



St. Joseph's N.S. Dromore

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of St. Joseph's N.S. Dromore 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. 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: Review of our Bi Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

All members of our school community were provided with the opportunity to input into the review of this policy.

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):

5.1. Culture and Environment

In St. Joseph's N.S. we foster a range of practices in order to create an environment where bullying behaviour is less likely to occur.

We strive to:

- Create a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and promote the idea that our school is a telling environment
- Create a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour by having clear behavioural expectations
- Involve parents as active partners in order to reinforce the anti-bullying message at home
- Ensure teachers model respectful and inclusive behaviour, setting a positive example for students
- Implement student-led initiatives which can help to resolve minor conflicts and foster friendships

We achieve these goals by:

- Displaying simple, student-friendly rules and charters in classrooms and hallways that emphasise respect, kindness, and inclusion
- Promoting the concept of the 'trusted adult' (who to tell)
- Circulating useful information to parents regarding Anti Bullying
- Creating designated spaces for group games or activities that encourage children to play together, reducing instances of exclusion
- Holding school assemblies which focus on themes like friendship, respect, anti-bullying, good news and well-being, using stories, role-plays, or guest speakers
- Creating buddy systems between senior classes and junior classes through a friendship week initiative and by developing peer leadership groups to promote positive behaviour among the students

- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils in class, at break times and during transitional periods

5.2 Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

In St. Joseph's N.S. we aim to integrate an Anti-Bullying message into the curriculum, and we do this through the promotion of an inclusive learning environment for our students

Curriculum and learning:

Social, Personal & Health Education (SPHE)

- At all class levels we implement the Stay Safe program, which teaches children how to recognise, respond to, and report bullying
- The Weaving Wellbeing and Walk Tall programs are used in our school to promote self-esteem, resilience, and respect for others
- Teachers emphasise lessons based on the themes of friendship and respect to teach strategies that promote positive peer interactions, empathy, emotional regulation and inclusion

Religious Education

- The Grow in Love program is taught daily at all class levels. This program emphasises kindness, compassion, and treating others with dignity

English & Drama

- Use storytelling and role-play to explore themes of kindness, respect, and standing up to bullying
- Use books and stories that address bullying in order to facilitate class discussions which explore positive ways to resolve conflicts

Physical Education (PE)

- Promote teamwork and co-operation through structured group activities and inclusive games

- Teach respect and fairness in competitive sports to prevent exclusionary behaviour

Digital Learning & Cyber Safety

- Integrate Webwise and HTML Heroes into ICT lessons to teach safe and respectful online behaviour
- Educate students on responsible social media use (where applicable) and the impact of cyberbullying

Inclusive Learning Environment:

- Promote collaboration and discourage exclusion through mixed group work and paired work
- Involve students in decision-making through the promotion of student voice and student leadership (e.g., Active Schools Committee, Green Schools Committee, Student Council, etc.)
- Teach about different cultures, abilities, and identities to foster respect, understanding and to celebrate diversity

5.3 Policy and Planning

Through the creation of the Bí Cineálta Policy, we at St. Joseph's N.S. aim to:

- Raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils, parents/guardians
- Support the participation of students in the development and implementation of the Bí Cineálta policy through the development of a child friendly policy, which will increase whole school awareness and ensure effective implementation
- To promote a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour
- Develop procedures for noting, investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour
- Ensure teachers and staff receive training to identify, address, and prevent bullying behaviour effectively
- Annually review and update the policy to reflect emerging challenges (e.g., changes in

technology and online interactions)

- Ensure that the school's Acceptable Use Policy, Special Education Teaching Policy, Admissions Policy and Code of Behaviour support its implementation
- Ensure that preventative structures are in place to prevent bullying behaviour (Anti-Cyber Bullying Policy, Code of Behaviour, effective supervision and monitoring, etc.)
- Ensure that effective leadership will be a key component with the Principal, Deputy Principal and APII post holder focused on supporting the implementation of this policy
- Establish a clear process for students and parents to report bullying confidentially
- Track bullying incidents to identify patterns and address recurring issues

5.4 Relationships and Partnerships

In St. Joseph's N.S. we believe that building strong relationships and partnerships is key to preventing bullying behaviour in our school. In order to promote these partnerships, we aim to:

- Engage with 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.
- Develop strong peer relationships among the students which will encourage inclusive friendships through a range of initiatives (group activities, cooperative learning, friendship week, student committees, playground pals, shared reading/buddy reading, 6th class buddies etc.)
- Foster strong teacher-student relationships to ensure that students feel genuine care from their teachers and that students feel comfortable reporting concerns relating to bullying
- Engage with parents regarding anti-bullying initiatives and encourage the active participation of parents in school life. Moreover, encouraging parents to reinforce the school's values of kindness and respect at home
- Share best practice with neighbouring schools to strengthen anti-bullying initiatives across the community
- Collaborate with outside agencies such as West Cork Child Development Services and the NCSE to share resources and gain assistance in handling serious bullying cases
- Link with local organisations and sports clubs to create a sense of community and

belonging for students

- Liaise with Garda Youth Officer in relation to cyber bullying

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

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):

