



Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

St. Joseph's Convent NS Charleville

The Board of Management of St. Joseph's Convent NS has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2024*. This policy was drafted following consultation with staff, parents, students and the Board of Management of our school during the academic year 2024/2025.

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. Ireland ratified the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child¹ in September 1992. In doing this we committed to promote, protect and fulfil the rights of children. Bullying is a children's rights issue. Bullying interferes with the following rights of the child:

- The right to freedom of expression (Article 13)
- The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 14)
- The right to freedom of association and freedom of peaceful assembly (Article 15)
- The right to privacy (Article 16)
- The right to be protected from all forms of abuse and neglect (Article 19)
- The right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health (Article 24)
- The right to education (Article 28)
- The right to enjoy their own culture, religion or language (Article 30)

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 (pg.17 Guidelines)

Bullying is targeted behaviour, online or offline, that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature and can have lasting effects on the child experiencing the behaviour. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between

two people or groups of people in society. It is behaviour which is deliberate in nature and is unwanted. It is not accidental or reckless behaviour .

There are many different methods of bullying behaviour, including physical, verbal and relational forms, and it can take place online and offline. There are also many different motives for bullying behaviour which can be understood on an individual level (for example, desire for dominance, status, revenge) and/or on a societal level (for example, identity based bullying such as racist, disablist, sexist or LGBTQ+ bullying). Bullying behaviour in schools is often strongly influenced by attitudes, behaviours, norms and power dynamics that are deeply ingrained in our society.

The Core elements of the definition are defined below:

> Targeted behaviour

Bullying is deliberate, unwanted behaviour that causes harm to others, and where the student displaying bullying behaviour knows that their behaviour is or will be perceived as harmful by the child or young person experiencing the behaviour. Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. The harm can be physical (for example, personal injury, damage to or loss of property), social (for example. withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion) and/or emotional (for example, low self esteem, depression, anxiety) and can have a serious and long term negative impact on the student experiencing the bullying behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying but, importantly, must still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour.

> Repeated behaviour

Bullying takes the form of a systematic pattern of behaviour which is repeated over time. Single offline incidents of intentional negative behaviour involving an imbalance of power are not considered bullying but must still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour. 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 behaviour.

> Imbalance of power

In incidents of bullying, the student experiencing the bullying behaviour finds it hard to defend themselves as a result of the abuse of a real or perceived imbalance of power. This imbalance of power may manifest itself through differences in size, strength, age, ability, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, race, ethnic origin including membership of the Traveller and/or Roma communities, sexual orientation, The harm can be :

- Physical (eg: personal injury, damage to or loss of property)
- Social: (eg: withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion)
- Emotional: (eg: low self esteem, depression, anxiety)

Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour:

- A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards a student is not bullying behaviour. However, a single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be visible to a wide audience and has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and so becomes a repeated behaviour.
- o If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour, but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying, but , importantly, must be addressed under the school 's code of behaviour.
- o Some students with special educational needs, may have social communication difficulties which may make them communicate their needs through behaviours that can hurt themselves or others. It is important to note that these behaviours are not deliberate or planned, but in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they cannot control.
- o Disagreement between students is not considered bullying **unless** it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Types of Bullying:

There are many different types of bullying behaviour. These can include directing bullying at someone focused on the following: disability, exceptional ability, gender identity, LGBTQ+ , physical appearance, racism, poverty status, religious identity, sexism and sexual harassment. This is not an exhaustive list.

Bullying can be Direct:

- Physical: pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping students. Physical assault. Destruction of personal property.
- Verbal: continual name calling which insults, humiliates the student – this may refer to physical appearance, size, clothes, gender, accent, academic ability, race or ethnic origin.
- Written: Writing insulting remarks in public places, passing notes or drawings about the student.
- Extortion: where something is obtained through force or threats **Bullying can be Indirect:**
- Exclusion: where a student is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded or ignored by a student or group of students.
- Relational: Where a student's attempts to form friendships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined, threats, non-verbal gesturing, malicious gossip, spreading rumours, silent treatment and manipulation of friend groups etc can all form relational bullying for a student.

