Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent & Address Bullying Behaviour

Of

Jesus & Mary Secondary School,

Gortnor Abbey

School Patrons: Le Chéile Schools Trust clg.

Reviewed January 2025
Reviewed June 2026

Appendix F

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

The Board of Management of Jesus + Mary SS. Gortnor Abbey 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 8/6/26 [date].

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: _____ Signed: _____

(Chairperson of Board of management) (Principal)

Date: 8/6/26 Date: 8/6/26.

Gortnor Abbey
Secondary School

Bí Cinealta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Adopted by the Board of Management 2026

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (welfare) Act 2000 and Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools, the board of Management of Jesus and Mary Secondary School Gortnor Abbey has adopted the following Policy in conjunction with and within the framework of the schools overall Code of Behaviour.

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: _____ Date: _____
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Principal)

Link to Mission Statement & Key Principles of best Practice

The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to ensuring that policy and practice in the school is guided by the four key principles of Cineáltas:

1. Prevention
2. Support
3. Oversight
4. and Community

The Board of Management of Jesus and Mary Secondary School, Gortnor Abbey 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 of Jesus and Mary Secondary School Gortnor Abbey 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.

These procedures relate to measures to prevent and address bullying behaviour that occur between students. Allegations of bullying behaviour by students towards school staff will be addressed through the school's Code of Behaviour. Allegations of bullying behaviour by school staff towards students will be addressed by the principal through the disciplinary procedures for staff.

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. As a Catholic school, we are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual. No human person is to be diminished or 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 inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

The core definition above sets out clear criteria to help school communities to prevent, correctly identify and address bullying among students. Alleged incidents of bullying are however often complex and must be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The core elements of the definition are further described below:

- ***Targeted behaviour***
  - Bullying is deliberate, unwanted behaviour that causes harm to others, and where the student displaying bullying behaviour knows that their behaviour is or will be perceived as harmful by the child or young person experiencing the behaviour. Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. The harm can be physical (for example, personal injury, damage to or loss of property), social (for example. withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion) and/or emotional (for example, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety) and can have a serious and long-term negative impact on the student experiencing the bullying behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying but, importantly, must still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour.

- ***Repeated behaviour***
  - Bullying takes the form of a systematic pattern of behaviour which is repeated over time. Single offline incidents of intentional negative behaviour involving an imbalance of power are not considered bullying but must still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour. Posting a single harmful message/image/video online, and which is highly likely to be reposted or shared with others can therefore be seen as bullying behaviour.

- ***Imbalance of power***
  - In incidents of bullying, the student experiencing the bullying behaviour finds it hard to defend themselves as a result of the abuse of a real or perceived imbalance of power. This imbalance of power may manifest itself through differences in size, strength, age, ability, peer group power, economic status,

social status, religion, race, ethnic origin including membership of the Traveller and/or Roma communities, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, experience of the care system, disability or the receipt of special education. In incidents of online (or cyber) bullying, the imbalance of power may relate to online anonymity, technical proficiency and possession of information/images/video, and the inability of the targeted student to remove offensive online material or escape the bullying.

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 are not 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.

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

Criminal Behaviour
Bullying behaviour can be considered criminal behaviour under certain circumstances and legal consequences can apply. The age of criminal responsibility in Ireland is 12 years. Some online behaviour may be illegal, and students need to be aware of the far-reaching consequences of posting inappropriate or harmful content online. In cases of intimate imagery, the Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020, also known as Coco's Law, criminalises the *non-consensual sharing of intimate images and also criminalises threatening to share these images*.

If *bullying behaviour involves physical violence or threats of violence*, it may be considered *assault*.

If bullying behaviour involves *discrimination or hate speech* targeting a student based on their race, religion, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation or membership of the Traveller

community, it may be *considered a hate crime* under the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 198911, and those engaging in such behaviour may face criminal charges.

If bullying behaviour *involves sexual harassment or sexual assault*, this may also be considered criminal behaviour.

An Garda Síochána is the appropriate authority to investigate alleged criminal behaviour.

