Bí Cineálta Policy

Bi Cinealta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of St Brigid's JNS 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: 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	31st Jan 2025	Review by staff at half day session.
Students		Assembly
Parents	TBC	Sample group of parents at a meeting held in the school. Notification to all parents via communication system
Board of Management	30th April 2025	Board of Management Meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers		

Date policy was approved: April 2025

Date policy was last reviewed: April 2025

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by the school. These include strategies specifically aimed at preventing online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is, therefore, fully committed to preventing and tackling bullying behaviour under the 4 essential areas outlined in Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta document.

Culture and Environment

- A positive school culture and climate which –
    - is based on inclusivity and welcoming of difference and diversity
    - Is where students and staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported.
    - Fosters relationships between all members of the school community based on respect, care, integrity and trust
    - Promotes open communication to help foster a collaborative approach and shared responsibilities in relation to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.
- An effective leadership which influences the school culture and set the standards and expectations for the school community when preventing and addressing bullying behavior

- 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 shape the school culture by promoting kindness and inclusion
- Parents are active partners in the school's Bi Ciniealta approach by promoting empathy and respect for everyone.
- Encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment and a 'telling environment'.
- The school's physical environment is safe and well maintained.
- Appropriate supervision of students at all times helps to prevent and address bullying behaviour.
- Organising a mixture of possible activities for children during yard time.
- Structured approach to addressing and reviewing needs including behaviour needs/bullying behaviour via regular Care Team meetings
- Role of support teacher reserved for working with children with emotional and behavioural needs

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

- Teaching and learning that is collaborative and respectful is promoted
- The curriculum offered to students provides opportunities to foster inclusion and respect for diversity.
- The SPHE, RSE, and Stay Safe curricula aim to foster students' well being, self-confidence and sense of belonging and to develop student's sense of personal responsibility for their own behaviour and actions.
- Our school has designed an Anti-bullying lesson pack appropriate for the children we work with. Teachers will teach two specific anti-bullying lessons per term. The children's work will be displayed on notice boards to foster a whole school approach to anti bullying.
- Our school rules aim to develop friendship, inclusion and an anti-bullying ethos.
- We use Circle time and Circle Work to build empathy and respect in the classroom.
- Implementation of regular whole school awareness Brookfield Buddies week and Lucky to be me week.
- Positive reinforcement of behaviour through assemblies, Star of the week awards, whole class systems of positive reinforcement e.g. Golden Time/Dojo points etc
- Teachers will use behavioural management strategies, which focus on problem solving and enable pupils to take an active role in finding a solution to problems.

Policy and Planning

- The well being of the school community is at the heart of our school's policies and planning.
- There are a range of other policies including the Acceptable Use policy, Supervision policy, Special Education Teaching policy and Code of behaviour that can support implementation of the school's Bi Cinealta policy.
- Staff are encouraged to participate in regular CPD to support them in their prevention and addressing bullying behaviour. This can be done through Oide or Webwise.
- At the beginning of every year the staff will review the Bi Cinealta policy to make sure everyone is aware of the procedure/approach.

Relationships and Partnerships

- Strong interpersonal connections are a vital part of effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.
- In our school these are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as school clubs, parents' association and Care Team meetings.
- Staff act as role models of positive interactions and relationships

- Some of the initiative we engage in to strengthen relationships and partnerships between members of the school community include: HSCL, age appropriate awareness initiatives including Free to be me/Lucky to be me and Brookfield Buddies, our parents association, kind club, Nurture groups, teaching problem solving, using restorative approaches to resolve conflict, circle work, school improvement plan for well being, using zones of regulation to support emotional literacy. This list is not exhaustive
- We recognise the importance of positive relationships across the whole education community to promote empathy, understanding and respect. We have involved the board of management, staff, students and their parents in the development, implementation and review of the Bi Cinealta Policy.
- We endeavour to implement our schools strategies to prevent bullying behavior through partnerships with the wider community including EWO, HSCL and SCP.

Preventing Cyberbullying Behaviour
- Our school promotes digital literacy, digital citizenship, and fostering safe online environments.
- Strategies we use to Prevent cyberbullying behaviour include; implementing the SPHE curriculum, implementation and regular review of our Acceptable Use Policy, close supervision of children using electronic devices, promoting and hosting online safety events for parents and holding an Internet Safety day annually.

It is important to note that the digital age of consent in Ireland is 16 years old and the minimum age requirement for most social media platforms is 13 years old. It is important for their child's safety, that parents are aware of their children's use of technology including smartphones and gaming consoles.

