Harolds' Cross Educate Together National School

Anti-Bullying Policy (2025)

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

1. INTRODUCTION

The Board of Management of Harold's Cross Educate Together National School (HXETNS) 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 has been prepared in consultation with the teaching staff, Board of Management, Parent's, and pupils of Harold's Cross Educate Together National School (HXETNS). The purpose of this policy is to prevent incidences of bullying behaviour and outline the relevant steps to be taken where there is a reported incidence of bullying behaviour.

This policy is in accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the C*ode of Behaviour Guidelines* issued by the National Education and Welfare Board (NEWB). The Board of Management of HXETNS 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 Bí Cineálta *Procedures to prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools* which were published by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) in June 2024.

2. KEY PRINCIPLES

Bullying is a violation of the rights of the child. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying behaviour and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and their families and is therefore fully committed to following the key

principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour.

3. DEFINITION OF BULLYING

In accordance with the Bí Cineálta *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post - Primary Schools,* bullying is defined as follows:

Bullying is 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.

Online bullying behaviour (cyberbullying) is carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text or direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, e-mail, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chat rooms and other online technologies.

This form of bullying behaviour can include:

- Sending or sharing nasty, insulting, offensive, and/or intimidating messages or images via text messages, emails, direct messages or other websites or apps.
- Posting information considered to be personal, private and sensitive without consent
- Making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other students
- Excluding or disrupting access to a student on purpose from online chat groups, access to accounts or from an online game

4. THE RELEVANT TEACHER

The relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with bullying behaviour is the class teacher. Where an allegation of bullying is made it should in the first instance be reported back to the class teacher by the person who has become aware of the incident, in order that the class teacher can initiate the reporting process. The SET will offer support to the class teacher where needed. The principal should be kept informed of any allegations of bullying behaviour.

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	24th March 2025 12th May 2025 28th May 2025	Survey sent to staff to gain insight into understanding of anti-bullying procedures and formulate new policy. Half-Day school closure to facilitate training on new Bí Cinéalta procedures and policy. Draft policy sent to staff for final feedback and amendments.
Students	April 2025 May 2025 June 2025	Teachers supported focus groups of students to their input in developing an Anti-Bullying policy. Their opinions and insights were all considered when drafting this policy. The Student Council Liaison teacher met with Student Council to create a Child Friendly Version of this policy. The ratified policy was distributed to all households via school news. Students were encouraged to talk about the policy with their parents. A copy of the Child Friendly version is displayed in all classrooms and on the school noticeboard.
Parents	19th of March 2025 28th May 2025	Survey sent to parents to gain insight into understanding of anti-bullying procedures and formulate new policy. Policy created with this information. Draft Policy sent to members of PSA.

		Attention drawn to our policy and Child friendly policy, resources and initiatives in the school and sent out via school news and school website.
Board of Management	14th of May 2025 18th of June 2025	Draft policy brought to the attention of the Board of Management for Feedback. Policy was reviewed and ratified.
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	June 2025	A ratified version of this policy was sent to the wider school community, including after-school staff.
Date policy was approved: 10th September 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: 10th Septmeber 2025		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

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 (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

Culture and Environment

- HXETNS is founded on four core principles**,** child centred, multi denominational, democratic administration and control, and co-educational, which inform the culture and environment of the school.
- We model and promote positive, respectful and inclusive relationships amongst all members of the school community. We endeavour to create a safe and happy school where every individual feels a sense of belonging and respect.
- The Leadership team led by the principal promotes the highest standards in dealing with any bullying behaviour.
- We have a consistent whole school approach which includes a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact on the person displaying bullying behaviour, the person experiencing bullying behaviour and the person witnessing bullying behaviour.
- We actively support and encourage a telling environment.
- The school actively involves parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around all forms and types of bullying and are kept up to date through the school newsletter.
- Parents, as the primary educators of their children, have a key role to play in supporting the anti-bullying policy.
- The school is committed to an active Student Council.

Curriculum - Teaching and Learning

- We are committed to delivering well planned, engaging, collaborative and respectful teaching and learning opportunities.
- We endeavour to create safe physical spaces and to display children's work that celebrates equality, diversity, inclusion and respect.
- Explicit instruction and lessons on anti bullying will be delivered through the SPHE and RSE and Learn Together Curriculum programmes.
- The staff will ensure that the student-friendly Bí Cineálta Anti-Bullying policy is reviewed with each class, in every school year in September and in January.

Policy and Planning

- The HXETNS Code of Behaviour which is based on the principles of Restorative practice will be fully implemented.
- The Bí Cineálta Anti-Bullying policy will be reviewed annually at the first staff meeting of the year.
- Bullying is a standing item on the agenda for monthly staff meetings.
- Continuous professional development for all staff in delivering these programmes will be supported by the Board of Management.
- The feedback surveys sent to parents every year will inform any review of the policy.
- The feedback from the staff meetings, the written feedback from parents and feedback from pupils will be presented to the Board of Management.