Types of Bullying behaviour deemed to be inappropriate

- Humiliation
- Intimidation; including aggressive use of body language.
- Verbal abuse, anonymous or otherwise.
- Physical abuse or threatened abuse.
- Aggressive or obscene language.
- Offensive joke; whether spoken or by email, text messaging etc.
- Victimisation; including very personal remarks.
- Exclusion and isolation.
- Intrusion through interfering with personal possessions or locker.
- Threats, including demands for money.
- An attack by rumour, gossip, innuendo or ridicule on any individual's reputation either verbally or through electronic media.
- Posting insults about a person on a website or sending upsetting text messages on a mobile. Putting up pictures on a message board, pretending to be someone else in a chat room or on a web page.

Types of Bullying

Physical bullying includes any physical contact that would hurt or injure a person like hitting, kicking, punching, etc. Taking something that belongs to someone else and destroying it would also be considered a type of physical bullying.
Verbal bullying is name-calling, making offensive remarks, or joking about a person's religion, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, socioeconomic status, or the way they look. It can also include a bully making verbal threats of violence or aggression against someone's personal property.
Indirect bullying includes spreading rumours or stories about someone, telling others about something that was told to you in private, and excluding others from groups. **Social Alienation** is when a bully excludes someone from a group on purpose. It also includes a bully spreading rumours, and also making fun of someone by pointing out their differences.
Intimidation is when a bully threatens someone else and frightens that person enough to make him or her do what the bully wants.

This Policy Applies

- In class, between classes and while on the school premises
- On school based activity, school tours etc.
- To anything done in the school name

- To any behaviour that adversely affects the school reputation or **the education of any student in the school**

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EACH MEMBER OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Right	Responsibility
• I have the right to be safe in school.	• I have a responsibility to make our school a safe and secure place for others.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS AND STAFF

I have a right to be:	I have the responsibility to ensure that:
• Treated with respect. • Physically safe and to expect my property to be safe at school. • Free from all forms of bullying. • Able to learn & teach without disruption.	• Others are treated with respect. • Others are physically safe and the property of others is safe. • Others are free from all forms of bullying. • Others/students are able to learn without disruption. • Bullying behaviour is acted upon as appropriate.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS

I have a right to:	I have the responsibility to ensure that:
• Expect that my child is safe in school and can learn without disruption.	• I report bullying behaviour to the school. • Cooperate fully with the implementation of school policy.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF BYSTANDERS/WITNESSES

I should	I should not
• Say 'no' or 'stop' when you see or hear someone behaving unfairly - be • assertive but not aggressive. • Seek help immediately from an adult, if the situation is dangerous. • Tell when you know a student is being bullied.	• Join in bullying behaviour for example, laughing at, sneering, 'slagging' or fighting etc. • Cheer on somebody who is bullying. • Stay in a dangerous situation, e.g. a fight. • Bully the 'bully' - If you see Bullying taking place you do not approach or try to intimidate the bully yourself.

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 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.

Our Wellbeing approach has been developed in line with national *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice* and provides the following four key areas that are essential for a holistic, whole school approach to wellbeing promotion: Culture and Environment; Curriculum (Teaching and Learning); Policy and Planning; and Relationships and Partnerships. These are the four areas that we have considered when we developed our measures to prevent bullying behaviour.

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.

Culture and environment

A positive and inclusive school culture and environment is essential to prevent and address bullying behaviour. The school environment should be a space where students and school staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported. Relationships between all members of the school community should be based on respect, care, integrity and trust.

