# Laurel Hill Secondary School
# Anti-Bullying Policy.

**Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ** is committed to the maintenance of a social environment in which all members of the school community can participate in all activities free from any form of harassment or discrimination of any nature whatsoever.

All students are obliged to respect the rights of others and to uphold the **College's Code of Discipline.**

Students shall not infringe the rights of others by engaging in any conduct which causes harassment or discrimination. (See Section 6 Code of Behaviour)

1. In accordance with the requirements of the **Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Code of Behaviour Guidelines issued by the N.E.W.B., the Board of Management of Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ** 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.**

2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour :

    - 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 behaviour in a non-threatening environment.
    - Promotes respectful relationships across the school community.
    - 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.
    - Explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-bases 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 behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies).
    - 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 2013**, bullying is defined as follows :-

**Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physically 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,**
- **Cyber-bullying,**
- **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.

4. **<u>The Relevant Teacher</u> :**

The relevant teacher(s) who have responsibility for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows :

(a) Relevant teachers : the Year Head/Guidance Counsellor/Deputy Principal/Principal who are responsible for managing student welfare and discipline.
(b) Class teachers also have a vital role to play in any effective anti-bullying strategy and will be kept informed at all times as to the progress of any investigation.
(c) The Career Guidance teacher works closely with the Principal, Deputy Principal in helping to resolve these issues.

5. **<u>Education and prevention Strategies</u> :**

The Education and Prevention Strategies that will be used by the school are as follows :

(a) The school confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour.
(b) The school affirms its commitment to the use of the SPHE and RSE Curriculum to provide opportunities to explore bullying and to enhance students to recognise and respond to bullying.
(c) The school has a pro-active approach to the prevention of bullying; incorporating strategies into its First Year Induction Programme and by the use of continuous programmes into Second Year.
(d) Anti-Bullying Week (Cairdeas) – Whole School based.
(e) Staff In-Service Training.
(f) Staff Anti-Bullying Committee – Principal, Deputy Principal, Career Guidance (relevant Year Head)
(g) Student reviews of all students well-being by Staff at Staff Meetings – 2 per year.
(h) Students' Council Awareness Programme.

## 6. Process & Procedures :

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 are as follows :-

- The primary aim in dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame).
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the Year Head/Guidance Counsellor/Deputy Principal. In that way, pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It will be made clear to all pupils, that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly. Class Teachers may also request statements be taken from the class as a whole.
- Non-teaching staff such as Secretaries, Special Needs Assistants (S.N.A.s) Bus Escorts, Caretakers, Cleaners will be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to Subject Teachers, the Year Head, Deputy Principal, Principal.
- Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.

## The Investigation:

- 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 to apportion blame).
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents. Teachers should report the alleged incidents to the Year Head for investigation.
- Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This will be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).
- If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Each member may be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements. Statements are usually read back to each member.
  Class Teachers may also request statements be taken from the class as a whole.
- Each member of a group shall be supported through the possible pressures that they may face them from the other members of the group after interview by the teaching community.

**Action to be taken :**

- In cases where it has been determined by the Year Head that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school will give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils.
- Where the Year Head has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him how he is in breach of the school's Anti Bullying Policy and efforts should be made to try to get him to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- Any sanctions decided upon, shall be communicated to the parents and the student by the Year Head.
- It shall be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.
  **Note**: If it is established by the Year Head that bullying has occurred, the Year Head will keep appropriate written records which will assist his efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

**Follow-up**:

1. Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved, should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date, if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. The Chaplain and Guidance Counsellor may be asked to become involved in this process by the Year Head.

2. In cases where the Year Head considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed, within twenty school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it shall be recorded by the Year Head in the recording template and copied to the Principal.

   In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed, the Year Head must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:-

   - **Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased?**
   - **Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable?**
   - **Whether the relationships between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable?**
   - **Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal?**

**Appeals :**

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.

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 instances of bullying behaviour will, in accordance with the Children First and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, be referred to the H.S.E. Children and Family Services and/or Gardaí as appropriate.

## 7. Support :

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

- All teachers of students affected by bullying will be briefed by the Year Head and asked to keep a watching brief on the student. Any sanctions given will be included in the briefing.
- The Year Head will maintain contact with all students affected by bullying and their parents, until satisfied that the situation has returned to normal.
- Informal meetings with students affected by bullying, Guidance Counsellor, Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Head, objective :- build-up self-esteem.

## 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 that 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.

**10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 24th September 2024.**

**11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and the Patron, if requested.**

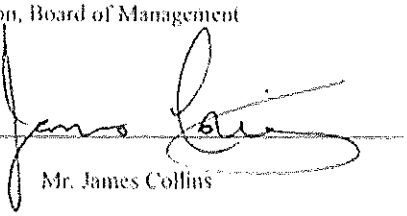
**12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Council. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the department.**

The Anti-bullying Policy for Laurel Hill Secondary School FCJ was adopted by the Board of Management on 24th September 2024.

Signed Date 24th September 2024

Mr. Jerry Cronin

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed  Date 24th September 2024

Mr. James Collins

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

## Appendix 1 – 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.
- Catch them being good – 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' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of 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 are 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.

## Appendix 2 – Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour:

1. **Name of Pupil being bullied and class group:**

**Name :** _____ **Class :** _____

2. **Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour:**

| |
|---|
| |
| |
| |
| |

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

| | |
|---|---|
| Pupil concerned | |
| Other Pupil | |
| Parent | |
| Teacher | |
| Other | |
| | |

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

| | |
|---|---|
| Playground | |
| Classroom | |
| Corridor | |
| Toilets | |
| School Bus | |
| Other | |

5. **Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern:**

| |
|---|
| |

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

| | |
|---|---|
| Physical Aggression | |
| Damage to Property | |
| Isolation/Exclusion | |
| Name Calling | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Cyber-bullying | |
| Intimidation | |
| Malicious Gossip | |
| Other (specify) | |

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

| Homophobic: | Disability/SEN: | 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 :**

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|---|
| |

**Signed :** _____ **(Relevant Teacher)** **Date :** _____

**Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal:** _____

***Note: The categories listed in the tables 3,4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.**