St. Joseph's Boys' School

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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The Board of Management of St Joseph's BNS 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. However, 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 behavior. 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	7/3/2025	• Half Day Closure • Staff meeting in March • Questionnaire emailed to staff
Students	18/3/2025 to 21/3/3025	• Questionnaire on the IPad
Parents	24/3/2025 to 28/3/2025	• Questionnaire emailed to parents
Board of Management	12/5/2025	• Board of Management Meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	16/06/2025	• Policy given for review to driver and escort of special class pupils
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 the Bí Cineálta procedures):

Culture and Environment

Parental and Community Involvement:
2nd Class Induction:

- Principal to present Bí Cineálta message during induction for incoming 2nd Class parents.

Culture Week

- Large Culture Day exhibition with food and student work.
- All classes to visit the display.
- Exhibition remains open in the hall for an additional two days.

Monthly Assemblies:

- Bí Cineálta Hero (Kindness Award) presented to one student. Photo displayed on the Wellbeing Wall.
- Highlights of school news and upcoming events.
- Assemblies held on the last Thursday of each month.
- School anthem to feature.

Buddy System for Staff:

- Every staff member will have a "buddy" to casually check in with weekly.
- This is not behaviour-related – it's about wellbeing and connection ("one kind adult").

Promoting Student Wellbeing and Inclusivity

- Wellness Wall to display positive messages and achievements.
- Chill Chairs available in every yard.
- Wellness Walks: Termly paired walks (e.g., 6th with 2nd class) within school grounds.
- School anthem – 'Joey's Boys – Cherish these days'

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

SPHE / Friendship / Anti-Bullying Initiatives

Start of School Year (First two full weeks):

- All teachers to focus on classroom management, rules, and friendship/relationship-building lessons.
- SPHE co-ordinator will distribute *Walk Tall & RSE* friendship lessons.
- Three school values will be introduced using student-created videos from the Student Council.

15th September – 24th October:

- *Stay Safe* programme will be taught across all relevant classes (6 weeks, up to mid-term).

After Mid-Term Break:

- 3rd–6th Class: Teach *Making Decisions* strand from *Walk Tall*.
- 2nd Class: Teach *Safety* strand from *Walk Tall*.

Anti-Bullying Week:

- Will proceed as normal in November.
- Key teaching resource on 'bystanders': *FUSE* lesson "Stand Up and Speak Out."

January (After Christmas Break):

- Teachers to reteach the three school values.

The FUSE programme will be used as a targeted intervention to address incidents of bullying, where appropriate.
The Webwise programme may be used as a resource for internet safety and to address online bullying.

Relationships & Partnerships

Parent Meetings at Start of Year:

- Parent Induction Meeting: Last Wednesday of September, 3:00 pm (30 minutes max).
    - Mandatory classroom Meet & Greet for all teachers (Croke Park hours).
    - Not a Q&A session.
    - Editable PowerPoint and checklist provided to guide the induction session.
    - Learning support teachers and SNAs will attend and move between classes as needed.

Other Initiatives

- The Parents' Association will coordinate parental involvement in school workshops.

Policy & Planning

Engagement with School Policies

- All relevant school policies will be shared via Aladdin message and email (start of each school year).

Student Voice:

- The Student Council have developed a student-friendly version of the Bí Cineálta policy.

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):

- Ensure **clear and effective communication** among all staff regarding **Code of Behaviour and yard rules**. These will be established at the beginning of the school year with the pupils. These will be revisited with the staff and children at the start of each term.
- To prevent bullying and provide a safe environment for all children, all staff must adhere to the **Code of Behaviour, Bí Cineálta Policy, and a Managing Challenging Behaviour Plan** where applicable.
- All teachers are assigned to a **yard supervision** timetable. Supervision is to be rotated among three teachers on duty, who will liaise weekly to ensure coordination.
- Teachers assigned to yard supervision must accompany their class and be present in the yard **at least two minutes before lunch begins.**
- All student teachers and long-term substitute teachers will be provided with a copy of the **school guidelines**.
- All staff are expected to model and promote the school values of **Respect, Kindness, and Teamwork.**
- Pupils must be supervised by staff in designated areas as they leave the school building.
- Procedures will be in place for dealing with individual cases of reported bullying: **Investigation:** Prompt and thorough, involving communication with all parties.

Follow-Up: The school will take appropriate and timely action to address any confirmed issues.

- The **Bí Cineálta pupil folder** will contain information on pupils with specific bullying/behaviour concerns will be decided on and maintained by the principal and can be made available to relevant staff.
- The folder will contain information on pupils who may need **extra support and monitoring as a prevention** of bullying strategy.

Section C: Addressing 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):

Our Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying
The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame);

Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

In these procedures, the member of teaching staff who has responsibility for investigating and dealing with bullying is referred to as the **"relevant teacher".** This is normally the class teacher. However, in particular or exceptional circumstances the principal may decide to nominate another teacher as the "relevant teacher".