➢ ***How we create this culture and environment***

1. Open communication between all stakeholders in the school.

2. In January 2024 our school began the process of becoming a restorative practice school.
3. Standards and expectations in relation to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour set by senior school leaders through whole school assemblies, parents evenings and all interactions with students when and where appropriate.
3. Consistent approaches taken to addressing Bullying behaviour.
4. Students promoting kindness, respect and inclusion through their daily Interactions - the school has welcoming and inclusive signage placed around the school and the Bí Cineálta flag displayed in our school canteen.
5. Parents helping to foster an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated by promoting empathy and respect. We support parents in this by running parents evenings.
6. By creating a "Telling Environment", we try to achieve this through our:
   (i) Guidance counsellors.
   (ii) Developing the concept of "One Good Adult" for all students, trying to ensure all students have at least one person in school or outside school that they can talk to.
   (iii) Supporting students who observe bullying with strategies to report and encourage them to report, through surveys, to counselors or any adult in the school or outside.

7. By creating safe physical spaces throughout the school: Bathrooms, under stairs and the school yard where teachers and other staff have clear lines of sight while on supervision
8. Ensuring expectations and values messages are clearly conveyed on corridors and in rooms through posters and artworks which are jointly created and developed with students

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

We promote an approach to teaching and learning that is both collaborative and respectful in Jesus and Mary Secondary School, Gortnor Abbey. Students are given regular opportunities to work in small groups with their peers, which help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy among students.

Subject and Programme Provision

- The curricular subjects offered to students provide opportunities to foster inclusion and respect for diversity, we have a wide array of subjects at both Junior and Senior Cycle and offer all programmes at Senior Cycle (TY, LCA and LC). We provide opportunities for students to develop a sense of self-worth through both curricular and a wide variety of extra-curricular programmes.
- AEN students are facilitated in our Claudine Centre for SPHE where they are provided with an age and stage appropriate level of information for them.
- The LIFT programme is also currently being rolled out in our school.
  LIFT's mission is to transform Irish society by enabling the development of Leaders of Character.

LIFT's leadership learning process is based on eight key leadership values; Listening, Positive Attitude, Respect, Competence, Dedication & Determination, Empathy & Understanding, Accountability, and Honesty & Integrity.

Subject content

- The updated **SPHE** specifications aim to help students to feel empowered to create, nurture and maintain respectful and healthy relationships with themselves and others. The **RSE** strand of the specification also provides space for students to examine and consider relationships and human sexuality which can foster an understanding of diversity which may help to reduce gender and identity based bullying as well as sexism and sexual harassment.

- Senior cycle students will receive 60 hours of SPHE over two years while junior cycle students will receive 400 hours.

- As well as this, diversity and inclusion can be experienced via the Le Chéile Charter which aims to encourage respect and understanding of different beliefs, perspectives and ways of living, and this is delivered in a cross curricular way through assemblies, SPHE, RE, CSPE and many other subjects. In **CSPE**, there is a focus on the interdependence of people in communities, at local as well as national and international levels.

- **Religious Education** is used to raise awareness of wellbeing with monthly themes posted on the Religion notice board in school. We also celebrate Le Chéile day every year reminding students of the importance of kindness and spreading awareness.

Wellbeing Monthly Personal and Student Development Themes

- We begin each month with a themed assembly which is linked to our School mission and ethos. These themes are followed through in SPHE and other classes and whole school activities to engage students, staff and the wider school community where appropriate. The themes are outlined below. These topics are also covered in SPHE classes.

September	Respect & Inclusion
October	Gratitude & Service
November	Reflection & Remembrance
December	Generosity & Giving

January	Resilience & Growth
February	Love & Compassion
March	Leadership & Responsibility
April	Courage & Integrity
May	Well-being & Self-Care

Together We will Achieve: Supports for Parents

➢ Equipping Parents with the skills and information on bullying and online safety is vital to successfully supporting our students. In school we use many of the resources from the FUSE programme developed by the DCU Anti Bullying Centre and promote the FUSE parent hub **https://antibullyingcentre.ie/fuse/parent-hub/**

Policy and Planning

The wellbeing of the school community is at the heart of school policies and plans. This policy clearly details how we try to prevent and address bullying behaviour. We use many of the resources and practices as recommended in the Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools, in particular FUSE Anti-Bullying and Online Safety Programme developed by DCU Anti-Bullying Centre https://antibullyingcentre.ie/fuse/ & anti bullying/stand up awareness week

There are a range of other policies such as our school's acceptable use policy, supervision policy, additional education needs policy and Code of Behaviour that support implementation of a school's Bí Cineálta policy.

