

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Convoy Joint 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 pupils who attend our school are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our pupils is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our pupils 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 pupils 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
<i>School Staff</i>	March 2025 29 th May 2025	Staff Survey Half day closure
<i>Pupils</i>	March 2025 March 2025 June 2025	Teacher led consultation Pupil Survey Student Council
<i>Parents</i>	March 2025 4 th June 2025	Parent Survey with explanation of Bí Cineálta Copy of policy sent out and feedback invited
<i>Board of Management</i>	19 th June 2025	Provide copy of policy in advance, to be discussed and ratified at meeting
<i>Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers</i>	23 rd June 2025	Copy of policy provided
Date policy was approved: 19 th June 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: Not Applicable		

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

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Systems of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines may be used where appropriate.
- Support a 'telling' environment where reporting of bullying behaviour is encouraged and where pupils feel comfortable to talk about their concerns.
- All staff will actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.

- Promote acts of kindness and celebrate 'Kindness / Friendship Week' annually.

Curriculum (Teaching & Learning)

- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like, in class and around the school.
- The implementation of the Social Physical and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum, according to our school plan, including the Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) and Stay Safe Programmes.
- School-wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence-based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme, programmes to teach about cyberbullying (e.g. Webwise teachers' resources and lessons from (www.cybersafekids.ie))
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Organise seminars/workshops given by relevant professionals to older pupils and to parents/guardians, focusing on educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while online and also on developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying. The school-wide approach and the role of parents is of great importance in this regard.
- In younger classes, picture/story books can be used to teach important concepts.
- Use of programmes such as The Walk Tall Programme, Weaving Wellbeing and Friends for Life (which looks at social skills and resilience)
- Participating in programmes including ASPIRE PEACEPLUS Shared Education and the School Completion Programme.
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.

Policy and Planning

- Our child-friendly *Bí Cineálta Policy* will be on display prominently around the school.
- Pupils are not permitted to bring mobile phones or other smart devices to school.
- The school's *Acceptable Use Policy* (AUP) aims to ensure that pupils benefit from learning opportunities offered by the school's ICT resources in a safe and effective manner.
- Other relevant school policy documents include the *Code of Behaviour*, *Safeguarding Statement*, *SEN Policy*, *Supervision of pupils*, *School Attendance* and *SPHE Policy*. The school has also focused on the area of *Wellbeing* as part of School Self Evaluation (SSE).
- All staff provide playground / school yard / outdoor supervision.
- School staff are aware of hot spots and hot times when there is potential for bullying behaviour to occur (e.g., toilet areas, hallways)

Relationships and Partnerships

- Catch the children being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- At school assemblies, school rules are reinforced on a regular basis / when required.
- Raise awareness of the definition of bullying behaviour and how the school deals with such behaviour.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Support the active participation of pupils in school life through formal and informal structures, e.g., circle-time activities, assemblies, sports' teams, Student Council, playground buddies, Buddy Reading, Focus Weeks - Wellbeing Week, Active Week, etc.
- Facilitate Parent/Teacher meetings and encourage parents to make contact with their child's class teacher should they have any concerns.
- Encourage and support the active participation of parents in school life, e.g. being a member of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), volunteering for school activities - Pancake Tuesday, etc.

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):

- *Code of Behaviour*
- *Safeguarding Statement*
- *Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) for the Internet*
- *Supervision Policy*

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

Mainstream class teachers are responsible for addressing bullying behaviour at Convoy Joint N.S., supported by SET teachers where relevant. Teachers are supported in doing so by other members of the school staff including Special Needs Assistants (SNAs).

The whole school community has a responsibility to prevent and address bullying behaviour. The following approach and steps are based on the information contained in Chapter 6 of the '*Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*'.

Approach

The primary aim in addressing reports of bullying behaviour should be to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the pupils involved.

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

- ensure that the pupil 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 those involved
- listen to the views of the pupil 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):

Stage 1 - Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred:

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.

Where bullying behaviour is suspected, it should be reported to the class teacher.

- ❖ To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour we will consider the following questions:
 1. *Is the behaviour targeted at a specific pupil or group of pupils?*
 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 *Bí Cineálta Procedures*.
- ❖ **Note:** One-off incidents may be considered bullying behaviour 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 (Stage 1), teachers should consider what, where, when and why? as follows: (Note that these steps are required – as outlined in the Procedures):

- Where one pupil is reported to be involved, the pupil should be engaged with individually at first.
- Thereafter, this pupil and the pupil who is reported to be experiencing the bullying behaviour should be met together.
- If a group of pupils is involved, each pupil should be engaged with individually at first.
- Thereafter, all pupils involved and the pupil who is reported to be experiencing the bullying behaviour should be met as a group.
- At the group meeting, each pupil should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views
- Each pupil should be supported as appropriate, following the group meeting. It may be helpful to ask the pupils involved to write down their account of the incident(s).
- Parents will be supported by the school, if needed, with recommendations

for useful resources/guides to help them support their children.

Stage 2 - Where bullying behaviour has occurred:

- Bullying behaviour will be addressed in accordance with the school's *Bí Cineálta Policy* to address and prevent bullying behaviour and the pupil-friendly policy should clearly explain what actions will be taken when bullying behaviour is reported.
- A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when pupils 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 pupils involved.
- Where the pupil displaying the bullying behaviour is not a pupil in the school, but the pupil experiencing the bullying behaviour is a pupil in the school, the school should support the pupil who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as appropriate and engage with them and their parents to determine what steps can be taken.
- It is important to listen to the views of the pupil who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation.
- Parents are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with schools, in addressing bullying behaviour. Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the pupils involved must 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.
- All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the form and type of behaviour if known (see pages 20-24, Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the *Bí Cineálta* procedures for descriptions/examples of the forms and types of bullying behaviour), where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with pupils 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 record should be shared with the Principal.

Requests to take no action

A pupil reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than "look out" for them. The pupil 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 pupil, deals with the

matter sensitively and speaks with the pupil 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 pupil 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.

Stage 3 - Determining if bullying behaviour has ceased:

- The teacher must engage with the pupils involved and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement. Important factors to consider as part of this engagement are the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the pupils involved.
- The teacher should document the review with pupils and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of pupils 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 pupils 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 pupils involved and their parents. A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- If it becomes clear that the pupil who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then consideration should be given to 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 pupil, their parents and the school.
- If a parent(s) is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with the *Bí Cinealta 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 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 pupil.

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):

We take all instances of bullying behaviour on a case-by-case basis, but we may use the following approaches generally:

- All pupils involved will be checked-in with regularly and behaviour will be monitored carefully.
- The teacher will check-in with parents too and will look for their ongoing support to monitor their child at home and to communicate with the school if needed.
- We will use resources, as appropriate - including those developed by NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service), Oide (support service for schools), DCU Anti-Bullying Centre, Tusla and from programmes/sites such as Webwise.
- Teachers will be encouraged to attend relevant TLP.

Record Keeping

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 pupils 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 pupil-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: Dean Líz FítzGerald

Date: 19th June 2025

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: Ms. Valérie Magee
(Principal)

Date: 19th June 2025