

Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School



Many Cultures, One Community

**Information Booklet for Parents
2026/2027 School Year**

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Welcome note from the Principal

Dear parents,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for enrolling your child with us in Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School. I hope that this marks the beginning of a long and happy relationship between your child, your family and your school!

For some of you, it will be the first time you have enrolled children in the Senior building, while for others, your child is following brothers and sisters who have already enrolled here. For all of you, I hope that we can continue to build on our commitment of developing Mary, Mother of Hope National Schools as a centre of excellence for all the children in our care, from their arrival in Junior Infants until they leave us in Sixth Class.

As you may already know, Mary, Mother of Hope National School was established in 2001. In 2008, the school split into Junior and Senior schools. In the current year, we have 432 pupils on roll. Next September we will have seventeen classes in all; four Third Classes, four Fourth Classes, four Fifth Classes and four Sixth Classes along with our Autism Class. We are particularly pleased when, in 2013, our school campus was enhanced by the addition of an All-Weather pitch, a new library and four support rooms, which were provided in the Gannon Tower.

Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National school provides an environment where all of our children are cherished and respected and can reach their full potential in a safe and caring atmosphere. In a constantly changing society it is vital that children's personal development, health and wellbeing are nurtured. The school values and promotes a harmonious environment which nurtures the potential of each child to become a productive member of the school community. The school also promotes co-operation between staff-members, B.O.M., the Parents Association, parents and pupils.

We have assembled this information booklet to familiarise parents with the policies and practices of the Senior school. We hope that in doing this we can help you as parents- the primary educators of your children- to support us in the important task of educating your children. We do not take for granted that you have chosen to send your child to our school, and we hope that, together, we can work in partnership to ensure that each child gains the maximum benefit of their time in our school.

As our community in Littlepace/Castaheany continues to grow, I hope that our school can provide a focus around which the community can also continue to develop. I urge all parents to take an active part in their children's education and to work with us in building Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School as a centre of excellence for our children.

Once again, welcome to our school!

Áine Fitzpatrick
Principal

2nd June 2026

School Vision

Mary Mother of Hope Senior National School is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. The policies, practices and attitudes of the school are grounded in Christian values. A spirit of mutual respect and tolerance for difference is promoted within the school community. The school aims at promoting the full and harmonious development, health and wellbeing of each child. We are proud to be an intercultural school, and abide by our motto 'Many Cultures, One Community!'

School Ethos

Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin.

The policies, practices and attitudes of the school are grounded in Christian values.

A spirit of mutual respect and tolerance for difference is promoted within the school community. The school seeks to foster an appreciation of, respect for and celebration of the different religious and cultural backgrounds represented in the school.

The school aims at fostering a sense of community between Management, Teachers, Parents, Pupils and the wider community.

The school aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the child, including his/her relationship with God, with other people and with the environment.

The school staff aims at making the school a centre of excellence in which high professional standards are maintained and where pupils learn in a safe and happy environment

Teachers are encouraged to develop their personal and professional talents.

Ancillary staff in the school, are highly valued and respected. It is recognised that their work makes a valued contribution to the process of education.

The school recognises and celebrates the dignity and value of each individual child. Teachers are sensitive to the needs and particular circumstances of the pupils in their care.

Close contact is central to the positive experience of the child in school. We aim for parents and teachers to value, respect and support one another. We seek to collaborate as partners, in leading the young people in whose education we play such a crucial role.

The school's code of discipline reflects Christian values promoted in the school, with an emphasis on forgiveness, reconciliation, new beginnings and hope.

Religious education is provided for the pupils in accordance with the doctrine and tradition of the Catholic Church.

Prayer is a feature of the school day. Children are prepared for the reception of the sacraments in co-operation between home, school and parish. Children are given the opportunity to participate in liturgical celebrations arranged by the school.

The school seeks to identify itself closely with the parish and the wider community and children are encouraged to participate in parish and community activities.

Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School At A Glance

Staff in the School

In September, 2025, the school will have the following staff:

- Principal: ***Ms. Áine Fitzpatrick***
- Deputy Principal: ***Ms. Éidín Macnamara***
- Sixteen Class-based Teachers
- One Autism Class Teacher
- Eight Special Education Needs (SEN) Teachers
- Eleven Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)
- One Caretaker: ***Mr. Séanna O'Moore***
- One Secretary: ***Ms. Ana Alupoaie***

Contact Details:

Main School Telephone Number: 01 812 8693
Email address: school@hopens.ie

School Website: www.hopens.ie

The School Day: School begins: 8:50 a.m. School closes: 2.30 p.m.

Meeting with Teachers

All questions / queries re school should be directed initially to the class teacher. Our teachers will do everything possible to meet parents at a time that is mutually convenient. Please understand that during the school day, class-based teachers have teaching duties which take absolute priority. Parents wishing to meet a teacher should, in the first instance, contact the secretary to make an appointment.

Parent/Teacher meetings

These take place every year in November and provide a forum to discuss any matters pertaining to your child's progress at school.

School Reports

Reports are sent home at the end of the school year. The purpose is to inform parents of their child's progress. Please be discreet with your child when discussing school reports so that you do not negatively impact on his/her self-esteem.

Readiness for school

We ask parents to help encourage their children to become responsible and independent as they enter the senior end of primary school.

Children should come to school in their school tracksuit *each day* and should present in a neat and tidy fashion. They should have all the books and equipment they need to complete their work in class, including a fully equipped pencil case. Details of these requirements are set out in the book lists.

As they get older, your children should be encouraged to take responsibility for getting themselves ready for school. This includes packing their own school bags, making their own lunch and getting their school uniform ready the night before school. While this may prove difficult initially, perseverance pays off in the end!!



Mary Mother of Hope Senior National School School Uniform

In the interest of continuity and to preserve a single identity for the campus, the uniform for Mary, Mother of Hope Senior school is the same as that for the Junior School.

Following a review of the school uniform policy in Mary, Mother of Hope Junior and Senior National Schools in 2023, it was decided that the school uniform will consist of **the school tracksuit only**.

Suppliers: There are two suppliers of the school tracksuits. These are:

Grants Uniforms, Unit 121 Coolmine Industrial Estate (Eircode D15 HWOX)

Leddys Uniforms, St. Brigid's Shopping Centre, Main St. Blanchardstown (Eircode D15 XH92)

Uniform for All Pupils In Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National school

- School tracksuit with light blue polo shirt
- White socks
- Suitable runners

The School Crest



The detail on the school crest contains the following symbols:

- The ring, as a sign of unity
- The book, as a sign of knowledge and learning, containing the Greek letters Α Ω, (alpha and omega)
- The lily is the symbol of Mary, Mother of Hope, the patron of the school.
- The name of the school appears in Irish on the outline of the crest.
- The inscription in Latin reads 'Per Scientiam Ad Unitatem', meaning *through knowledge to unity and understanding*

Uniform Policy of Mary, Mother of Hope Senior N.S.

Rationale

Following a collaborative process between the staff, the Board of Management and the Parents' Association of the school, this uniform policy is set out in order to:

- reaffirm the Board's commitment to the safety, protection and welfare of every child in our school.
- formally outline the reasons for a school uniform and confirm its importance.
- provide clear direction and guidance to parents and staff so that breaches can be addressed in a fair and consistent manner.
- create a clear and separate uniform policy, by updating the information contained within the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Following a review of the school uniform policy in Mary, Mother of Hope Junior and Senior National Schools in 2023, it was decided that the school uniform would consist of **the school tracksuit only**.

Aims and Objectives

- It is the policy of the school that all pupils wear a uniform during school activities. This includes the entirety of the school day and on special school-organised events outside of school hours.
- The wearing of a uniform helps to promote a positive image for the school.
- It contributes to the development of a sense of pride in the school.
- The wearing of a uniform prevents competition among pupils in the matter of dress and therefore reduces costs for parents/guardians.
- The wearing of a uniform contributes to health and safety by ensuring all uniform items will not cause harm or injury.
- It makes pupils recognisable as members of the school and ensures that pupils are easily identified outside the school on school trips and at sporting or other events.

Uniform Details

The school uniform for boys and girls in the school is as follows:

The uniform consists of:

- School tracksuit
- Light blue polo shirt
- White socks

Suitable runners, with adequate grips, must be worn at all times.

Wearing of School Shorts in warm weather:

In the months of September, May and June only, children coming to school may choose to wear knee-length hemmed shorts to school, with the school tracksuit. These are available to buy from our uniform suppliers.

School shorts, altered from the school tracksuit *and hemmed*, are also acceptable.

Footwear

Children should wear **suitable runners, with adequate grips**.

Pupils will not be allowed to participate in P.E. activities without such runners.

A list has been drawn up, in conjunction with the Parents' Association, of types of footwear that are deemed as unsuitable for school and which **may not be worn**. These are:

Converse Runners/ vans/ pumps
Knee length Boots
High Heels
Wedge Runners

Girls pumps: shoes with no grips
Flip flops /open backed shoes
High Tops

Jewellery

The only jewellery allowed is a watch, one bracelet and/or stud earrings. No other jewellery, such as rings or necklaces, are allowed in accordance with Health and Safety best practice.

Hair and Grooming

Make-up is not to be worn at any time at school or at school-organised events. The wearing of nail varnish, nail polish or false nails is also forbidden, unless at designated times. Pupils coming to school wearing make-up will be asked to remove it at the earliest opportunity.

We encourage hairstyles to be kept neat and conventional. It is expected that hair be kept a natural colour. Extreme contrasts are not acceptable.

It is expected that all students keep their hair clean and neat every day.

Notes

- The wearing of a uniform is compulsory in school and at school related activities unless otherwise specified.
- Uniform should be clean and neat at all times.
- All items of school uniform should be clearly labelled to ensure that they are not lost or mislaid.
- In the event of a dispute regarding the acceptability of a pupil's uniform, the school authority is the arbiter, subject to the Board of Management.
- Coats, jackets, caps and other non-uniform items may not be worn in class, at class-related activities or in the school building.
- Breaches of the Uniform Policy will be dealt with under the Code of Behaviour.

Monitoring & Review

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Board on an on-going basis. It will be reviewed by the Board annually in order to maintain an integrated and inclusive approach, taking into account school resources, changes in legislation, DES regulations, the needs of pupils and the changing profile of our community.

This policy will be circulated to all school staff, members of the Board and volunteers and will be readily accessible to parents/guardians.

Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School Members of the Board of Management

Chairperson: Mr. Michael Shea

Ms. Áine Fitzpatrick

Ms. Marina Horan

Mr. David Shakeshaft

Ms. Adele Campbell

Mr. John Kinsella

Ms. Regina Hendrick

Mary, Mother of Hope National School Members of the Parents' Association

The Parent's Association plays a valuable role in the running of our schools. They provide a necessary link between the work we do as teachers in the school, and the important work of parents in the home. They support the school Boards of Management in the development of school policies and play an invaluable role in raising funds for additional materials and resources for the schools.

In the course of the school year, the Parents' Association organises a number of activities, in and out of school. These include Funky-Hair day, Sponsored walks, coffee mornings, refreshments for Graduation day and other school meetings, Christmas activities to name a few! This was a huge undertaking and highlights the strengths and benefits of partnership between home and school.

A joint Parent Association operates across the Junior and Senior schools. The current executive officers of the P.A. are:

Lorraine Shakeshaft

Rachel Conroy

Jean Murdiffe

Shirley Brady

The Parent Association meet regularly throughout the year in the Community Centre and all are welcome at these meetings. The Parent Association AGM will be held in September 2026. Parents are reminded that all parents are automatically members of the Parents' Association. We appreciate your on-going help and support!

The Primary School Curriculum in Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School

Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School fully embraces the primary curriculum, which is based around the core principles of child-centered learning. We identify with the three main aims of primary education:

- to enable the child to live a full life as a child and to realise his or her potential as a unique individual
- to enable the child to develop as a social being through living and co-operating with others and so contribute to the good of society
- to prepare the child for further education and lifelong learning.

The policies, practices and attitudes of the school are grounded in Christian values. The school aims at promoting the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the child, including his/her relationship with God, with other people and with the environment. Religious education is provided for the pupils in accordance with the doctrine and tradition of the Catholic Church. Prayer is a feature of the school day. Children are prepared for the reception of the sacraments in co-operation between home, school and parish. Children are given the opportunity to participate in liturgical celebrations arranged by the school. The school seeks to identify itself closely with the parish and the wider community and children are encouraged to participate in parish and community activities.

We fully endorse the vision of the Primary school curriculum. We celebrate the uniqueness of our children, as expressed in each child's personality, intelligence and potential for development. We nurture the child in all aspects of their development, including spiritual, moral, cognitive, emotional, imaginative, aesthetic, social and physical.