Student and Parent Voice

➢ Supporting the participation of students and Parents in the development and implementation of school policies and plans helps increase awareness and ensure effective implementation. We do this by surveying all parents and through focus groups with the parents association and the student council.

Staff Development and Voice

➢ All school staff are also consulted in the development of Policy and Procedures in the school. We have developed a Staff CPD Plan for engagement with restorative practices. Our staff also engage in teacher professional learning courses that support school staff to prevent and address bullying behaviour. School staff are encouraged to share their experiences and examples of best practice.

Relationships and Partnerships

Strong interpersonal connections are a vital part of effectively preventing and

addressing bullying behaviour. These interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures and activities such as

Student Council

➢ We have a nominated student council which ensures those students who are most interested in developing the student voice in the school feel supported and can connect and engage with our school community.

School Clubs

➢ we aim to develop and enhance the number of school clubs and extra-curricular clubs in the school to ensure that all students can feel and connection and belonging in our school.

Parents Association

➢ Our parents' associations plays an active role in the development of our school. The main focus of their regular meetings is how we can make our school a better, more positive place for all students. Every parent/guardian becomes a member of the Parents Association when their child is enrolled.

Student Support Teams

➢ We have a variety of student support teams in the school. This includes the Year Head, AEN/ASD Lead teacher and a Guidance Counsellor with a Pastoral responsibility for each year group. They meet 1-2 times a term with the School Deputy Principal.
➢ We also have an AEN teacher for the school who works with a Deputy Principal and a Team of teachers to support students.

Open door Policy and restorative practices.

➢ Our Principal and Deputy Principal lead an open door policy for all students in the school. WE aim to develop positive relationships with all students and try to develop a culture where students can approach any member of staff to discuss any issue which is affecting them in school, including any bullying behaviours.
➢ It is envisioned that the implementation of restorative practices within the school will help build relationships between students, students and staff, staff and staff etc.

Awareness Initiatives

➢ Some of our monthly themes address the topic of Bullying as well as encouraging confidence and resilience within our students.
➢ Everyone participates in Friendship/Anti-bullying Week, which takes place on an annual basis and covers many topics throughout the week and leading up to and proceeding it

The dignity and the wellbeing of the individual person is of paramount concern in our Christian response. This school will listen closely to, and in dialogue with parents, and thereby build a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, trust and confidence. In continuing to develop prevention strategies, this school will take as much time as is practicable listening to young persons and parents, to help establish their particular context and needs.

Frequent periods of reflection and further engagement by the school, young persons

and parents, will be used to discern appropriate support for young people in this school and will help inform future prevention strategies".

Preventing cyberbullying behaviour

Technology and social media have provided many positive opportunities for entertainment, social engagement and education. Technology is a part of life that can impact even the youngest members of society. However, the increase in the use of technology has led to students becoming increasingly vulnerable to cyberbullying or unacceptable online behaviour

In Jesus and Mary Secondary School Gortnor Abbey strategies to prevent cyberbullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive List:

We proactively address these challenges by promoting digital literacy, digital citizenship, and fostering safe online environments through our first year taster module, through assemblies, SPHE and visiting speakers some of the Assembly topics and visiting speakers include:

- Respectful and kind relationships online.
- We have developed and communicated to students and parents our Acceptable Use Policy for technology.
- Appropriate online behaviour is referenced as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour.
- We promote or host online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online.
- We hold an Internet safety day to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour as part of our Friendship/Anti Bullying week.
- Mobile Phones are not allowed in school unless being used by a teacher in the classroom for teaching and learning.

- **Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour**
  All students, including LGBTQIA+ students, have a right to feel safe and supported at school.

In Jesus and Mary Secondary School Gortnor Abbey strategies to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list

- We maintain an inclusive physical environment such as by displaying relevant posters and flags in classrooms and around the school.
- Conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying including homophobic bullying behaviour.
- Encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour.

