



Holy Family G.N.S., Askea is a Catholic all-girls' National School under the Patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. Our school ethos is based on the Christian values of love, respect, kindness and consideration. The staff of this school works with the whole school community – children, parents, Board of Management and the wider community in a spirit of partnership and trust. As educators we strive to help each child to reach her full potential in all aspects of her life. We encourage a spirit of communication and openness where the integrity of each person is upheld.

In line with our school ethos statement:

The school community of Holy Family G.N.S. Askea believes that each pupil has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation.

The school regards bullying as a serious infringement of individual rights and a serious threat to the self-esteem and self-confidence of targeted pupil(s). Therefore, it does not tolerate bullying of any kind.

Every report of bullying is treated seriously and dealt with, having due regard for the wellbeing of the targeted pupil(s) and the perpetrator(s).

The immediate priority, should a bullying incident occur, is ending the bullying, (*thereby protecting the person(s) being targeted*) and resolving the issues and restoring the relationships involved insofar as is practicable using a “Reform, not Blame” approach.

All pupils are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance of a safe environment in the school. On becoming aware of any bullying situation, in or outside the school, involving members of the school community they should notify a trusted responsible adult. Bullying behaviour is too serious not to report.

Pupils' participation in school life in general is encouraged through existing school structures. Awareness of bullying, and willingness to take action to prevent or stop it, is part of this participation.



1. In accordance with the requirements of the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000* and the code of behavior guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Holy Family G.N.S. Askea, has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behavior. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *AntiBullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013.

This policy should be read and comprehended in conjunction with the following school policies:  
(not an exhaustive list)

- Code of Behaviour
  - Religious Education
  - Relationships and Sexuality Education
  - SPHE
  - Supervision
  - Acceptable Use Policy
  - Health, Safety and Welfare
  - Child Protection – Child Safeguarding Statement and Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment
  - English as an Additional Language Policy
  - Special Educational Needs Policy
  - Record Keeping and Data Protection
2. The Board of Management recognizes the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behavior:
    - A positive school culture and climate which –
      - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
      - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behavior in a nonthreatening environment; and
      - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
      - **See Appendix 1: Key Elements of a positive school culture and climate**
    - Effective leadership;
    - A school-wide approach;
    - A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
    - Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that –
      - Build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
      - Explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying;



- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
  - Supports for staff;
  - Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behavior (including use of established intervention strategies); and
  - On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy
3. In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows:

**Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.**

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

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying and
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

**Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.**

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

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

This definition includes a wide range of behaviour, whether verbal or written, whether physical or social, whether targeting person or property, whether carried out directly or indirectly or through any electronic or other medium, which could harm a pupil or undermine her/his self-esteem or self-confidence.

**Appendix 2** gives a list of specific examples of bullying behaviour. This list is not exhaustive. **Appendix 3** lists indicators of bullying behaviour

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *AntiBullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.



#### **4. Personnel involved in investigating and dealing with bullying:**

The “Relevant Teacher(s)” for investigating and dealing with bullying in this school are the individual class teachers.

*(“At primary level, the relevant teacher will normally be the class teacher.” DES Procedures 6.8.3).*

#### **5. Education and Prevention Strategies:**

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyberbullying and identity based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

- Definition of ‘bullying’ is displayed in all classrooms
- The anti-bullying module of the SPHE programme as it applies during each school year
- Additional programmes have been introduced for a number of classes as part of our SPHE programme
  - Fun Friends
  - Friends for Life
  - Incredible Years
  - [www.antibullying.ie](http://www.antibullying.ie) (Primary School – Ages 4 – 12)
  - Anti- Bullying through Drama
  - Give Racism the Red card
- At least five awareness-raising exercises per school year for each class group (*e.g. from the “Awareness-Raising” strand of the Anti-Bullying Campaign, via its website*), pro-actively explaining the nature and variety, causes, consequences and unacceptability of bullying.
  - Pupils are helped to examine the issue of bullying in a calm rational way, outside of the tense context of particular bullying incidents. In the process they are made more aware of the nature of bullying and the various forms that it can take.
  - Pupils are made aware that the consequences of bullying behaviour are always bad for those who are targeted, even if this is not always obvious at the time.
  - Pupils are encouraged to recognise, reject and report bullying behaviour, either spontaneously or through questionnaires that are regularly used in the school.
- Through presentations or other exercises, the school staff and parents/guardians are made aware of the nature of bullying and the signs that might indicate that a pupil is being bullied. They are encouraged to be vigilant in watching out for signs of bullying and to report any suspicion of bullying they may have to the “Relevant Teacher” (in the case of staff members) or any staff member (in the case of parents/guardians).
- Through regular reports in school newsletters/website and other communications as well as at meetings with parent/guardian groups, parents/guardians are regularly informed of the activities of the school’s Anti-Bullying initiatives and encouraged to support its work.



