

Bí Cineálta Policy - to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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The Board of Management of St John The Evangelist NS 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 Traveler 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	05/03/2025 11/03/2025 20/05/2025	Staff meeting – Half day closure. Staff questionnaire Staff consultation on Draft Policy
Students	27/03/2025	Student questionnaire
Parents	11/03/2025 28/05/2025	Parent questionnaire Parent consultation on Draft Policy
Board of Management	11/6/2025 18/6/2025	Member consultation on Draft Policy (digital copy) Policy approval
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	N/A	
Date policy was approved: 18/6/2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: 18/6/2025		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

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

Prevention Strategies

Culture and environment:

- Create a whole school culture where all students and staff feel safe, respected and valued.
- Promote open communication among students, staff and parents/guardians.
- Build respectful, trusting relationships across the school community.
- Support the idea that our school is a telling environment where students are encouraged and supported to report concerns.

- Promote the concept of a trusted adult aligning with the principles of the Stay Safe programme to ensure students know who to tell.
- Create safe physical spaces and incorporate artwork and signs to promote our school's values.
- Establish and maintain appropriate supervision to ensure the safety of students during school hours and school related activities.

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning):

- Promote teaching and learning that is collaborate, respectful and inclusive.
- Teach the SPHE content with a focus on fostering respect for diversity, promoting inclusion and the awareness of bullying behaviour and its effects.
- Integrate anti bullying messages into the school curriculum.
- Provide opportunities for students to develop social and emotional skills.
- Implement the Stay Safe programme and the school's code of behaviour.
- Provide movement breaks to support student's emotional regulation.

Policy and Planning:

- Implement a clear and consistent anti-bullying policy that includes a Bí Cineálta policy and a student friendly Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour and to ensure that the policy it is enforced and supported by all staff members.
- On-going review and evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.
- To support and provide staff with training to enable them to identify and effectively respond to bullying behaviour.
- To create opportunities for staff to share experiences and examples of best practice to continue improvement

The school's Code of Behaviour supports the Bí Cineálta policy by setting clear expectations for respectful and kind behaviour.

Both work together to create a positive school environment where everyone feels safe, valued and respected.

Relationships and Partnerships:

- Promote open communication among students, staff and parents/guardians.
- Foster strong, supportive relationships with students and their families.
- Implement 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 behaviour during SPHE lessons.

- Encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring.
- Involve students in developing a Child-Friendly Anti-Bullying Policy, encouraging their active participation in identifying and reducing bullying, and promoting awareness of the procedures for addressing it.

Preventing Cyberbullying Behaviour:

- Implementation of the SPHE curriculum and stay safe programme.
- Staff monitoring of pupils who are considered at risk of bullying/ being bullied.
- Promote school-wide community awareness and internet safety talks to educate students, staff, and families about the risks and consequences of cyberbullying.

Preventing Homophobic/ Transphobic Bullying Behaviour:

- Ensuring a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all students, irrespective of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities.
- Encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour.

Preventing Racist Bullying Behaviour:

- Fostering and promoting a culture where diversity and inclusion is celebrated.
- Promote school-wide community awareness to educate students, staff, and families about the risks and consequences of racist bullying behaviour.
- Encouraging students to speak up when they witness racist behaviour.
- Ensuring that the library reading material represents appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour:

- Educate students on the importance of gender equality.
- Celebrate diversity within the school community, and recognise and acknowledge the contributions of all students.
- Encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home.

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

Supervision

School staff supervise students on a daily basis in the classroom, and in common areas from 8:50am to 2:30pm to ensure student safety. If bullying behaviour is identified, it should be reported to the relevant class teacher.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The class teacher(s) will oversee the recording of bullying reports for students in their class.

All staff will be vigilant to bullying behaviour.

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 relevant class teacher is responsible for investigating all reported or suspected incidents of bullying behaviour to establish the facts and address the behaviour appropriately.
- The relevant class teacher uses professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and to decide on the necessary actions and supports.
- Conversations with the students involved are conducted in a fair, respectful and confidential manner, ideally outside the classroom. Where a group is involved, students will be interviewed individually before a group discussion is held. Written accounts may be requested to support clarity.

All investigations and follow-up actions will be guided by the following principles:

- The student experiencing the bullying behaviour is listened to and supported.
- The privacy and dignity of all parties involved will be respected.
- All matters relating to the incident are treated as confidential and are strictly between the student, their parents/guardians, and the school.
- Timely and appropriate actions are taken to address the behaviour.
- Parents/guardians of all relevant students are informed.
- All school personnel, including non-teaching staff are encouraged to report any observed or suspected bullying behaviour.
- Teachers take a calm, problem-solving approach when addressing any reported incidents.
- A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, the school is required to support the students involved if such behaviour has a continued impact within the school.
- Support will be provided to both the student subjected to the bullying behaviour and the student displaying the bullying behaviour.
- The parents/ guardians of all parties involved will be contacted at an early stage and informed of the steps being taken by the school. They will be given an opportunity to discuss how they can best support the actions of the school.
- Once the investigation is concluded and/or the matter is resolved, the relevant class teacher will complete a written report outlining the findings, actions taken, strategies adopted, the outcome, along with any additional relevant information.
- If a Student Support Plan is in place for any student involved, it will be updated to reflect appropriate response strategies and any additional supports required.
- Progress will be reviewed with all relevant parties (students and parents/guardians) within **20 school days** of the initial report.
- If bullying behaviour has not ceased, the class teacher will review the strategies in place in consultation with the students involved and their parents/guardians, and agree on a revised action plan with clear timelines for review.

- A follow-up meeting may be arranged to support a resolution and ensure continued progress. This may occur individually or, if appropriate, jointly.
- If the student responsible for the bullying continues the behaviour after intervention and review, the matter will be escalated in line with the school's **Code of Behaviour**.
- Disciplinary sanctions may be considered at this stage. These sanctions will be proportionate and appropriate, and it must be made clear that such decisions remain a private matter between the student, their parents/guardians, and the school.
- If a parent/guardian is not satisfied with the school's handling of a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, they may follow the school's formal complaints procedure.
- If, after exhausting the complaints procedure, the matter remains unresolved, parents/guardians will be advised of their right to make a complaint to the **Ombudsman for Children**.

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

The school is committed to:

- Addressing and managing bullying behaviour promptly and effectively.
- Promoting a culture of mutual respect among all pupils.
- Supporting the emotional wellbeing and self-esteem of targeted pupils by encouraging participation in classroom-based group work and extra-curricular social or team activities that promote positive relationships and inclusion.
- Engaging with external support services such as the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), Oide, Webwise, National Parents Council, Dublin City University (DCU) Anti Bullying Centre and Tusla, to proactively prevent and address bullying behaviour.
- Adopting a restorative approach to addressing negative behaviour, where the focus remains on challenging the behaviour while supporting the individual pupil.
- Support a resolution-based approach to bullying behaviour that encourages accountability and change, underpinned by a commitment to improvement rather than punishment.
- Encourage students who witness bullying behaviour to report it and reassure them that their concerns will be taken seriously and handled sensitively.
- Help bystanders understand the importance of their role in stopping bullying, through awareness-raising activities and classroom discussions.

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

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

Section D: Oversight

The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting. This update will include the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting, the number of ongoing incidents and the total number of incidents since the beginning of the school year. Where incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred, the principal will also provide a verbal update which will include where relevant, information relating to trends and patterns identified, strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant. This update does not contain personal or identifying information. 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: Lore O'Driscoll Date: 18/6/25
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: James Carroll Date: 18/6/25
(Principal)