Preventing Homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour -
- All children from the LGBTQ+ community have the right to feel safe and supported in school. We maintain an inclusive, supportive culture and physical environment that challenges gender stereotypes.

Preventing Racist bullying behaviour
- St Brigid's has many students from different cultures and backgrounds. We have a school culture that embraces diversity and emphasises inclusion.
- The cultural diversity of our school is visible and on display
- Encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviours
- 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
- Our school focuses on gender equality as part of our measures to create a supportive and respectful environment.
- All Students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex.

Preventing Sexual harassment
- Preventing sexual harassment requires an approach that focuses on education, awareness and clear enforceable policies.
- Our school has a zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment.

Pupils

- Pupils are expected to be tolerant and to have mutual respect for each other and staff

- Pupils are encouraged to use the strategies they have been taught in dealing with unwanted behaviour
- Pupils are advised to always report incidents of bullying, whether they happen to themselves or others, to parents and teachers
- Pupils involved in bullying behaviour will be supported as the need arises
- Pupils who are victims of bullying will be supported as the need arises

Parents

Parents are asked to

- Encourage positive behaviour and discourage negative behaviour both at home and at school
- Encourage children to solve difficulties without resorting to aggression
- Support the school in its efforts to prevent and tackle bullying

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):

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

Implementation of our Supervision Policy

Implementation of our Acceptable Use Policy

Implementation and regular review of our Code of Behaviour and Child Safeguarding Policy.

Implementation of our SEN policy.

Teachers record incidents in the yard.

Restorative Questions will be used to resolve issues in the yard.

- *What happened?*
- *How did you feel when it happened?*
- *What do we need to do to fix the problem ?*

The principal reviews yard sheets weekly to identify possible patterns of bullying or inappropriate behaviours which may occur over longer periods of time.

Teachers record incidents and monitor suspected bullying behaviour in the class where relevant.

Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour.

Close supervision on children using electronic devices.

Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils throughout the day during all school activities.

Pupils are advised to always report incidents of bullying, whether they happen to themselves or others, to parents and teachers.

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):

Procedures for Reporting and Investigating Bullying Incidents

1. All staff will listen to reports of concerns from children and/or parents in relation to incidents between children so that pupils will gain confidence in telling.
2. If a teacher suspects bullying is taking place or a parent has a concern that their child is being bullied this will be investigated and behaviour will be monitored by the teachers involved. The relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these incidents, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding the same.
3. Once it is established that there is an incident of bullying behaviour this will be recorded (See Appendix) and referred immediately to the Principal.
4. Incidents will be investigated discreetly when the teachers will speak separately to the alleged victim, the alleged offender and any witnesses. This will involve the taking of a written record of what happened. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour , the relevant adult should seek answers to the Restorative Questions with which the children will already be familiar. A calm unemotional problem-solving approach will be taken.
5. In cases where it is determined that bullying has occurred, the Principal will request separate meetings with the parents/guardians of the parties involved. Their assistance will be sought in preventing a repeat of the behaviour.
6. Victims will be assured that the school community will help them and monitoring procedures (teacher observation, checking in with the parent and the child, further meetings with the principal if necessary) will be put in place to safeguard them.
7. Sanctions may follow for the child engaged in bullying behaviour such as loss of privileges as appropriate to the situation and age of the child. Help and support will be sought for the child.
8. Follow-up meetings will be arranged not more than 20 days after the initial meeting to assess progress and/or restore relationships.

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):

School's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follow:

Consider the child's opinion/view when deciding how to respond where relevant.

Ensure the privacy of those involved

Conduct all conversations with sensitivity

Be aware that no one approach to supporting those affected works in every situation.

Regular check ins with the child and parents to ensure the issue remains resolved.

Child/Children will possibly attend the support teacher for a set period of time to be agreed between staff and parents to build confidence/self esteem/feel supported.

Engage with NEPS where this is deemed necessary.

TUSLA should be contacted for advice in any situation where bullying is considered a child protection concern.

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. **The school will follow up no more than 20 days after the initial concern is raised to review progress of initial actions. If the bullying behaviour continues a review of strategies will take place and further actions/supports put in place for an agreed timeframe which will then be reviewed. If bullying behaviour persists the school will consider reverting to the Code of Behaviour.** 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.

This policy was developed by staff on 31st January 2025

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 30th April 2025.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Prinipal