Scoil Iosaef Naofa

Ár ndícheall i gconaí

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Scoil Iosaef Naofa 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 Traveler community.
"We confirm that we will take all steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent all bullying or harassment of our students in whatever form and however motivated.
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 everybody in our school is treated with respect and care, in accordance with the Catholic Schedule.
As a Catholic school, we are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual. No human person is to be devalued and everybody has a 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. 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

Bishop Street, Kilgarvan, Cobh, Co. Cork, P24 P270 | 021-4812424 |
office@stjosephsnscobh.com | www.stjosephsnscobh.com | Roll no. 15718I

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	30th May .2025	Staff Training
Students	June 2024 – May 2025	Paper Survey (Senior Classes), Student Council (On-going).
Parents	June 2024 Parent's Association May 2025	Online Survey (All Parents)
Board of Management	11th November 2024 12th June 2025	Wellbeing Survey Results. Bí Cinealta Ratification
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	On-going	Informal, as required.
Date policy was approved: 26th August 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: 24th November 2024		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by this school to address all forms of bullying behaviour, in whatever form and however motivated, including online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment.

In developing the 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 our 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 our 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 dialogue with parents, thereby building a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, trust and confidence.
In continuing to develop prevention strategies, this school will listen to young people and parents, to help establish their particular context and needs. Frequent periods of reflection and further engagement by the school, young people and parents, will be used to discern appropriate supports for young people in this school and to help inform future prevention strategies.

- 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;
- Effective leadership.
- We inform parents/guardians that our school promotes an Anti-Bullying culture.
- A school-wide approach; all staff are to be vigilant and report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher, who will then record it.
- On enrolment parents/guardians of new pupils receive a copy of our Code of Discipline and Anti-Bullying policy and are asked to read and sign their acceptance of this policy.
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-
  - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and

- explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.

- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils at all times when teachers is in loco parentis.
- 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.
- **Key elements of a positive school culture and climate**

- The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.
- The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.
- The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.
- The school prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members.
- The school has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of it's functioning.
- The school has the capacity to change in response to pupils' needs.
- The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupils' attitudes and values.
- The school recognises the need to maintain good communication channels with parents and keep parents informed on procedures to maintain good relationships on a school-wide basis.
- The school recognises the role of parents and community workers (e.g. Gardaí, nurses etc) in equipping the pupil with a range of life-skills in preventing and dealing with bullying.
- The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy, social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school.

- Staff members share responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community.
- Teachers will record meetings with either parents or pupils re behavioural issues.

Education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying, identity-based bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

- Develop self esteem and self worth, through participation in Sciath na Scoil, Drama, rotating class tasks/activities, singing "Happy Birthday" at assembly, rewards etc.
- Buddy System throughout the school.
- The "Play Zone" strategy.
- Morning Assembly.
- Play groups for children who find it difficult to integrate/mix with others.
- SPHE programme, Stay Safe, Walk Tall, R.S.E. Programme.
- Foster a respectful and positive attitude to diversity.
- Our pupils are not allowed mobile phones or other unregulated digital devices in school or on any school outing. e.g. school tours, orienteering etc. Please see AUP Policy November 2023 for details.
- We invite a community Garda to address 5th and 6th class pupils annually.
- We will provide parents/guardians and pupils of 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th classes with an opportunity to attend an online safety awareness talk in the school.

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):

- Yard Supervision Policy
- Incident Recording Policy
- Before/After School Supervision Policy
- Outside School Activity Procedures

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

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):

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:

- The Primary aim for the relevant teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as possible, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame)
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is possible, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.

Investigation:

When investigating:

- Teachers take a calm, unemotional problem solving approach when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff, or parents/guardians.
- The procedure would be carried out as quickly as possible.
- Such incidents are best investigated outside the classroom situation to avoid the public humiliation of the victim or the pupil engaged in bullying behaviour.
- In any incident of bullying:
  1. The teacher and Principal should speak separately to the pupils involved in an attempt to get both sides of the story, recording the findings.
  2. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).

3. All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.

- Teachers investigating cases of bullying behaviour should keep a written record on their discussions with those involved.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour seek answers to questions of what, where, who and why. This should be done in 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 and then as a group. Each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear about each other's statements.
- Each member of the group will be supported through the possible pressures that often face them from other members after interview by the teacher.
    - Supports include:
        - Explanation of situation.
        - Referral to school policy.
        - Seeing from victim's point of view.

Procedures to be followed

In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred...

- The parents/guardians of the parties involved will be asked to meet the class teacher and Principal at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the schools Anti-Bullying policy). We will provide parents/guardians with an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their children.
- Parents/Guardians will be informed of all steps taken in relation to their own child.
- The child/children will be spoken to, by the class teacher and Principal, on an individual basis, making clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- The victim(s) will be spoken with by the class teacher and Principal, discussing how the matter has been dealt with and allowing them to talk about their thoughts and feelings. They will be reassured that they are not to blame for the incidents.
- A social skills group will be established to facilitate communication, co-operation, friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience.

- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved will be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.

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 follows:

- Reassure the victim that they are not to blame for the incidents.
- Discuss with the victim how the matter has been dealt with and allow them to talk about their thoughts and feelings.
- A program of support for those with low self-esteem to increase their feelings of self worth.
- Social skills group to facilitate communication, co-operation, friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience.
- The victim and/or the child engaged in bullying behaviour may need counselling with our assigned school psychologist.

Follow up and Recording if it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred:

- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect.
- In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within twenty school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the class teacher in the standard recording template and be reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal.

- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
  - Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
  - Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is possible;
  - Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is possible; and
  - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;
- Where a parent/guardian is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.
- When it is concluded 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 Code of Behaviour and try to get him/her to see the situation from the victim's point of view.

Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools

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: Terri Byrne _____ Date: 26/08/2025
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: Eoin Kennedy _____ Date: 26/08/2025

(Principal)

Scoil Iosaef Naofa

Ár ndícheall i gconaí

Bishop Street, Kilgarvan, Cobh, Co. Cork, P24 P270 | 021-4812424 |
office@stjosephsnscobh.com | www.stjosephsnscobh.com | Roll no. 15718I

Appendix F

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

The Board of Management of
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 26/10/2025

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: Terri Byrne
(Chairperson of board of management)

Date: 26/08/2025

Signed: Eoin Kennedy
(Principal)

Date: 26/08/2026

Date of next review: 26/10/2026