Online bullying behaviour:

Cyber bullying is carried out via text, direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, e-mail, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chat rooms and other online technologies.

This can include:

- Sending or sharing of insulting and offensive or intimidating messages or images via online means as mentioned above.
- Posting information which is personal, private or sensitive without consent.
- Making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other students.
- Exclude/disrupt access to a student on purpose on online chat groups/access to accounts/from an online game.

When bullying behaviour becomes a child protection concern

Section 10 of the Children First Act, 2015 places a statutory obligation on schools, as a “provider of a relevant service” to ensure, as far as practicable, that each child attending the school is safe from harm while attending school or otherwise participating in school activities.

Teachers registered with the Teaching Council are Mandated Persons under the Children First Act. They have a legal obligation under the Act to report harm of children that meets or is above a defined threshold to Tusla, and also to assist Tusla if requested, in assessing a concern which is the subject of a mandated report. If the concern does not reach the threshold for mandated reporting, but a teacher feels that it is a reasonable concern about the welfare or protection of a child, a report should be made to Tusla under the Children First National Guidance. The Children First National Guidance applies to everyone. All school staff and volunteers must report reasonable concerns to Tusla.

The *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (Revised 2023)* provide that all school staff should report reasonable concerns to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) who may take advice and/or report the concerns to Tusla. If the staff member is a registered teacher and the concern is at or above the threshold of harm at which a mandated report must be made the concern shall be submitted as a mandated report to Tusla jointly by the DLP and the registered teacher. See Chapter 5 of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (Revised 2023)*.

The Children First Act defines harm as assault, ill treatment, neglect or sexual abuse and covers single and multiple instances.

The threshold of harm is reached where the mandated person believes that a child’s health, development or welfare have been, or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected.

The Children First National Guidance document 2017 is the national, overarching guidance with regard to child safeguarding. The Guidance provides that in cases of serious instances of bullying where the behaviour is regarded as possibly abusive, a referral may need to be made to Tusla or An Garda Síochána as appropriate.

Generally, bullying behaviour can be addressed without the involvement of Tusla. However, bullying behaviour may become a child protection concern when it results in significant physical or emotional harm, or where it becomes a persistent and severe problem and measures taken to address it are not effective.

In determining when bullying behaviour should be reported to Tusla the following factors should be considered:

- > the impact on the child
- > protective/appropriate action taken by the parents
- > protective/appropriate action taken by the school
- > engagement of child/family with support services such as NEPS

If there is doubt about whether bullying behaviour is a child protection concern schools should contact Tusla’s social work department for advice. This will enable the social worker to explore the situation with school staff and provide advice on the best course of action.

Where bullying behaviour can occur

Bullying behaviour can happen anywhere, online or offline and at any time, but there are certain places and times where bullying behaviour can be more likely to occur. These can include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

Inside School

School physical environments can have a significant influence on social relationships among students and can impact on the ability of school staff to effectively prevent and address bullying. Well designed school environments play a vital role in preventing bullying behaviour and promoting inclusion, positive relationships, and a safe and supportive learning environment.

School yard: Bullying behaviour can take place in the school yard. School grounds with hidden or obscure parts may provide an environment where bullying behaviour is more likely to occur. Many common school yard games present opportunities for bullying behaviour because of their physical nature. Continuing provocation may lead to a physical fight and in some cases the student experiencing bullying behaviour may appear to be the aggressor as they give vent to their frustration.

In the classroom: Bullying behaviour can take place in class. It may occur subtly through glances, looks, sniggers or may take the more overt form of physical intimidation or deliberate isolation. Bullying behaviour may also occur between class periods when the students or the teacher moves.

Other areas: Bullying behaviour can take place in other areas such as toilets, corridors, cloakrooms, locker areas, changing rooms, showers, gym, canteen and assembly hall.

Outside 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.

Coming to and from school: Bullying behaviour can occur in the area immediately outside the school, the local shops and the wider local area. Bullying behaviour can take place at the bus stop or on the journey to and from school whether the students are walking, cycling or on school buses.

Bullying behaviour can also take place in organised clubs and groups outside of school such as sports clubs.

