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HOLY ROSARY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Whole School Plan for

Bí Cineálta

The principles in this policy are approved by the Board of Management and therefore constitute standard practices, which apply throughout Holy Rosary Primary School.

This policy, along with all Holy Rosary policies, is available on the Holy Rosary website. Electronic copies of these policies are controlled and live. Holders of printed copies of the policies are responsible themselves for ensuring that they have the most up to date version.

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Introduction/Rationale
The Board of Management of Holy Rosary Primary 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 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 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.

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 targeted behaviour, online or offline, that causes harm.

- Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society.

- It is behaviour which is deliberate in nature and is unwanted. It is not accidental or reckless behaviour.

The harm can be:

➢ Physical (eg: personal injury, damage to or loss of property)

➢ Social: (eg: withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion)
➢ Emotional: (eg: low self esteem, depression, anxiety)

and can have lasting effects on the child experiencing the behaviour.

A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards a student is not bullying behaviour. However, a single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be visible to a wide audience and has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and so becomes a repeated behaviour.

Behaviour that is <u>not</u> bullying behaviour

Disagreement between two students, or instances where students don't want to be friends or to remain friends, is not considered bullying **unless** it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others including deliberate manipulation of friendship groups.

Some students with special educational needs may have social communication difficulties which may make them communicate their needs through behaviours that can hurt themselves or others. It is important to note that their behaviours are not deliberate or planned, but, in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they can't control.

When attempting to determine whether particular behaviours are considered to be bullying behaviours, our school will ask the following three questions:

1. **Is the behaviour targeted at a particular student or group of students?**
2. **Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?**
3. **Is the behaviour repeated?**

If the answer to all of these questions is yes, then we will consider the behaviour to be bullying behaviour.

If the answer to any of these questions is no, then we will not consider the behaviour to be of a bullying nature. However, the school may refer to its Code of Behaviour when dealing with the issue.

Bullying Behaviour that occurs outside school

The school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs outside school. However, where bullying behaviour (including bullying behaviour online or by phone) has an impact in school, schools are required to deal with this bullying behaviour.

Examples of Bullying Behaviour

General behaviours which apply to all	• Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc. • Physical aggression • Damage to property • Name calling • Slagging • The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person • Offensive graffiti • Extortion • Intimidation • Insulting or offensive gestures • Invasion of personal space • A combination of any of the types listed

Cyber	● Denigration: Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation ● Harassment: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual ● Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name ● Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight ● Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online ● Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images ● Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group ● Cyber stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety ● Silent telephone/mobile phone call ● Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls ● Abusive text messages ● Abusive email ● Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles ● Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures ● Abusive posts on any form of communication technology

Identity based behaviours	Including any of the **nine** discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).
1-5. Race, Nationality, Ethnic background, Family Status, membership of the Traveller Community	• Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background • Exclusion on the basis of any of the above
6. Relational	This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying.
	Behaviours include: • Malicious gossip • Isolation & exclusion • Ignoring • Excluding from the group • Taking someone's friends away • Spreading rumours • Breaking confidence • Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear
7. Sexual	• Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching • Harassment
8. Additional needs, disability	• Name calling • Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs • Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying • Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues. • Mimicking a person's disability • Setting others up for ridicule
9. Homophobic and transgender	• Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner • Physical intimidation or attacks/threats rooted in homophobic/transphobic bullying

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	March 2025 March 2025 April 2025	Half day closure for training and input Surveys Discussion and consultation at Well-being Committee
	September 2025	Staff Meeting presentation and discussion
Students	March 2025 September 2025	Questionnaires 2nd-6th Student Council Meeting to discuss the Bí Cineálta steps from the poster and launch a Poster Competition for Bí Cineálta
Parents	March 2025 October 2025	Surveys Policy shared with parents via Newsletter
Board of Management	September 2025	Policy document brought to BOM for discussion, consultation and ratification
Wider School Community	September 2025	Outside agencies who work within the school will be introduced to the new policy

Date Policy was approved by BOM	22nd September 2025
Date of next review	September 2026

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.

The Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice provides the following four key areas that are essential for a holistic, whole-school approach to wellbeing promotion: Culture and Environment; Curriculum; Policy and Planning and Relationships and Partnerships. This section sets out the prevention strategies that are used by the school to prevent bullying behaviour.

1. Culture and Environment

We strive to

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Display key respectful messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. The Bí Cineálta poster which was designed by the pupils and promoted by the Student Council will be displayed in key areas around the school.
- Promote Acts of Kindness in class and highlight in Assembly
- Catch children being respectful and kind- notice and acknowledge desired behaviour by providing positive attention and reinforcement and in compliance with our Code of Behaviour
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school-this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or Special Educational Need.
- Involve parents as active partners in fostering an environment where bullying is not tolerated
- Support the idea that our school is a 'telling school'- Explain the difference between telling about and telling on.
- Promote the concept of a trusted adult, someone to tell
- Establish robust supervision throughout the school so children feel safe. Identify hot spots and blind spots and supervise appropriately and ensure supervising adults are visible (hi viz) and vigilant.

