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Anti-Bullying Policy

"The true measure of a nation's standing is how well it attends to its children - their health and safety, their material security, their education and socialisation, and their sense of being loved, valued, and included in the families and societies into which they are born."

Introduction

High Cross College is committed to providing a safe and inclusive learning environment where every student is treated with respect and dignity. Bullying in any form is not tolerated, as it undermines the values and principles outlined in our mission statement. This Anti-Bullying Policy is designed to create awareness, prevent bullying, and respond effectively when incidents occur.

Rationale

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Code of Behaviour guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB), the Board of Management of High Cross College 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, which were published in September 2013.

More recently initiated, the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2019, as established by the Department of Education, serves as a guiding framework reflecting their vision. This vision is dedicated to ensuring that children and young people, throughout their educational journey, experience an environment that enriches, advocates for, values, and nurtures their overall wellbeing.

Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying

The development of Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying is informed by the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2019, alongside insights from UNESCO's Whole

¹ United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund's (UNICEF) Innocenti Report Card 7, p.7
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Education Approach, national and international research, and best practices. This comprehensive strategy is designed to position students at the heart of both their school community and the broader national education policy and strategy development.

Moreover, this Action Plan on Bullying is in harmony with the objectives of UN Sustainable Development Goal 4. This goal places a primary focus on delivering an inclusive and fair-quality education for every child and young person. Such an education is pivotal in the pursuit of a peaceful and prosperous world.

Scope

This policy primarily addresses student-to-student bullying within the school setting, which impacts students' progress and emotional well-being. The school's mission statement guides the implementation of this policy.

External Impact

This policy extends beyond the school premises. The school reserves the right to apply its anti-bullying policy to bullying behaviour occurring in locations, activities, functions, or programs not directly related to the school if, in the opinion of the principal and/or the Board of Management, such behaviour creates a hostile environment for the victim, infringes on the victim's rights at the school, or substantially disrupts the education process or the school's orderly operation. If bullying behaviour affects any person's participation in our school or involves illegal activities, such as cyber-bullying, it may be reported to the Gardaí.

Core Principles

This anti-bullying policy is underpinned by three fundamental principles in line with our mission statement:

- Respect must be shown to all persons at all times.
- All students are entitled to an education free from fear and intimidation.
- Bullying is wrong and will not be tolerated.



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Furthermore, in line with 'Cineáltas: Implementation Plan on Bullying 2023-2027' the following fundamental principles have also been applied in the formation of our policy:

1. Prevention

- Fostering Empathy: By promoting empathy, the plan aims to create a foundation for understanding and compassion.
- Knowledge Foundation: The plan will provide essential training to build knowledge, cultivate respect, ensure equality, and promote inclusion.

2. Support

- Targeted Assistance: Offering tangible and tailored support based on a continuum of needs, thereby creating a framework for our school community to collaborate effectively.

3. Oversight

- Visible Leadership: The plan emphasises the importance of visible leadership that fosters positive environments for children, young people, and all members of the school community.

4. Community

- Inclusive School Community: The plan envisions the development of an inclusive school community that is intricately connected to society. These communities are designed to foster and nurture positive relationships and partnerships.

Themes

The following thematic approach was fostered when creating our anti-bullying policy. As documented in the 'Cinealtas Action Plan for Bullying', the following themes were considered to be significant to our plan

Culture and Environment

- Promoting Inclusion: Emphasising the importance of a welcoming school community with a culture that actively promotes inclusion, equality, respect, and diversity, while maintaining a zero tolerance for bullying.
- Leadership Responsibility: Recognizing the pivotal role of school leaders in



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cultivating this inclusive culture.

- **Safe School Spaces:** Ensuring access to safe areas within the school, and considering both internal and external school design to reduce the potential for bullying.
- **School Inspections:** Placing a greater focus on school culture and student wellbeing during school inspections.
- **Support Mechanisms:** Providing necessary support for both students and staff when needed.
- **Preventative Approach:** Highlighting the significance of proactively preventing bullying, rather than merely reacting to it.
- **Awareness Campaign:** Raising awareness regarding how to address bullying and its impact among all members of the school community.