Incidents of bullying which occur **outside the school will only be dealt with** under this policy if they have a **negative impact within the school.**

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour,
Staff will consider the following questions:

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 all three questions is yes, the school's procedures **must be consistent** with the following approach.

Reporting Bullying Behaviour

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any member of staff
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher
- Teaching and non-teaching staff including secretary, special needs assistants (SNAs), cleaners **must report any incidents of bullying behaviour** witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

The relevant teacher may liaise with the **Bí Cineálta Liaison Officers** responsible for bullying to support the teacher in dealing with any incidents of bullying.

Investigating and addressing incidents:

1.Investigation Process

- The relevant teacher will exercise professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and to decide on the most appropriate resolution in a fair and consistent manner.
- All templates needed for the reporting and feedback of bullying will be available on **Aladdin** under the heading **'Bí Cineálta – Reports'**.
- Parents/guardians and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and to assist in resolving the issue and restoring relationships of parties involved as quickly as possible.
- Where feasible, investigations should take place outside the classroom to ensure the privacy of all involved parties.
- All interviews should be conducted sensitively and with due regard for the rights of all pupils. Pupils who are not directly involved may also provide useful information in this manner.
- The teacher will assess incidents by calmly asking: **what, where, when, who, and why,** setting a non-aggressive example in handling conflict.

2.Group Incidents

- If a group is involved, each member should be **interviewed individually at first.**
- After individual interviews, the teacher should conduct a group meeting where each pupil provides their account of what occurred to ensure clarity of each other's statements.
- The teacher must check in individually with each group member afterward to ensure they are **supported and protected** from possible group pressure or retaliation.

3.Written Accounts

- Pupils involved may be asked to submit written statements outlining their version of events to aid in clarity and documentation.

4.Communication with Parents/Guardians

- When bullying is confirmed, the teacher will **inform the parents/guardians of all parties** at an early stage and keep them updated on further developments.

- The school should give parents/guardians an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the decisions being taken by the school and supports provided to the pupils.
- In circumstances where student's express concerns about their parents being informed, the school will develop an appropriate plan to support the student.

5.Responding to Bullying Behaviour

- If a pupil has engaged in bullying, they will be informed they are in breach of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy.
- Efforts will be made to help the pupil understand the impact of their behaviour from the victim's perspective.
- Disciplinary action, where necessary, will be treated as a private matter between the pupil involved, their parents/guardians, and the relevant staff.
- In line with our school's Code of Behaviour, bullying is treated as a serious misdemeanor, and disciplinary measures will follow the procedures outlined in the policy.

6.When a Student Requests No Formal Action

- A student may report bullying but request that staff **'do nothing' beyond watching out for them**, due to fear of escalation or identification.
- In such situations, staff must respond with empathy/discretion, working closely with the student to:
  1. **Agree on appropriate next steps,**
  2. **Develop a plan for parental communication, and**
  3. **Ensure the student feels safe and supported at all times.**

Follow-Up Procedures

In assessing whether the bullying case has been adequately resolved, the relevant teacher must consider:

- If the bullying behaviour has **ceased.**
- If the issues and relationships between parties have been **resolved/restored**, as far as possible.
- **Feedback** from students, parents/guardians, and school leadership (to also be documented on Aladdin).
- **If bullying is still taking place, sanctions and disciplinary measures will follow in line with the Code of Behaviour Policy.**

- **Follow-up meetings** with the involved parties should happen **separately** within **20 school days** of the initial intervention, with potential for a joint meeting later if appropriate.
- If **parents/guardians are not satisfied**, they must be referred to the **school's complaints procedures policy.**
- If complaints procedures are exhausted, schools must inform parents of their right to contact 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):

Support Strategies (Chapter 6 of *Bí Cineálta*)

Whole-School Approaches:

- Promote a **"telling school"** culture.
- Encourage students to be **upstanders, not bystanders**.
- Use a variety of **class-based programmes** (e.g., Stay Safe, Walk Tall, FUSE).

Support for Students **Who Experience Bullying:**

- Staff follow *Bí Cineálta* policy.
- Regular **check-ins** and **reassurance** that bullying is not their fault.
- One-on-one support with trusted staff.
- Support in building new or stronger **peer groups**.
- Clear **communication** throughout the process.

Support for Students **Who Witness Bullying:**

- Help them understand the role they can play.
- Reinforce the **"telling school"** approach.
- Teach **empathy** and ensure **confidentiality**.
- Encourage strategies like "**Stand up and Speak out**" from the **FUSE** programme.

Support for Students **Who Display Bullying Behaviour:**

- Handle the process **impartially**.
- Support and **listen** to the student.
- Encourage **accountability** and ownership.
- Apply tailored **intervention programmes**.

Maintain clear and consistent **communication.**

Documentation and Child Protection

- **All incidents** will be **documented**: type of behaviour, time/place, dated actions taken, supports provided and any follow up feedback.

Child protection concerns must be escalated immediately in line with *Child Protection Procedures for 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: _____ Date: _____

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Principal)