Online bullying (cyberbullying) behaviour, along with all other types of bullying behaviour, can cause significant harm and can have a lasting impact on students who experience this behaviour. Access to technology means that online bullying behaviour can happen anytime, and the student's home is no longer a safe place. The nature of these technologies means that digital content can be shared and seen by a very wide audience almost instantly and the content is almost impossible to delete permanently.

Signs of when a student may be experiencing bullying behaviour

Signs that may indicate that a student is experiencing bullying behaviour include but are not limited to the following:

- anxiety about travelling to and from school; for example, physical illnesses; for example anxiety or distress; for example, requesting parents to drive or collect them, changing travel routes, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school
- not wanting to go to school, refusal to attend
- a change in how the student performs in school, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school
- pattern of physical illnesses for example; headaches, stomach aches
- unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour which may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or after school holidays
- visible signs of anxiety or distress for example; stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting > spontaneous out of character comments about either students or teachers
- possessions missing or damaged
- increased requests for money or stealing money
- unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing
- reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling them

The above signs do not necessarily mean that a student is experiencing bullying behaviour. However, if these signs occur over a period of time or if a number occurs together, it may be an indication that the student is experiencing bullying behaviour.

Students who may be more at risk of experiencing bullying behaviour

It is important to note that bullying behaviour can be experienced by anyone. Bullying behaviour can be directed at individuals for no obvious reason, or it can be more overt based on a student's identity or societal issues.

Some students with special educational needs may have difficulties recognising bullying behaviour has occurred. Some students with complex needs may lack awareness of social dynamics leading them to trust others implicitly. Consequently, these students may be more at risk of experiencing bullying behaviour.

Schools should consider the composition of their student population when identifying who may be more at risk of experiencing bullying behaviour so that preventative strategies can be tailored to support students at risk. At risk groups can include:

- > students who have additional learning needs
- > students with disabilities
- > students from an ethnic minority background and migrant students > students who are members of the Traveller and Roma communities
- > students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+)
- > students who practise or display a religious faith
- > students experiencing homelessness
- > students experiencing health or mental health issues

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	May 2025	Questionnaire via Google Docs was sent out to all staff
Students	May 2025	Questionnaire via Google Docs given to all students in the school
Parents	May 2025	Parent Questionnaire was sent out Via Aladdin to all parents
Board of Management	2024-2025	
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 **Culture and Environment: We strive to :**

- Create a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.
- Involve parents as active partners in fostering an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated.
- Support the idea that our school is a telling environment.
- Promote the concept of a trusted adult – stay safe linkage – who to tell.
- Create safe spaces in our school building and yards – visibility
- Incorporate artwork and signs to promote our school values – creation of a school charter promoting rights – equality, inclusion and respect.
- Encourage a sense of belonging with ownership over their own space through art and creativity.
- Create a positive school culture and climate which is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity; encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and promotes respectful relationships across the school community;

Ways in which we work to achieve these goals are as follows:

- Staff are briefed on the uniform approach we must take to handle all reports of bullying – this is distributed to staff and a copy is displayed on the Staff Room notice board for ease of access also.
- Anti Bullying week activities such as Random acts of Kindness homework, Poster making, slogan making, etc
- Playground helpers – students in higher classes volunteer to support younger classes on the yard to help with games and positive interactions. Minders at lunchtime also.
- Child Friendly Anti- Bullying Policy was formed with pupil and parent input and is distributed to parents, children and staff to discuss. This policy outlines various ways to tell.
- Parents receive information at times regarding useful information on Anti Bullying.
- Stay safe and SPHE lessons focusing on positive behaviour form part of curricular content in all classes.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils.
- Class and School Charter development as well as notice board to promote kindness and build responsibility amongst pupils.

Curriculum (teaching and learning)

We strive to :

- Provide teaching and promote learning which is collaborative and respectful, fostering inclusion and respect for diversity.
- Display a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact.