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

- **Inclusive Curriculum:** Developing an inclusive curriculum that educates the entire school community about diversity and respect for other cultures, anti-racism, and awareness of unconscious bias.
- **Teacher Training:** Increasing the focus on inclusion, equality, and diversity during initial teacher education, newly qualified teacher education, and continuous professional development.
- **Bullying Prevention:** Enhancing teacher skills to effectively prevent and address bullying.
- **Evidence-Based Programs:** Emphasising the importance of implementing evidence-based, age-appropriate, and culturally relevant anti-bullying programs, such as FUSE.
- **Message Reinforcement:** Using books and lessons to reinforce the message of inclusion and equality, while reflecting the evolving nature of society.
- **Specific SPHE Qualification:** Developing a dedicated qualification in social, personal, and health education (SPHE) for post-primary teachers.



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Policy and Planning

- **Inclusive Approaches:** Advocating for inclusive approaches to school policy development that involve the meaningful participation of children and young people.
- **Wellbeing Focus:** Placing the wellbeing of the entire school community at the core of policies and plans.
- **Effective Reporting:** Establishing a range of effective approaches within schools to enable the safe reporting of bullying behaviour, including anonymous reporting.
- **Comprehensive Reporting:** Ensuring the reporting of all alleged bullying incidents, including specific details of the bullying behaviour and the approach to addressing it.
- **Staff Training:** Providing school staff with the training to implement a variety of appropriate responses to alleged bullying behaviour.
- **Data Collection:** Collecting disaggregated data on bullying in schools to inform future policies and guide continuous professional development.
- **Policy Review:** Emphasising the importance of regular review of school policies.
- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Clearly outlining the roles and responsibilities of each member of the school community in school policies, presenting this information in an age-appropriate and child-friendly manner.
- **Self-Evaluation:** Recognizing the value of the School Self-Evaluation process for wellbeing promotion.
- **Online Safety:** Stressing the importance of an Online Safety Commissioner who can address individual complaints.

Relationships and Partnerships

- **Positive Relationships:** Recognizing the significance of positive relationships across the entire school community to foster empathy, understanding, and respect, and to raise awareness of unconscious bias.
- **Vigilant Oversight:** Encouraging all school staff to maintain a 'watchful eye' on the well-being of the children and young people in their care, with confidence in their knowledge of best practices for addressing bullying behaviour.



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- **Trusted Adults:** Highlighting the importance of having a trusted adult available for the disclosure of bullying incidents.
- **Youth Involvement:** Advocating for the meaningful involvement of children and young people in anti-bullying efforts.
- **Parent Engagement:** Recognizing the vital role of parents in preventing and addressing bullying and encouraging their active engagement.
- **Diverse Involvement:** Encouraging diversity of involvement across the entire school community, including student councils and school staff.
- **Student Mentors:** Acknowledging the potential for student mentors to play a key role in preventing bullying in schools.
- **Support Teams:** Recognizing the valuable role that Student Support Teams can play.

Definition of bullying

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

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

The core elements of the definition are further described below:

Targeted Behaviour

- Bullying constitutes deliberate, unwelcome actions that inflict harm on others. Those who display bullying behaviour, particularly children or young individuals, are aware that their actions will be perceived as harmful by those experiencing the behaviour. It's important to note that bullying is neither accidental nor reckless conduct. The harm can manifest physically (e.g., causing personal injury or damage to property), socially (e.g., leading to withdrawal, loneliness, or exclusion), and emotionally (e.g.,



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affecting self-esteem or causing depression and anxiety). These actions can have a substantial and enduring adverse impact on the well-being of the individuals subjected to bullying. It's worth emphasising that if the harm is real for the recipient but unintended by the perpetrator, it may not qualify as bullying. Nevertheless, such incidents must be addressed under the school's code of behaviour.

Repeated Behaviour

Bullying takes the form of a consistent pattern of behaviour that recurs over time. Isolated offline instances of intentional negative behaviour involving a power imbalance are not classified as bullying. However, they still require attention and should be addressed in accordance with the school's code of behaviour. On the other hand, posting a single harmful message, image, or video online, with a high likelihood of being reposted or shared with others, may be considered a form of bullying behaviour.

