

School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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The Board of Management of St. Joseph's N.S 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.

Definition of bullying

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

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

Section A: Development/review of our Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour

All members of our school community were provided with the opportunity to input into the development/review of this policy.

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	15 th March 2025	Online survey
Students	19 th March 2025	Bí Cineálta Committee completed survey at a meeting with Ms. McEvoy
Parents	5 th March 2025	Online survey shared via Aladdin
Board of Management	27 th May 2025	Board of Management meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	21 st March 2025	Online survey
Date policy was approved: 17 th June 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by the school. These include strategies specifically aimed at preventing online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

St. Joseph's N.S is a junior school that pursues active strategies to ensure that children's experience a school climate that encourages respect, trust, caring, consideration & support for others. We strive to create a school culture where bullying is unacceptable and there is a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour. We are an inclusive school, every child is cherished, and we incorporate our school slogan 'Every Child, Every Chance, Every Day' into all aspects of school life.

The following education & prevention strategies will be used at the appropriate and relevant level for each class:

- As pupils model their behaviour on the behavior of adults, all staff members and volunteers must be careful to act as good role models and not misuse their authority. They should be firm, clear and consistent in

their disciplinary measures. Techniques based on positive motivation and recognition and reward have been shown to be more effective in promoting desired behaviour than methods which are based on threat or fear. The positive discipline approach is adapted from the Incredible Years & PAX programmes.

- Develop a positive sense of self-esteem and promote emotional intelligence and resilience. Friendship Week in Term 1 and Anti-Bullying Week in Term 2, classroom & corridor displays and buddy sessions focus attention on building positive relationships & affirming good behaviours. Key messages will be displayed in classrooms and throughout the school.
- Parents will be informed of the Bí Cineálta policy and encouraged to look for signs of bullying. They are informed how to contact the school if they have information or want to report bullying. The class teacher is the first point of contact.
- We have a number of initiatives to promote emotional wellbeing, social skills and positive mental health in the school. A music therapist provides support for individuals and small groups of children. The Cairdeas Club provides support to small groups of children. The Home School Community Liaison teacher provides a vital link between parents and school and ensures that there is a team approach to promoting positive behavior and supporting children.
- Through the use of storybooks pupils are taught to recognise and respect that we are all unique. Pupils will learn that our brains work differently and we react to things differently.
- A number of programmes taught in school are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying, building resilience, emotional wellbeing and the promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness. The SPHE curriculum strands have particular relevance-
 - ✓ The Stay Safe programme and RSE programme are implemented at all levels on a bi annual basis and Walk Tall, and other relevant resources are used to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognize and cope with bullying.
 - ✓ Zippy's Friends, Fun Friends and A Lust for Life resources are available for use in the school. Zippy's Friends is a social and emotional learning programme which was developed by Partnership for Children, academics and educational resources specialists. This programme helps children to solve and to develop their own positive strategies to deal with problems through activities, stories, discussion, games and role play. Fun Friends is an evidence based anxiety prevention and resilience building programme developed by Dr. Paula Barrett. This programme helps pupils to develop resilience by teaching them effective strategies to cope with, problem solve and manage all kinds of emotional distress including worry, stress change and anxiety. A Lust for Life is a programme developed by a team of psychologists which aims to build resilience, increase wellbeing & enhance the emotional literacy of school children.

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):

- There will be supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors and school grounds.
- Non-teaching & ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers.
- Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within in school.
- Supervision on yard areas is managed and conducted effectively with particular attention being paid to arrival/dismissal
- Staff will endeavour to encourage pupils to show respect for each other.
- Foster a culture where diversity is celebrated and students “see themselves” in the school environment.
- Raise awareness of the impact of bullying behaviour and encourage pupils to speak up when they witness bullying behaviour.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

The Class teacher(s)/SET teacher initially

The Principal

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

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

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

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve and issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships for those involved.

- All children are encouraged to tell an adult if they feel they are being bullied. Children are taught ways to tell their class teacher, learning support teacher, SNA, parents, family member or another adult through role play (Stay Safe, Section 4) Children may speak to their teacher or may be encouraged to draw pictures, write a note or communicate in an alternative way.
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher(s) will exercise his/her/their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type of bullying and how best the situation might be resolved.
- All reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher(s). In this way, pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. 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.
- Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, SNAs, caretakers, cleaners are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behavior witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.
- Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved, as quickly as possible.
- Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviours reported by pupils, staff or parents.
- Incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of the pupils involved.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher(s) should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. It may also be helpful to ask those involved to write down their account or draw pictures of the incident. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from other members of the group after the interview by the teacher.
- Where the relevant teacher(s) has/have determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the schools Bí Cineálta policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.

- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher(s) that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school should give parents and opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school for their pupils.
- It should be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his/her parents and the school.
- Follow up meetings with the relevant parties involved may be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
- An additional follow-up meeting with parents of the children involved may take place after an appropriate time to ensure that the matter may be resolved satisfactorily.
- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.
- Noting and reporting of bullying behaviour must be documented using the school template for recording bullying behaviour. All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation.

The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

- In-school supports will be provided for pupils affected by bullying. Activities and programmes designed to raise self-esteem, build emotional resilience and social skills will prioritise those children who are more at risk- music therapy, Cairdeas Club, parental involvement, developing social skills, small group work, friendship games
- Regular check-in, after yard, with affected pupil(s) to make sure all is well using a traffic light system
- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour
- must be reported to a teacher.
- Promote a positive school culture where pupils feel safe, respected and valued
- Helping pupils raise self-esteem by offering opportunities for group work in class, opportunities to work in small groups in SET (where necessary), delivering a balanced curriculum where all strengths are recognised and acknowledged
- Focus on positive reinforcement when dealing with challenging behaviour

All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with students and parents. The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented. If the bullying behaviour is a child protection concern the matter will be addressed without delay in accordance with *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Section D: Oversight

The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting. This update will include the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting, the number of ongoing incidents and the total number of incidents since the beginning of the school year. Where incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred, the principal will also provide a verbal update which will include where relevant, information relating to trends and patterns identified, strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant. This update does not contain personal or identifying information. See Chapter 7 of the *Bí Cineálta* procedures.

This policy is available to our school community on the school's website and in hard copy on request. A student friendly version of this policy is displayed in the school and is also available on our website and in hard copy on request.

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

Signed: Bernie Mc Date: 17/6/2025
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: Bridget Clear Date: 17/6/2025
(Principal)

Bí Cineálta!

We want everyone in our school to feel safe and happy.

If you think that you are being bullied or someone else is being bullied, you need to **tell a teacher or another adult that you trust**. They will know what to do to help.

Get Help

Tell

Please tell someone if you think that you are being bullied or someone else is being bullied

Let's work together to keep everybody in St. Joseph's safe
Be Kind - Bí Cineálta!

Bullying is hurting somebody with actions or words lots of times.