5.5 Preventing cyberbullying behaviour

- Promoting digital citizenship through the effective implementation of the SPHE Curriculum
- Conducting open conversations with students about developing kind and respectful relationships online
- Promoting online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online

5.6 Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour

- Maintaining an inclusive physical environment such as displaying relevant posters
- Encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- Challenging gender-stereotypes

5.7 Preventing racist bullying behaviour

- Encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- Fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students 'see themselves' in their school community
- Encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour
- 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

5.8 Preventing sexist bullying behaviour

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

5.9 Preventing sexual harassment

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

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

The class teacher

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):

6.1. Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

To determine if bullying has occurred, staff should consider: **what happened, where, when, why**, and whether the behaviour was **targeted, intentional, and repeated**.

- The relevant teacher should engage with the students involved in the incident
- If multiple students are involved, they should first be engaged individually before meeting as a group.
- Students should provide a written account if appropriate.
- The school's definition of bullying and the Bullying Incident Form (Appendix 1) should be used to assess incidents.
- Some behaviours may be hurtful but not classified as bullying and should be addressed through the school's Code of Behaviour.

6.2 Where bullying behaviour has occurred

- Staff must act promptly when bullying is reported or witnessed.
- A record should be kept of the engagement with all involved including the initial 'Bullying Incident Report Form' (Appendix 1).
- This record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known (see Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the Bi Cineálta procedures), where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students involved and their parents
- The record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour
- Parents must be informed early, and their concerns considered in addressing the situation.
- While schools are not responsible for incidents occurring outside school hours, they must support affected students if the issue impacts school life.
- If the student displaying bullying behaviour is not a pupil of the school, staff should still support the affected student and engage with parents.
- Both the student experiencing bullying and the student displaying bullying behaviour should receive appropriate support.

6.3 Requests to take no action

- Students who are experiencing bullying behaviour are within their rights to request that no action is taken by the school. This may be to protect their identity or for safety concerns
- In these instances, it is important that the relevant school staff member shows empathy to the student
- The staff member should speak to the student and discuss possible steps going forward
- Regardless of the student's request, the parents of the student in question must be informed
- Parents may also request that no action is taken in relation to incidences of bullying. This request must be put in writing to the school
- The school may still decide to take action if it is believed that the instances of bullying behaviour have not ceased

6.4 Determining if bullying behaviour has ceased

- The school will engage with parents and students within 20 school days to update regarding the incidence of bullying behaviour
- A record should be kept of the engagement with all involved using the 'Bí Cineálta review form' (Appendix 2).
- A review of the effectiveness of the strategies used to combat bullying behaviour will be conducted
- A review of the relationship between the students involved in the incident will be conducted. It is important to note that the relationship between the students may not be restored
- Ongoing supervision may be required if the school believes that there is cause for concern
- If the bullying behaviour has not ceased a review with all the stakeholders will be conducted over an agreed timeframe
- If needed, the school's Code of Behaviour may be applied

6.5 Recording bullying behaviour

- All incidents of bullying will be recorded
- When recording instances of bullying the form and type of bullying will be recorded including

where and when the bullying occurred

- The time and date of the meeting with the students involved will be recorded
- The time and date of the meeting with the parents of the students involved will be recorded
- The views of the students and parents involved will be recorded
- The agreed actions will be recorded
- The school will complete a review to establish if the bullying behaviour has stopped - these engagements will be recorded and dated
- A note will be made about any engagement with external services and supports
- All records will be kept on file in the school and a copy will be placed in the students' school file

6.6 Complaint process

- If a parent is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed, they will be referred to the school's complaint procedure on the school's website
- Regarding the school's complaints procedure, additional information for parents and students is available at <https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/parental-complaints/>
- If the school's complaints procedure has been exhausted and a parent is still unsatisfied, they may complain to the ombudsman for children

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

The school'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 programs
- 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
- 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
- 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.

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: Margo Daly Date: 17/06/26
(Chairperson of the board of management)

Signed: Kevin Mulcahy Date: 17/06/2026
(Principal)

Appendix F

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

The Board of Management of Dromore NS confirms that the board of management's annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour and its implementation was completed at the board of management meeting of [date]. 17/06/2026

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

Signed: Margo Daly
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: Kevin Mulcahy
(Principal)

Date: 17/06/2026

Date: 17/06/2026

Date of next review: June, 2027.