Preventing racist bullying behaviour

Schools have become much more culturally diverse over the last number of decades. Students attending schools come from many different cultures and backgrounds. Students from diverse backgrounds may face discrimination and prejudice and may be subject to

racist bullying behaviour.

In Jesus and Mary Secondary School Gortnor Abbey strategies to prevent racist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- We conduct bullying workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents which raise awareness of racism.
- We encourage peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities.
- We encourage bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour.
- We provide support to school staff to respond to the needs of students for whom English is an additional language and for communicating with their parents.
- We ensure 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

As a mixed school we place a particular focus on gender equality as part of our school's measures to create a supportive and respectful environment.

In Jesus and Mary Secondary School Gortnor Abbey strategies to prevent sexist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- We ensure members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex.
- We ensure all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex.
- We celebrate diversity at school and acknowledge the contributions of all students.
- We organise awareness campaigns, workshops and presentations on gender equality and respect as part of Friendship/Anti Bullying week and at different times throughout the year.
- We encourage parents to reinforce these values of respect at home.
- We celebrate stand up awareness week every year in the school with activities organised throughout the week and within our SPHE classes.
- A student friendly version of the schools anti-bullying policy is printed in the
- school journal.

Preventing sexual harassment

Preventing sexual harassment requires an approach that focuses on education, awareness and clear enforceable policies. We make it clear that there is a zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment. Sexual harassment should never be dismissed as teasing or banter.

In Jesus and Mary Secondary School Gortnor Abbey strategies to prevent sexual harassment include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- We use the updated SPHE specifications to teach students about healthy relationships and how to treat each other with respect and kindness..
- We promote positive role models within the school community.

- we challenge 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
In addition to all of the practices identified above under Culture and Environment, Curriculum, Planning and Policy and Relationships and Partnerships

In Jesus and Mary Secondary School Gortnor Abbey

Supervision on Yard and Corridors and in class

➢ A weekly schedule of student supervision on corridors and yard is developed to monitor student behaviour and wellbeing. Any causes for concern are dealt with and reported to school management.

➢ All staff are watchful and observe relationships between students in class, note absence patterns and let it be known that high standards of behaviour are expected at all times

Survey of Students

➢ Students in each year group are surveyed by their Year Head to identify bullying behaviour

ADDRESSING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

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

Year Head for Each Year

The primary aim in addressing reports of bullying behaviour should be to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties 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:

Who to Talk to

Students and or/parents should **report bullying behaviour to any member of staff with whom they feel comfortable, but their main point of contact will be their Year Head** and they should be contacted first. All staff, students or parents may make:

- A direct approach at an appropriate time.
- Hand up a signed note e.g. with homework.

- Make a phone call to the school.
- Send an email to the appropriate teacher.
- Ask a parent/guardian or friend to talk on your behalf.
- Discuss an incident of bullying with a teacher or another trusted adult within the school about who is responsible for bullying behaviour rather than "telling tales" with no concrete information.

Incidents of bullying behaviour, no matter how trivial, which are drawn to the attention of a mandated staff member, will be dealt with in the following manner:

The staff member will

- Listen, take notes, reassure the student, ensure the students safety as far as possible.
- All reported instances ***will be passed on to the Year Head for investigation.***

We work to ensure that the person being bullied feels safe and secure at all times. Therefore the person being bullied will be consulted in conjunction with their parents about the matter and how the school is to proceed in the first instance.

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

1. Ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour is heard and reassured.
2. Seek to ensure the privacy of those involved - within the parameters of child protection guidelines.
3. Conduct all conversations with sensitivity.
4. Consider the age and ability of those involved.
5. Listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to.
6. how best to address the situation.
7. Take action in a timely manner.
8. Inform parents of those involved.

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 Year Head will

- Identify if bullying behaviour has occurred by analysing incidents of alleged bullying and seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why.
- This will be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- If a group of students is involved, each student will be engaged individually at first.

