



St. John of God Primary School, The Faythe, Wexford, Y35 YT38

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Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of St John of God Primary School 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.

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.

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.

The core elements of the definition of bullying are:

- **Targeted Behaviour**
- **Repeated Behaviour**
- **Imbalance of power**

Bullying behaviour can take many forms which can occur separately or together. These can include the following, which is not an exhaustive list
(See Chapter 2, 2.5)

Direct Bullying behaviour:

- Physical bullying behaviour
- Verbal bullying behaviour
- Written bullying behaviour
- Extortion

Indirect Bullying Behaviour:

- Exclusion
- Relational

Online Bullying Behaviour:

Types of Bullying:

- Disablist bullying behaviour
- Exceptionally able bullying
- Gender identity bullying
- Homophobic/transphobic (LGBTQ+) bullying
- Physical appearance bullying
- Racist bullying
- Poverty bullying
- Religious identity bullying
- Sexist bullying
- Sexual harassment

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

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 | October 2024 March 2025 May/June 2025 | Principal and Acting AP1 attended full day Bí Cineálta face to face training Half day school closure to facilitate whole staff Bí Cineálta training and consultation Staff Questionnaire distributed and collected Sharing of draft policy with staff to discuss/consult and make any amendments |
| Students | April 2025 June 2025 | Pupil Questionnaire – senior pupils supporting junior pupils Consultation with Student Council Development of a Bí Cineálta Child Friendly policy |
| Parents | April 2025 June 2025 | Parent Questionnaire Send out link to the draft policy with an invitation for feedback and suggestions |
| Board of Management | June 2025 | Review new policy draft – leading to consultation and final ratification after amendments where necessary |
| Wider school community as appropriate | Ongoing | School website Newsletters Caretaker Secretary Afterschool Club |
| Date policy was approved: | | |
| 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 *Bí Cineálta procedures*):*

In developing the preventative strategies which this school 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.

St John of God Primary School 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 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 particular 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.

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

Culture and Environment

A positive and inclusive school culture and environment which

- is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity.
 - Is a 'telling' environment which encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment
 - promotes and models respectful relationships across the school community
- Effective leadership that sets high standards and expectations
 - A school-wide approach where each member of staff takes a consistent approach to effective observation and addressing of bullying behaviour
 - Students promoting kindness and inclusion in peer groups
 - Parents as active partners in their child's education, fostering an environment where bullying is not tolerated through promoting empathy and respect

- A 'trusted adult' who reassures and supports students they have done the right thing by reporting bullying behaviour
- The creation of safe physical spaces supports psychological safety
- A mix of organised activities during break times encourages and supports play and friendships
- Murals, artwork and signage can help schools to promote the school's values such as equality, diversity, inclusion and respect
- Fortnightly Assemblies to acknowledge, celebrate and encourage a sense of belonging and inclusion at whole school level
- An awareness and implementation of strategies to encourage Kindness:
 - Kind Hands, Kind Feet, Kind Words
 - THINK (True, Helpful, Inspiring, Necessary, Kind)

Curriculum- Teaching and Learning

- A shared understanding of what bullying is, its impact and bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour.
- Students should have regular opportunities to work in small groups with their peers, which can help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy among students.
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that
 - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils
 - promote inclusion and diversity
 - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including homophobic, transphobic, racist, sexist bullying and sexual harassment as appropriate.
 - provide teaching and learning in SPHE that equips students with skills to build positive relationships, resolve conflicts and recognise and deal with bullying behaviour
- SPHE Curricular Programmes to include: Stay Safe, RSE, Walk Tall, Grow in Love etc.
- SPHE methodologies to include -e.g.
 - Group work/ Collaboration
 - Role - play, acting out scenarios
 - Extra - curricular activities to develop positive self - worth
 - Circle Time
 - Co-operative games (particularly in P.E) etc.

Policy and Planning

- Bí Cineálta Policy developed, communicated, implemented and reviewed in consultation with all partners
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies)
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the Bí Cineálta Policy
- Student Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy
- Code of Behaviour

- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Supervision Policy
- Arrivals and Dismissals Policy
- SPHE & RSE Policy
- SEN Policy
- DEIS Policies
- Wellbeing interwoven into DEIS policies and others
- Health and Safety Policy Statement
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils (both within school and on yard, unstructured activities, trips, swimming etc)
- Teacher Professional Learning and other relevant supports for staff

Supporting the participation of students in the development and implementation of school policies and plans can help increase awareness and ensure effective implantation.