Imbalance of Power

- In instances of bullying, individuals who experience the bullying behaviour encounter difficulties in defending themselves due to the exploitation of a real or perceived power imbalance. This power asymmetry may manifest through differences in attributes such as size, strength, age, ability, peer group influence, economic status, social standing, religion, race, ethnic background (including membership in the Traveller and/or Roma communities), sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, experience within the care system, disability, or the receipt of special education. In cases of online (or cyber) bullying, the power imbalance may relate to factors such as online anonymity, technical proficiency, access to information/images/videos, and the targeted individual's inability to remove offensive online content or escape the bullying.²

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:* Manipulating relationships as a means of bullying, which includes behaviours such as malicious gossip, isolation, exclusion, ignoring, taking someone's friends away, "bitching," spreading rumours, breaking confidence, talking loud enough so that the

² Department of Education. (2022). Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying - Ireland's Whole Education Approach to preventing and addressing bullying in schools



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victim can hear, and using threatening looks or gestures.

- *Cyber-Bullying:* Bullying conducted through electronic means, including behaviours such as denigration (spreading rumours, lies, or gossip online), harassment (sending vicious or disturbing messages online), impersonation (posting offensive messages under someone else's name), flaming (using inflammatory language online), trickery (deceiving someone to share personal information online), outing (sharing confidential or compromising information or images online), exclusion (purposefully excluding someone from an online group), cyberstalking (ongoing harassment causing fear for safety), silent telephone/mobile phone calls, abusive telephone/mobile phone calls, abusive text messages, abusive emails, abusive communication on social networks/social media, abusive website comments/blogs/pictures, and abusive posts on any form of communication technology.
- *Identity-Based Bullying:* Bullying based on personal characteristics such as gender (including transgender), marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, nationality, ethnic background, and membership of the Traveller Community. Examples include discrimination, prejudice, comments, or insults related to these characteristics.
- *Homophobic and Transgender Bullying:* Targeting individuals based on their sexual orientation or gender identity, including spreading rumours, taunting, name-calling, physical intimidation, and threats.
- *Race, Nationality, Ethnic Background, and Membership of the Traveller Community Bullying:* Discrimination, prejudice, comments, or insults related to colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic background, or Traveller community membership. Exclusion based on any of these grounds is also considered bullying.
- *Special Educational Needs and Disability Bullying:* Targeting individuals with disabilities or special educational needs, including name-calling, taunting, taking advantage of vulnerabilities, and mimicking disabilities.
- *Sexual Bullying:* Involves unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching.

Handling Single Incidents



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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 Behavior.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image, or statement on social media 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 Behavior.

For further details on the types of behaviour included in our definition of bullying, please see Appendix 1. Please note that the examples provided are not exhaustive and may be amended when deemed necessary.

School Wide Approach

This Anti-Bullying Policy outlines our school-wide approach to prevent and address bullying, including specific strategies for cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying.

The school community shares responsibility in preventing and tackling bullying.

This means; any student or staff member who believes she/he has been or is being bullied, as well as any person who has reason to believe a student or staff member has been or is being subjected to bullying, shall report the matter immediately to the Principal, Deputy Principal, or Year Head, as appropriate. This includes non-teaching staff such as school caretaker, secretarial staff, and canteen staff. Bullying will be included on the agenda for Year Head Meetings each week. This enables discussion of welfare of students in relation to specific cases of bullying.

Education and Prevention

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by the school. These include strategies specifically aimed at preventing online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate.