The Primary School Curriculum is currently undergoing a stage of redevelopment in Irish Education. IT sets out a cohesive vision for high-quality learning, teaching, and assessment across primary schools. It builds on earlier curricula while adapting to Ireland's evolving social and educational landscape, giving schools greater flexibility and strengthening continuity from early years through to post-primary. The framework identifies new curriculum priorities, restructures learning areas, and embeds key competencies that support children's holistic development. It also outlines clear approaches to learning, teaching, and assessment and guides the phased development of detailed curriculum specifications that will shape classroom practice in the years ahead

The curriculum in our school is learner-centered. It emphasises the importance of literacy, numeracy, and language, while at the same time responding to changing needs in science and technology, social personal and health education, the arts and citizenship. The redeveloped curriculum is presented in five broad curriculum areas:

Primary School Curriculum Specifications	
Areas	Subjects
Language	English, Gaeilge, Modern Foreign Language
Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths	Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths
Social and Environmental Education	History, Geography
Arts Education	Visual Arts, Drama, Music
Wellbeing	Physical Education Social, Personal and Health Education

Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School Extra-Curricular Activities

The holistic development of the children in our care is a central aim of Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School. Children are offered a variety of experiences in school which are designed to support this aim. The school is also anxious to provide opportunities for children to develop skills, interests and hobbies together with a healthy attitude to leisure *outside* of the formal school day.

To this end, the Boards of Management wishes to encourage and facilitate the development of quality after-school activities in the school- both free of charge and paid activities. The board has developed a policy and a set of guidelines for after-school activities. This aims to ensure that after-school activities are provided in a safe and secure environment. It should also assist parents in making decisions in relation to such activities.

A number of voluntary extra-curricular activities are provided free of charge by school staff, in conjunction with the school. These include:

- The school choir
- Gaelic Football
- Hurling
- Camogie
- Soccer
- Athletics
- Quiz Teams

The school has had tremendous success in developing Gaelic Games in conjunction with our local club, Erin Go Bragh. This has included reaching the finals of the Cumann na mBunscoil Junior and Senior hurling finals in Croke Park and Parnell Park on many occasions in the past.

We are anxious to continue this tradition and we encourage all of our children, boys and girls, to take part in Gaelic Games in school and after school.

A number of paid after-school activities are also provided after school. At the beginning of each school-year, we draw up a menu of the after-school activities which are proposed in that school year. An application form is also provided. Parents who wish to enroll their children on any of these activities are then given the opportunity to do so at a registration day in September sent out on Aladdin. To date these activities have included Guitar, Homework Club, Art Club, Maths Club, Board Games Club, Chef's Club, Crochet Club, Chess Club, Performing Arts and Sports and Fitness.

Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School

Homework Policy

Rationale:

This policy was drawn up in order to have a consistent approach to homework amongst the teachers in the school and as a way of effectively communicating the school's approach to homework to parents

Aims

The aims of the policy are:

- To enhance pupil learning by consolidating the work done in school.
- To encourage consistency throughout the school.
- To promote a similar approach to homework across all class levels.
- To encourage positive home-school links.
- To enhance children's study and concentration skills.

1) Why give homework?

- Homework reinforces what the child has learned during the day and is, therefore an essential part of the learning process.
- Homework is differentiated where necessary.
- Homework provides a link between teacher and parent and helps develop a child's concentration skills and develop a work ethic
- Homework is meant to be achievable by a child, i.e. it provides an opportunity to practice work already done. It is normally prepared by the teacher in class. However, sometimes with senior classes, some homework is designed to challenge children's ability and provide opportunities for creativity.
- Children are expected to do their homework to the best of their individual ability – no more, no less- and all homework assigned should be attempted.

2) How often is homework given?

- Homework is given on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays but not on Fridays. There are two exceptions:
- if homework has been neglected during the week
- in senior classes some project work may be undertaken at weekends
- Sometimes, at the discretion of the class teacher or the principal, children are given "homework off" as an acknowledgment of some special occasion. In addition, homework passes are given to children who have not missed a day in any month, in accordance with the school's attendance policy.
- Please note extra homework may sometimes be given during the week if a child has not done homework, made a suitable effort or presented untidy work.

3) What is the content of homework?

- Homework will contain a balance between reading tasks, learning tasks, digital tasks using Seesaw and written tasks. It should be noted that homework time devoted to reading and learning is as important as written work and should therefore be completed with equal care.
- Homework will regularly contain reading, spellings, tables, written work, pieces to be "learned by heart", drawing/colouring, digital homework, Religious work, collecting information/items and finishing work started in class.
- Children often feel that reading and "learning by heart" is not real homework. Parents have an important role in listening to reading and listening to items to be learned to help ensure that this work is done well.

4) How much time should a child spend on homework?

The following are guidelines for time spent at homework. Different children will complete the same homework in different lengths of time. Time spent will vary from day to day and also from the beginning to the end of the school year. It is important to remember that it is the quality and not the quantity of homework that matters. The following are general guidelines only:

3 rd class	Up to 30 minutes
4 th class	Up to 40 minutes
5 th class	Up to 50 minutes
6 th class	Up to 1 hour

Homework is given from Monday to Thursday. Normally there is no homework at weekends or on a school day just before a public holiday. However, children in middle and senior classes may sometimes be required to work independently on projects at weekends.

5) How much help should parents give?

Parents should try to help their children with homework by:

- Providing them with a suitable place and time to do their homework
- Preventing interruptions from other children or distractions, such as television and gaming consoles.
- Children should do written homework themselves and parents should only help when the child has difficulty.
- If a child has difficulty with homework, the parents should help the child to overcome the difficulty with further explanation or examples, but not by actually doing the homework for the child. In this case the parent should write a note to the teacher explaining the problem.

6) The Homework Journal

- Each child has a homework journal. The journal offers parents and teachers an invaluable way of communicating between home and school. As with all books and copies, the Homework Journal should be kept neatly and free of any scribbles/drawings or other such marks.
- If parents wish to communicate with their child's teacher, the Homework Journal should be used. (additional pages are available at the end of the journal for this purpose)
- Parents are asked to check the journal each day for notes from the teacher.
- School notes and other letters to parents are folded and placed in the current day of the homework journal. Please check your child's journal for such notes on a regular basis
- It is a requirement of Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School that parents will be asked to inspect the homework that their child has completed and to sign the child's homework journal on a **daily basis**. Teachers will check homework journals on a daily basis. If parents do not sign the journal, teachers will make contact with the parents, to address the matter.
- Parents should check that children record their homework neatly in the correct page and tick each item of homework when completed.
- Parents should also make sure that their children get into the good habit of putting their books away at the end of their homework and checking their bag to ensure that they have all the equipment and books they need for the next day in school.

7) How often do teachers monitor homework?

- Ideally teachers like to check homework on a daily basis. However, with large class numbers it is not always possible to check each child's homework journal every day.
- As children get older and learn to work independently, some items of homework are checked less often e.g. every second day or once per week.
- Some items of homework (and class-work) may be checked by children themselves under the direction of the teacher. This can be a useful part of the learning process for children.

8) Differentiated homework.

- Homework may be differentiated at the discretion of the class teacher and the SET team for various children. The child will be closely monitored in this regard.

9) When should parents communicate with the teachers about homework?

- When your child cannot do homework due to family circumstances. Parents are discouraged from writing notes excusing their children from homework because of after school or other leisure activities.
- When your child cannot do homework because she/he cannot understand some aspect.
- If the time being spent at homework is often longer than the recommended amount of time.

10) When should homework be done?

- Each family situation is different - both parents working, child minders, etc. Ideally, homework should be done soon after school, before any television is watched, while your child is still fresh. However, some children need a break before starting homework.
- Homework should never be left until morning time before school

11) Failure to complete homework

Failure to complete homework assigned will be regarded as a breach of the school's Code of Behaviour and will be treated in accordance with that code.

Remember

If homework is a stressful experience between parent and child, something is wrong! This leads to poor learning and defeats the whole purpose. Should this happen on a regular basis, please contact the class teacher.

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School

Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

The school's vision and values in relation to attendance

Mary Mother of Hope Senior National School is a Catholic school and the policies, practices and attitudes of the school are grounded in Christian values. A spirit of mutual respect and tolerance for difference is promoted within the school community. The school aims at promoting the full and harmonious development, health and wellbeing of each child. It is an intercultural school, and abides by its motto 'Many Cultures, One Community!' The school seeks to foster an appreciation of, respect for and celebration of the different religious and cultural backgrounds represented in the school.

The school aims at fostering a sense of community between Management, Teachers, Parents, Pupils and the wider community. Close contact is central to the positive experience of the child in school. The school strives for parents and teachers to value, respect and support one another. The school recognises and celebrates the dignity and value of each individual child. Teachers are sensitive to the needs and particular circumstances of the pupils in their care.

The school staff aims at making the school a centre of excellence in which high professional standards are maintained and where pupils learn in a safe and happy environment.

The school's code of discipline reflects Christian values promoted in the school, with an emphasis on forgiveness, reconciliation, new beginnings and hope.

The school seeks to identify itself closely with the parish and the wider community and children are encouraged to participate in parish and community activities.

The school's high expectations around attendance

Attendance at school is a requirement under law. Regular attendance helps to create a stable learning environment for all pupils. We aim to promote co-operation among pupils, parents/guardians and staff in maintaining a high level of regular attendance and punctuality throughout the school year.

- We expect children to be in school every day of the school year unless this cannot be avoided.
- We expect children to be in school for the full school day.
- We expect all school absences, regardless of the duration, to be accounted for by parents/guardians electronically or in written format.

How attendance will be monitored

Attendance at school is a requirement under law. Regular attendance helps to create a stable learning environment for all pupils. We aim to promote co-operation among pupils, parents/guardians and staff in maintaining a high level of regular attendance and punctuality throughout the school year.

- We expect children to be in school every day of the school year unless this cannot be avoided.
- We expect children to be in school for the full school day.
- We expect all school absences, regardless of the duration, to be accounted for by parents/guardians electronically or in written format.

The whole-school approach:

The climate and atmosphere in our school is warm, welcoming and supportive. Pupils with difficulties in attending school on a regular basis are supported. We also work closely with parents of children with medical conditions to ensure school is fully accessible for them.

We strive to ensure all pupils feel safe, happy and secure. We are an intercultural school and we ensure pupils are active participants in their own learning, that learning is fun and that pupils experience success and positive reinforcement. We aim for the full and harmonious development of all pupils in our care. We implement a school attendance strategy to encourage, in a positive way, regular school attendance and an appreciation of learning within the school. We also prepare and implement a code of behaviour, setting standards of behaviour and disciplinary procedures for the school.

Promoting good attendance:

We highlight the importance of good attendance with parents at Induction Transfer meetings and at parent teacher meetings if the need arises. The school encourages and promotes good attendance by:

- Rewarding pupils with full attendance each month by giving them a *Homework Pass* which allows the pupils one night free from written homework. (The months of December, April and June are exempt)
- By acknowledging excellent attendance at the end of the school year (trophies for full attendance and certificates for pupils who missed 5 or less days).

Responding to poor attendance:

- Where class teachers see a pattern of poor attendance emerging, they bring this to the attention of parents at an **early stage**: poor attendance patterns are more easily changed if attention is drawn to them at an early stage
- Written contact is made with parents when a child has missed 15 days.
- A phone call is made to parents of children who missed 20 days or more and this is followed through with a letter.
- Referral to Túsla is made when a child has missed 20 days.

School roles in relation to attendance

Parents

- To ensure their child attends school as fully as possible throughout the school year.
- To ensure that their child is in school by 8.50am each day and stays until 2.30pm.
- To notify the class teacher electronically through Aladdin or in writing of all absences.
- To work with the Class Teacher and/or Principal where there are issues around a child's attendance.

Teachers

- To call and record attendance on the school's electronic platform 'Aladdin' by 10:30am
- To record lateness.
- To send notes/make phonecalls to parents requesting written explanations of absence if these have not been given.
- To keep all notes of explanation on file and to accurately record reasons for absence on Aladdin.
- Where class teachers see a pattern of poor attendance emerging, they bring this to the attention of parents at an **early stage**: poor attendance patterns are more easily changed if attention is drawn to them at an early stage
- To send letters to parents when a child misses 15 days and 20 days.
- To liaise with the principal in relation to concerns about attendance /lateness of children in their class.