Relationships and Partnerships

- Strong interpersonal connections supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as Student Council, Amber Flag Committee, Parents' Association, focus groups etc.
- DEIS Partnership with Parents and Others – supporting the active participation of parents in school life, including those who may find it difficult or daunting to engage with the school due to being unfamiliar with education system or language or cultural barriers
- Student and parent/guardian active participation
- Workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying
- Promoting acts of kindness and activities that build empathy, respect and resilience e.g. Wellbeing Week
- Designated days and events e.g. Grandparents' /Special Person Day, Blue Star Flag initiative, Friendship Week, Active Week etc.
- SCP support by delivering universal, small groups and 1 to 1 programme on friendships, building resilience etc.
- Care Team – staff are encouraged to complete a referral document in relation to any concerns about the wellbeing of a child. The referral will be discussed at Care Team meeting with agreed actions and monitoring of outcome
- Teaching problem solving skills
- Critical Thinking Skills
- Promoting self-awareness and awareness of others
- Encouraging peer tutoring and buddying etc.

The meaningful involvement and the positive relationships of the board of management, staff, students and their parents in the development, implementation and review of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and student – friendly version is essential to effectively prevent and address bullying behaviour.

Preventing cyber bullying behaviour

Technology and social media have provided many positive opportunities for entertainment, social engagement and education. However, the increase in the use of technology has led to students becoming increasingly vulnerable to cyberbullying or unacceptable online behaviour. St John of God Primary School strives to proactively address these challenges by promoting digital literacy, digital citizenship, and fostering safe online environments. Strategies to prevent cyberbullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- implementing the SPHE curriculum
- implementing the Digital Media Literacy curriculum which teaches students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship
- having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- developing and communicating an acceptable use policy for technology
- referring to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour
- promoting or hosting online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online*
- holding an Internet safety day to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour

(Note: The digital age of consent is the minimum age a user must be before a social media or internet company can collect, process and store their data. In Ireland the digital age of consent is 16. Children between 13 and 16 must have parental permission to sign up to social media services. Most social media platforms have a minimum age requirement and for the majority of these, it is 13 years old. Therefore, children under the age of 13 should not have a social media account).

Preventing homophobic/ transphobic bullying behaviour

All students including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students, have a right to feel safe and supported at school.

Strategies to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- maintaining an inclusive physical environment such as by displaying relevant posters
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- challenging gender stereotypes
- conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour
- encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour

Preventing racist bullying behaviour

Students attending schools come from many different cultures and backgrounds. As our school becomes more culturally diverse, we strive to prevent potential racist bullying behaviour.

Strategies to prevent racist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students “see themselves” in their school environment
- having the cultural diversity of the school visible and on display conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of racism
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour
- providing supports to school staff to respond to the needs of students for whom English is an additional language and for communicating with their parents
- providing supports to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma students, and to encourage communication with their parents
- inviting speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds
- ensuring that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds

Preventing sexist bullying behaviour

St John of God Primary School will focus on gender equality as part of the school’s measures to create a supportive and respectful environment. Strategies to prevent sexist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex
- ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex
- celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contribution of all students
- encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home

Preventing sexual harassment

St John of God Primary School promotes a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment. It strives to support this through a focus on education, awareness and clear enforceable policies. Sexual harassment should never be dismissed as teasing or banter.

Strategies to prevent sexual harassment include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- promoting positive role models within the school community
- challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour

*(see Chapter 5 of *Bí Cineálta* procedures):*

In line with Chapter 5 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (Bi Cineálta, 2023), the Board of Management and staff of St John of God Primary School recognise that effective supervision and monitoring of pupils is a critical element in the prevention and management of bullying behaviour.