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High Cross College will put in place educational and other initiatives to ensure that;

- All members of the school community have a shared & thorough understanding of what bullying is. This includes educating the school community re. the following:
 - The definition of bullying
 - The types of bullying (inc. cyberbullying; homophobic bullying; transphobic bullying)
 - The impact of bullying
 - Role of the bystander

Strategies

- *Atmosphere of Respect:* We promote an atmosphere of openness, respect, understanding, and belonging within our school community.
- *Positive School Culture and Climate:*
 - o Creating a welcoming, inclusive environment that embraces diversity.
 - o Encouraging pupils to report bullying incidents in a non-threatening atmosphere.
 - o Promoting respectful relationships across the school community.
- *Whole School Approach:* Management, teachers, parents, and students collaborate to prevent bullying. Shared understanding among these groups is vital.
- *Anti-Bullying Coordinator:* a designated staff member is assigned to the area of anti-bullying. Their role is to look after policy, prevention strategies, liaise with subject departments on curriculum needs, investigation, as well providing counselling services to those involved.
- *Curriculum Integration:* We integrate anti-bullying education into the curriculum, including the Social, Personal, and Health Education (SPHE) program and the Civic, Social, and Political Education (CSPE) program.
- *Awareness-Raising:* We conduct awareness-raising exercises, explaining the nature, causes, consequences, and unacceptability of bullying. Pupils are encouraged to recognize, reject, and report bullying behaviour.



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- *Parental Involvement:* Regular reports in school newsletters, meetings with parent/guardian groups, and other communications keep parents informed and engaged.
- *Anti-Bullying/Friendship Initiatives:* We organise Anti-Bullying/Friendship Days/Weeks, assemblies, workshops, and invite external speakers to raise awareness.
- *Extracurricular Activities:* We offer a range of extracurricular activities to build students' self-esteem and sense of belonging.
- *Support Structure:* A support structure involving various staff members, including class prefects, buddies, and counsellors, is available to students.
- *Communication:* School computers do not allow access to social media sites.
- *Investigation and Reporting:* All reports of bullying are noted, investigated, and addressed discreetly and sensitively. Investigating teachers approach incidents calmly, seeking answers to what, where, when, who, and why. Students, parents, and guardians are encouraged to report any concerns. Teachers emphasise the importance of reporting concerns. New staff members receive induction on relevant policies.
- *Consistent Recording, and Follow-Up:*
 - Maintaining consistent records of bullying incidents.
 - Thoroughly investigating reported incidents and implementing appropriate follow-up measures.
- *Staff Development and Training:* Whole staff professional development on bullying ensures awareness and response. Moreover, specific training is provided to relevant teachers. Awareness training is conducted for pupils, parents/guardians, and the wider school community.
- *Monitoring and Supervision:* Classrooms, corridors, school grounds, and communication technology use are regularly monitored.
- *School Policies:* Students are inducted and retrained on the Code of Behaviour Policy each year. An Acceptable Mobile Phone Policy/Social Media Awareness Program is implemented.
- *Student Voice:* The Student Council contributes to a safe school environment.
- *Culture of Telling:* Students are encouraged to report bullying incidents through



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various means and are provided with strategies to do so. Parents and guardians are encouraged to approach the school if they suspect their child is being bullied

- Effective Leadership:
 - Providing strong leadership to maintain a safe and respectful learning environment.
- Ongoing Evaluation:
 - Continuously assessing the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy and making necessary improvements.

Targeted Areas

The education and prevention strategies include strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying'

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying means any usage of social media Technologies/Digital Technology that seeks to hurt, undermine or humiliate a member, or members of the school community. This includes circulating or publishing through ICT, material recorded without consent for the purpose of undermining or causing damage to the personal or professional reputation of another person whether considered a "joke" or not. Social Media technologies are defined as information and communication technologies, such as internet, digital media, mobile phone (e.g., text messaging, group messaging services, instant messaging, personal websites, online personal polling websites, social media networks and other means)

Cyber bullying may include (but is not limited to);

- Bullying that is conducted by means of ICT such as text messages, social network sites, emails, instant messaging, apps, gaming sites, chat rooms, photos and other online technologies.
- Targeting a person through ICT with inappropriate and hurtful messages or information at any time of day or night in or outside of school.



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- Placing photographs or changing a photograph of another person online without that person's permission
- "In directing" i.e., making indirect, hurtful comments about another person online
- Masquerading (Pretending to be someone else) as another person while online and /or causing hurt or offence to another online.

This policy applies even when a student engages in inappropriate use of social media/ICT when not under the direct supervision of the school, when there is a clear connection to the school and its students or personnel. It should be further noted that cyber - bullying using school technologies is in violation of the school's Acceptable Internet Use Policy.