AP2 Postholder

- To monitor school attendance on a termly basis and prepare letters to go home with children when they've reached 15 days and 20 days of absence.
- To liaise closely with teachers when concerns arise with children's attendance and/or punctuality.
- To prepare packs of homework passes to be given to each class teacher in September with a detailed monthly schedule attached. These are to reward children with full attendance each month.
- To order trophies for children with full attendance each academic school year.
- To liaise with the principal and print attendance certificates for children with 'Excellent' attendance each school year.

Principal

- To monitor attendance data and identify trends and patterns in attendance.
- To follow up on poor attendance/punctuality.
- To work closely with parents of children with medical conditions to ensure school is fully accessible for them.
- To make reports to Túsla and liaise with Túsla staff where necessary.

Partnership arrangements (parents, students, other schools, youth and community groups)

Parents, BOM, Parish, Mary, Mother of Hope JNS, Túsla, Érin GO Brágh GAA, Teachers running After School Activities and camps,

How the Statement of Strategy will be monitored

It will be reviewed annually by the Board of Management with alterations made where required.

Promoting Punctuality in our school

Punctuality is promoted in the school, with the children being reminded regularly of the rule 'at ten to nine be in your line'. Parents are asked to ensure that children come to school on time every day, to establish good life-long habits.

Parents who wish to collect a child from school before the end of the school day should report to the office. Parents should send a note to the class teacher explaining the absence, preferably with at least one day's notice. The school secretary will ask parents to complete the sign-out book. She will then collect the child from the class.

Mary Mother of Hope Senior National School

Healthy Eating Guidelines

1. Mary Mother of Hope Senior National School, through these guidelines, aims to help all those involved in our school community; children, staff and parents, in developing positive and responsible attitudes to eating and to appreciate the contribution that good food makes to health.
2. (a) Nutrition is known to be one of the key factors influencing the health of school children and adults. Food is often a feature of school celebrations. The taught curriculum provides an opportunity to teach about food and healthy lifestyles.

(b) A healthy lunchbox includes a piece of food from the first four shelves of the food pyramid i.e.
First shelf: Vegetables, salad and fruit
Second shelf: Wholemeal cereals, breads, potatoes, pasta and rice
Third shelf: Milk, cheese and yoghurt.
Fourth shelf: Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans and nuts.

(c) Children may have one or two treats on special days e.g. end of term, the day of Christmas holidays, summer holidays etc. On these days children will be allowed to include some food from the top shelf of the food pyramid. Occasionally, teachers may give a sweet or a lollipop as a reward.

(d) Following discussions with Staff and Parent Association members it was agreed that parents should not send cakes or sweets to school on the day of children's birthdays. We are happy to acknowledge birthdays in class and to sing "Happy Birthday" but school staff will not distribute sweets, cakes or "Goodie Bags" sent to school.

(e) Cans of fizzy minerals and glasses are **not permitted** for health, safety and litter reasons. Healthier choices of drink include water, milk and unsweetened juice. Furthermore, crisps, sweets, chewing gum are not permitted in school.

(f) Examples of the healthy snacks that we encourage for the small break include fruit, yoghurt, fromage frais, crackers, carrot/celery sticks, raisins and cheese strings.

(g) Chewing gum is not allowed in school.
3. The school has adopted the Hot Lunches Scheme which provides children with a menu of hot lunches that they can choose to be delivered to their classroom each day. This initiative provides children with a healthy hot lunch and has proved to be a very successful initiative in our school.
4. Children are required to bring all uneaten foods including their Hot Lunch Box, wrappers and any other packaging home in their lunch boxes to be disposed of properly in the child's own home so as to reduce litter and protect our school environment.
5. All classes will receive a minimum of 2 lessons on healthy eating.
6. Teachers will provide positive modelling and supportive attitudes to encourage healthy eating.
7. Parents are advised to monitor the Lunch Bag App and change their child's lunch order on a regular basis to help with a varied diet.
8. Children will be reminded of the school's healthy eating policy at assemblies.
9. Eating Times for Children
10.45 -11.00am Fruit Break: Small portable snack taken to yard for eating under supervision
12:20 - 12.30 pm Hot lunches can be eaten in the classroom.
10. Parents of new children enrolling at Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S. will receive the Hot Lunches Menu each week and parents can make meal choices alongside their children each week.

Healthy Eating: Good Food for our Lunch Boxes

Foods allowed	Foods <i>Not</i> allowed
Fruit <i>At least one portion of fruit daily</i> Apple, orange, banana, strawberries, blackberries, raspberries, blueberries, satsuma, manadarin, grapes, plum, peach, pear, pineapple chunks, mango, dried fruit-raisins sultanas, etc. Vegetables (raw/salad) <i>At least one portion of vegetable daily</i> Carrots, peppers, broccoli, celery, lettuce, tomatoes, cucumber etc. Types of Bread White, brown, wholemeal, soda, pittas, wraps, bagels, tortillas, bread rolls, scones etc. Crispbreads Breadsticks, plain, savoury or wholewheat crackers, crispbreads, water biscuits, crackers, plain ricecakes etc. Yogurts Fruit yoghurts and yogurt drinks Cheese Hard/soft cheese: grated, slices, triangles, cheese strings, cheese tubs with breadsticks etc. Sandwich fillings Salad with ham, chicken, turkey, corn beef, tuna, salmon, cheese, egg, jam, hummus, etc. Cold Cooked dishes Rice/ pasta/ couscous/ chickpeas with/without meat & veg. Fluids Water, milk, diluted drinks, smoothies, yoghurt drinks, soups in thermos flask	<i>The following foods are not allowed in school. Children will be asked to put them back into their lunch boxes and a note sent home explaining the school policy.</i> • All Sweets • Biscuits and cakes • Fizzy drinks • All types of crisps and popcorn • Chewing gum • Fruit winders • Chocolate bars and chocolate biscuits • Chocolate yoghurts • Isotonic drinks Unhealthy lunches which we recommend against There are a number of lunches that children bring to school which we would recommend against. These include commercial products which are marketed as 'health snacks' such as RiceKrispie Squares, but which are in fact very high in sugar and are of little nutritional value. • Chocolate spread on sandwiches • Croissants, buns, sweet bread and cakes • Custard, rice puddings, dessert yoghurts • Ricecakes with chocolate/yoghurt toppings • Cold cooked foods such as sausage rolls and burgers

Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School

Code of Behaviour

Foreword

At Mary, Mother of Hope our Code of Behaviour is reflective of the overall ethos of our school which promotes respect, forgiveness and new beginnings in a positive, safe and happy environment where excellence is strived for at all times.

Discipline in schools is an essential element of the socialisation of children, of the formation of their characters and of the process of education. This requires the use of certain controls. These do not threaten the children's independence, self-esteem and self-confidence, but enable them to appraise their behaviour rationally in terms of what is right and what is wrong, appropriate and inappropriate. Furthermore, they allow the children to develop an awareness of the impact that their behaviour has on others.

The school, and every teacher, will ensure that, in applying any sanction, the duty of care to the student is maintained. The teacher's duty of care is a professional duty of care, reflecting the teacher's training, skill and knowledge.

The standards and rules contained in the code of behaviour apply to any situation where the student, although outside school, is still the responsibility of the school. Examples include school tours, games and extracurricular activities.

The school has an active Positive Behaviour Committee which regularly examines and updates procedures while promoting and rewarding positive behaviour on an ongoing basis.

Aim of the Code of Behaviour

This code was developed in order to foster a positive and supportive learning environment in the school, where our children feel respected, secure and happy.

This requires the co-operation of all the school community, including the children, parents, teachers, staff and Board of Management.

Principles underlying the Code of Behaviour

- (a) The underlying principles of our Code of Behaviour are reflective of the overall ethos of our school, which recognises the uniqueness of each child, with different needs, cultural backgrounds, experiences, abilities and capacities.
- (b) We seek to support children in all aspects of their development, including their behaviour.
- (c) It is by providing our children with an environment that promotes, develops and maintains supportive and respectful relationships that the aim of this code can be achieved.
- (d) We aim to nurture children's personal development, sense of responsibility and awareness of the needs of others so as to enable them to become active and responsible citizens.
- (e) We recognise the right of all children in our care to an educational experience in an ordered and relatively disruptive free environment.
- (f) Our school places greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions in the belief that this will yield the most effective results.

Statement of Positive Behaviours

These have been drawn up in school with children and staff. They are couched in positive terms, and each statement is a definite behaviour which the children can understand and relate to-

- ✓ **We are kind and thoughtful.**
- ✓ **We are responsible for our actions.**

- ✓ **We show respect for ourselves and others.**
- ✓ **We take pride in our school and community.**
- ✓ **We always work to the best of our ability.**

We are kind is based on the expectation that children will think of how their behaviour affects others and treat all members of the school community – pupils, staff, parents, visitors – in a thoughtful and caring way.

We are responsible is based on the expectation that children are responsible for their own actions and the impact those actions have on others. It is also expected that children take responsibility for their work and that is always completed to the highest standards appropriate to the child concerned. They are also expected to show responsibility by coming to school on time and fully prepared for the day which includes wearing the appropriate uniform, with homework fully completed and with everything they need for the school day including a healthy lunch.

We keep our classroom happy and safe is based on the expectation that children behave in a manner which is appropriate to the classroom by following teachers instructions without delay, being polite and mannerly, treating their classmates and teacher well, working hard and moving about the room in a safe and orderly way.

We show respect is based on the expectation that children treat their schoolmates in the way in which they themselves would like to be treated, that they do not destroy or interfere in anyway with people's property and that they speak and act politely and mannerly in the presence of staff.

We take pride in our school is based on the expectation that children keep their school and classroom clean and tidy, that they wear their uniforms, that they behave in an exemplary manner when representing the school on trips and that they show support for all members of the school community.

Bullying

In discussing the issue of bullying with our children, we will reinforce the following message:

- Bullying is always wrong.
- I should never bully others.
- I should always tell my parents or teacher if it happens to me.
- Mary, Mother of Hope National School is a 'bully- free' zone.

This information is developed further in the school's policy on bullying.

Encouraging Positive Behaviour

Encouraging Positive behaviour is best achieved by fostering a positive atmosphere in class and throughout the school. Praise may be given in any of the following ways:

- A quiet word or gesture to show approval
- A comment in pupils journal or notebook
- A visit to another member of staff or to the Principal for commendation.
- A word of praise in front of a group or class.
- Stamps, stickers, stars, certificates etc.
- Delegating some special responsibility or privilege.
- An acknowledgement to parent, either written or verbal.
- Star Pupil Award
- Positive comments from another teacher
- Special announcement on P.A system or at assembly
- Golden Time
- Homework Pass
- Class based system of merit
- Positive Behaviour Card Report
- Records of positive/improved behaviour in Behaviour Book
- Special Awards for good behaviour from the principal.

Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School Code of Discipline

Essential Consideration:

At all times teachers are aware of their professional duty in “loco parentis” as they consider the needs of all children in their care. Teachers will take particular care in helping students who have special educational needs to understand clearly the purpose of the sanction and the reason why their behaviour is unacceptable. The school and classroom practices aim to support good learning behaviour which is valid for all students, including those with identified special educational needs.

There are many strategies, which are open to the teacher and school in showing disapproval of unacceptable behaviour. The nature of the behaviour will determine the strategy pursued.

The degree of misbehaviour i.e. minor, serious or gross, will be judged by the teachers and/or Principal based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity/frequency of such misdemeanours. This list is not exhaustive but illustrates some of the behaviours which falls into each category.

Minor Misdemeanours

Examples of minor misdemeanours:

Arriving late
Not wearing full uniform
Homework not completed and/or signed
Needlessly interrupting class work
Not following teachers' instructions
Behaving inappropriately in line
Interfering with others work or property
Running in school building
Rough play
Leaving litter around school
Discourtesy to others

Examples of steps to be taken by teachers when dealing with minor misdemeanours:

- Supporting the child in reaching the desired level of behaviour in the school, in a positive way
- Reasoning with pupils by discussing the behaviour, talking through what has happened and exploring possible solutions
- Verbal reprimand, including advice on how to improve
- Note of misbehaviour recorded by the teacher in the teacher's behaviour book
- Parents may be informed in writing, through the child's homework journal or by a separate note if the teacher deems it appropriate.