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

- We adhere to the highest standards of supervision in class, the yard, and on excursions outside the school.
- The yard is a standing item on the monthly staff meeting
- Staff at all times endeavour to encourage pupils to show respect for each other.
- Implementation of the SPHE curriculum.
- Positive self-esteem is fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences, by acknowledging good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed regularly with the pupils.
- Staff are particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of bullying/ being bullied.
- All disclosed incidents of bullying are investigated thoroughly and consistently by following the correct procedure as outlined to staff and recorded on Aladdin using the template for this.
- School wide awareness raising on all aspects of bullying, supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extracurricular activities.
- Involvement of pupils in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Kindness/ anti-bullying week, and other activities that can help to pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Refer to appropriate online behaviour when using devices and in SPHE lessons.
- Promote online safety events or material for parents.
- The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school e.g. www.tacklebullying.ie, www.antibullyingcentre.ie>fuse, www.webwise.ie
- Shared folder of resources for teaching of bullying including lessons from above websites – shared Google drive for all teachers to access.
- Challenge gender- stereotypes – equal participation of all. Equal recognition.
- Raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour and encourage students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour.
- Foster a culture where diversity is celebrated and students “see themselves” in the school environment.
- Ensuring class libraries have material that reflects our diverse school population from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
- Modelling of respectful behaviour by staff of all irrespective of sex.
- Ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of sex or gender identity.

● Making clear that our school has a zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment of any kind with enforceable policy	
Type of bullying behaviour	**Specific Strategies**
Online Bullying Behaviour	● Don't be mean behind the screen ● AUP in place for all devices ● promote digital citizenship ● implementing SPHE/RSE curriculum ● open ongoing conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online ● referring to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour ● Promoting online safety events for parents
Homophobic /transphobic bullying behaviour	● encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities ● challenging gender-stereotypes ● celebrating pride month ● implementing SPHE/RSE curriculum ● ensuring that all school materials represent a broad range of people and experiences.
Racist bullying behaviour	● fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated. ● encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities ● providing supports to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities ● encourage communication with their parents especially where there are barriers to communication. ● ensuring that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Sexist bullying behaviour	● ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex and or gender. ● ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex. ● celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contribution of all students ● encouraging parents to reinforce these values ● Challenging gender stereotypes
Sexual harassment	● promoting positive role models within the school community ● challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

- ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour is heard and reassured
- seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- consider the age and ability of those involved
- listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- take action in a timely manner
- inform parents of those involved

The steps that will be taken by the school to determine if bullying behaviour has occurred, the approaches taken to address the bullying behaviour and to review progress are as follows (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

Addressing Bullying Behaviour

- All reported incidents of bullying behaviour will be investigated.
- The relevant teacher will speak to all the students involved in the alleged bullying behaviour. She/he may carry out observations, she/he may discuss the situation with the SET and or the principal and other relevant staff members. The teacher must determine if:

  a) The behaviour is targeted.
  b) The behaviour is repeated
  c) The behaviour is intending to cause harm.

- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting each member of the group should be asked to give his or her account so that everyone in the group is clear about each others' statements. It may be helpful to ask each person to write their account with support if necessary.
- All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights and privacy of all pupils concerned.
- The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all concerns or incidents being investigated.
- Where bullying behaviour has occurred the parents of all parties 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 the school's Bí Cineálta policy.
- Parents and or students may ask that nothing is done about bullying behaviour other than monitoring the situation. Parents should put this request in writing or be facilitated to do so. However, while acknowledging the parents and or students request, we may decide that it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

- The teacher and or the principal will engage with the students and parents involved no more than **20 school days** after the initial discussion to review progress. If the bullying has not ceased the teacher will review the strategies used in consultation with the student. Sanctions will be in line with the **HXETNS Code of Positive Behaviour.**

Complaints

- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with its procedures, the parent will be referred to the school complaints' procedures.
- In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Recording Bullying Behaviour

- All incidents of bullying behaviour will be recorded. The record will note the **form** and **type** of bullying behaviour, if known, where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students and their parents.
- The record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour.
- The relevant teacher must record all allegations of bullying and actions taken using the school template (Appendix A).
- It should document the review with the students and their parents to determine if the bullying behavior has ceased and view of the students and their parents in relation to this. It is important to note the dates of each engagement and the date that the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- Any engagement with external services should be documented.
- The **20 day Recording Template** (Appendix A) will be used in cases where the relevant teacher or principal deem that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days.
- Bullying behaviour can be considered **criminal behaviour** under certain circumstances and legal consequences can apply. The age of criminal responsibility in Ireland is 12 years. Bullying behaviour which is deemed to be criminal will be referred to the Garda Síochána.
- Bullying behaviour may become a **child protection concern** when it results in significant physical or emotional harm, or where it becomes a persistent and severe problem and measures taken to address it are not effective. The relevant teachers and or the principal will make a report to Tusla if they believe the threshold of harm is reached.