- Thereafter, all students involved should be met as a group (this will only happen by agreement with students and parents)
- At the group meeting, each student will be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views.
- Each student will be supported, as appropriate, following the group meeting. • It may also be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident. Appendix A.

The definition of bullying provided above sets out clear criteria to help the Year Head to identify bullying behaviour. ***The Year Head will use Appendix B to make this determination***.

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

Where bullying behaviour has occurred

"Given the complexity of bullying behaviour it is generally acknowledged that no one approach works in all situations. International and national research also continues to evolve in this area and the effectiveness of particular approaches continue to be reviewed. Each school must therefore decide on an approach that is best suited to its own circumstances."

P 44, Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools

The Year Head Will

- Where the Year Head has deemed Bullying has occurred the Year Head will Record any instances of Bullying on our school record portal/form.
- 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.
- All files and documents will be stored with a Bullying Case file number in the Year Head Office and attached to each relevant student file on the Student Management Information System.

In the first instance a restorative practice and mediation approach to dealing with the bullying behaviour will be taken by the Year Head.

- Consult with parents: 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 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.

- Listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation.
- The person who has bullied will be asked to sign and Complete Appendix C. Sanctions may apply in line with the schools Code of Behaviour for serious or a repeated instance of Bullying with a second student. Repeat instances of Bullying with the same student is dealt with below.
- 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.

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, school staff will show empathy to the student, will deal with the matter sensitively and speak 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 will be asked to put this request in writing to the school.

However, while acknowledging the parent's request, the school may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour

Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred

The Year Head will

- Engage with the students involved and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement
- In cases where the **Year Head** considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after they have determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it will be recorded by the **Year Head** and passed on to the principal with all other documentation.

In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the **Year Head** must, as part of their professional judgement, must document and take the following factors into account:

- Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased and the date.
- The views of the parents and students.

- Any engagement with external services and supports
- If the bullying behaviour has not ceased the Year Head will review the strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents. 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 use 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.
- 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.
- 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 student.

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

Students who experience Bullying or Witness Bullying

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

Pupils may need counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed.

- In this regard the relevant Student Support Team will work closely with the student to ensure they are actively supported in the school and to engage in school based activities they enjoy
- The schools guidance department and behaviour for learning coordinator will also put in place a program of support in conjunction with the **Year Year Head**
- The learning strategies applied within the school will also allow for the enhancement of the pupil's self-worth
- The Student will be placed on our Handle with care list for Pastoral Care

Students who display bullying Behaviour

Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others. The Year Head in conjunction with the relevant Student Support Team will work closely with the student in this regard.

Outside agency support

The school in certain circumstances may also seek the support and advice of TUSLA, EWO, NEPS, NCSE, second level school support services, HSE and any other agency

deemed appropriate to support the school in dealing with incidents of bullying.

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	Meeting: Survey: Focus Group: 14/03/2025	Staff Meetings, Survey and focus group
AP1 Team	April 2026	Meeting & Discussion Guidelines created and agreed on
Students	Student Survey: SPHE class discussions: 28 Apr - 07 May 2025 Student Council Focus Group: 07/05/2025	Student Survey, SPHE class discussions, Student Council Focus Group
Parents	Parent Survey: Parents Council Focus Group:	Parent Survey & Parents Council Focus Group:
Board of Management	Board of Management Meeting:	Board of Management Meeting Discussion
Wider School Community as appropriate eg Bus Drivers	Community Survey:	Community Survey to include Bus Escorts and Drivers
Date Policy was approved	-----Insert Date	
Date Policy was last reviewed	-----Insert Date	

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DEVELOPMENT OF OUR BÍ CINEÁLTA POLICY TO PREVENT AND ADDRESS BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Date	Action
Term 1 2025	Poster competition for student version of Bi Cinealta meaning for display around the school
Academic Year 25/26	Specific programmes used to improve relationships amongst students in specific yeargroups
March 2026	Anti Bullying Talks for specific year groups where issues were identified
April 2026	AP1 Team Meeting & Discussion Guidelines for Yearheads created
May 2026	Single Sex assemblies to address issues within yeargroups

OVERSIGHT

Periodic Summary Reports to the Board of Management
The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting. (Appendix D)

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 bullying behaviour.
- Any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant.
- If any serious incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred which have had a serious adverse impact on a student.
- If a parent has informed the school that a student has left the school because of reported bullying behaviour.
- If any additional support is needed from the board of management and if the school's Bí Cineálta policy requires urgent review in advance of the annual review.