Serious Misdemeanours

Examples of serious misdemeanours:

Continuous occurrence of minor misdemeanours
Deliberately hurting a fellow pupil
Refusing to work
Putting safety of self or fellow pupils at risk in the school, in the yard or at break time
Stealing or damaging property
Leaving school without permission
Use of unacceptable language
Telling lies, Being disrespectful

Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with serious misdemeanours

In class

- Supporting the child in reaching the desired level of behaviour, in a positive way
- Reasoning with pupils by discussing the behaviour, talking through what has happened and exploring possible solutions
- Verbal reprimand, including advice on how to improve
- Note of misbehaviour recorded by the teacher in the teacher's behaviour book

- Communication with Parents – verbal or written.
- Temporary separation from peers
- Loss of privilege
- Extra work
- Writing of explanation or apology
- Pupil asked to speak with Principal or Deputy Principal
- Use of behaviour contracts
- Detention during playtime
- Explore possible benefits of shortened day

Communication with the home

Central to the success of this policy will be the support given by parents to the school in implementing the policy. Maintaining good communication between home and school is an important part of this process. This can be done by:

- Verbal communication with Parents
- A written note in the child's homework journal which the parent must sign
- A separate written note to the home explaining the misbehaviour. This may include a request for parents to meet with the class teacher and/or the Principal or Deputy-Principal.
- Improvements in behaviour should also be noted and rewarded by communicating with parents

Gross Misdemeanours

In cases of gross misdemeanours, the school reserves the right accorded to schools under Rule 130 (6) of the Rules for National Schools, as amended by circular 7/88, namely suspension and or expulsion.

Examples of Gross Misdemeanours

Ongoing and frequent incidences of serious misbehaviour

Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher/pupil

Setting fire to school property

Deliberately leaving taps/fire hose turned on

Abuse of mobile phones as outlined in the policy

Not adhering to the anti-bullying policy.

Steps to be taken when dealing with gross misdemeanours

Suspension

1. Child may be removed from peer group and brought to the office
2. Chairperson of Board of Management will be informed and parents will be requested to meet with the Principal, Chairperson and class teacher if appropriate. Chairperson may delegate this responsibility to the Principal on occasion.
3. Chairperson/Principal will sanction immediate suspension pending discussion with parents for a maximum initial period of three days
4. All communications to parents regarding the suspension of a pupil or the possibility of suspension will be in writing and copies of all correspondence will be retained
5. A written statement of the terms and date of the termination of a suspension will be given to parents
6. When a period of suspension ends, the school principal will meet with the pupil in the company of his/her parent(s) in order to formally re-admit the pupil to school or where a satisfactory resolution of a problem is achieved, a pupil may be re-admitted to school within a suspension period at the discretion of the chairperson of the Board and the Principal.
7. If another period of suspension is required the BOM will be asked to make a special decision to authorise a further period of suspension up to a maximum of 10 days. In exceptional cases the BOM may authorise a further period of suspension in order for the matter to be reviewed.

Expulsion

Expulsion will be considered only in an extreme case in accordance with Rule 130 -(6) of the Rules for National Schools, as amended by Circular 7/88 i.e. “ *No pupil can be struck off the rolls for breaches of discipline without prior consent of patron and until alternative arrangements are made for enrolment of pupil at another suitable school in the locality*”.

All guidelines laid down in Section 24 of the Education (Welfare Act 2000) in relation to expulsion will also be strictly adhered to.

24. (1) *Where the board of management of a recognised school or a person acting on its behalf is of the opinion that a student should be expelled from that school it shall, before so expelling the student, notify the educational welfare officer to whom functions under this Act have been assigned, in writing, of its opinion and the reasons therefore.*

(2) *The educational welfare officer concerned shall, as soon as may be after receiving a notification under subsection (1), make all reasonable efforts to ensure that provision is made for the continued education of the student to whom the notification relates.*

(3) *For the purposes of subsection (2), the educational welfare officer concerned shall, as soon as may be after receiving the said notification:*

make all reasonable efforts to consult with the principal of the school concerned or a person nominated by him or her, the student concerned and his or her parents, and such other persons as the educational welfare officer considers appropriate, and convene a meeting attended by him or her of such of those persons as agree to attend such meeting.

(4) *A student shall not be expelled from a school before the passing of 20 school days following the receipt of a notification under this section by an educational welfare officer.*

(5) *Subsection (4) is without prejudice to the right of a board of management to take such other reasonable measures as it considers appropriate to ensure that good order and discipline are maintained in the school concerned and that the safety of students is secured*

Parents will also be informed of their right of appeal under Section 29 of the same Act.

Parents are required to sign a statement declaring their support of the school's Code of Behaviour and the procedures contained therein upon admission to Mary Mother of Hope Senior National School.

Promoting Positive Relations In Mary Mother of Hope Senior National School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Introduction:

The Board of Management of Mary, Mother of Hope SNS 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.

We confirm that we will take all steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent bullying or harassment of our students in whatever form and however motivated.

Catholic schools have a distinctive understanding of the human person, recognising that every person is created in God's image and likeness and has inherent dignity as a child of God. This is the basis for ensuring that everybody in our school is treated with respect and care, in accordance with the Catholic Schedule.

As a Catholic school, we are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual. No human person is to be devalued, and everybody has a part to play in the school community, regardless of difference.

Relationship to School Ethos:

Mary Mother of Hope Senior National School is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. The policies, practices and attitudes of the school are grounded in Christian values. A spirit of mutual respect and tolerance for difference is promoted within the school community. The school aims at promoting the full and harmonious development, health and wellbeing of each child. We are proud to be an intercultural school, and abide by our motto 'Many Cultures, One Community!'

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school and the school actively promotes an anti-bullying environment. We encourage pupils to talk to us if they experience or witness bullying. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils. It is therefore committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

Definition of bullying behaviour:

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.

This Bí Cineálta policy 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 is deliberate, unwanted behaviour that causes harm to others, and where the student displaying bullying behaviour knows that their behaviour is or will be perceived as harmful by the child or young person experiencing the behaviour. Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. The harm can be physical (for example, personal injury, damage to or loss of property), social (for example, withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion) and/or emotional (for example, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety) and can have a serious and long-term negative impact on the student experiencing the bullying behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying but, importantly, must still be addressed under the school's Code of Behaviour.

✓ Repeated behaviour

Bullying takes the form of a systematic pattern of behaviour which is repeated over time. Single offline incidents of intentional negative behaviour involving an imbalance of power are not considered bullying but must still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour. Posting a single harmful message/image/video online, and which is highly likely to be reposted or shared with others can therefore be seen as bullying behaviour.

✓ Imbalance of power

In incidents of bullying, the student experiencing the bullying behaviour finds it hard to defend themselves as a result of the abuse of a real or perceived imbalance of power. This imbalance of power may manifest itself through differences in size, strength, age, ability, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, race, ethnic origin including membership of the Traveller and/or Roma communities, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, experience of the care system, disability or the receipt of special education. In incidents of online (or cyber) bullying, the imbalance of power may relate to online anonymity, technical proficiency and possession of information/images/video, and the inability of the targeted student to remove offensive online material or escape the bullying.

✓ Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour

A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards another student is not bullying behaviour. However, a single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be visible to a wide audience and has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and so becomes a repeated behaviour. Disagreement between students, or instances where students don't want to be friends or to remain friends, is not considered bullying behaviour unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others including deliberate manipulation of friendship groups. Some students with special educational needs may have social communication difficulties which may make them communicate their needs through behaviours that can hurt themselves or others. It is important to note that these behaviours are not deliberate or planned but, in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they can't control. Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying. These behaviours, while not defined as bullying can be distressing. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

✓ Criminal behaviour

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. Some online behaviour may be illegal, and students need to be aware of the far-reaching consequences of posting inappropriate or harmful content online. In cases of intimate imagery, the Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020, also known as Coco's Law, criminalises the non-consensual sharing of intimate images and also criminalises threatening to share these images. If bullying behaviour involves physical violence or threats of violence, it may be considered assault. If bullying behaviour involves discrimination or hate speech targeting a student based on their race, religion, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation or membership of the Traveller community, it may be considered a hate crime under the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989¹¹, and those engaging in such behaviour may face criminal charges. If bullying behaviour involves sexual harassment or sexual assault, this may also be considered criminal behaviour. An Garda Síochána is the appropriate authority to investigate alleged criminal behaviour.

How bullying behaviour occurs:

Bullying behaviour can take many forms, which can occur separately or together. These can include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

Direct bullying behaviour:

✓ Physical bullying behaviour

Physical bullying behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping students. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While students can often engage in “mess fights” they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain. Personal property can be a focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, schoolbooks and other learning material or interference with a student’s locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden

✓ Verbal bullying behaviour:

Continual name calling directed at a student which hurts, insults or humiliates the student should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name calling of this type refers to physical appearance; for example, size or clothes worn or gender identity. It can also refer to a student’s accent, distinctive voice characteristics, academic ability, race or ethnic origin.

✓ Written bullying behaviour:

Written bullying behaviour includes writing insulting remarks about a student in public places, passing around notes about or drawings of a student.

✓ Extortion:

Bullying behaviour can involve extortion. Extortion is where something is obtained through force or threats. Indirect bullying behaviour:

✓ Exclusion:

Exclusion bullying behaviour occurs where a student is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded or ignored by a student or group of students 5 •

✓ Relational:

Relational bullying behaviour occurs when a student’s attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. Common forms include control: “Do this or I won’t be your friend anymore”; a group of students ganging up against one student; nonverbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a student; giving a student the “silent treatment”; and the deliberate manipulation of friendship groups to make someone unpopular

✓ Online bullying behaviour

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, email, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chatrooms 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. Even though a message may be posted online just once by a student it can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be seen by a wide audience where it is intended to be shared or has a likelihood of being shared multiple times and is thus repeated. As online bullying uses technology to carry out bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact it can occur at any time. Many types of bullying behaviour can be facilitated through online bullying. In many cases online bullying can relate to an “offline” experience with someone known to the student. This type of bullying may involve forms of sexual exploitation including but not limited to, sextortion and the non-consensual sharing of intimate images. The sharing or threatened sharing of images without consent is a criminal offence.

Types of bullying behaviour:

There are many different types of bullying behaviour. These can include the following which is not an exhaustive list:

- ✓ disablist bullying behaviour: behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of a perceived or actual disability or additional need
- ✓ exceptionally able bullying: behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their high academic ability or outstanding talents
- ✓ gender identity bullying: behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual gender identity
- ✓ homophobic/transphobic (LGBTQ+) bullying: behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual membership of the LGBTQ+ community
- ✓ physical appearance bullying: behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their physical appearance. Students who “look different” can be mocked or criticised about the shape, size or appearance of their body
- ✓ racist bullying: behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their race or ethnic origin which includes membership of the Traveller or Roma community. Racism is defined in the National Action Plan Against Racism as “a form of domination which manifests through those power dynamics present in structural and institutional arrangements, practices, policies and cultural norms, which have the effect of excluding or discriminating against individuals or groups, based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin”
- ✓ poverty bullying: behaviour that intends to humiliate a student because of a lack of resources
- ✓ religious identity bullying: behaviour that intends to harm a student because of their religion or religious identity
- ✓ sexist bullying: behaviour that intends to harm a student based on their sex, perpetuating stereotypes that a student or a group of students are inferior because of their sex
- ✓ sexual harassment: any form of unwanted verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by Mary Mother of Hope SNS to address all forms of bullying behaviour, in whatever form and however motivated, including online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment.

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by Mary, Mother of Hope SNS. 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):

In developing the preventative strategies which Mary Mother of Hope SNS will use to prevent all forms of bullying behaviour, we come from the context of our Catholic ethos, where inclusivity permeates our school in a real way.

Effective leadership:

- The Board of Management has overall responsibility to ensure that this policy is effective, sustainable and measured. The Board of Management must ensure accountability is of the highest standard and frequently appraise the outcomes of the strategies and measures contained within the policy.
- Mary Mother of Hope SNS takes positive steps to ensure that the culture of the school is one which welcomes a respectful dialogue and encounter with diversity and difference by ensuring that prevention and inclusivity strategies are given priority and discussed regularly at our board of management and staff meetings
- The Principal, as a key leader, strongly influences attitudes and set standards in relation to dealing with bullying.
- The ISL team (In-school leadership team) have a clear role to act in a leadership capacity within the school community, stimulating a whole school approach to preventing and tackling bullying and modelling best practice. The school leadership team influences the school culture and sets the standards and expectations for the school community when preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.
- Each member of school staff has a responsibility to develop and maintain a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and to take a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.
- Teachers must act as good role models and must be fair, clear and consistent.
- The dignity and the wellbeing of the individual person is of paramount concern in our Christian response. This school will listen closely to and dialogue with parents, thereby building a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, trust and confidence.
- In continuing to develop prevention strategies, this school will listen to young people and parents, to help establish their context and needs. Frequent periods of reflection and further engagement by the school, young

people and parents, will be used to discern appropriate supports for young people in this school and to help inform future prevention strategies.