Ways in which we work to achieve this:

- Teach SPHE and RSE content which fosters student's well-being and self confidence as well as promoting personal responsibility for their own behaviours and actions.
- Model respectful behaviour towards colleagues, pupils and visitors in our school environment.
- Curricular and Extra-curricular activities can help to develop a sense of self worth, working together, inclusion and respect.
- Students are given regular opportunities to work in small groups with peers, which can help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy.
- Acknowledgment of our diverse school population – celebrating diversity and culture in our school through art, displays, photographs, international events.
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and o explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.

- Supports for staff;
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

Policy and planning

The aim of ST. Joseph's Convent NS Bi Cinealta policy is

- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils, parents/guardians.
- To promote a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To ensure appropriate supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
- To develop procedures for noting, investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To implement a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- To work with appropriate agencies in countering all forms of bullying and promoting anti bullying behaviour.

6

- The Acceptable Use Policy, Supervision policy, Special Education Policy and Code of Behaviour as well as the Agree to Agree policy all support the implementation of the Bi Cinealta policy.
- Effective leadership is a key component with Principal, Deputy Principal, DLP, DDLP, and all middle management focused on supporting the implementation of this policy.

Relationships and Partnerships

- Interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as our parents' association, our walking bus, our cycling bus, our various and multiple student committees and groups.
- Age and stage appropriate awareness initiatives that engage the student body in looking at their own behaviour – promoting acts of kindness and friendship, being an active help to others and looking at the causes of and impact of bullying during SPHE lessons.
- Conducting workshops and seminars for students, staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying.
- Encouraging peer mentoring and peer support
- Supporting active participation of students in school life and active participation of parents in school life also.
- Engaging parents and students in actively contributing to the formation of a Child Friendly Anti Bullying Policy to make them active participants in promotion of and

discussion of useful ways to identify and reduce bullying behaviour and highlight procedure and how to deal with it if it does occur.

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

Preventing Cyber Bullying:

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 Convent NS proactively tries to 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

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 16.²²

For the purposes of data collection, students between the age of 13 and 16 years old must have parental permission to sign up to social media services where companies use the legal basis of consent to collect, process and store users' data. Most social media platforms and services have a minimum age requirement and for the majority of these services it is 13 years' old. Therefore technically, children under the age of 13 should not have a social media account.

It is important for their child's safety, that parents are aware of their children's use of technology including smartphones and gaming consoles.

Homophobic/Transphobic bullying:

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

Strategies used in St. Joseph's Convent NS 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

Racist bullying

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 used in St. Joseph's Convent NS 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

Strategies used in St. Joseph's Convent NS 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 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

In addition to above mentioned strategies, the school has the following in place to prevent and address bullying:

- Staff at all times endeavour to encourage pupils to show respect for each other.
- Implementation of the SPHE curriculum.
- Positive self-esteem is fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences, by acknowledging good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success.
- Digital Media Policy includes learning about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship. AUP also developed for technology in our school.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed regularly with the pupils.
- Staff are particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of bullying/ being bullied.
- All disclosed incidents of bullying are investigated thoroughly and consistently by following the correct procedure as outlined to staff and recorded on Aladdin using the template for this.
- School wide awareness raising on all aspects of bullying, supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extracurricular activities.
- Involvement of pupils in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Kindness/ anti-bullying week, and other activities that can help to pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell. Promotion of the school motto of "If you don't report, you support"
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Refer to appropriate online behaviour when using devices and in SPHE lessons.
- Promote online safety events or material for parents
- The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school e.g. www.tacklebullying.ie, www.antibullyingcentre.ie>fuse, www.webwise.ie
- Shared folder of resources for teaching of bullying including lessons from above websites – shared Google drive for all teachers to access.
- Challenge gender- stereotypes – equal participation of all. Equal recognition.
- Raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour and encourage students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour.
- Foster a culture where diversity is celebrated and students "see themselves" in the school environment.
- Ensuring the library has material with reflects our diverse school population from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
- Modelling of respectful behaviour by staff of all irrespective of sex.

- Making clear that our school has a zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment of any kind with enforceable policy - See Code of Behaviour.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

- The class teacher will oversee recording of bullying reports for students in their class – this includes using the procedure guidelines to investigate reports of bullying and recording bullying behaviour on the correct form
- The DDLP will follow up after twenty days to investigate if bullying has ceased.
- All staff will be vigilant to bullying behaviour.
- Principal will inform the Board of Management of incidences of Bullying.
- Deputy principal /SENCO

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, we will deal with it in accordance with our 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, St. Joseph's Convent NS will 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.

