Bí Cineálta Policy

St. Corban's BNS

To Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of St Corban's BNS 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 discrimination 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.

The Children First National Guidance document 2017 is the national, overarching guidance with regard to child safeguarding. The Guidance provides that in cases of serious instances of bullying where the behaviour is regarded as possibly abusive, a referral may need to be made to Tusla or An Garda Síochána as appropriate.

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".*

Types of Bullying Behaviour.

The *Bí Cineálta* guidelines describe the following as types of bullying behaviour: disablist bullying behaviour, exceptionally able bullying, gender identity bullying, homophobic/transphobic (LGBTQ+) bullying, physical appearance bullying, racist bullying, poverty bullying, religious identity bullying, sexist bullying, sexual harassment.

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.

Outside School

A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, schools should deal with it in accordance with their Bí Cineálta policy. (*pg 23 Bí Cineálta Procedures*)

Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour
- A one off instance of negative behaviour towards another student is not bullying behaviour. However, a single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be visible to a wide audience and has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and so becomes a repeated behaviour.
- Disagreement between students, or instances where students don't want to be friends or to remain friends, is not considered bullying behaviour unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others including deliberate manipulation of friendship groups.
- Some students with special educational needs may have social communication difficulties which may make them communicate their needs through behaviours that can hurt themselves or others. It is important to note that these behaviours may not be deliberate or planned but, in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they can't control.
- Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying.

These behaviours, while not defined as bullying can be distressing and can be dealt with using the Code of Behaviour.

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

SECTIONS OF THIS POLICY

Section A: Development/ Review of the Bí Cineálta Policy

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

Section D: Oversight

Section A: Development/Review of our Bí Cineálta Policy

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	March 2025	Stage 1: Staff Meeting.

		Survey to provide Feedback
		Draft Policy shared with teachers in June 2025 as part of the consultation process
Students	April 2025	Survey to provide feedback
		Student Friendly Policy shared with students in May 2025 as part of the consultation process
Parents	April 2025	Survey to provide feedback
	May 2025	Draft Policy shared with parents in June on the school website as part of a consultation process
Board of Management	May 21st 2025	Discussion at BOM meetings
		Draft Policy shared with Board of Management in June 2025 as part of a consultation process
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers		Policy shared with Bus Drivers and Traffic Wardens in June 2025.

Date policy was approved: 26/06/2025

Date policy was last reviewed:

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:
- Positive and inclusive environment
- A telling environment (use of yard books for communication)
- School Sports Teams, Choir, to encourage a sense of belonging.
- Safe Physical spaces and play areas that are well supervised
- After school Clubs
- Breakfast Club
- Positive messaging on corridors
- Student Council
- Prefect/Buddy system
- School committees (eg. ICT)
- Whole school Friendship Fortnight, Wellbeing Weeks

Curriculum:
- Teaching and learning in SPHE
- RSE Curriculum & Lessons
- SPHE Methodologies
- Walk Tall, Stay Safe, RSE Programmes and Resources
- Promoting inclusion and diversity
- Extra-curricular activities
- Groupwork/collaboration
- Transition to Secondary School Programme
- Special Education Support.

Policy and Planning:
- Bí Cineálta Policy
- Student friendly Bí Cineálta Policy
- Code of Behaviour Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Religion Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Supervision Plan
- RSE Policy
- SEN policy
- Dignity in the Workplace Policy
- Equal Opportunity and Gender Equity Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- SSE Wellbeing in education, Wellbeing Policy.
- Mobile Phone & Electronic Devices Policy
- Internet Safety Week
- Go Phone Free Initiative
- Aladdin Padlet for Anti-Bullying Resources

Relationships and Partnerships:

- Shared School Values- listed on website.
- Positive interactions and communication between staff, pupils, parents and the wider school community
- Student and Parent participation in school events and school life.
- Rewards and praise for students – Positive Reinforcement and recognition.
- Student Council
- Promoting peer support
- Parents' Association links
- Church/Parish Links with Priest and Parish Team
- Prefects/ Bí Cineálta ambassadors.
- Strong communication between parents and school.
- Buddy reading
- Wellbeing Week, Friendship Fortnight.
- Sports week, class leagues.
- Catholic Schools Week
- Internet Safety weeks
- Relationships with Secondary schools (Transition Year Pupils)
- Relationships with other schools in sports/chess/ choir.
- Outside agencies- Gardai, Traffic Wardens, Fire Services.
- Community links- GAA, Library, Gardaí, local bookshop
- Meeting with new families to the school Community
- July Provision off site/onsite

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour:

- Acceptable Use of the Internet policy
- Supervision Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Policy
- Mobile Phones & Electronic Devices Policy.