2. Curriculum (Teaching & Learning)

We strive to

- Provide teaching and promote learning which is collaborative and respectful, fostering inclusion and respect for diversity.
- Display a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact through explicit teaching and modelling Ways to achieve this:
- At the start of each school year staff are reminded to familiarise themselves with the Anti Bullying Bí Cineálta Policy and have a copy readily available.
- New staff members are guided through the policy by a mentor
- Explicit teaching of SPHE content which fosters students' well being and self confidence as well as promoting personal responsibility for their own behaviours and actions. SPHE programmes include Stay Safe, RSE, Weaving Wellbeing, Welcome to Wellbeing, GEM content, Web Wise, Zeeko, FUSE
- Students are given regular opportunities to work in small groups with peers, which can help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy.
- Curricular and Extra-Curricular activities can help develop a sense of self-worth, working together, inclusion and respect eg. celebrating World Down Syndrome Day,

acknowledgement of religious holidays such as Eid, Friendship Week, Grandparents' Day, Failte Friday, Wellness Wednesday and other similar events.
- Use of content and materials that promote and celebrate inclusion, cultural diversity and gender equality
- Welcoming programmes such as the Morning Meeting, morning circle time

Policy and Planning

- School policies- Acceptable Use Policy, Enrolment, Code of Behaviour, SPHE, RSE, Child Safeguarding and Risk Assessment / Child protection
- Parent Newsletter
- Special focus weeks and special events eg Friendship Week, Wellness Wednesdays, Parents talk on cyber safety
- Supervision of classrooms, corridors, stairs, hall, playground/yard with special focus on hot spots-bike shed, hometime,
- Play Therapist
- Outside agencies eg Zeeko, Barnardos
- Awareness drives around Bí Cineálta -display and teaching
- Support implementation of Bí Cineálta to include procedures of noting, investigating and dealing with incidences of bullying
- Programme of support for those involved in bullying - Behaviour Support Teacher School Completion Policy

Relationships and Partnerships

- Extra-curricular activities/ sports teams-mixed classes
- Wellness Wednesdays
- Failte Friday
- Grandparents' Day
- Arts & Activities Week and community parade
- Diversity awareness- world map, acknowledgement of religious events
- Student Voice-Student Council and the Assemblers
- Junior Safety Forum
- Friendship Week
- Microsoft Dream Space
- Peer support-Book Buddies and Yard Buddies
- Library- parents
- HSCL programmes and initiatives
- Amber Flag committee
- Green Schools Committee
- Outside sports coaches from local GAA and rugby club
- Halloween Walk
- School Completion
- Play Therapist

Section D

Addressing Bullying Behaviour

Roles and Responsibilities

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

- Mainstream class teachers and SETs (where appropriate).
  The class teacher will oversee recording of bullying reports for students in their class-this includes using the procedure guidelines to investigate reports of bullying and recording bullying behaviour on the correct form on Aladdin

- The Principal/Deputy Principal will provide support and advice and will become involved where appropriate. Principal will inform the Board of Management of incidences of bullying

- The Class Teacher will follow up after 20 days to investigate if bullying has ceased

- All staff and the whole school community will be vigilant to bullying behaviour

Approach

The primary aim in addressing reports of bullying behaviour should be to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the students involved.

When addressing bullying behaviour, the teachers with responsibility will:

- 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 the students 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 and inform parents of those involved

Stage 1 - Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

Bullying is defined in Cinealtas: 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.

Where bullying behaviour is reported the relevant teacher (normally the class teacher) must determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour. He/she will consider the following questions:

1. Is the behaviour **targeted** at a specific student or group of students?
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 policy.

Note: **One-off incidents** may be considered bullying behaviour 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. However, the school may refer to its Code of Behaviour to deal with the behaviour.

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred (Stage 1), teachers should consider what, where, when and why? as follows: (Note that these steps are required – as outlined in the Procedures):

- Where one student is reported to be involved, the student should be engaged with, on an individual basis, at first.

- Thereafter, this student and the student who is reported to be experiencing the bullying behaviour should be met together

- If a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with, on an individual basis, at first.

- Thereafter, all students involved and the student who is reported to be experiencing the bullying behaviour 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 be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident(s).

- Parents will be supported by the school, if needed, with recommendations for useful resources/guides to help them support their children.

Stage 2: When Bullying has Occurred

- 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 students 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 student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation.

- All bullying behaviour will be recorded, documenting the engagement that occurred with all involved. The record should include the views of students and their parents.

- The record will include the form and type of behaviour if known (see pages 20-24, Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the Bí Cineálta procedures for descriptions/examples of the forms and types of bullying 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 PostPrimary Schools.

- The record should be shared with the Principal.

Stage 3: 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 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 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 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 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.

- 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.

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):

We take all instances of bullying behaviour on a case-by-case basis, but we may use the following approaches generally:

- All students involved will have regular check-ins with their teacher and the Behaviour Support Teacher and behaviour will be monitored.

- The teacher will check-in with parents too and will look for their ongoing support to monitor their child at home and to communicate with the school if needed.

- We will use resources, as appropriate – including those developed by NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service), Oide (support service for schools) and from programmes/sites such as Webwise and FUSE.

Section E: 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 request. A student-friendly version of this policy is displayed in the school.

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.