This update does not contain personal or identifying information.

Annual Review of the Bí Cineálta Policy
The Board of Management must undertake an annual (calendar) review (Appendix E) or as soon as practicable where the board of management determines that a review is warranted of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and its implementation in consultation with the school community.

The review will be completed with input from the school community which includes the board of management, staff, students and their parents and members of the wider school community (as appropriate).

The school will engage with the student council and the parents association to obtain their views on the content and effectiveness of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy.

The school community will be given notice that the annual review has taken place and the form included at Appendix F will be used for this purpose. This confirmation will be published on the school website once the annual review has taken place.

APPENDIX A

ALLEGED BULLYING INCIDENT STUDENT STATEMENT FORM

DATE: _____ **STUDENT:** _____

DETAILS: Include time, place, names of alleged perpetrators, names of bystanders. Detail here both sides of the event

Appendix B

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred
To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour the Year Head should 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 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.

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Appendix C

Jesus and Mary Secondary School Gortnor Abbey
Anti-Bullying

Student Anti-Bullying Charter

Student Name: _____ *Class:*_____

I recognise and appreciate that all of my fellow students are different from each other and from me in many ways. I would not like to be treated unfairly by any of my fellow-students because of any difference. I know that I have a right to be unique from other students and this does not give anyone the right to treat me unfairly. I know that I am entitled to fair, equal, respectful treatment in school because of the school's Code of Behaviour and outside of school too.

I also know that all other students are entitled to be treated fairly, equally and respectfully. It is wrong to treat anyone any other way. I therefore promise that I will treat all my fellow-students fairly, equally and respectfully .

In particular: *(Handwrite below "I will always treat (Name) fairly and respectfully")*

_____

_____

_____

Signed:

Student: _____ Date: ___/___/___

Teacher: _____

APPENDIX D

Bullying Behaviour Update for board of management meeting of DD/MM/YYYY

Having reviewed the details of the incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the previous board of management meeting, the following information is provided:

Total number of new incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the last board of management meeting	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour currently ongoing.	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the beginning of this school year.	

Where incidents of bullying behaviour have been reported since the last meeting, the update included a verbal report which includes the following information where relevant:

- The trends and patterns identified such as the form of bullying behaviour, type of bullying behaviour if known, location of bullying behaviour, when it occurred.
- The strategies used to address the bullying behaviour.
- Any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour.
- If any serious incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred which have had a serious adverse impact on a student.
- If a parent has informed the school that a student has left the school because of reported bullying behaviour.
- If any additional support is needed from the board of management.
- If the school's Bí Cineálta policy requires urgent review in advance of the annual review.

This update did not include any personal information or information that could identify the students involved.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Principal)

APPENDIX E

REVIEW OF THE BÍ CINEÁLTA POLICY

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual (calendar) review of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and its implementation in consultation with the school community. As part of the review, this document must be completed

Bí Cineálta Policy Review

1. When did the Board formally adopt its Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools? Insert date when the Bí Cineálta policy was last adopted by the school.
   _____/_____/20_____
2. Where in the school is the student friendly Bí Cineálta policy displayed?
3. What date did the Board publish the Bí Cineálta policy and the student friendly policy on the school website? _____/_____/20_____
4. How has the student friendly policy been communicated to students?
5. How has the Bí Cineálta policy and student friendly policy been communicated to parents?
6. Have all school staff been made aware of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools?
7. Does the Bí Cineálta policy document the strategies that the school uses to prevent bullying behaviour?
8. Has the Board received and minuted the Bullying Behaviour Update presented by the principal at every ordinary board meeting over the last calendar year?
9. Has the Board discussed how the school is addressing all reports of bullying behaviour.
10. Is the Board satisfied that all incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed in accordance with the school's Bí Cineálta Policy?
11. Have the prevention strategies in the Bí Cineálta policy been implemented?
12. Has the Board discussed the effectiveness of the strategies used to prevent bullying behaviour?