Strong interpersonal connections are a vital part of effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

We aim to strengthen relationships and partnerships between members of the school community by using the following strategies:

- age-appropriate awareness initiatives that look at the causes and impacts of bullying behaviour including those dealing with navigating friendships, identity-based bullying, racist bullying, homophobic/transphobic bullying, sexism and sexual harassment

- supporting the active participation of students in school life
- supporting the active participation of parents in school life, including those who may find it difficult or daunting to engage with the school due to being unfamiliar with the education system or due to language or cultural barriers
- conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying
- supporting activities that build empathy, respect and resilience
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring
- promoting acts of kindness
- teaching problem solving
- developing interpersonal skills and relationship skills.

Preventing Cyberbullying

Our School will actively try to prevent Cyberbullying by using the following strategies:

- implementing the SPHE curriculum
- implementing the AUP which teaches students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship
- having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- developing and communicating an acceptable use policy for technology
- referring to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in our Code of Behaviour
- promoting online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online
- holding an Internet Safety Day to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour
- Implement our Electronic Devices Policy.

Preventing racist bullying behaviour

Our school will use the following strategies to help prevent racist bullying behaviour:

- Constantly teaching and modelling our core value of respect.
- 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 and organising empathy building activities.
- encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour.
- providing supports to school staff to respond to the needs of students for whom English is an additional language and for communicating with their parents.
- providing supports to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities and to encourage communication with their parents
- inviting speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds
- ensuring that library reading material, resources and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds

Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour

Our school aims to create a supportive and respectful environment and will use the following strategies to prevent 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 contributions of all students
- organising awareness campaigns, workshops and presentations on gender equality and respect
- encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home

Preventing Sexual Harassment

In our school there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is never dismissed as teasing or banter. We use the following strategies to prevent sexual harassment:

- treating each other with respect and kindness
- 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:

- Class Teacher in consultation with the Principal.

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
- seek a resolution.

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):

- **Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred**

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the teacher should consider the following: **what, where, when and why?**

-If a group of students is involved, each student will be engaged with individually at first. Thereafter, all students involved should 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 also be necessary to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident on an Incident Account Sheet.

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour we will consider the following questions:

1. Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?

2. Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?

3. 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 procedures outlined in this policy.

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.

Incidents can occur where behaviour is unacceptable and hurtful but the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies that deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

- Requests to take no action

A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than "look out" for them. The student may not want to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They may feel that telling someone might make things more difficult for them. Where this occurs, it is important that the member of staff shows empathy to the student, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the student to work out together what steps can be taken to address the matter and how their parents will be informed of the situation. It is important that the student who has experienced bullying behaviour feels safe.

Parents may also make schools aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action. **Parents should put this request in writing to the school or be facilitated to do so where there are literacy, digital literacy or language barriers.** However, while acknowledging the parent's request, schools may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour. (*pg 45 Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and address bullying behaviour for Primary and Post Primary school.*)

The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour

- ➢ Supporting Pupils experiencing Bullying.
- ➢ Supporting pupils displaying bullying behaviour.

Staff will:

- Listen to the student
- Show empathy to the student
- Reassure the student
- Advise the student to let staff know if the bullying occurs in school
- Devise appropriate 'check in measures
- Discuss with the student how to inform parents if they haven't already done so.
- Record incidents using the Recording Template (Appendix to this form)
- Consult with outside agencies e.g. NEPS if deemed necessary

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.*

- The teacher must engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress following the initial intervention.
- the teacher will document the review with students and their parents 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
- As per Bi Cinealta Guidelines 6.5: If a student has a Student support File a copy of this document is placed on the Student Support File, to help the support team provide a consistent and holistic response to support the wellbeing of the students involved.

If a parent is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with these procedures, they should be referred to the school's parents complaints procedures.

In the event that a student and/or parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, a student and/or parent 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.
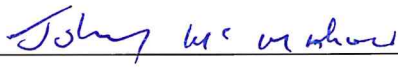
Section D: Oversight

Board of Management Updates: 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 will not contain personal or identifying information.
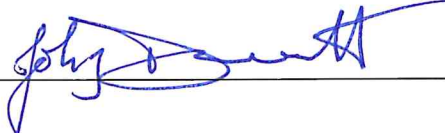
Schools will submit anonymised data on incident of bullying once DES has set up the system.

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.

Implementation & Review: 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.

The school community will be given notice that the annual review has taken place. Confirmation will be published on the school website once the annual review has taken place.

Signed: _John Mc Mahon_ Date: _26/6/25_
(Chairperson of the Board of Management)

Signed: _John Brett_ Date: _26/06/2025_
(Principal)