



St. Joseph's CBS • Sunday's Gate • Drogheda

Bí Cineálta Policy

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of St. Joseph's C.B.S. has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

This policy fully complies with the requirements of *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2024*.

The board of management acknowledges that bullying behaviour interferes with the rights of the child as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We all, as a school community, have a responsibility to work together to prevent and address bullying behaviour and to deal with the negative impact of bullying behaviour.

We are committed to ensuring that all students who attend our school are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our students is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our students and we are fully committed to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

We confirm that we will, in accordance with our obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the harassment of students or staff on any of the nine grounds specified: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

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

Catholic schools have a distinctive understanding of the human person, recognising that every person is created in God's image and likeness and has inherent dignity as a child of God. This is the basis for ensuring each person 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 all have an indispensable 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 definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the *Bí Cineálta* procedures.)

St. Joseph's C.B.S. 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	Training day – ½ school day closure. 4 th April 2025	Oide resources and discussion materials.
Students	Kiva questionnaires yearly	Online surveys.
Parents	Parent Questionnaires March 2025	Newsletter/email and website
Board of Management	Procedures / information June 2025	Procedures issued by email. DESY/ CPSMA resources.
Date policy was approved: June 19 th 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: New policy and procedures adopted June 2025		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by this 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):

In developing 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 the school in a real way.

This 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 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 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.

5.1. Culture and environment

In St. Joseph's C.B.S. we believe a positive and inclusive school culture and environment is essential to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

- The school environment should be a space where students and school staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported.
- Relationships between all members of the school community should be based on respect, care, integrity and trust.
- Open communication between the patron, boards of management, school staff, students and their parents help to foster a collaborative approach and shared responsibilities in relation to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.
- The school leadership team influences the school culture and set the standards and expectations for the school community when preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.
- Each member of school staff has a responsibility to develop and maintain a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and to take a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.
- Students can shape the school culture by promoting kindness and inclusion within their peer group and maintain a positive and supportive school environment for all.
- Parents, as active partners in their child's education, can help foster an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated through promoting empathy and respect.

A Telling Environment

In St. Joseph's C.B.S students through engagement with the Kiva anti bullying program supports a 'telling' environment. Schools should be safe environments where reporting of bullying behaviour is encouraged.

A Trusted Adult

The concept of "a trusted adult" can be an effective strategy to encourage students to report if they or another student is experiencing bullying behaviour. This is covered in Kiva lessons and Stay safe lessons throughout the school year.

- Staff could support this strategy by letting students know that they can talk to them. Students who witness bullying behaviour should be supported and encouraged to report the behaviour to a trusted adult in the school so that the behaviour can be addressed. At primary level in our school this may be the class teacher or SET teacher.
- Students who witness bullying behaviour on social media have an important role in helping to address the behaviour by reporting the witnessed behaviour to a trusted adult. The trusted adult should reassure the student that they have done the right thing by reporting the behaviour.
- The trusted adult should, without delay, inform the Kiva team and Principal.
- The trusted adult should continue to support the student, as appropriate, while the behaviour is being addressed by the relevant member of staff.

Creating safe physical spaces in schools

The creation of safe physical spaces supports psychological safety and is an important measure to prevent bullying behaviour.

- Spaces that have a clear line of sight make it easier for school staff to supervise students.
- St. Joseph's C.B.S takes the following measures to create safe physical spaces:
 - > ensure good lighting is present to avoid dark corners or spaces
 - > remove visual barriers from windows such as posters
 - > improve the visibility of school staff who are supervising at break times including during yard duty
 - > St. Joseph's C.B.S schools wellbeing team promote the school's values such as equality, diversity, inclusion, respect and kindness through the display board created by the wellbeing committee in consultation with pupils and the display board in the front reception area.

Supervision

Appropriate supervision is an important measure to help prevent and address bullying behaviour.

- St. Joseph's C.B.S takes all reasonable measures to ensure the safety of their students and to supervise students when students are attending school or attending school activities.
- A yard duty rota is issued and clearly displayed in the staffroom. This rota is very explicit and designates areas for each teacher to supervise both for outdoor and indoor (wet day) supervision.

5.2 Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

Teaching and learning that is collaborative and respectful should be promoted.

- Students at St. Joseph's C.B.S have regular opportunities to work in small groups with their peers, which can help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy among students.
- The curricular subjects offered to students provide opportunities to foster inclusion and respect for diversity.
- The Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) curricula at primary level aim to foster students' wellbeing, self-confidence, sense of belonging and to develop students' sense of personal responsibility for their own behaviour and actions.
- Students' social and emotional learning (SEL) skills can be improved through the SPHE curriculum and the religion curriculum – Grow in love.
- Students in St. Joseph's C.B.S have the opportunity to engage in student council, sports teams, active schools activities, chess group, school choir, nurture groups and green schools activities to develop their sense of self-worth.
- Children in all classes from 1st to 6th complete anti-bullying lessons as part of the KiVa programme in the time allocated to the S.P.H.E curriculum.

5.3 Policy and planning

The wellbeing of the school community should be at the heart of school policies and plans.