The school has the following practices in place:

- School wide awareness raising on all aspects of bullying, supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extracurricular activities
- A structured supervision rota ensures staff presence throughout the school day, particularly during break times when the students are on the yard
- Teachers and staff engage in active and intentional supervision, promoting a positive school culture and modelling respectful behaviour
- Students are encouraged to speak up if they witness or experience bullying. A culture of openness and trust is fostered so that all students feel safe in reporting concerns
- Staff remain vigilant for signs of bullying, both within the classroom, during non-classroom activities and during break and lunch times.
- The Board of Management informs parents/guardians that the school does not accept responsibility for pupils who arrive to school before the gates open at 8:50 a.m.
- Late arrivals and early departures are recorded
- Breakfast Club area is monitored and supervised daily
- Classes are assigned designated areas on the yard to ensure age-appropriate interactions and ease of monitoring and observing of behaviour
- Playground Leaders, from 5th class upwards, under the supervision of staff, to support children at play time and to report any inappropriate behaviour to a staff member
- Teachers on yard duty remain with the classes until the class teacher returns from break. Planned teacher absences to arrange a swap of supervision duties, unexpected absences to be managed by management
- Record-keeping and handover meetings between teachers
- Code of Behaviour

These measures form part of our whole-school approach to wellbeing and are implemented in conjunction with other preventative strategies as outlined in this policy

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The primary aim in addressing reports of bullying behaviour should be to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore, as far as is practical, the relationships of the parties involved.

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

- The class teacher (relevant teacher) will oversee recording of bullying reports for students in their class – this includes using the procedures guidelines to investigate reports of bullying and recording bullying behaviour.
- Principal will inform the Board of Management of incidents of bullying.

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 *Bí Cineálta* procedures)*

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred:

Core Definition of Bullying: Bullying is defined 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 to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*)

Bullying Behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school

- 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, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved.
- Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, schools should deal with it in accordance with their *Bí Cineálta* policy.
- Where the student displaying the bullying behaviour is not a student in the school, but the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour is a student in the school, the school should support the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as

appropriate and engage with them and their parents to determine what steps can be taken.

General Principles:

- It is important for school staff to be fair and consistent in their approach to address bullying behaviour.
- Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour need support
- It is important that the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour is engaged with, without delay, so that they feel listened to, supported and reassured.
- School staff should identify the supports needed for the student who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties and ensure that their needs are met.

Requests to take no action:

A student who reports bullying behaviour may ask a member of staff not to do anything and just “look out” for them due to not wanting to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They might 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 behaviour
- It must be made clear to the pupil that other parties may need to be informed for their welfare
- Parents may also make the school aware of bullying behaviour and specifically request that no action is to be taken by the school. Parents should put this in writing to the school
- The school will consider each such request on a case-by-case basis while reserving the right, if determined that based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour through the Bí Cineálta procedures and/or the Code of Behaviour where appropriate.

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour the following questions will be considered:

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.

What is not bullying behaviour?

- A once off instance of negative behaviour
- Disagreement between students
- Instances where students don't want to remain friends
- Non-deliberate behaviours of students with special educational needs (Bí Cineálta Section 2.2)

Cyberbullying

- Bullying behaviour including cyberbullying behaviour, which has occurred outside of school can often continue in school
- Where a student engages in cyberbullying behaviour when in school, the school must address the bullying behaviour
- Where a student experiences cyberbullying behaviour in school, the school must address the bullying behaviour
- In the case of cyberbullying, although the hurtful message may have been sent outside of school hours, the student may view the message while in school. Where this happens, the school must address the bullying 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 should be met as a group
- at the group meeting, each student should 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 Bi Cineálta procedures), where and when it took place and

the date of the initial engagement with the students involved and their parents (Appendix A)

- the record should include the views of the students and their parents 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
- the teacher should document the review with students (Appendix A) 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, it must be made clear to all (pupils and parents/guardians) that this is a private matter (under GDPR) between the student being disciplined, his/her parents/guardians and the school

Recording Bullying Behaviour: See template Appendix A which includes all the required details/fields.

- 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.
- where a Student Support File exists for a student, a copy of the record should be placed on the student's support file with a brief reference to it on a Behavioural Log of Actions (priority document)
- where a Student Support Plan exists, the plan should be updated to incorporate response strategies and associated supports.
- where no Student Support File exists open a Behavioural Log of Actions on Aladdin and mark it as a 'Priority document'. Add date and reference to the completed record (Appendix A). (This form can be found by selecting - Child's profile >documents > new document >Bullying Incident Recording Form)
- 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 2.4)

Complaint Process

- 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 student and/or 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 on the student

*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*)*

Supports

The school's programme of support for working with pupils who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour, in addition to supports referenced in the steps above, may include but is not limited to the following:

- Listening
- Showing empathy
- Reassuring the student
- Restorative approach to interviews and conversations with students
- Asking them to let you know if the bullying behaviour occurs in school
- Devising appropriate 'check in' mechanisms
- Discussing how the pupils can inform their parents of the situation if they haven't already done so
- Discreet lessons may be taught as appropriate
- Pupils who have been bullied, witness or engage in bullying behaviour will be supported by the school, within the limits of resources available in the school, through the provision of opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and thereby build resilience and a sense of self-worth whenever this is needed.
- Where relevant and available, a referral for appropriate supports as offered through e.g. SCP or Counselling

Even though the bullying behaviour may have ceased, ongoing supervision and support may be required for both the student who has experienced the bullying behaviour as well as the student who has displayed the behaviour. It can take time for relationships to settle and for support to take effect. In some cases, relationships may never be restored to how they were before the bullying behaviour occurred.

Supports available to help prevent and address bullying include the

following:

- NEPS- providing advice on best practice to prevent and address bullying when issues arise in schools and/or training in preventative initiatives pg.46
- Oide – providing Teacher Professional Learning
- Webwise – online safety awareness raising and education initiative for pupils and parents
- National Parents Council – online and in person courses to support parents to prevent and address bullying
- DCU Anti bullying centre- FUSE programme that can be used to promote a positive school culture and assist in preventing and addressing bullying behaviours
- Tusla – for cases where it is considered that bullying behaviour becomes a child protection concern
- Cyberbullying and Internet Safety

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: _____

Date: _____

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: _____

Date: _____

(Principal)

Appendices:

Appendix A: Bullying Incident Report Form

Appendix B: Student Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy

Appendix C: Guide to Addressing Bullying Behaviour

Appendix D: Board of Management Report

Appendix E: Review of Bí Cineálta Policy

Appendix F: Notification regarding the board of management's annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy

Appendix G: Overview of the Bí Cineálta Procedures for Preventing and Addressing Bullying Behaviour

Appendix H: Teacher Checklist

Appendix A: Bullying Incident Report Form

Section A: Details of Pupils involved:

| | |
|---|--------------|
| 1. Name/s of pupil/s experiencing bullying behaviour | Class |
| | |

| | |
|---|--------------|
| 2. Name/s of pupil/s displaying bullying behaviour | Class |
| | |

| | |
|---|--------------|
| 3. Name/s of other pupil/s e.g.: witnesses | Class |
| | |

Section B: Details of Bullying Behaviour:

| 1. Source (and Name) of bullying concern/report | 2. Location, Date and Time of incident/s (if known) |
|--|--|
| Pupil concerned | Playground |
| Other pupil | Classroom |
| Parent | Corridor |
| Teacher | Toilets |
| Other | Yard |
| | MUGA |
| | Other (please specify) |

| 3. Forms of Bullying Behaviour (Refer to Section 2.5– Tick all that apply) | | | |
|---|--|------------------------|--|
| Physical Bullying | | Online Bullying | |
| Verbal Bullying | | Exclusion | |
| Written Bullying | | Relational Bullying | |
| Extortion | | Other (Please specify) | |

| 4. Type of Bullying Behaviour (Refer to Section 2.7– Tick all that apply) | | | |
|--|--|----------------------------|--|
| Disablist Bullying | | Poverty | |
| Exceptionally able Bullying | | Religious Identity | |
| Gender identity | | Sexist | |
| Homophobic/transphobic (LGBTQ+) | | Sexual Harassment Bullying | |
| Physical Appearance | | Other (Please specify) | |
| Racist | | | |

5. Brief Description of Bullying Behaviour and its impact

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Section C: Engagement with Parents/Guardians:

| | Experiencing Bullying Behaviour | Displaying Bullying Behaviour |
|--|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Initial Engagement (dates and details) | | |
| Parents | | |
| Students | | |
| Supports to be put in place | | |
| 2. Views | | |
| Parents | | |
| Students | | |
| 3. Date of Review: to determine if bullying behaviour has ceased. | | |
| Parents | | |
| Students | | |
| 4. Outcome | | |
| Date of Review (if required) | | |

| 5. Recording Teacher/s | | |
|------------------------|------------------|------|
| Signed | Role | Date |
| | Relevant Teacher | |
| | | |

Appendix B: Student Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy

Appendix C: Guide to Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The whole school community has a responsibility to prevent and address bullying behaviour. Schools should work in partnership with their patron, board of management, staff, students and their parents to develop and implement their Bí Cineálta policy. This appendix is intended as a guide to addressing bullying behaviour. It is based on the information contained in Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Approach

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
- take action in a timely manner
- inform parents of those involved

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. The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour you should consider the following questions:

- Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?
- Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?
- 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 should be met as a group
- at the group meeting, each student should 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 Bi 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 parents 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
- 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's 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 on the student.