Strategies to counteract cyberbullying may include some of the following:

- Students are explicitly informed about the appropriate use of social media/ICT through the curriculum - for example in Digital Literacy class, Posters, visiting speakers, assembly, tutor class, SPHE.
- Students from 1st-3rd year are taught internet safety classes during Tutor and SPHE Classes, as part of the school's overall Digital Learning Plan. Furthermore 1st year and Transition Year students undergo Additional internet safety talks as targeted groups.
- Blocking social networking sites in school.
- Vigilance & consistency re use of mobile phones and or devices which have internet access
- Strong security measures re use of Wi-Fi code and use of tiktok/snapchat/X/Instagram in school

Identity Based Bullying

Identity based bullying may be directed at one or other aspects of a person's identity. This may include (but is not limited to);

- Bullying on the basis of race, religion, ethnic or social background



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- Bullying based on image & appearance
- Bullying of those with special educational needs, disabilities or exceptional abilities.
- LGBTQ+ bullying
- Bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller Community

Strategies to Counteract Identity Based Bullying may include some of the following:

- Clear Seating Plans for all classes
- Posters promoting respect for diversity
- Activities which celebrate the diversity of the school community e.g., Stand-Up Week
- RE/RSE/SPHE/CSPE lessons
- Continually promoting through words and actions the necessity of respect for all members of the school community
- Senior students/Student Council to role model respect and to drive anti bullying initiatives

Addressing Bullying Behaviour-Investigation & Recording

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



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The entire school community is responsible for

1. Being vigilant
2. Reporting bullying behaviour to key personnel

All staff are responsible for reporting any concerns about misuse of authority by other adults both within the school and during school related activities. Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus drivers, caretakers, and cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed or mentioned to them to the relevant teacher. Any pupil or parent/guardian may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.

The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows: Principal, Deputies Principals, Assistant Principals, Guidance Counsellor and the Anti-Bullying Coordinator,

The Students Council will:

1. Assist the school management in identifying bullying behaviour e.g., highlighting bullying hotspots, forms of cyberbullying, trends in bullying behaviour etc.
2. Promote positive school atmosphere

Students can report concerns or incidents of bullying to the following:

- Parents
- Any staff member with whom the student feels comfortable
- Friends who will speak on your behalf
- Deputy Principal.
- Tutor or Year Head.
- Guidance Counsellor.
- Student/ Prefect/Buddy
- Anti-Bullying Coordinator



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Concerns or incidents can be told in the following ways:

- Direct approach to a teacher at an appropriate time, e.g., after class, hand note up with homework, email.
- Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
- Email the school
- Get a parent or friend to tell on your behalf.
- Parents can inform the school.
- Witnesses can inform the appropriate person.
- Administer a confidential questionnaire to all students during the year.

Stage 1: Addressing Bullying

- Main Objective: The primary focus of our approach to bullying is conflict resolution and the restoration of relationships, rather than assigning blame.
- Investigation and Resolution Process:
 - o Investigating teachers will employ their professional judgement to identify instances of bullying, determine its nature, and devise effective resolutions.
 - o All reports, including anonymous ones, will be thoroughly examined by the investigating teacher(s) initially to foster reporting confidence, which is crucial.
 - o The teacher will bring the matter to the attention of the relevant personnel e.g., Year head. The investigating teachers will calmly inform the student that they must notify the year head.
 - o Every effort will be made to make the student/s feel comfortable and safe having reported the issue.
 - o Where staff have concerns on dealing with an issue, they should approach the relevant teachers as identified in this policy.
- Involvement of Non-Teaching Staff:
 - o Non-teaching staff, including secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus drivers, caretakers, and cleaners, are encouraged to promptly report any

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witnessed or reported incidents of bullying to the relevant investigating teacher.