- An annual anti-bullying/friendship day/week/month
- Anti- Bullying messages are reinforced at weekly assemblies
- Anti- Bullying messages are clearly displayed throughout the school
- Use of Prim-Ed posters and publications throughout the school □ Annual poster and slogan competition
- Cyberbullying:
  - Talks/presentations to parents/guardians
  - Distribution of information leaflets to pupils/parents
  - Raising parents/pupils awareness of the school's AUP policy
  - Activity sheets for pupils:
- Homophobic/transphobic bullying: Where such types of bullying arise, the school, in deciding whether it is appropriate to address the issue in an individual, class or whole- school context, will, in consultation with parents/guardians of the children involved, consider the following
  - The Catholic ethos of the school
  - The age and development of the child
  - The school's RSE policy
  - The school's SPHE policy

## **6. School's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour:**

**Procedures to use:**

**Child to child bullying - Code of Behaviour and Anti- Bullying policy**

**Child to Adult Bullying – Code of Behaviour**

**Adult to Child Bullying**

- **Teachers- DES Circular 60/2009**
- **SNAs- DES Circular 72/2011**
- **Others- Contract of Employment or SI 146/2000**

**Adult to Adult Bullying-**

- **Teachers – C2 [ CPSMA Handbook (Revised 2012), p132]**
- **SNAs- DES Circular 72/2011**
- **Others- HSA Code of Practice- Bullying at Work 2007**

**The primary aim for the relevant teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than apportion blame)**



### **Child to Child Bullying:**

The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour: (e.g. the six step approach available from the "Dealing with Incidents" section of the Anti-Bullying Campaign website) are as follows:

- The 'Relevant Teacher' investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour, whether these take place within the school or outside it, with a view to establishing the facts and bringing any such behaviour to an end.
  - The school, through the 'Relevant Teacher' reserves the right to ask any pupil to write an account of what happened, as part of an investigation. This will be a standard procedure and does not necessarily imply that a pupil is guilty of misbehaviour.
  - Pupils who are alleged to have been involved in bullying behaviour are interviewed by the 'Relevant Teacher' to establish the nature and extent of the behaviour and any reasons for it. In the event that they have been involved in bullying behaviour they are asked to sign a **binding promise** that they will treat all pupils fairly, equally and respectfully including the targeted pupil(s).
  - The 'Relevant Teacher' does not apportion blame but rather treats bullying behaviour as a "mistake" that can and must be remedied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter. Pupils who report bullying therefore are not getting others "in trouble" so much as enabling them to get out of trouble into which they may ultimately get if the bullying continued.
  - **When an investigation is initiated and/or a bullying situation is resolved the 'Relevant Teacher' will complete a report, i.e. Incident Report Form/Action Taken- Appendix 4 to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information.**
  - If a pupil has signed such a promise but then chooses to break that promise and continue the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer be considered a "mistake." In this event parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed and requested to countersign their child's promise. Breach of this additional promise by further bullying behaviour is regarded as a very grave matter and a serious sanction may be imposed by the school authorities (See sanctions below).
  - All documentation regarding bullying incidents and their resolution is retained securely in the school, and maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation.
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- **Sanctions: In any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required. This is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, her parents and the school (DES Procedures)**



Where a pupil has been found to be engaged in bullying behaviour, has formally promised to stop and has broken that **first** promise, the following procedures will be implemented:

1. The principal/Deputy Principal will be informed of the incident and Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted by the 'Relevant Teacher' and informed of the nature and extent of the bullying behaviour with a view to agreeing a strategy- 'no blame or sanction', whereby a promise to end the bullying behaviour would be honoured
2. The child will be required to sign another, a **second** promise, this time countersigned by a parent/guardian
3. The relevant teacher must use both recording templates at **Appendix 4 and Appendix 5** to record the bullying behaviour

The recording templates at Appendices 4 & 5 must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

In the case of a **second** promise being broken, any sanctions imposed will be in line with the school's Code of Behaviour.

- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures (i.e. CPSMA/INTO Parental Complaints Procedure)
- In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children
- Serious incidents of bullying will be referred to the TUSLA Child and Family Agency and /or Gardaí as appropriate. CPOR reports to BoM will include records of such reports.

