to promote positive behaviour and kindness on the yard.

Preventing Cyberbullying

The best way to address cyberbullying 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.

Strategies to prevent cyberbullying behaviour include the following:

➢ implementing the SPHE curriculum.

➢ implementing the Digital Media Literacy curriculum which teaches students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship.

➢ having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online.

➢ developing and communicating an acceptable use policy for technology, referring to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour.

➢ promoting or hosting online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online.

➢ holding an Internet safety day to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour.

Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour
All students including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students, have a right to feel safe and supported at school.

Strategies to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour include the following:
➢ maintaining an inclusive physical environment such as by displaying relevant posters.
➢ Buy some inclusive books for the school around the topics of gender stereotypes, disability and the various types of families, e.g. stepfamilies; single-parent families; families headed by two unmarried partners, either of the opposite sex or the same sex; households that include one or more family members from a generation; adoptive families; foster families; and families where children are raised by their grandparents or other relatives.
➢ encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities.
➢ challenging gender- stereotypes.
➢ conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour.
➢ encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour

Preventing Identity Based Bullying

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.
➢ 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.

Preventing Racist Bullying

Strategies to prevent racist bullying behaviour include the following:
➢ fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students "see themselves" in their school environment.

- having the cultural diversity of the school visible and on display.
- conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of racism.
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities.
- encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour.
- providing supports to school staff to respond to the needs of students for whom English is an additional language and for communicating with their parents.
- providing supports to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma students, and to encourage communication with their parents.
- ensuring that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Preventing sexist bullying behaviour

Strategies to prevent sexist bullying behaviour include the following:
- ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex.
- ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex.
- celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contributions of all students.
- organising awareness campaigns, workshops and presentations on gender equality and respect.
- encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home.

Preventing sexual harassment

Preventing sexual harassment requires an approach that focuses on education, awareness and clear enforceable policies. There is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment in Holy Family JNS. Sexual harassment should never be dismissed as teasing or banter.

Strategies to prevent sexual harassment include the following:
- promoting positive role models within the school community.
- challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment

Many of the preventative strategies listed above can be implemented by schools to prevent all types of bullying behaviour.

The following school policies, plans and procedures have a bearing on this Bí Cinéalta 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

Supervision

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.
They ensure that there is experienced and adequate playground, school yard and indoor and outdoor supervision.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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.

The steps that will be taken by Holy Family JNS to determine if bullying behaviour has occurred are as follows:

➤ When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the teacher should consider the following: what, where, when, who and why?
➤ If a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first. Thereafter, all students involved should be met as a group.
➤ At the group meeting, each student should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views. Each student should be supported, as appropriate, following the group meeting. It may also be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident.
➤ Incidents can occur where behaviour is unacceptable and hurtful but the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies that deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within Holy Family JNS' Code of Behaviour.

- Where a child with additional needs has engaged in hurtful behaviour on a continuous basis, Holy Family JNS will review each case individually as per the child's Behaviour Plan. This behaviour plan has been directed by the school's Code of Behaviour.

Where bullying behaviour has occurred 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.
- keep a record of the engagement with all involved. This record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students involved and their parents. The record should also include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be 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 parties 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 as outlined in our Bí Cineálta policy. Schools should consider communication barriers that may exist when communicating with parents, for example, literacy, digital literacy and/or language barriers.

Holy Family JNS will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour.

Supporting those who experience bullying behaviour
The student who is experiencing bullying behaviour is engaged with without delay so that they feel listened to, supported and reassured. 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.

Supporting those who witness bullying behaviour
Students who witness bullying behaviour should be supported and encouraged to report the behaviour to a trusted adult in the school so that the behaviour can be addressed. Students who witness bullying behaviour on social media have an important role in helping to address the behaviour by reporting the witnessed behaviour to a trusted adult.

The trusted adult should reassure the student that they have done the right thing by reporting the behaviour. The trusted adult should, without delay, inform the member of staff who has responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour.

Supporting those who display bullying behaviour
Students who are displaying bullying behaviour should be supported to better manage relational difficulties and ensure that their needs are met. A programme of support for those pupils 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.

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 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.

Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred:
- The teacher must engage with the students 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 students involved.
- The teacher should document the review with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and their parents.
- 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 students 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 students involved and their parents.
- A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- If it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school 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 student, their parents and Holy Family JNS.

- ➢ If a parent(s) is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the Holy Family JNS, 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.
- ➢ 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 student.

Holy Family JNS 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 are required to support the students involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, schools should deal with it in accordance with their Bí Cineálta policy. Where the student displaying the bullying behaviour is not a student in the school, but the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour is a student in the school, the school should support the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as appropriate and engage with them and their parents to determine what steps can be taken.

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.

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, 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: _Úna Whelan_   Date: 7th April 2025
Ms Ú Whelan, Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: _May McNally_   Date: 7th April 2025
Ms M McNally, Principal