Appendix D

Guide to providing Bullying Behaviour Update for board of management meeting of

Having reviewed the details of the incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the previous board of management meeting, the principal must provide the following information at each ordinary meeting of the board of management:

Total number of new incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the last board of management meeting.

Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour currently ongoing.

Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the beginning of this 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 etc
- > 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 should not include any personal information or information that could identify the students involved.

Appendix E Review of the Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual (calendar) review of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and its implementation in consultation with the school community. As part of the review, this document must be completed.

Bí Cineálta Policy Review

1. When did the Board formally adopt its Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour in accordance with the *Bí Cineálta Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*? Insert date when the Bí Cineálta policy was last adopted by the school.

___ / ___ /2025

2. Where in the school is the student friendly Bí Cineálta policy displayed?

3. What date did the Board publish the Bí Cineálta policy and the student friendly policy on the school website? / /20

4. How has the student friendly policy been communicated to students?

5. How has the Bí Cineálta policy and student friendly policy been communicated to parents

6. Have all school staff been made aware of the, school's Bí Cineálta policy and the *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*?

Yes _____ No _____

7. Does the Bí Cineálta policy document the strategies that the school uses to prevent bullying behaviour?

Yes _____ No _____

8. Has the Board received and minuted the Bullying Behaviour Update presented by the principal at every ordinary board meeting over the last calendar year?

Yes _____ No _____

9. Has the Board discussed how the school is addressing all reports of bullying behaviour?

Yes _____ No _____

10. Is the Board satisfied that all incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed in accordance with the school's Bí Cineálta Policy?

Yes _____ No _____

11. Have the prevention strategies in the Bí Cineálta policy been implemented?

Yes _____ No _____

12. Has the Board discussed the effectiveness of the strategies used to prevent bullying behaviour?

Yes _____ No _____

13. How have (a) parents, (b) students and (c) school staff been consulted with as part of the review of the Bí Cineálta Policy?

14. Outline any aspects of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and/or its implementation that have been identified as requiring further improvement as part of this review:

15. Where areas for improvement have been identified, outline how these will be addressed and whether an action plan with timeframes has been developed?

16. Does the student friendly policy need to be updated as a result of this review and if so, why?

17. Does the school refer parents to the complaints procedures if they have a complaint about how the school has addressed bullying behaviour?

Yes _____ No _____

18. Has a parent informed the school that a student has left the school due to reported bullying behaviour?

Yes _____ No _____

19. Has the Office of the Ombudsman for Children initiated or completed an investigation into how the school has addressed an incident of bullying behaviour?

Yes _____ No _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Principal)

Date of next review: _____

Appendix F

Notification regarding the board of management's annual review of the school's *Bí Cineálta* Policy

The Board of Management
of _____

confirms that the board of management's annual review of the school's *Bí Cineálta* Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour and its implementation was completed at the board of management meeting of _____ [date].

This review was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Education's *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed: _____

(Chairperson of board of management)

Date: _____

Date of next review:

Signed: _____

(Principal)

Date: _____

Appendix G

Overview of the Bí Cineálta Procedures for Preventing and Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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|-----------|--|--|
| Chapter 1 | Responsibilities of the school community | All members of the school community must work together in partnership to prevent and address bullying behaviour at school. |
| | Legal basis | Legislation underpinning Bí Cineálta: Children First Act 2015. Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020 also known as Coco's Law. |
| Chapter 2 | What is bullying behaviour? | Updated definition of bullying behaviour based on Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying (2022). |
| | Criminal behaviour | Updated information on when bullying behaviour can be considered criminal behaviour. |
| | Child protection concerns | Updated information relating to when bullying behaviour becomes a child protection concern. |
| Chapter 3 | Impacts of bullying behaviour | Updated information on how bullying behaviour can impact students who experience bullying behaviour, students who witness the behaviour and students who engage in bullying behaviour. |
| Chapter 4 | Bí Cineálta Policy | <p>Schools must engage with the whole school community to develop their Bí Cineálta policy, using the template in Appendix A.</p> <p>The policy must list preventative strategies that are used including those to specifically prevent cyberbullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate.</p> <p>Schools must list specific support strategies for individuals experiencing bullying behaviour, those who witness bullying behaviour and those displaying bullying behaviour.</p> <p>All incidents of bullying behaviour must be recorded.</p> <p>The school principal is required to provide a bullying behaviour update at each ordinary board of management meeting.</p> <p>The school's Bí Cineálta policy must be reviewed in collaboration with the whole school community once each calendar year and sooner if a serious incident occurs and the board of management determines an urgent review is required.</p> |