13. How have (a) parents, (b) students and (c) school staff been consulted with as part of the review of the Bí Cineálta Policy?

14. Outline any aspects of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and/or its implementation that have been identified as requiring further improvement as part of this review:
15. Where areas for improvement have been identified, outline how these will be addressed and whether an action plan with timeframes has been developed?

16. Does the student friendly policy need to be updated as a result of this review and if so why?

17. Does the school refer parents to the complaints procedures if they have a complaint about how the school has addressed bullying behaviour?

18. Has a parent informed the school that a student has left the school due to reported bullying behaviour?

19. Has the Office of the Ombudsman for Children initiated or completed an investigation into how the school has addressed an incident of bullying behaviour?

Signed: _____ Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management) (Principal)

Date: _____ Date: _____ Date of next review:

Appendix F

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

The Board of Management of Jesus and Mary Secondary School Gortnor Abbey 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 _____[date].

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: _____ Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management) (Principal)

Date: _____ Date: _____

Following on from interaction with all stakeholders in the school and wider community about our Bí Cineálta Anti Bullying policy we held an in class feedback session with all school year groups.
A list of suggestions, questions and general comments made by students has been compiled and a small number of changes have been made to the Policy. Some of these changes include:

- Students suggested that the statement "Bully the Bully" should be better explained this has been updated.

- Add the A to LGBTQI+ to reference Asexual making it LGBTQIA+

- In the curriculum section explain the LIFT programme. An explanation as to what the LIFT programme does has been added.

- Clarification was requested on a point under the who to tell section; it has been edited for easier understanding.

- Students requested that the suggested option of sending an email to the teacher/yearhead to report bullying information be added to The who to talk to section also.

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Appendix G Student Friendly Bi Cinealta Policy

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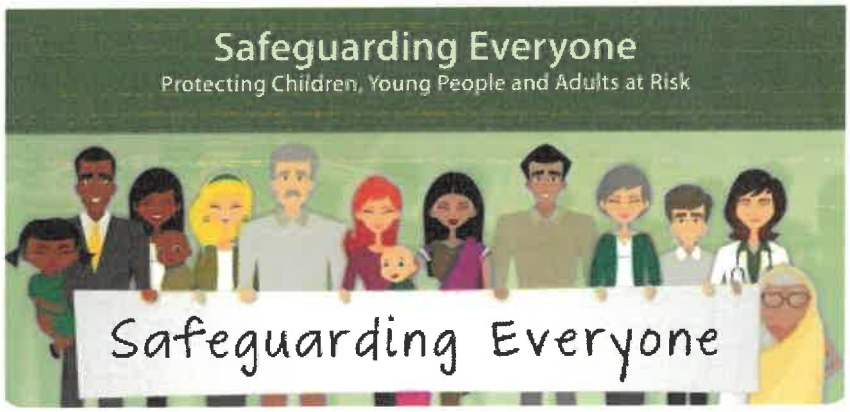

Child safeguarding is what we do in our school to keep children and young people safe from harm.

We think about how to keep everyone safe and we write down how we will do that.

This is called our **Child Safeguarding Statement**. We check this every year. When we do this we will ask you what you think about safeguarding in our school. It is important that you feel safe at school and in your life outside of school too.

If someone says or does something to hurt you or makes you feel uncomfortable, you can tell an adult that you trust.

Who to go to:

☑ **Any trusted adult**

For example, your Year Head or Tutor, a teacher, SNA, the Principal or Deputy

What we will do:

☑ Listen and understand

☑ Guide or look for help

Every school has a person in charge of child safeguarding. This person is called the Designated Liaison Person or DLP. The DLP for our school is

Ms Harrison