- Chapter 4 details the requirements of a school's Bí Cineálta policy and student - friendly Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.
- There are a range of other policies such as the school's acceptable use policy, supervision policy, special education teaching policy and Code of Behaviour that can support implementation of a school's Bí Cineálta policy.
- Supporting the participation of students in the development and implementation of school policies and plans can help increase awareness and ensure effective implementation.
- Engaging in appropriate teacher professional learning courses can support school staff to prevent and address bullying behaviour.
- School staff should also share their experiences and examples of best practice.
- There is a range of training available for school staff which relates to promoting inclusion and diversity in schools.

5.4 Relationships and partnerships

Strong interpersonal connections are a vital part of effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. These interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as student councils, school clubs, parents' associations and student support teams.

- The following structures in St. Joseph's C.B.S strengthen relationships and partnerships between members of the school community:
 - > age appropriate awareness initiatives that look at the causes and impacts of bullying behaviour including those dealing with navigating friendships/identity - based bullying, racist bullying, homophobic/transphobic bullying, sexism and sexual harassment – Kiva program
- > supporting the active participation of students in school life
- > 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 the education system or due to language or cultural barriers- HSCL teacher
- > conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying
- > supporting activities that build empathy, respect and resilience
- > encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring – shared reading older/ younger classes
- > promoting acts of kindness

5.5 Preventing cyberbullying behaviour

Technology and social media have provided many positive opportunities for entertainment, social engagement and education. Technology is a part of life that can impact even the youngest members of society. However, the increase in the use of technology has led to students becoming increasingly vulnerable to cyberbullying or unacceptable online

behaviour.

- St. Joseph's C.B.S proactively address these challenges by promoting digital literacy, and fostering safe online environments.
- Strategies to prevent cyberbullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:
 - > implementing the SPHE curriculum
 - > having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online – using webwise resources
 - > 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* - promoted by SCP and HSCL
 - > holding Internet safety week to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour.

5.6 Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour

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

- conducting workshops and seminars for, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour
- encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic behavior
- Making use of resources including the 'Different Families Same Love' poster and All Together Now programme in 6th class

5.7 Preventing racist bullying behaviour

Schools have become much more culturally diverse over the last number of decades. Students attending schools come from many different cultures and backgrounds. Students from diverse backgrounds may face discrimination and prejudice and may be subject to racist bullying behaviour.

Strategies to prevent racist bullying behavior at St. Joseph's C.B.S 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 behavior
- 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

- ensuring that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural
- Backgrounds
- St Joseph's C.B.S engages with many different programmes and initiatives to support inclusion, diversity and promoting a sense of belonging for all our pupils including and not limited to – School of Sanctuary, Show Racism the Red Card, Multicultural Week and Traveller Pride Events

5.8 Preventing sexist bullying behaviour

St. Joseph's C.B.S. will focus on gender equality as part of the school's measures to create a supportive and respectful environment.

Strategies to prevent sexist bullying behavior at St. Joseph's C.B.S. 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 contributions of all students
- organising awareness campaigns, workshops and presentations on gender equality and respect
- encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home

5.9 Preventing sexual harassment

Preventing sexual harassment requires an approach that focuses on education, awareness and clear enforceable policies. Schools must make it clear that there is a zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment. 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 the Bí Cineálta procedures):

Supervision rota
AUP policy
Code of behaviour
SET policy

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Principal, class teachers, SET team and Kiva team.

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

The guide at Appendix C page 60 BÍ Cineálta procedures to prevent bullying behaviour will be used to address bullying behaviour.

. 6.1. Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the teacher should consider the following: 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 also be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident. The definition of bullying provided in Chapter 2 sets out clear criteria to identify bullying behaviour.
- The questions included in Appendix C can further assist schools in this regard.

Incidents can occur where behaviour is unacceptable and hurtful but the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies that deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

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):

6.2 Where bullying behaviour has occurred

A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school.

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. A student's agency or sense of power can be decreased when they experience or witness bullying behaviour. When a student tells an adult that they feel that they are experiencing bullying behaviour they may feel that they are taking back some control over what is happening to them. It is very important that a student's agency is not decreased further by adults deciding what will happen next without listening to the student and involving them in deciding on the actions that will be taken.

St. Joseph's C.B.S is a KiVa School and had adopted the KiVa Anti Bullying Programme and we follow the approaches outlined in the programme when incidents of bullying occur.

The following principles must be adhered to when addressing bullying behavior

- 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 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

6.4 Determining if bullying behaviour has ceased

The teacher must engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress following the initial intervention.

Important factors to consider as part of the review 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.

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 supports to take effect.

In some cases, relationships may never be restored to how they were before the bullying behaviour occurred.

If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students and parents and agree to meet again over an agreed timeframe until the bullying behaviour has ceased.

Where it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school should consider 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.

6.5 Recording bullying behavior

All incidents of bullying behaviour should be recorded. The record should document the form (Section 2.5) and type (See Section 2.7) of bullying behaviour, if known, where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students and their parents.

The record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour. It should document the review with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and their parents in relation to this.

It is important to document the date of each of these engagements and the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased.

Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted. These records should be retained in accordance with the school's record keeping policy and in line with data protection regulations.

Where a Student Support File exists for a student, schools are encouraged to place a copy of the record on the student's support file. This will assist the school's student support team, where they exist, in providing a consistent and holistic response to support the wellbeing of the students involved. Where a Student Support Plan exists, the plan should

be updated to incorporate response strategies and associated supports.

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)