- **Parent and Student Cooperation:**
 - Parents and students are expected to cooperate fully with investigations, assisting the school in resolving issues and restoring relationships as promptly as possible.
 - All reported bullying incidents will be documented, taken seriously, and addressed promptly and effectively.
 - Parents should promptly inform the school if they have concerns about their child being bullied.
- **Clarity of Approach:**
 - It is essential that all parties involved, including students and parents, fully understand the conflict resolution approach from the outset.
- **Investigative Approach:**
 - Investigating teacher(s) should adopt a composed and rational problem-solving approach when addressing allegations of bullying from students, staff, or parents. Teacher(s) must not assign blame or guilt at this stage.
- **Sensitivity in Interviews:**
 - All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity, respecting the rights of all students involved. Students not directly involved may provide valuable information.
- **Thorough Analysis:**
 - When examining incidents of bullying behaviour, investigating teacher(s) should seek answers to questions such as what, where, when, who, and why, in a calm manner that sets an example of non-aggressive conflict resolution.
- **Handling Group Cases:**
 - In cases involving groups, each member should be interviewed individually initially. Subsequently, if needed, all involved parties may be convened as a group, ensuring clarity about each other's statements.



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- o Support should be provided to each group member facing potential peer pressure after the interview.
- Educational Approach:
 - o When bullying behaviour is confirmed, the school should clearly communicate to the offender how their actions contravene the school's anti-bullying policy, aiming to foster empathy toward the bullied student. This is the primary intervention in most bullying cases. However, where it is deemed necessary, depending on the severity of the case, different sanctions may apply. This is decided on a case-by-case basis.
- Documentation:
 - o 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*.
 - o Encouraging those involved to write down their accounts of incidents may be appropriate and helpful. Written accounts must be read back and details should be verified. Moreover, those who make a written record of events should be advised that written accounts may be used as part of the overall investigation.
- Parent Involvement:
 - o Parents will be notified of investigations when necessary and deemed appropriate. In cases where the investigating teacher determines bullying behaviour has occurred, parents of the parties involved should be promptly contacted to inform them of the situation and explain the actions being taken.
 - o Parents should have an opportunity to discuss how they can support the school's actions.
- Privacy in Disciplinary Actions:
 - o It is crucial to emphasise that situations requiring disciplinary sanctions are private matters involving the disciplined student, their parents, and the school.



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- Follow-Up:
 - Follow-up meetings with relevant parties may be organised separately with the possibility of bringing them together at a later date if the bullied student is willing and agreeable.
 - Additional follow-up meetings with parents may occur to ensure satisfactory resolution.
 - If the issue has not been resolved following restorative measures, other sanctions may be applied, in line with the school's code of conduct and discipline solutions.
- Ongoing Monitoring:
 - The Year Head will continuously monitor the situation to ensure those involved in bullying behaviour exhibit appropriate conduct.
- Principal and Staff Involvement:
 - The Principal/Deputy Principals will receive comprehensive briefings on all bullying incidents within the school community. Relevant staff will also be alerted to ensure continued vigilance.
- Counselling Support:
 - Our school's Guidance counsellor may provide counselling to all parties involved to offer ongoing support.
 - This can also be provided by the anti-bullying coordinator.

Stage 2: Dispute Resolution

- Unsatisfied Parents:
 - If a parent is dissatisfied with the school's handling of a bullying case, they may be referred to the school's complaints procedures as appropriate.
- Further Escalation:
 - If a parent exhausts the school's complaints procedures and remains dissatisfied, the school will inform them of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.



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Sanctions

- Ensuring Safety and Discipline:
 - It is the school's duty to provide a safe environment.
 - If interventions fail and bullying continues, the principal, in consultation with parents and the Board of Management, may implement a program of appropriate sanctions.
 - These sanctions aim to promote positive behaviour and bolster the student's self-esteem.
 - In severe bullying cases, sanctions may include expulsion or a suspension period with ongoing consultation with parents to decide the best course of action for the student's well-being.
 - Any suspension will be formally reported in writing by the Principal to the Chair of the Board of Management.

Bullying by Adults

The Board of Management of High Cross College is dedicated to fostering positive working relationships among staff, with parents, and with outside visitors. This commitment includes adopting the HSA Dignity in the Workplace Charter, endorsed by ICTU and IBEC, and adopted by the JMB and ASTI.