7. **School's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:**

□ **Bullied pupils:**

- Ending the bullying behaviour,
- Continue to promote and foster the positive school culture which aims to foster more respect for bullied pupils and all pupils, **see Appendix 6**
- Continue to promote our school culture to foster greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils,
- Indicate clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the awareness-raising programme,
- Indicate 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,



- After resolution, enabling bullied pupils to complete a victim-impact statement,
- A programme of support for pupils who have been bullied will be in place. Such pupils may need counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed.
- 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).
- Implementing a “buddy system” in the school (*if applicable*), □ **Bullying pupils:**
- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a “clean sheet,”
- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honorable thing and giving them praise for this,
- A programme of support for those pupils involved in bullying behaviour will also be part of the school’s intervention process. Pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those with low self-esteem, opportunities will be developed to increase feelings of self-worth. It is, therefore, important that the learning strategies applied within the school allow for the enhancement of the pupil’s self-worth. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.
- 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,
- In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a “clean sheet” and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.

#### 8. **Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils:**

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

#### 9. **Prevention of Harassment:**

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps as are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.





10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management in May, 2014.
11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website, is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and provided to the Parents' Group. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and to the patron if requested.
12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website, be readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and provided to the Parents' Group. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and to the patron if requested.

Signed: Rev. Fr. Thomas Little  
(*Chairperson of Board of Management*)

Signed: Anne Fitzpatrick  
(*Principal*)

**Reviewed by Board of Management: 03/10/2022**

**Date of next review: September/October 2023**

### **Appendix 1**

- The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.
- The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.
- The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.
- The school prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members.
- The school has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of its functioning.
- The school has the capacity to change in response to pupils' needs.
- The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupils' attitudes and values.
- The school takes particular care of "at risk" pupils and uses its monitoring systems to facilitate early intervention where necessary and it responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.



- The school recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis.
- The school recognises the role of parents in equipping the pupil with a range of life-skills.
- The school recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.
- The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.
- The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school.
- Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community.

## Appendix 2

*Bullying can take a number of forms. These may include any of the following (this list is not exhaustive):*

- **Repeated aggressive behaviour/attitude/body language, for example:**  
Shouting and uncontrolled anger,  
Personal insults,  
Verbal abuse,  
Offensive language directed at an individual,  
Continually shouting or dismissing others,  
Public verbal attacks/criticism,  
Domineering behaviour,  
Open aggression,  
Offensive gestures and unwanted physical contact.
- **Intimidation, either physical, psychological or emotional, for example:**  
Treating in a dictatorial manner,  
Ridicule,  
Persistent slagging,  
Deliberate staring with the intent to discomfort.  
Persistent rudeness in behaviour and attitude toward a particular individual.  
Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. personal life/family  
Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. social life or schoolwork.
- **Interference with property, for example:** Stealing/damaging books or equipment  
Stealing/damaging clothing or other property  
Demanding money with menaces



Persistently moving, hiding or interfering with property Marking/defacing property

- **Undermining/Public or Private Humiliation, for example:** Condescending tone,  
Deliberately withholding significant information and resources,  
Writing of anonymous notes,  
Malicious, disparaging or demeaning comments,  
Malicious tricks/derogatory jokes,  
Knowingly spreading rumours,  
Belittling others' efforts, their enthusiasm or their new ideas,  
Derogatory or offensive nicknames (name-calling),  
Using electronic or other media for any of the above (cyber bullying),  
Disrespectfully mimicking a particular individual in his/her absence, Deliberately refusing to address issues focusing instead on the person.
- **Ostracising or isolating, for example:** Deliberately marginalising an individual  
Deliberately preventing a person from joining a group,  
Deliberately preventing from joining in an activity, schoolwork-related or recreational Blaming a pupil for things s/he did not do.



### Appendix 3

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school e.g. requesting parents to drive or collect him/her, changing travel routes, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school;
- Unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, truancy;
- Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school;
- Pattern of physical illnesses e.g. headaches, stomach aches;
- Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour which may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays;
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress e.g. stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting;
- Spontaneous out-of-character comments about either pupils or teachers;
- Possessions missing or damaged;
- Increased requests for money or stealing money; Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing; and
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her.

There may be other signs depending on the individual and his/her circumstances. The above signs do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied but if repeated or occurring in combination, these signs do warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the pupil.



**Appendix 4**  
**Incident Report Form Appendix 5**  
**DES Report Form**



## Appendix 6

### **Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate:**

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Praise and encourage positive behaviour - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- 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 SEN.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use. Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Group in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying “hot spots” and “hot times” for bullying in the school.
- Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
- Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.
- Support the establishment and work of student councils.