| | | |
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| Chapter 4 | Appendix A Bí Cineálta Policy | This template document must be used as a basis for each school's Bí Cineálta Policy. |
| | Student-Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy | Every school must develop a student-friendly version of its Bí Cineálta policy and display it where students and the school community can see it. |
| | Appendix B Student-Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy | This template document can be used by schools as a basis for their student-friendly policy. |
| Chapter 5 | Preventing Bullying Behaviour | <p>Prevention measures are linked to the four areas of Wellbeing Promotion.</p> <p>Importance of fostering a “telling environment” in schools and the role of the trusted adult.</p> <p>Prevention strategies must be provided relating to specific types of bullying behaviour including cyberbullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment, as appropriate.</p> |
| Chapter 6 | Appendix C Guide to Addressing Bullying Behaviour | Guide can be used to address bullying behaviour. |
| | Remit of the school in addressing bullying behaviour | 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, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, schools should deal with it in accordance with their Bí Cineálta policy. |
| | Requests to take no action | Guidance for schools on how requests by students and parents to “take no action” should be addressed. |
| | Engagement with students involved in bullying behaviour and their parents | <p>Schools must engage with students who have experienced bullying behaviour to decide the actions to be taken to address the incident of bullying behaviour.</p> <p>Schools must also engage with their parents.</p> <p>Schools must engage with students who have displayed bullying behaviour as well as their parents when deciding actions to be taken.</p> <p>Schools must engage with all involved when reviewing progress and determining whether bullying behaviour has ceased.</p> |
| | Recording Incidents of Bullying Behaviour | All incidents of bullying behaviour must be recorded by the teacher addressing the behaviour. |

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| Chapter 7 | Update to the board of management | <p>Principal must provide an update to the board of management at each ordinary board meeting. This report includes the number of incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the last board meeting, the number of incidents ongoing and the total number reported since the beginning of the school year.</p> <p>The principal must provide a verbal update which will include, where relevant, trends and patterns, the strategies used to address the incidents and whether an urgent review of the policy is needed.</p> <p>The update is to inform discussion at each ordinary board of management meeting regarding the effectiveness of the preventative strategies used by the school and the overall effectiveness of the Bí Cineálta Policy.</p> |
| | Appendix D Guide to providing bullying behaviour update to the board of management | Guide can be used to assist principals in providing bullying behaviour update to board of management. |
| | Review of Bí Cineálta Policy | The Bí Cineálta policy must be reviewed once each calendar year, in collaboration with the whole school community, and earlier if the Board determines an urgent review is warranted. |
| | Appendix E Review of the Bí Cineálta policy. | The Review template must be completed when the Bí Cineálta policy is reviewed. |
| | Appendix F Notification of Annual Review | The template can be used to notify the school community that the annual review has been completed. |

Appendix H: Teacher Checklist

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred:

- 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 should be met as a group
- at the group meeting, each student should 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
- in some instances, it may be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident(s)

Where bullying behaviour has occurred:

- inform parents of students as soon as possible
- listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- record engagement using Appendix A

Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred:

- engage with students involved and parents again no more than 20 school days after initial engagement
- 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
- record the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased
- 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:

- review the strategies in consultation with the students involved and their parents.
- agree upon a time frame for further engagement
- If it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school's 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

Appendix F

Notification regarding the board of management's annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management of St John of God Primary School confirms that the board of management's annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour and its implementation was completed at the board of management meeting of 26th of June 2025.

This review was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Education's *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed:



(Chairperson of board of management)

Date:

26/6/25

Signed:



(Principal)

Date:

26/6/25

Date of next review:

June 2026

