

St Mark's JNS



Bí Cinéalta To Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Love, Laughter & Learning

Principal: Deirdre Ní Bhroin
Deputy Principal: Mark Fennelly

St Mark's JNS,
Maplewood road,
Springfield,
Tallaght,
Dublin 24
Uimhir Rolla 19472W



Bí Cinealta Policy To Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour Love, Laughter & Learning

1. Introductory Statement

The Board of Management of St. Mark's JNS 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.

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.

2. Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School

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.

3. 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.

This policy sets out how our 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.

2025 / 26	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	Feb '25	Staff meeting / Focus group
Students	May '25	Student Council / Focus group
Parents	May '25	Aladdin / Email
Board of Management	June '25	Meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	May '25	Email
Date policy was approved: June '25		
Date policy was last reviewed: June '25		

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. In developing the preventative strategies which St. Mark's JNS 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.

Culture and Environment

- Creating 'a telling environment'
- Identifying trusted adults
- Creating safe physical spaces
- Supervision
- Restorative Practice Ethos
- Circle time + check-ins
- Positive behaviour initiatives
- Active Yard
- Intercultural Week
- Forest School
- Kindness Tree
- Nurture Room
- Amber Flag
- Children's voice - my thoughts about school/through your eyes & Annual Questionnaires

Curriculum

- SPHE
- RSE & Stay Safe
- RE - Grow in Love
- ENGLISH - Social Stories & Emotional Literacy
- Arts Education/Drama

Policy and Planning

- Code of Behaviour
- Bí Cineálta
- Acceptable Use Policy
- SEN
- Supervision Policy
- Connection Plan
- Monthly Assembly
- Staff CPD
- Behaviour Plans
- Connection Plan

Preventing Cyberbullying

- SPHE curriculum
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Internet Safety Day
- Internet Safety talk for parents

Relationships and Partnerships

- Connection Plan
- Student Council
- Incredible Years
- HSCL
- SCP
- Nurture Room
- Accommodate language barriers where possible (translator)
- Deis camps/clubs
- Attendance Drive
- Roots of Empathy
- Community Partnerships
- NEPS
- Tusla
- Transition Programmes
- Football League

Preventing Homophobic / Transphobic Bullying

- RSE & E
- Code of behaviour

Preventing Racist Bullying

- RSE
- Code of behaviour

Preventing Sexist Bullying

- RSE
- Code of behaviour

Preventing Sexual Harassment

- RSE
- Code of behaviour
- Sexual harassment policy

Our Approach

Prevention

- **Promote Kindness:** Embed kindness and respect in all aspects of school life.
- **Inclusive Curriculum:** Integrate lessons on empathy, diversity, and inclusion.
- **Positive Behaviour Reinforcement:** Recognise and celebrate positive behaviours and acts of kindness.
- **Student Engagement:** Involve students in discussions about bullying and its prevention.

Intervention

- **Clear Reporting Channels:** Provide accessible ways for students and parents to report bullying incidents.
- **Prompt Action:** Investigate all reports of bullying promptly and thoroughly.
- **Support for Victims:** Offer appropriate support to victims of bullying, ensuring their well-being.
- **Addressing Perpetrators:** Implement strategies to address the behaviour of those who bully, focusing on understanding and change.

Oversight

- **Record Keeping:** Maintain accurate records of all bullying incidents.
- **Board of Management Updates:** The Principal will provide regular updates on bullying incidents to the Board of Management.
- **Annual Review:** The policy will be reviewed annually in consultation with the school community.

St. Mark's JNS 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. St. Mark's JNS 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, St. Mark's JNS 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.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teachers with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour are as follows:

- Class teachers / relevant Support Teachers
- Principal (Deirdre Ní Bhroin)
- Deputy Principal (Mark Fennelly)

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:

Step 1: Determine if bullying behaviour has occurred.

The Teacher/Support Teacher will meet with each individual separately. Restorative questions will be used:

- ✓ What happened?
- ✓ What were you thinking at the time?
- ✓ What have you thought about since?
- ✓ Who has been affected and in what way?
- ✓ How could things have been done differently?
- ✓ What do you think needs to happen next?

A written account (reflection sheet) of the incident(s) by the individuals involved may be deemed appropriate and helpful.

If behaviour is not bullying, the matter will be dealt with in accordance with the Code of Behaviour.

If the behaviour is bullying, the Teacher/Support teacher will proceed to the next step.

Step 2: Record and Address

The relevant teacher will consult with the principal and record the information using Appendix A.

Parents of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school will discuss with parents ways in which to reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school.

Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to the pupil that he/she is in breach of the school's Bí Cinealta policy and efforts will be made to repair and restore relationships. Students' failure to immediately cease bullying behaviour will be viewed by the principal as a serious risk to the safety of others.

Thereafter, if appropriate, a restorative meeting will be held with pupils involved. A written agreement for all the individuals involved may sometimes be deemed necessary. Parents will be notified about any meeting that has taken place, and pupils are encouraged to discuss with their parents.

Step 3: Review

A check in with the relevant parties involved will be arranged separately by the relevant teacher, with a view to bringing the parties together again at a later date, if appropriate and necessary. A review is conducted with the pupil and parent no more than 20 days after initial engagement.

Step 4: Determine if bullying behaviour has ceased

In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed, the relevant teacher and the principal teacher must, as part of their 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 practicable;
- ✓ Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and
- ✓ Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal

If bullying has ceased, behaviour continues to be monitored by the class teacher.

If bullying has not ceased, Stage 4 (Formal Intervention) and/or suspension may be warranted in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour. The school may also seek external supports e.g. NEPs, Oide, etc.

The school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when pupils are not under the care or responsibility of the school. If this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, the school will support all pupils' involved e.g. relevant lessons in SPHE, check-ins, etc.

Where a parent 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.

All bullying behaviour will be recorded (See Appendix 1). 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. This record will be retained by the Principal for the duration of a pupils' time in St. Mark's JNS, i.e. a period of no longer than 4 years.

If bullying behaviour is reported to the school by a parent and specifically requests that the school is to take no action, this request must be made in writing. However, whilst acknowledging the parent's request, schools may decide that, based on the circumstances (e.g. having an impact on teaching and learning in the classroom, or behaviours on playground), it is appropriate to address bullying behaviour.

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.

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: 

Don Harper, Chairperson, B.O.M.

Review Date: Summer 2026