Culture and Environment:

We strive to :

- ✓ Create a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.
- ✓ Create a school culture where students and school staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported.
- ✓ Involve parents as active partners in fostering an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated.
- ✓ Support the idea that our school is a telling environment. This is promoted and reinforced through the yearly teaching of the Stay Safe and Walk Tall, Friendship and Bullying topics.
- ✓ Promote the concept of a trusted adult – stay safe linkage – children know who to tell.
- ✓ Create safe spaces in our school building and yards.
- ✓ We improve visibility and accessibility of school staff who are supervising at break times including yard duty.
- ✓ Incorporate artwork and signs to promote our school values – creation of a school charter promoting rights – equality, inclusion and respect.
- ✓ Encourage a sense of belonging with ownership over their own space through art and creativity.
- ✓ Create 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; and promotes respectful relationships across the school community.
- ✓ Establish clear expectations for behaviour and enforce them consistently.
- ✓ Foster and enhance the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities.
- ✓ Pupils will be provided opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.

Strategies in which we work to achieve these goals are as follows:

- We hold a Friendship Week as a yearly event in the school.
- Active Flag & Green Flag initiatives promote cooperation and provide opportunities for children's voices to be heard.
- We provide robust yard supervision at all times (see supervision rota) This includes 2 teachers on the yard at all times during break time, along with associated SNAs
- Morning Supervision is provided by teachers and SNAs and staff are extra vigilant during school outings.
- We acknowledge the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.
- We actively prohibit vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour.
- We take particular care of 'at risk' pupils and use systems to identify needs and facilitate early intervention where necessary –thus responding to the needs, fears and anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner
- Stay Safe, Walk Tall, RSE and Friends for Life materials are taught according to a structured timetables.
- Lunchtime yard activities during the school year that encourage inclusion and having fun playing with friends
- We encourage integration through Yard Buddies, Paired Reading initiatives, PenPal pairings and yard games.
- Acts of Kindness acknowledged by class teacher and principal.
- Student Spotlight Board to celebrate successes by pupils.
- Positive affirmations by teachers and staff in classrooms and on yard.
- Student Council to allow and encourage pupil voice.
- Green Schools/ Librarian committees.
- Quiet Space/Calming Corner in classrooms
- Sensory Spaces/Zen Den/ Regulation Tubs on corridors
- Friends for Life programme used with 5th/6th class.
- A Code of Behaviour that rewards good behaviour – Star Pupil each Friday
- Child Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy was formed with pupil and parent input and is distributed to parents, children and staff to discuss.
- Development and promotion of a Student Friendly Bí Cineálta Code will be displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.

- The school's Bí Cineálta Anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parents/guardians are given access to a copy on enrolment.
- Parents receive information at times regarding useful information on Anti Bullying, Online Safety, Stay Safe and SPHE lessons which focus on positive behaviour.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils.
- Foster positive relationships between pupils and staff members in order to nurture connections and establish open communication
- 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.
- We promote the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour
- We foster and enhance the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and multiple extracurricular activities.
- Pupils are provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions
- The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures e.g. dedicated notice boards in the school on the promotion of friendship and bullying prevention; annual Antibullying Week, Friendship week, Internet Safety Week and parents/guardian' talks organised by the PA.; regular school assemblies organised by Principal.
- Opportunities for whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develop an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it prevention and intervention
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parents/guardians
- Encourage a culture of talking about bullying behaviour, with particular emphasis on the importance of the role of upstanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence from talking. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should 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.
- We have participated in the Amber Flag initiative – an initiative run by Pieta House which recognises the individual efforts of primary and secondary schools, youth reach, third level institutions, community groups, clubs and companies to create healthy, inclusive environments that support mental wellbeing. This includes hosting an annual Wellbeing Day.

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

We strive to :

- ✓ Provide teaching and promote learning which is collaborative and respectful, fostering inclusion and respect for diversity.
- ✓ Display a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact.

Strategies in which we work to achieve these goals are as follows:

- Teach SPHE, Walk Tall and RSE content which fosters students' well-being and self-confidence as well as promoting personal responsibility for their own behaviours and actions.
- One anti-bullying/friendship lesson at the start of each term.
- Internet Safety Day
- Friendship Week
- Use of novels and stories to explore topics such as stereotyping, difference, inclusion and diversity.
- Class Contracts set up in September each year
- SARI Workshop- Sports Against Racism Ireland
- Social Skills Groups
- Intercultural Week
- Friends for Life programme
- Anti-bullying and cyber-safety talks for parents and children.
- Mobile Phone free school
- Smartphone Free Voluntary Code
- Online Safety education programmes and guest speakers to tie in with Internet Safety Day.
- Model respectful behaviour towards colleagues, pupils and visitors in our school environment. Curricular and extracurricular activities can help to develop a sense of self-worth, working together, inclusion and respect.
- Students are given regular opportunities to work in small groups with peers, which can help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy.

- Acknowledgment of our diverse school population – celebrating diversity and culture in our school through art, displays and photographs
- Support for staff including access to Continuous Professional Development PD when and as required.
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour.
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the Bí Cineálta Policy through our yearly reviews.

Policy and planning

We strive to:

- ✓ Raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils, parents/guardians.
- ✓ Promote a school ethos and culture where all school community members treat each other with kindness and respect.
- ✓ Promote a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- ✓ Ensure appropriate supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
- ✓ Develop procedures for noting, investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- ✓ Implement a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- ✓ Work with appropriate agencies in countering all forms of bullying and promoting anti bullying behaviour.
- ✓ Use the Acceptable Use Policy, Smartphone Free Voluntary Code, Mobile Phone Policy, Supervision policy, Special Education Policy and Code of Behaviour, RSE Policy and Child Safe Guarding Statement to support the implementation of the Bi Cineálta policy.
- ✓ Show how effective leadership is a key component with Principal, Deputy Principal, DLP, DDLP, and In-School Leadership Team assisting in the formulation of this policy.
- ✓ Plan and provide for appropriate Teacher Professional Development in order to support the successful implementation of this policy.

Relationships and Partnerships

We strive to :

- ✓ Support Interpersonal connections through a range of formal and informal structures such as our Parents Association, and our student council, committees and groups.
- ✓ Create Age and stage appropriate awareness initiatives that engage the student body in looking at their own behaviour – promoting acts of kindness and friendship, being an active help to others and looking at the causes of and impact of bullying during SPHE lessons.

Strategies in which we work to achieve these goals are as follows:

- Promote positive home school links and relationships, help parents to communicate with teachers at an early stage if they suspect their child is being bullied.
- Encourage peer mentoring and peer support: Yard Buddies, Paired Reading, Friendshio week links with junior classes other activities between the senior school and the junior school.
- Support the active participation of students and parents in school life.
- Provide meaningful involvement of the board of management, staff, pupils and their parents in the development, implementation and review of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and student friendly version is actively pursued by the school through the regular use of discussion groups and surveys.
- Conduct workshops and seminars for students, staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying.
- Encourage peer mentoring and peer support through Active, Amber and Green School initiatives.
- Support active participation of students in school life and active participation of parents in school life also.
- Engage parents and students in actively contributing to the formation of a Child Friendly Anti Bullying Policy to make them active participants in promotion of and discussion of useful ways to identify and reduce bullying behaviour and highlight procedure and how to deal with it if it does occur.

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):

Supervision and Monitoring

Staff always endeavour to encourage pupils to show respect for each other.

- ✓ A yard supervision rota is devised at the beginning of each term so that adequate and appropriate supervision is provided for on yard.

- ✓ An Acceptable Internet Use Policy has been developed and will be regularly reviewed to ensure that pupils are aware of their responsibilities when accessing the internet in school and when using school devices.
- ✓ 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 specific school templates. Reports on bullying are stored in a specific folder in the principal's office.
- ✓ School wide awareness raising on all aspects of bullying, supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extracurricular activities.
- ✓ The Acceptable Use Policy, Supervision procedures, Special Education Policy, Code of Behaviour, RSE Policy and Child Safeguarding Statement all support the implementation of the Bí Cineálta policy.
- ✓ The pupils are actively involved in contributing to a safe and inclusive school environment.
- ✓ These messages are reinforced during our Wellbeing Week and at our school assemblies.
- ✓ Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell. The school actively encourages the concept of a 'trusted adult' through letting pupils know regularly that they can talk to them.
- ✓ Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- ✓ Promote online safety events or material for parents. The school regularly invites outside speakers to address parents and pupils about the importance of online safety.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The whole school community has a responsibility to prevent and address bullying behaviour. The patron, staff, pupils and the parents of Mary, Mother of Hope SNS work in partnership to develop and implement the Bí Cineálta policy. The primary aim in addressing reports of bullying behaviour should be to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the students involved, rather than to apportion blame.

When addressing bullying behaviour teachers should:

- Ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured
- Seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- Conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- Consider the age and ability of the students involved
- Listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to
- Address the situation
- Act in a timely manner
- Inform parents of those involved

Responsibility for Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

- All teachers
- Assistant Principals
- Deputy Principal
- Principal

Reporting bullying behaviour

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- All reports will be investigated and dealt with by the appropriate teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff (SNAs, secretaries, caretakers) must report any incidents of bullying.
- All alleged bullying behaviour must be reported to the Principal,

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

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.*

During informal investigations, the pupil reflection sheet is used to determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour. Three questions should be considered in this process:

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

If the answer to each of the questions above is Yes, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour and the behaviour should be addressed using the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

Note: One-off incidents may be considered bullying in certain circumstances. A single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and thus becomes a repeated behaviour. If the answer to any of these questions is No, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour. When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred teachers should consider what, where, when and why?

- If a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first
- Thereafter, all students involved may be met as a group
- At the group meeting, each student may be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views
- Each student should be supported as appropriate, following the group meeting
- It may be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident(s)

Where bullying behaviour has occurred:

- Parents are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with schools, in addressing bullying behaviour.
- Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the students involved must be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to consult with them on the actions to be taken to address the behaviour.
- It is important to listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation.
- A record should be kept of the engagement with all involved. This record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known (see Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the *Bí Cineálta* procedures), where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students involved and their parents the record should include the views of the students and their parent regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour.
- Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred.
- The teacher must engage with the students involved and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement.
- Important factors to consider as part of this engagement are the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the students involved.

Determining if bullying behaviour has ceased:

- The teacher should document the review with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and their parents in relation to this.
- The date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased should also be recorded.
- Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted
- Ongoing supervision and support may be needed for the students involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased.
- If the bullying behaviour has not ceased the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents. A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- If it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school consideration should be given to using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school.
- If a parent(s) is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with the *Bí Cineálta* Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools. they should be referred to the school's complaints procedures.
- If a parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions have had a negative effect.

Recording bullying behaviour:

All incidents of bullying behaviour are recorded. The record will document 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 will include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour. It should document the review with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and their parents in relation to this. It is important to document the date of each of these engagements and the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has

ceased. Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted.

These records will be retained in accordance with the school's record keeping policy and in line with data protection regulations. Where a Student Support File exists for a student, schools are encouraged to place a copy of the record on the student's support file. Where a Student Support Plan exists, the plan will be updated to incorporate response strategies and associated responses.

Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour

The teacher must use the recording template in Appendix 1 to record the bullying behaviour:

The recording template must be retained by the teacher and a copy given to the Principal.

Records are retained in a secure space in the teacher's classroom. All report templates given to the Principal will be retained in the filing cabinet in the Principal's Office.

Established intervention strategies for supporting pupils:

- Teacher interviews with pupils
- Working with parent/guardian to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- Morning Meetings
- Conferencing
- Implementing questionnaires
- Sociometric surveys
- Strengthening the victim
- Support for the pupil who has engaged in bullying behaviour
- Mediation
- Restorative Practice

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

All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.

- SPHE Lessons
- Stay Safe Programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- RSE Programme
- Friends For Life Programme
- NEPS programmes on www.neps.ie
- Anti-bullying Week
- Internet Safety Week
- Friendship week
- Well-being Week
- Social Skills Group

Requests to take no action:

A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than "look out" for them. The student may not want to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They may feel that telling someone might make things more difficult for them. Where this occurs, it is important that the member of staff shows empathy to the student, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the student to work out together what steps can be taken to address the matter and how their parents will be informed of the situation. It is important that the student who has experienced bullying behaviour feels safe.

Parents may also make schools aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action. Parents should put this request in writing to the school or be facilitated to do so where there are literacy, digital literacy or language barriers. However, while acknowledging the parent's request, the school may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour

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.

