St. Joseph's Patrician College, Galway.

'THE BISH'

Bí Cinéalta Policy

Ratification Date: 28th May 2025

Revision Number	Date:	Approved by BOM
1		28th May 2025
2	12th May 2026	12th May 2026
3		

Next Review Date: Annually.

This procedure is in keeping with the Child Protection Procedures as adopted by the Board of Management. Teachers are reminded that they are mandated persons and must be familiar with their obligations with reference to the Children First: National Guidance for Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 and the Children First Act 2015

Bí Cineálta: Anti-Bullying Policy

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of St Joseph's Patrician College - The Bish 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 well-being of our students is at the forefront of everything we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our students and 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.

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 that each person in our school is treated with respect and care.

As a Catholic school, we are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual. No human person is to be diminished or 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.

A 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.

Stakeholder	**Date Consulted**	**Method of Consultation**
School Staff	29th April 2025	Staff Meeting
Students	13th May 2025	Student Council Discussion
Parents	6th May 2025	Parent Survey
Board of Management	20th May 2025	Policy Review Meeting
Wider School Community		Direct Consultation
Date Policy was approved:	28th May 2025	
Date policy was last reviewed:	12th May 2026	

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

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

Culture and Environment

Creating a positive and inclusive school culture is vital to preventing bullying. Our school will strive to:

- Foster a safe and inclusive school culture.
- Build an environment where every student feels a sense of belonging.
- Kindness and respect are embedded in daily interactions.
- Conduct regular assessments to identify areas of risk.
- Display anti-bullying messages and values throughout the school.

Curriculum and Teaching

Education is key to preventing bullying. By embedding anti-bullying content within the curriculum, we equip students with the knowledge and skills to recognise and respond to bullying. Our curriculum will:

- Promote understanding of empathy, diversity, and inclusion through targeted lessons and workshops.
- Integrate digital literacy to teach students about online safety and the consequences of cyberbullying.
- Provide students with opportunities to learn about conflict resolution, kindness, and emotional intelligence, reinforcing the values of *Cineáltas*.
- Encourage students to participate in peer education programmes to help prevent bullying and build positive relationships.
- Include anti-bullying education in SPHE and Wellbeing programmes.
- Provide workshops on empathy, respect, and inclusion.

Relationships and Partnerships

Strong relationships are the foundation of a supportive school environment. Building positive relationships among students, staff, and parents can prevent bullying and foster a sense of belonging. Our school will:

- Encourage student-led initiatives such as peer mentoring programmes and leadership roles for students to take active steps in promoting kindness and inclusion.
- Foster open communication between teachers, parents, and students to ensure that bullying concerns are addressed promptly and appropriately.
- Work in partnership with the Parents Council to ensure that parental engagement is an integral part of the school's anti-bullying efforts.
- Engage parents through workshops and awareness initiatives.

- Strengthen student voice through leadership opportunities i.e., Senior Prefects and Student Council.

Policy and Planning

The *Bí Cineálta* policy ensures that anti-bullying efforts are embedded into the school's planning processes. Our school will:

- Regularly review and update this policy to reflect new developments, including feedback from students, staff, parents, and the Board of Management.
- Maintain clear, accessible procedures for reporting bullying, including anonymous reporting options for students and families.
- Incorporate anti-bullying goals into the school's broader well-being and academic plans, ensuring consistency across initiatives.
- Use data collection to track and analyse bullying incidents, informing policy improvements.
- Develop a Code of Responsibility and Behaviour that reinforces positive interactions.
- Conduct regular staff training on bullying prevention.

In addition to our strategies to address general bullying behaviours, these prevention strategies include strategies aimed at preventing online bullying bahviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate:

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 in dialogue with parents, and thereby build a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, trust and confidence.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Deputy Principals, Year Heads and Guidance Counsellors

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):*

Reporting

- Students can report bullying to a trusted adult.
- Anonymous reporting options are available.
- Parents and staff can report concerns to school leadership.

Investigation

- Gather statements from all involved parties.
- Determine whether behaviour meets the definition of bullying.
- Assess severity and impact.

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):*

Response

- Provide support for the victim (counselling, monitoring).
- Apply disciplinary measures if necessary.

Follow-up

- Conduct regular check-ins with affected students.
- Ensure behaviour does not continue.
- Communicate outcomes to relevant parties

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
- 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.*

Policy Accessibility and Review

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.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Conduct an annual review of policy and incident reports.
- Gather feedback from students and parents on school climate.

Data Collection

- Maintain comprehensive records of reported bullying incidents.
- Analyse trends to improve prevention and intervention strategies.

Board of Management Oversight

- Review reports on bullying incidents and effectiveness of policies.
- Ensure compliance with Department of Education guidelines.

Conclusion

St Joseph's Patrician College - The Bish is committed to ensuring a school environment where every individual is treated with kindness, respect, and dignity. By embedding well-being principles into our daily practices, we aim to create a safe and supportive school community for all.

Signed: Date: 12th May 2026

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: Date: 12th May 2026

(Principal)

Appendix 1: Bullying Incident Report Form

1. Name of student allegedly being bullied:

_____

2. Year Group: _____ Base class: _____

3. Name(s) and class(es) of students allegedly engaged in bullying behaviour:
_____
_____
_____

4. Source of bullying concern/report (tick as relevant):

Student	
Other Student(s)	
Teacher	
Parent	
Other	

5. Location of incident(s) (tick as relevant)

School Yard		Classroom	
Bus		Toilets	
Out of School		Changing Rooms	
Corridor		Other	

6. Name of person(s) who reported the alleged bullying concern:

_____

7. Type of bullying behaviour (tick as relevant):

Physical		Gender-identity bullying	
Verbal		Extortion	
Damage to personal property		Written bullying	
Exclusion / isolation		Relational bullying	
Cyber-bullying		Other	

Intimidation			

8. Brief description of bullying behaviour:

9. Impact of bullying behaviour:

10. Details of action taken:

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Year Head)

Appendix 2: Bullying Incident Report Notes

Name of student _____ Date_____

NOTES

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Signed: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 3: Student Friendly Bí Cinealta Policy