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):

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves a whole school approach. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, no one intervention/support programme works in all situations.

- Supporting Bullied pupils:
  - Ending the bullying behaviour
  - Fostering respect for bullied pupils and all pupils
  - Fostering greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils
  - Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through annual awareness-raising programmes
  - Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations
  - Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).
  - A school support plan may be drawn up for the pupils experiencing, witnessing or exhibiting bullying behaviour.
  - Students involved may be referred to outside services.

- Supporting Bullying pupils:
  - Making it clear that bullying pupils seek to amend and restore relationships are not blamed or punished and get a 'clean sheet,'
  - Making it clear that bullying pupils seek to amend and restore relationships are doing the right thing and giving them praise for this.
  - Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school)
  - Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth
  - In dealing with negative behavior in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child.
  - A school support plan may be drawn up for the pupils experiencing, witnessing or exhibiting bullying behaviour.
  - Students involved may be referred to outside services.

Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools

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*.

Section D: Oversight

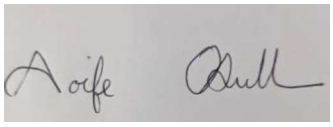
The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting. This update will include the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting, the number of ongoing incidents and the total number of incidents since the beginning 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: Date: 10th September 2025

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed:  Date: 10th September 2025

(Acting- Principal)

Date of next review: September 2026, or when protocols around new Anti-Bullying Guidelines issue to schools.

Appendix A: Template for Recording Information

HAROLD'S CROSS
Educate Together NS

Bi Cinealta Recording Form

PLEASE ENSURE DIGITAL COPY IS STORED/FILLED ON ALADDIN & HARD COPY IN PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

- For GDPR compliance, please consider, when writing, who may be reading this in the future
- Use initials only when referring to other students
- Remain short, concise and factual
- Avoid sharing of opinions

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1. Date Of Initial Engagement with Student(s) and Parent(s) _____

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2. Name and Class of Pupil Experiencing Bullying Behaviour

Name: _____ Class: _____

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3. Name(s) and Class(es) of Pupil(s) Engaged in Bullying Behaviour

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4. Name(s) of Person(s) Who Reported the Bullying Concern

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5. Location(s) of Incidents

Yard/Pitch		Toilets	
Classroom		Other (specify)	
Corridor			

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6. Form of Bullying Behaviour*

Physical Aggression		Personal Property	
Verbal		Relational	
Written		Online	
Extortion		Other (specify)	
Exclusion			

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7. Type of Bullying Behaviour (related to)

Ability		Race/Ethnicity	
Physical Appearance		Social class	
Religious Identity		Gender (sexism)	
Gender Identity/ Homophobic/ Transphobic		Other (specify)	

8. Brief Description of Bullying Behaviour and Its Impact, as Understood by Staff

9. Views of Student(s) Regarding Actions to be Taken to Address Bullying Behaviour

10. Views of Parents(s) Regarding Actions to be Taken to Address Bullying Behaviour

11. Details of Actions Taken (include reference to any external agencies involved, if appropriate)

12. Agreed Date/Timeframe for Review Meeting (within 20 days)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Relevant Teacher)

Date Submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal: _____

<u>The following section to be completed at Review Meeting(s)</u>

13. Views of Student(s) Regarding Continuation/Cessation of Bullying Behaviour, Effectiveness of Strategies Used and Current Relationship Between Those Involved

14. Views of Parents(s) Regarding Continuation/Cessation of Bullying Behaviour, Effectiveness of Strategies Used and Current Relationship Between Those Involved

15. Details of Any Further Actions

16. Agreed Date/Timeframe for Review Meeting (if deemed appropriate)

17. Date it Has Been Determined That Bullying Behaviours Have Ceased , as Understood by Staff

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Relevant Teacher)

Date Submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal: _____

Examples of Forms of Bullying Behaviour

Physical Aggression	*Pushing; poking; punching; kicking; etc*	***Verbal***	*Name-calling; humiliating; mimicking; etc*
Written	*In public places/ passed notes/ drawings*	***Extortion***	*Something obtained through force or threat*
Relational	*Non-verbal gestures, malicious gossip; 'silent treatment'; manipulation of friendship groups to make someone unpopular; "do this or I won't be your friend anymore"; etc*	***Online***	*Sending/ sharing nasty/ offensive/ intimidating/ insulting messages/images; posting private/ sensitive content; impersonation; exclusion*
Exclusion	*Deliberately isolated/ ignored/ excluded*	***Personal Property***	*Damage to/hiding of/stealing of/ interference with belongings*