- There are agreed supervision and monitoring practices in the school. Staff members have a responsibility to ensure that supervision of pupils in class is effective and consistent

- Supervision in playground/yard areas is managed and conducted effectively, with particular attention given to arrival and dismissal times
- Mobile phones and smart devices are not permitted – Mary, Mother of Hope SNS is a 'Mobile Phone and Smart Device free school'.
- In relation to Acceptable Use Policy in the school, the following issues are addressed:
- All Internet sessions are supervised by a teacher
- The school regularly monitor pupils' Internet usage within school time.
- Pupils are instructed to access only those discussion forums and messaging or other electronic communication fora that have been approved by the school.
- (Note that the Schools Broadband Programme has blocked all social networking sites and is provided for educational purposes only). Please refer to the Acceptable Use Policy for more information and supports.

External Supports and Services:

Supports are available to help prevent and address bullying behaviour. These include the following:

- ✓ NEPs
- ✓ Oide
- ✓ Web wise
- ✓ National Parents Council
- ✓ The DCU Anti-Bullying Centre (FUSE Anti-bullying programme for the entire school community.)
- ✓ TÚSLA

Section D: Oversight:

Bullying behaviour update to board of management: Appendix 3

At each meeting of the board of management, an update on the number of incidents of bullying behaviour and the measures taken to prevent and address bullying behaviour is given by the Principal. The purpose of the update is to inform discussion at board level on the effectiveness of the measures that the school is taking to prevent and address bullying behaviour and the effectiveness of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy.

The update must include the following:

- The number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting
- The number of incidents of bullying behaviour that are currently ongoing
- The number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the beginning of the school year
- Where incidents of bullying behaviour have been reported since the last meeting, the update must include a verbal report which should include the following information where relevant:
- The trends and patterns identified such as the form of bullying behaviour, type of bullying behaviour if known, location of bullying behaviour, when it occurred,
- The strategies used to address the bullying behaviour
- Any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour
- If any serious incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred which have had a serious adverse impact on a student
- If a parent has informed the school that a student has left the school because of reported bullying behaviour
- If any additional support is needed from the board of management
- If the school's Bí Cineálta policy requires urgent review in advance of the annual review

This update will not include any personal information or information that could identify the students involved. It is important that the minutes of the board of management meeting documents the number of new incidents of bullying behaviour, the number currently ongoing and the total number of incidents of bullying behaviour since the beginning of the school year as reported by the principal. The minutes should also note where the board has considered the bullying behaviour verbal update and document when the board has decided that an urgent review of the school's Bi Cineálta policy is required.

Mary Mother of Hope Senior National School

Revised Parental Complaints Procedure

The parental complaints procedure was revised and agreed by the Irish National Teachers' Organisation and the management bodies of primary schools, the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association, the Church of Ireland, An Foras Pátrúnachta, the Muslim Primary Education Board, Educate Together and the National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education in 2023.

It is designed to provide an open and clearly defined process to facilitate parents/legal guardians in raising concerns about their own child/children in an agreed, fair and transparent manner. It is recognised that parents/legal guardians are the primary educators in a child's life and as such from time-to time concerns may arise which they may need to engage with the school.

It is expected that engagement will be timely, courteous and resolution focused to ensure that the important relationship between the parent and school can be preserved and respected. It is expected that all parties concerned will engage proactively.

Procedural Points

The procedure is a staged procedure where every effort is made to resolve matters at the earliest possible stage. In most cases, concerns will be dealt with either informally or formally at the earlier stages of the procedure. Where it has not been possible to agree a resolution at the earlier stages, the procedure does allow for the escalation of the matter to the Board of Management. This procedure sets out, in four stages, the process to be followed in progressing a complaint and the specific timescale to be followed. It is expected the parties will follow each stage in sequence.

- Where the term written correspondence is used, this refers specifically to a letter or email correspondence from a parent/legal guardian(s).
- Only complaints about a teacher which are written and signed by a parent/legal guardian, and which relate to their own child, will be investigated.
- Where a complaint raised by a parent/legal guardian is deemed by the employer/board of management to relate to the following, this procedure will not apply;
 - matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education;
 - frivolous or vexatious complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a teacher in a school; or
- complaints in which either party has recourse to law or to another existing procedure.
- In all circumstances, any form of written correspondence for the attention of the Board of Management must be supplied to the Chairperson of the board of management only. Any deviation from this could be deemed prejudicial and as acting outside the scope of this agreement.
- Days in this procedure refer specifically to school days. A school day is a day on which the school is in operation. Holiday periods, school closures and leaves of absences are not counted as school days for the purpose of this procedure.
- Group/collective complaints are not provided for and each parent/legal guardian raising a concern will be dealt with separately through this process.
- The procedure is a domestic forum and accordingly, neither management nor the INTO intends that there would be legal representation at any stage.
- Issues should be raised in a timely manner. It is in the best interests of the child that issues are raised to achieve early resolution at the earliest possible stage with the teacher, ideally while the pupil is in that teacher's class.

Formal Stage 1: Discussion

1.1 Parent/guardian meets teacher

A parent/legal guardian who wishes to make a complaint in respect of their own child, should, seek an appointment with the teacher concerned with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings with the teacher can be convened as appropriate.

1.2 Parent/guardian meets Principal

Where the parent/legal guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the teacher, they should seek an appointment with the Principal with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings can be convened by the Principal as appropriate.

1.3 Parent/guardian meets Chairperson

Where the complaint remains unresolved, the parent/legal guardian should seek an appointment with the Chairperson of the Board of Management with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings can be convened by the Chairperson as appropriate.

Complaint resolved

The complaint may be resolved during this stage.

Formal Stage 2: Written (10 days)

2.1 Written complaint sent to Chairperson

If the complaint has not been resolved at stage 1, the parent/ legal guardian who wishes to pursue the matter further should submit the complaint in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Management. This commences stage 2.

2.2 Chairperson provides a copy to the teacher

The Chairperson should provide a copy of the written complaint to the teacher against whom the complaint has been made, without delay.

2.3 Chairperson convenes meeting(s)

The Chairperson should seek to resolve the complaint between the teacher and the parent/ legal guardian within 10 school days of the commencement of stage 2.1. This may require one or more meetings to be convened by the Chairperson with the teacher/ parent/legal guardian and other school personnel as deemed appropriate by the Chairperson

Complaint resolved

The complaint may be resolved at this stage.

Formal Stage 3: Board of Management (20 days)

3.1 Chairperson makes a formal report to the Board

If the complaint remains unresolved following stage 2 and the parent/ legal guardian wishes to pursue the matter, they should inform the Chairperson in writing of this fact. The Chairperson should make a formal report to the Board of Management within 10 days of receipt of this written statement. At this meeting, the Board can decide to proceed to either stage 3.2 or 3.3.

3.2 Complaint concluded

Where the Board considers the complaint, the process may be concluded at this stage, if the board considers that: a) The complaint is frivolous/vexatious; b) The complaint has already been investigated by the board; c) The complaint is more appropriately dealt with through a more relevant DE circular, or; d) where recourse to law has been initiated. Where the Board determines the complaint is concluded at this stage, the parent/legal guardian should be informed within five days of the Board meeting.

3.3 Proceed to a hearing

Where the Board decides to proceed to a hearing, it should proceed as follows:

- a) the teacher should be informed that the complaint is proceeding to a full hearing and the Chairperson must ensure the teacher has been supplied with all documents which are being considered by the Board.
- b) the Board should arrange a meeting with the parent/legal guardian if it considers such to be required. The parent/ legal guardian is entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting.
- c) the teacher should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of their case to the Board. The teacher is entitled to be represented by a friend or a union representative, who may be accompanied for the purpose of assistance and note taking.
- d) the teacher should be requested to supply a written statement to the board as the employer in response to the complaint. This written statement will be confidential to the employer and will not be shared with any third party.
- e) the meeting of the Board of Management referred to in 3(b), (c) and (d) will take place within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3.1. in so far as possible.

Formal Stage 4: Decision (5 days)

4.1 Written decision from Chairperson

The Board will consider the complaint and the response provided and will adjudicate the matter. The Chairperson should convey the decision of the Board in writing to the teacher and the parent/legal guardian(s) within five days of the meeting held at stage 3.3.

4.2 Complaint concluded

The decision of the Board shall be final.

Mary Mother of Hope Senior National School

Acceptable Internet Usage Policy

Introduction

At Mary Mother of Hope Senior School, we recognise the many opportunities digital technology offers in enhancing teaching and learning. As a school, we are committed to equipping our pupils with the skills and understanding they need to navigate the digital world confidently, creatively, and responsibly.

The internet is a powerful resource for learning, communication, and exploration, when used appropriately, it can open doors to a wealth of information and experiences that enrich a child's 'educational journey'. Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S places a strong emphasis on the safe, respectful, and responsible use of digital tools and online platforms.

This Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) outlines the expectations and guidelines for the appropriate use of digital technologies within our school. It is designed to ensure that all members of our school community: pupils, staff, and parents understand the importance of digital safety and act in a manner that reflects the values of our school.

General Approach

The aim of this Acceptable Use Policy is to ensure that students will benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's digital resources in a safe and effective manner. The responsible use of internet and digital technologies, both online and offline and access is considered an integral part of teaching and learning. If the school AUP is not adhered to, this privilege may be withdrawn, and appropriate sanctions will be imposed.

It is envisaged that school and parent representatives will revise the AUP regularly. The most recent review took place in May 2025.

When using the internet students, parents and staff are expected:

- To treat others with respect at all times.
- Not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute.
- Respect the right to privacy of all other members of the school community.
- Respect copyright and acknowledge creators when using online content and resources.

School Strategy

The school employs a number of strategies in order to maximise learning opportunities and reduce risks associated with the Internet. These strategies are as follows:

- Filtering software and/or equivalent systems will be used in order to minimise the risk of exposure to inappropriate material.
- Uploading and downloading of non-approved software will not be permitted.
- The use of personal external digital storage media in school, requires school permission.
- Virus protection software will be used and updated on a regular basis.
- Internet use within school will always be supervised by a teacher.

Users to whom this AUP Applies

This Acceptable Use Policy applies to students who have access to and are users of the internet in Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S.

It also applies to members of staff, volunteers, parents, carers and others who access the internet in Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S.

Promoting Safer Use of the Internet

Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S. implements the following strategies to promote safer use of the internet:

- Pupils will be provided with education in the area of Internet Safety as part of our implementation of SPHE and other curriculum areas.
- The WebWise programme will be taught as part of the SPHE programme every September. It will be introduced in 3rd class and elements will be revisited yearly in 4th, 5th and 6th classes. 3rd and 4th class will cover the 'HTML Heroes' programme while 5th and 6th will cover 'My Selfie and the Wider World'.
- The topic of Internet Safety will be revisited throughout the year, with particular focus around Safer Internet Day in February.
- Mary Mother of Hope SNS will avail of opportunities to facilitate outside agencies and speakers for pupil and parent Internet Safety Talks.
- Teachers will be provided with continuing professional development opportunities in the area of Internet Safety.

Serious Online Safety Incidents

Students will treat others with respect at all times and will not undertake any actions that may bring the school into disrepute. Should serious online safety incidents take place, the school principal or in her absence, the deputy principal should be informed.

The implementation of this Internet Acceptable Use policy will be monitored by the school principal and the Digital Learning postholder.

Content Filtering

Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S. has chosen to implement the following level on content filtering on the Schools Broadband Network: Level 4. This allows access to millions of websites including games and YouTube but blocks access to websites belonging to the personal websites category and websites such as Facebook belonging to the Social Networking category.

- Students taking steps to by-pass the content filter by using proxy sites or other means may be subject to disciplinary action, including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges, detention and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion.
- When using Seesaw, the schools agreed digital platform for remote learning/homework, students will be outside the Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S. broadband network. Therefore, it will be incumbent upon their parents/guardians to ensure adequate internet safety precautions are taken.

Internet Use

The following Statements apply to Internet use in Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S:

- Students will not intentionally visit internet sites that contain obscene, illegal, hateful or otherwise objectionable materials.
- Students will be encouraged to report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in accordance with school procedures.
- Students will report accidental accessing of inappropriate materials in school to their class teacher in the first instance and then to the principal or deputy principal.
- Students will not copy information into assignments and fail to acknowledge the source (plagiarism and copyright infringement).
- Students and staff will be aware that any usage, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, may be monitored for unusual activity, security and/or network management reasons.
- Students will use the Internet for educational purposes only.
- Students will not engage in online activities such as uploading or downloading large files that result in heavy network traffic which impairs the service for other Internet users.
- Students will not download or view any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Downloading by students of materials or images not relevant to their studies is in direct breach of the school's acceptable use policy.
- Students will never disclose or publicise personal information or passwords.
- Students will be aware that any usage of the internet and school's digital platform, including distributing or receiving information, school-related or personal, will be monitored.
- Use of file sharing and torrent sites is not allowed.