Recording

- Documentation:
 - Bullying behaviour is documented using the provided template for recording bullying behaviour/incidents. (Appendix 2).
 - All records are maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation.



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- Professional Judgement:
 - Investigating teacher(s) use their professional judgement when keeping records of reports, actions taken, and discussions with those involved.
- Records for Confirmation:
 - If bullying is confirmed, the investigating teacher(s) maintain appropriate written records to aid in resolution efforts and the restoration of relationships.
- Record Copies:
 - Two copies of these records are created: one for the Principal/Deputy Principals and another for the relevant Year Head.

Follow-Up and Review

- A review of behaviour will occur approximately 20 calendar days after the determination that bullying behaviour exists. If the behaviour persists, the relevant forms will be filled out and brought to the principal's attention.

Further Support

- Students affected by bullying, whether as victims or perpetrators, may receive ongoing assistance from the teaching staff, Guidance Counsellor, Year Head, anti-bullying coordinator and tutors.

Additional Support Resources

- Further support may be available from external services such as N.E.P.S. and Jigsaw.
- Parents may seek outside professional help as needed.
- Cases falling under the Child Protection Guidelines will be reported to the Designated Liaison Person or Deputy Designated Liaison Person and addressed according to the



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Child Protection Policy.

Role of External Agencies/Wider Community

High Cross College recognises the role of the wider community in tackling bullying. Liaising with external agencies/community members is a normal part of the school's approach to preventing and tackling bullying. In cases where the school has serious concerns in relation to the behaviour of a student or a group of students it may be necessary for the school management to seek the assistance of formal agencies such as the Gardai, NEPS, Tusla. Child Protection Procedures for Post Primary Schools are implemented in this regard.

Appeals

Where a matter remains unresolved after these procedures have been followed, the matter shall be referred to the Board of Management for their consideration. Where a matter fails to be resolved at that level students, parents and guardians will be advised of their rights of appeal to the Ombudsman for Children.



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

Signed: _____

Date: _____ (Chairperson of board of management)

Signed:



HIGH CROSS
COLLEGE

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.

	<u>Date consulted</u>	<u>Method of consultation</u>
<u>School Staff</u>		
<u>Students</u>		
<u>Parents</u>		
<u>Board of Management</u>		
<u>Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers</u>		
<u>Date policy was approved:</u>		



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Date policy was last reviewed:

Date of Next Review:

Appendix 1

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

General behaviours which apply to all	• Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in equality legislation, i.e., gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, and membership of the Traveller community. • 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 • The ‘look’ or ‘stare’ • Invasion of personal space • A combination of any of the types listed.
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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/social media • 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).	



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Homophobic and Transgender	• Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation or gender • Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation • Name calling e.g., Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner • Physical intimidation or attacks • Threats
Race, nationality, ethnic background and 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
Relational	• This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include: • Malicious gossip • Isolation & exclusion
Sexual	• Ignoring • Excluding from the group • Taking someone's friends away • "Bitching" • Spreading rumours • Breaking confidence • Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear • The "look" • Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching • Harassment



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Special Educational 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
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Appendix 2 Record of Bullying Interview

1. Name _____ Class _____

Person Investigating _____

2. Role of person & Names of those involved.

Other People Involved _____

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es)) *

Pupil concerned	☐
Other Pupil	☐
Parent	☐
Teacher	☐
Other	☐

4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))*

Playground	☐
Classroom	☐
Corridor	☐
Toilets	☐
School Bus	☐



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Other	
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5. Name of Person(s) who reported the bullying concern

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

Physical Aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Other (specify)	

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category.

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact



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9. Details of actions taken

Signed (Relevant Teacher): _____

Date _____

Follow Up Meeting

Date _____

Person investigating: _____

Student name/s: _____



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Has the issue been resolved? Yes No

Details	
Actions to be Taken	
No Actions Needed at this time	

Next Review Date (if applicable): _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____



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Appendix 3

Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.

Yes /No

Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day-to-day work?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	

Signed _____

Date _____

Chairperson, Board of Management



HIGH CROSS

COLLEGE

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____



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The Board of Management of 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.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____

Signed: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: _____

Signed: _____

(Principal)

Date: _____