The following principles must be adhered to when addressing bullying behaviour:

- > 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

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

All meetings between the relevant teacher and the parties involved will have another member of the staff present for recording purposes.

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:

The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

- a. While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the 'Relevant Teacher(s)', the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' will use his/her/their professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
- b. If it is established by the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' that bullying has occurred, the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved. The 'Relevant Teacher' must inform the Principal.

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). With this in mind the school's procedures are as follows:

- In investigating and dealing with bullying the teacher(s) will exercise his/her/their judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type if it has and how best the situation might be resolved.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the 'Relevant Teacher(s)'. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report instances of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, SNAs, caretakers and cleaners are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them to the Class Teacher.
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
- On being informed of an alleged incident of bullying, the teacher dealing with the report will first interview the victim(s) and discuss the feelings which the victim(s) experienced because of the bullying behaviour.

- Initial investigations of bullying will be done in class where possible but some incidents might be best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' should seek answers to questions of what, where, who, when and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non- aggressive manner.
- If a group is involved each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about the other's statements.
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after an interview by the teacher.
- Where the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' has/have determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- The "Relevant Teacher" does not apportion blame but should make an effort to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter.
- When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the "Relevant Teacher" will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information. This may be recorded on Aladdin under the Bi Cinealta tab, and uploading a file "Alleged Bullying Behaviour Report".
- If a pupil chooses to continue the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer be considered a once off occurrence. In this event parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted. The school should give parents an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for the pupil.
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may be arranged separately with a view to bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
- Depending on the seriousness of the bullying some or all of Level 2 Supportive Interventions will be utilized (See School Code of Behaviour)
- Repeated incidents of bullying behaviour will result in the imposition of sanctions. Such sanctions will be proportionate to the seriousness of the bullying behaviour. It must be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils

and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required that this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.

- The School will maintain care for the victim over time. This will be done by speaking to the child a number of weeks after the incident to check on their continuing welfare. The child's parents will also be consulted.
- If a child makes a report of bullying, but asks that nothing is to be done about it, the relevant teacher will support the child appropriately to explore how it will be handled sensitively and how parents may be notified. If a parent does so, they must submit in writing that they require no further action to be taken, but even so, the school may still deem it necessary to be investigated and handled appropriately.

Recording bullying behaviour

All incidents of bullying behaviour should be recorded. The record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known, where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students and their parents. St. Joseph's Convent NS Staff have devised a reporting template which is being used throughout the school.

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.

Complaint process

If a parent is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with these procedures, they should be referred to the school's complaints procedure.

In the event that a student and/or parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, a student and/or parent 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

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves a whole school approach. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, no one intervention/support programme works in all situations.

Supporting Bullied pupils:

- Ending the bullying behaviour,
- Fostering respect for bullied pupils and all pupils,
- Fostering greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils, -
Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through annual awareness-raising programmes,
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations,
- Making adequate counselling facilities available to pupils who need it in a timely manner (subject to available funding)
- Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).

Supporting Bullying pupils:

- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a 'clean sheet,'
- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honorable thing and giving them praise for this,
- Making adequate counseling facilities available to help those who need it learn other ways of meeting their needs besides violating the rights of others,
- Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school),
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth,
- In dealing with negative behavior in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child,
- In dealing with bullying behaviour, seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a 'clean sheet' and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.

Oversight

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*. Reports of bullying behaviour will be done using the template that has been devised by the staff.

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.

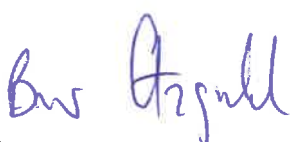
This policy is available to our school community on the school's website and in hard copy on request. A student friendly version of this policy is displayed in the school and is also available on our website and in hard copy on request.

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: 

(Chairperson of board of management)

Date: 16/6/25.

Signed: 
(Principal)

Date: 16/6/25