Email and Messaging

The following statements apply to the usage of email and Messaging services in Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S.:

- The use of personal email accounts is only allowed at Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S. with expressed permission from members of the teaching staff.
- Students do not have permission to access email services on any school devices.
- Students will not send any material that is illegal, obscene, and defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person.
- Students should immediately report the receipt of any communication that makes them feel uncomfortable, is offensive, discriminatory, threatening or bullying in nature and must not respond to any such communication.
- Students should avoid opening emails that appear suspicious. If in doubt, pupils should ask their teacher before opening emails from unknown senders.
- Students will not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses or telephone numbers or pictures.
- Students will never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone they only know through emails or the internet.
- Students will note that sending and receiving email attachments is subject to permission from their teacher

- Students will not forward email messages or screenshots of emails or “reply all without the permission of the originator.
- Students must only use approved school email for school related activities and for registering on school-based activities only. The use of personal email addresses is not allowed for school-based work.
- Students should not use school email accounts to register for online services, social networking, apps or games.
- Students should report the receipt of any communication that makes them feel uncomfortable, is offensive, discriminatory, threatening or bullying in nature and must not respond to any such communication. Pupils should report any such communications to a teacher.
- All emails and opinions expressed in email are the responsibility of the author and do not reflect the opinion of the school.

Social Media and Messaging Services for Staff and Students

The internet provides a range of social media tools that allow us to interact and keep in touch. The principles set out in this policy are designed to help ensure that social media is used responsibly so that the confidentiality of pupils and other staff and the reputation of the school is protected.

This policy applies to personal websites such as social networking sites (for example Instagram and TikTok), blogs, microblogs such as X, chatrooms, forums, podcasts, open access online encyclopedias such as Wikipedia, social bookmarking sites such as del.icio.us and content sharing sites such as flickr and YouTube. The internet is a fast-moving technology and it is impossible to cover all circumstances or emerging media.

Blogging and Video Streaming Services

The following statements apply to the use of messaging, blogging and video streaming services in Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S.:

- Use of instant messaging services and apps including Snapchat, WhatsApp, Viber, etc. is not allowed in Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S.
- Use of video streaming sites such as YouTube and Vimeo etc. is only used with express permission from and the supervision of teaching staff.

Social Media and Messaging Services

The following statements apply to the use of Social Media and messaging services in Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S.:

- All members of the school community must not use social media, messaging services and the internet in any way to harass, impersonate, insult, abuse or defame pupils, their family members, staff or other members of the Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S. Community.
- Staff and students must not discuss personal information about pupils, staff and other members of the Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S. community on social media.
- Staff and students must not use school email addresses for setting up personal social media accounts or to communicate through such media.
- Staff and students must not engage in activities involving social media which might bring Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S. into disrepute.
- Staff and Students must not represent your personal views as those of bring Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S. on any social medium.
- Students will be provided with guidance on etiquette regarding social media.

In line with the Teaching Council of Ireland’s Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers (2012):

- Teachers should ensure that all forms of communication with students, colleagues, parents, and school management are appropriate, respectful, and professional.
- Teachers must refrain from accessing, downloading, or possessing any inappropriate materials in any format during school activities.

Additional information to be found at <https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/fitness-to-teach/updated-code-of-professional-conduct/>

Personal Devices

The following statements apply to the usage of personal devices in Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S.:

- Pupils are prohibited from bringing smart devices to school or on any school outings. These devices include, but are not limited to, mobile phones, electronic watches, or any other technology capable of operating interactively or autonomously.
- Pupils are permitted to wear personal activity-tracking devices (such as a ‘Fitbit’) provided that such device does not have sound recording or photographic imaging capability. These devices are required to be free of games or apps. This ensures that even wearable devices meant for tracking physical activity are limited strictly to their primary function, reducing the potential for distraction or misuse during school hours.

- Students found to be using smart devices in school and who are sending nuisance text messages, or who are taking unauthorised images with a camera, still or moving, are in direct breach of the school's Acceptable Use policy.
- Further information can be found in the school's Mobile Phone and Smart Device Policy.

Mary Mother of Hope Schools' Community Commitment

In partnership with parents, the staff and the Board of Managements of Mary Mother of Hope Senior and Junior schools introduced the schools' 'Smart Phone Free Voluntary Code'. In February 2025.

- Parents have voluntarily committed to delay the purchasing or providing a smartphone and access to social media until their child has finished their time in primary school.
- This collective agreement supports a school culture that values face-to-face interaction, focus, creativity, and emotional wellbeing.
- Our staff and parent body work together to ensure that this message is reinforced consistently across home and school settings.

Digital Learning Platforms (including video conferencing)

Seesaw

Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S. uses Seesaw as the agreed digital learning platform for both in-school and remote learning. Students use Seesaw to complete and submit classwork, homework, and digital projects. Teachers share assignments, give feedback, and communicate with pupils and families via Seesaw. Students must use Seesaw responsibly, following teacher instructions and school guidelines at all times. Any misuse of Seesaw will result in restricted access and communication with parents/guardians.

The following statements apply to the use of Digital Learning Platforms in Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S.:

- Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S.'s digital learning platform is owned and managed by the school. This platform enable two-way communications.
- Staff must only use their school email for accessing the school digital learning platform.
- All school-related media and data should be stored on the school's platform.
- Each user of the platform will be provided with their own unique login credentials.
- Passwords for digital platforms and accounts should not be shared.
- Personal email addresses should not be used when creating accounts on school digital platforms.
- Prior acceptance from parents should be sought for student usage of the schools' digital learning platform.

Using the Internet at Home for School Purposes

- Where homework is assigned using ICT, pupils are expected to follow all of the rules outlined in this AUP. They are expected to behave online in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour. Any breaches will be dealt with under the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Students will not send or receive any material that is illegal, obscene, defamatory or that is intended to annoy or intimidate another person on learning platforms such as Seesaw or Padlet.
- Students will not reveal their own or other people's personal details, such as addresses or telephone numbers or pictures.
- Students will note that sending and receiving email attachments is subject to permission from their teacher.
- Prior to using online learning platforms, students will be educated in school on the appropriate way to use these tools to enhance their learning.
- Parents/guardians are advised to keep themselves informed of online safety through reputable organizations such as:

Organisation	Online Safety Site
Government of Ireland	https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/be-safe-online/#
Webwise.ie	https://www.webwise.ie/parents/advice-top-10-tips-for-parents/
Spunout.ie	https://spunout.ie/category/life/privacy-security/

Remote Learning Policy

Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S. uses Seesaw as the official platform for remote learning. Pupils are expected to log in regularly, complete assigned tasks, and engage respectfully with teachers and classmates. All posts and communications must be appropriate and related to learning. Parents/guardians are encouraged to support younger children with access and submissions. Any misuse, including inappropriate content or behaviour, will be addressed in line with the school's Code of Behaviour and AUP.

Audio, Images and Video

The following statements apply to the use of audio, images and video in Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S.:

- As part of the school's AUP, parental consent for the use of digital images in accordance with the AUP policy will be requested when the child enrolls in the school.
- Staff are permitted to take digital/video images to support educational aims, but must follow school policies concerning the distribution of those images.
- When taking digital/video images ensure that students are appropriately dressed and are not participating in activities that might bring the individuals or the school into disrepute
- Students must not record audio, take, use, share, publish or distribute images of others without their permission.
- Pictures to be published on the school's website, or elsewhere, which include pupils will be selected carefully and will comply with good practice guidance on image use
- Pupils' full names will not be used on a website or blog in association with photographs.
- Parents are asked not to share group images or videos of students or teachers taken during special school events.
- Recording audio, taking photos or videos on school grounds or when participating in school activities is only allowed with expressed permission from staff.
- Students must not share audio, images, videos or other content online with the intention to harm another member of the school community.
- Sharing explicit images/video and in particular explicit images/video of students and/or minors is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved. Sharing explicit images/video of other students automatically incurs suspension as a sanction.

Inappropriate Activities

- Promotion or conduct of illegal acts, e.g. under the child protection, obscenity, computer misuse and fraud legislation
- Misuse and fraud legislation
- Racist material
- Pornography
- Promotion of any kind of discrimination
- Promotion of racial or religious hatred
- Harmful content or threatening behaviour, including promotion of physical violence or mental harm
- Any other information which may be offensive to colleagues or breaches the integrity of the ethos of the school or brings the school into disrepute
- Using school systems to run a private business
- Use systems, applications, websites or other mechanisms that bypass the filtering or other safeguards employed by the school
- Uploading, downloading or transmitting commercial software or any copyrighted materials belonging to third parties, without the necessary licensing permissions
- Revealing or publicising confidential or proprietary information (e.g. financial / personal information, databases, computer / network access codes and passwords)
- Creating or propagating computer viruses or other harmful files
- Carrying out sustained or instantaneous high volume network traffic (downloading / uploading files) that causes network congestion and hinders others in their use of the internet
- Online gaming
- Online gambling
- Online shopping
- Use of social networking sites, instant messaging and online forums
- Child sexual abuse material
- Any other activity considered questionable

School Website

The following statements apply to the use of the school website and class blogs in Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S.:

- Students will be given the opportunity to publish projects, artwork or school work on the internet in accordance with clear policies and approval processes regarding the content that can be loaded to the school's website.
- Students will continue to own the copyright on any work published.
- The website will be regularly checked to ensure that there is no content that compromises the safety, privacy, or reputation of students or staff.

- Webpages allowing comments or user-generated content will be pre-moderated and checked frequently to ensure that they do not contain any inappropriate or offensive content.
- Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S. will use only digital photographs, audio or video clips of focusing on group activities.
- Content focusing on individual students will only be published on the school website with parental permission.
- The publication of student work will be coordinated by a teacher.
- Personal student information including home address and contact details will not be published on Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S. web pages
- The Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S. will avoid publishing the first name and last name of pupils in video or photograph captions published online.
- The school will ensure that the image files are appropriately named and will not use students' names in image file names or ALT tags if published online.
- Students will continue to own the copyright on any work published.
-

Promoting Kindness and Respect Online

Mary Mother of Hope Senior School is committed to ensuring a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for our school community, both in person and online. As a school, there is an expectation that everyone in our school community will use digital tools kindly and responsibly.

'Being Kind Online' means:

- Treating others with respect in all digital interactions.
- Thinking before posting, sharing, or commenting:
- Asking: *Is it true? Is it necessary? Is it kind?*
- Reporting harmful online behaviour to a trusted adult.
- Understanding that online words and actions have real-life impact.

In Mary Mother of Hope S.N.S., we encourage pupils to be positive digital citizens, ensuring our digital footprint supports peers, celebrates others and that the internet is used positively, kindly and responsibly.

Cyberbullying

In line with the BÍ Cineálta procedures:

• 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, chatrooms and other online technologies.

• This form of bullying 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

• Even though a message may be posted online just once by a student it can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be seen by a wide audience where it is intended to be shared or has a likelihood of being shared multiple times and is thus repeated.

• As online bullying uses technology to carry out bullying behaviour and does not require face-to-face contact it can occur at any time. Many types of bullying behaviour can be facilitated through online bullying. In many cases online bullying can relate to an "offline" experience with someone known to the student. This type of bullying may involve forms of sexual exploitation including but not limited to, sextortion and the non-consensual sharing of intimate images. The sharing or threatened sharing of images without consent is a criminal offence

Legislation

The school will provide information on the following legislation relating to use of the Internet which teachers, students and parents should familiarise themselves with:

- Data Protection Acts 1988 to 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
- Copyright and Related Rights Act 2000
- Child Trafficking and Pornography Act 1998 and Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act 2017
- Children First Act 2015
- Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020 (Coco's Law)
- Criminal Damage Act 1991

Support Structures

The school will inform students and parents of key support structures and organisations that deal with illegal material or harmful use of the Internet.

Sanctions

Misuse of the internet or digital technologies may result in disciplinary action, including written warnings, withdrawal of access privileges, detention and, in extreme cases, suspension or expulsion in line with the school's Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy. The school also reserves the right to report any illegal activities to the appropriate authorities including An Garda Síochána.

Permission Forms

Parents sign consent for the school's Acceptable Use Policy on Admission to the school.

Students sign consent for the school's Acceptable Use Policy through the Student Consent Form (Appendix 1).

