

Bí Cineálta Policy

2025-2026

Christ Church National School

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Christ Church National School 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	May 2025 9 June 2025	Survey Half-day school closure for whole staff training.
Students	June 2025 June 2025	Discussion re pupil friendly policy. Survey
Parents	May 2025	Online Survey
Board of Management	August 2025	Draft policy shared for consideration with follow up discussion at meeting.
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers		Conversation
Date policy was approved: 19/8/2025		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

Christ Church NS engages in prevention strategies that will be used to prevent bullying behaviour. These include strategies specifically aimed at preventing online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment.

Prevention Strategies:

Culture and Environment

These include:

- Positive and inclusive school culture
- Developing and modelling positive relationships between all members of school community based on respect, care, integrity and trust
- Effective leadership
- Staff commitment to prevent and addressing bullying behaviour
- A positive environment
- A telling environment

- A trusted adult
- Safe physical spaces
- Celebrating diversity
- Supervision
- Child friendly posters
- Daily assembly where we celebrate achievements and success
- Promote children's voices
- Annual events e.g. Teddy Bears' Picnic, school barbeque, whole school play

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

In Christ Church NS we

- implement the SPHE curriculum, the RSE curriculum, the Stay Safe programme, the Follow Me religious programme and other Wellbeing programmes
- model respectful behaviour towards colleagues, pupils, parents and visitors to our school
- promote inclusion and diversity
- encourage pupil participation, collaboration and group work
- integrate anti-bullying messages across all curricular areas
- use age related/appropriate language and teach specific vocabulary
- use restorative practices
- focus on specific topics in SET
- use pair work, group work and role play to build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy

Policy and Planning

Our teaching and non-teaching staff have:

- attended training on the Bí Cineálta procedures and worked together to develop this policy
- worked with our pupils to develop a student friendly Bí Cineálta policy
- developed and implement our code of behaviour
- developed and implement our Child Safeguarding statement

- developed and implement our Acceptable Use policy
- developed and implement a supervision system
- developed and implement SPHE and RSE policies
- developed and implement a SEN policy
- implement restorative practice approach to the resolution of issues
- taken part in appropriate CPD

Relationships and Partnerships

In Christ Church NS we

- focus on the kindness and respect in our school and in our relationships with one another
- take part regularly in bullying awareness initiatives, especially initiatives that build empathy, respect and resilience
- encourage student and parent participation
- promote peer support; we have a buddy system between classes
- award well-done cards for pupils who help others quietly
- teach problem solving strategies

Strategies aimed at preventing cyberbullying behaviour

Christ Church NS engages in strategies to prevent cyberbullying by:

- explicitly teaching what is meant by online bullying
- explicitly teaching ways in which to stay safe online
- educating pupils regarding responsible and respectful online behaviour-SPHE curriculum
- marking Internet Safety Day annually using Webwise resources
- inviting the guards to speak about Internet safety regularly
- promoting online safety events for parents
- not permitting mobile phones to be used by pupils in school

Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour

Christ Church NS engages in strategies to prevent homophobic/transphobic bullying by:

- maintaining an inclusive physical environment
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- challenging gender stereotypes
- encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour

Preventing racist bullying behaviour

Christ Church NS engages in strategies to prevent racist bullying by:

- 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
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour
- 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

Christ Church NS engages in strategies to prevent sexist bullying by:

- 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
- encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home

Preventing sexual harassment

Christ Church NS engages in strategies to prevent sexual harassment by:

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

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

Supervision

In Christ Church National School, we strive to ensure that full supervision is maintained at all times during the school day.

- Our playground supervision timetable is planned with the class teachers and the SET and SNAs supervising the children with whom they are directly involved. The allocation of personnel for supervisory duties is regularly reviewed at staff meetings and additional staff provided where necessary.
- Arrival to and departure from school is closely supervised by staff and regularly reviewed.
- Additional supervision is provided for school tours and other events which take place off the school premises such as theatre visits, library visits, church services, sporting events etc. Classes are usually accompanied by their class teacher and SNA and/or SET. Garda vetted parent volunteers are used on occasions.
- If patterns of inappropriate behaviour are detected, these are investigated and documented, as relevant, on Aladdin log of action.
- If there are reported incidents or issues between children that warrant closer monitoring on yard and trips, this is noted to relevant staff.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teachers with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour are as follows: Principal, deputy principal, class teachers and SET teachers, as appropriate.

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:

1. Determine if bullying behaviour has occurred

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour, the following questions will be considered:

- Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?
- Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?
- Is the behaviour repeated?

If the answer to each of the questions above is Yes, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour, and the behaviour should be addressed using the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

Note: One-off incidents may be considered bullying in certain circumstances. A single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and thus becomes a repeated behaviour.

If the answer to any of these questions is No, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour.

Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred teachers should consider what, where, when and why?

- if a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first
- thereafter, all students involved may be met as a group
- at the group meeting, each student should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views
- each student should be supported as appropriate, following the group meeting
- it may be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident(s)

2. Where bullying behaviour has occurred

- Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents/ guardians of the students involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to consult with them on the actions to be taken to address the behaviour
- the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation should be considered
- a record should be kept of the engagement with all involved
- this record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known (Direct bullying behaviour – physical/ verbal / written / extortion; Indirect bullying behaviour - exclusion / relational / online), where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students involved and their parents / guardians
- the record should include the views of the students and their parents / guardians regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour

3. Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred

- the teacher will engage with the students involved and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement
- this engagement will consider the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the students involved
- the teacher should document the review with students and their parents/ guardians to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and their parents in relation to this
- the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased should also be recorded
- any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted
- ongoing supervision and support may be needed for the students involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased
- if the bullying behaviour has not ceased the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents / guardians. A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased
- if it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school will consider using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school. If a parent(s) / guardian(s) is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with the BÍ

Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools. they should be referred to the school's complaints procedures

- if a parent / guardian is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, they 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 (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

Approaches

The primary aim in addressing reports of bullying behaviour is to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the students involved, rather than to apportion blame.

The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display 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 the students 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 school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying behaviour is as follows:

Bullied pupils

All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.

- Lessons in SPHE, Walk Tall and Stay Safe as appropriate
- encouraging bullied pupils to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills
- Group work such as circle time

- Continued visible monitoring of situations
- Continued contact with parents
- Victims are reassured from the outset that they are not to blame
- Where deemed necessary, the child, in consultation with parents / guardians, may be referred for counselling

Students engaged in bullying behaviour

- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honourable thing and giving them praise for this.
- Helping the pupils who engage in bullying behaviour to 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 friendship and social skills.
- Using learning strategies throughout the school to help enhance pupils feelings of self-worth.
- Challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child.
- Continued contact with parents.
- Continued monitoring of particular situations.
- Where deemed necessary, the child, in consultation with parents / guardians, may be referred for counselling
- Empathy awareness needs to be developed.

To the relevant class

If deemed necessary, it should be reinforced to students that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

Recording

All bullying behaviour will be recorded.

This will include:

- the type of behaviour
- where and when it took place
- the date of the engagement with students and parents

- the actions and supports agreed to address bullying 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
- 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
- any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant.

This update does not contain personal or identifying information.

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: Bruce Hayes

Date: 19/8/25

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: A. Hemmingway

Date: 19/8/2025

(Principal)