Mary Mother of Hope Senior National School

Smartphone Free Voluntary Code

The use of smartphones and other technologies is now a feature of daily life for people of all ages. While smartphones offer numerous advantages, they can expose primary school children to several risks including cyberbullying and encountering harmful content.

In schools we see directly the negative impact on children of smartphones/devices and social media usage. There is an increasing amount of national and international evidence to support the case for delaying its introduction until children are older. Links to some examples of this evidence are available in the appendices.

In response to the various concerns of childhood smartphone use, parents in several school communities across Ireland have agreed not to provide their child with a smartphone until they finish Sixth Class. Many schools and organisations have come together to create a charter for all primary school pupils. The 'Gen Free' charter asks parents not to buy their child a smartphone or allow them on social media until they leave primary school. It calls for our primary aged children to be:

Gen Free - Free from smartphones, Free from social media and Free to be kids.

In December 2024, Mary Mother of Hope Parents Association and the junior and senior schools conducted a parent survey of smartphone and social media use by children in primary school. Results of the Mary Mother of Hope Schools survey found:

- 93.1% of parents felt that primary school children should not own their own smartphone.
- 96.6% of parents felt that primary school children should not have access to social media.

As a result of this survey, the Parents Association with the support of the junior and senior school staff and Board of Managements are introducing a '**Smart Phone Free Voluntary Code**'. The '**Smart Phone Free Voluntary Code**' is one in which as many parents as possible in Mary Mother of Hope Schools voluntarily agree to delay purchasing or providing a smartphone and access to social media until their child has finished their time in primary school.

It is hoped that collective participation in this voluntary code will provide parents and guardians, who are concerned about their child having personal access to a smartphone, with a tool to help address the risks of smartphone use.

Collective parental agreement to hold off on purchasing smartphones will reduce peer pressure and support parents in saying no. Parents will also have data as a tool to respond to the possible pressure from their children, for example "82% of 3rd class parents have opted in to the "Smartphone Free Voluntary Code".

There are many benefits for children in delaying smart phone/social media usage and these are outlined below:

Enhanced Social and Emotional Development:

Delaying smartphone ownership can foster better social and emotional development in children. They can learn essential face-to-face communication skills and build stronger interpersonal relationships without digital distractions.

Exposure to unwanted, negative behaviours by others is also reduced. Online content and social media use can affect the mental health of young people through increased anxiety and stress, cyberbullying, self-harm, disordered eating and suicidal ideation.

Unfortunately, social media allows children to communicate with their peers in ways which can cause hurt and harm to others and many children do not understand the potential impact of their actions.

Improved Concentration and Academic Performance:

By postponing smartphone usage, children can focus on their studies, leading to improved academic performance. Reduced screen time can enhance concentration and critical thinking skills.

Reduced Screen Time:

Delaying smartphone ownership limits a child's exposure to excessive screen time, reducing the risk of negative effects such as sleep disturbances, decreased physical activity and cyberbullying.

Safer Online Experience:

Young children are more vulnerable to online risks including the spreading of misinformation through online channels, negative effects on body image through social comparison and the lack of age verification.

Delaying smartphone access allows parents/guardians to educate children about responsible internet use and gradually introduce them to digital technology in a controlled environment.

Parent-Child Bonding:

Without the constant distraction of a smartphone, parents/guardians and children can engage in more meaningful activities together, strengthening the parent-child bond.

The Age of Digital Consent

It is important for parents to be aware that in Ireland, the Age of Digital Consent is 16 years of age. It is important also for parents to adhere to age ratings on apps and on the video games their children play. Please see the **Children's Data and Parental Consent Publication** in the appendices

Parental Controls

Parents should make full use of the available parental controls on any device they give their child access to. Parental controls are available on most Internet-enabled devices including computers, smartphones, tablets and gaming systems. Parental controls can help reduce the risk of your child encountering inappropriate content when they are online.

What about children who already have a smartphone?

It is a parent/guardian decision as to whether it is appropriate to continue allowing their child to have access to a smartphone/device. Some parents/guardians may wish to consider pausing current smart phone access if appropriate for their child. However, the Parents Association and schools would encourage all parents/guardians to review the age-appropriateness of any apps that children may be using including Snapchat (current minimum age is 13), Tiktok (current minimum age is 13), and WhatsApp (current minimum age is 13).

Mary Mother of Hope Schools remain mobile phone and smart device free – children should never have a personal smart device in school, including smart watches.

Mary Mother of Hope Schools Access to Technology

We recognise that as part of the school's education programme pupils have some supervised access to technology to support their learning. This allows our children access to online educational resources that can greatly enhance their learning experience.

This is separate to the voluntary agreement that is being proposed. Access to and use of the internet during the school day is outlined in the school's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) and any proposed voluntary agreement would not interfere with this.

Smartphone Free Voluntary Code**Key points:**

1. All information provided is confidential. Any data collected will only be shared numerically by class level and for information purposes only.
2. Each family's right to decide whether or not their children have access to the internet or a smartphone is respected and there is no obligation to join if you do not wish to do so.
3. This is not a solution in itself, to the growing problem but it is potentially one tool which may be helpful to those who wish to avail of it.

How to sign up:

Please indicate your preference to join Mary Mother of Hope Schools' Smartphone Free Voluntary Code on your child's Aladdin's Permission page. *Please complete for **each of your children**.*

Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School

Policy regulating the use of Mobile Phones and Smart Devices

Modification of the School's Mobile Phone Policy.

Introduction

In the interest of privacy and safety, the Board of Management of Mary Mother of Hope Senior National School took the decision to withdraw consent for the possession of mobile phones by pupils of the school anywhere on the campus in 2013 and again in 2019 following a full review of the policy in conjunction with staff, parents and the Board of Management.

Mary Mother of Hope's Smartphone Free Voluntary Code

This policy was further reviewed in May 2025 following the introduction of Mary Mother of Hope's Smartphone Free Voluntary Code. In February 2025, the Parents Association with the support of the junior and senior school staff and Board of Managements introduced the 'Smart Phone Free Voluntary Code', encouraging all parents in Mary Mother of Hope Schools voluntarily agree to delay purchasing or providing a smartphone and access to social media until their child has finished their time in primary school.

Mary Mother of Hope SNS Mobile Phone and Smart Device Free

Mary Mother of Hope SNS remains mobile phone and smart device free. Smartwatches that can access the internet, take photographs and record media are not permitted to be worn in school, even when in 'school mode'. Children should never have a personal smart device in school (in the building, on the school grounds or during off-site activities such as tours/ sports events/ visits to the church etc.).

Rationale

The possession and use of mobile phones, smart devices and tablets by school pupils is now extensive, even in the primary school sector. Our core business of teaching and learning needs to be conducted in an environment free from unnecessary distractions or disruptions.

The promotion of digital technologies for teaching, learning and assessment is a priority of the Department of Education and Skills. Research shows that digital technologies can play a positive role in supporting high quality teaching, learning and assessment. The use of tablet devices and smartphones is now an integral part of the lives of children and young people. The school's Digital Learning Plan and Acceptable Usage Policy outlines how digital technologies will be used in the school to enhance teaching, learning and assessment.

In developing this policy, the Board of Management took account of the fact of the many benefits to technology. While smartphones and smart devices offer numerous advantages, the Board is also aware of the dangers which unchecked access to this technology can present. They can expose primary school children, to several risks – including cyberbullying and encountering age inappropriate and harmful content. Smart devices and access to the Internet have the potential to be increasingly abused, especially by young people who may not always be aware of the consequences of their actions.

There is an increasing body of evidence of cyber-bullying at primary and post-primary level whereby young people can use this new technology to victimize others. This can take many forms- the abuse of texting services and/or social media apps, the use of camera or video camera facilities on such devices or the inappropriate use of the internet. It is clear to us that children of primary school age have not developed the emotional or social maturity to deal with and think through the consequences of mis-use of this technology.

School Procedures

The Staff in the school and the Board of Management have given very careful consideration to the matter. We have come to the view that, while there may be a certain advantage to children having a mobile or smart device with them in school, the potential for mis-use and damage is much greater.

Given that the Board of Management has overall responsibility for the welfare, the well-being and safety of all the children in our care, the Board has taken the decision to **withdraw consent** for the possession of mobile phones and smart devices in the school. Mary Mother of Hope is a mobile phone and smart device free school.

In the interests of Health and Safety of our pupils, the school phone is available to pupils, with their teacher's permission, to phone a parent during the school day. Parents are welcome to contact the school (01 8128693) should they wish to speak with or relay a message to their child.

Using Mobile Phones or Smart Devices Inappropriately

Mary Mother of Hope is a mobile phone and smart device free school. Pupils who are found with a mobile phone or smart devices in their possession on school premises or during school-related activities will be treated as having

broken the school's Code of Behaviour and will be disciplined accordingly. The device will be confiscated and will only be released to the child's parent by the school principal.

Should it come to our attention that children are misusing phones or smart devices by uploading images, through social media apps and/or sharing negative commentary about parents, peers or teachers children will face sanctions in line with the school's Code of Behaviour and Acceptable Use Policy. This policy includes any interactive device which has a camera, messaging function or games.

Implementation

While members of the Board of Management do not make this decision lightly, we hope that parents will understand that the greater good is paramount in this matter. The Board urges all parents to give this matter their fullest co-operation. The Board will keep this policy under ongoing review.

Sample of School-Based Activities in Recent Years

Seachtain na Gaeilge	Student Council
Yard Buddies	Show Your Colours to the World
Whole-school Mindfulness Mornings	Green Schools Committee
Wellbeing day	Friends for Life
Friendship and Anti-Bullying Week	Erin Go Bragh Gaelic Coaching
Fingal Fitness	Active Schools Week
Trips to Glasnevin Cemetery	FAI Soccer Tournament
Confirmation	Visiting Story Tellers
Intercultural Week	School Cake Sale for Lilliput
Cycling Safety (5 th Class)	Funky Hair Day
Marathon Kids	Swimming Lessons at National Aquatic Centre
STEM Initiatives	School Quiz Team
Class Bloggers	Buddy System with classes in the Junior School
Drumming Workshop	Genius Hour Projects
World Book Day	Carol Service
Paired Reading with the Junior School	Sponsored Walk
Sports Day	Lenten Trócaire Boxes
Science Week and IBM Science Fair	6 th Class Transition to Post Primary Workshops
Gaelic Football (Boys & Girls)	6 th Class Graduation
Camogie, Hurling, Athletics	St. Patrick's Festival- <i>Green Day!</i>
Handwriting Competition	National Spring Clean- Neighbourhood Clean-Up
Halloween Fancy Dress	Catholic Schools Week
Halloween Cinema	Art Competition in Memory of Aaron Osasere
Halloween safety	Bí Kerri Kind: in Memory of Kerri Behan
Lego Club	Creative Writing Competition in Memory of Mr. Gannon
Chess Club	School Tours: Crystal Maze, Navan Adventure Centre, Clara Lara, Lilliput
Book Fair	Boys and Girls Basketball Teams
Funky Hair Day	Action Team Partnership Group
Food Dudes	Exploration Dome
Maths Week, Maths Trails and Fun Day	Draíocht / Blanchardstown Library Partnership
Visits from Relationship Care	School Talent Show
Reindeer Food Sale - St. Vincent De Paul	Read and Raise
Horse Riding	
Internet Safety Talks	

Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School

What the children say about the school.....

Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School is a welcoming, bright and colourful school with lovely, smart teachers and joyful, happy children.

In my school, I always feel safe.

I think Mary, Mother of Hope is a special school where people from many countries become a community.

This school is a great place for learning because the teachers have a great way of teaching.

We do really fun things and have lovely teachers. It is the best school ever.

What makes our school great is our slogan "Many Cultures One Community"

We are positively encouraged to do our best in all areas. Excellent support is also provided for children experiencing difficulty.

Many interactions between Students, Parents, Teachers. This promotes our school - it's like one big happy family

The children in our school are kind and friendly. I love learning about other cultures too.

Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School is a friendly, healthy and fair school where we celebrate many cultures and we are looked after very well by the caring principal and teachers.

I love the way my school is so colourful

Our school makes learning fun.

In the senior school, we are more responsible and independent.

We work enthusiastically on more challenging topics.

We go to church and pray together.

Everybody in my school is so kind to me. I really love being here.

Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School is a school where we are all different, yet the same.

We have a colourful school run by a good principal.

Mary, Mother of Hope Senior National School is full of nice teachers and fun, wrapped in one!

Notes:



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Email: school@hopens.ie

Visit us at www.hopens.ie