

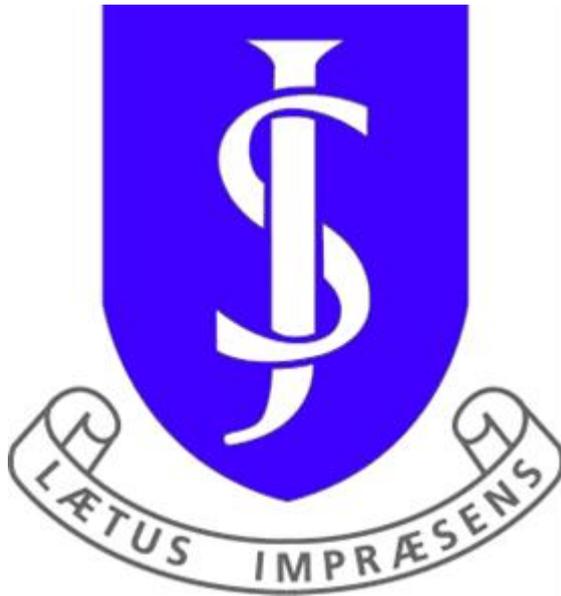


JOHN SCOTTUS SECONDARY SCHOOL

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John Scottus School

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

John Scottus school offers a vision of education that gives young people the self-mastery, strength of character and compassion to contribute meaningfully to the world around them. It is an education based on the belief that each child can come to discover and express their innate gifts, that each child can come to contribute something unique and exceptional, that each child has at their heart a limitless potential.

Central to the ethos of the school is character development through cultivating the life skills of stillness, attention and enquiry. This takes place by emphasising the importance of coming to know your true self, of discovering your true limitless essence and coming to know that we are united in oneness through this essence.

Mindfulness, philosophy, and meditation are considered the three key aspects in the journey of self-discovery. The school invites each child to develop life skills of stillness, attention, and enquiry. The mindful motto of the school is "Delight in the present", and the belief is that when a child comes to know their true self, it is possible to delight in the present every moment of every day.

The Board of Management of John Scottus Secondary 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 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.

This policy applies to the whole school community in their relationships with students and each other, teachers, management, Board of Management, Board of Trustee, parents, office and all ancillary staff.

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 the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

- A positive school culture and climate which, is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity; encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
- Effective leadership;
- A school-wide approach;
- A shared understanding of what bullying behaviour is and its impact;
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness-raising measures) that-

- build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
- explicitly address all the forms and types of bullying behaviour
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils
- Supports for staff;
- Consistent recording, investigation, and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy

Policy link to ethos:

At John Scottus Secondary School we strive to create the best environment for learning and for the healthy growth and development of each student. As a caring school community, we hold that all harmful and hurtful behaviour is unacceptable and repugnant to the ethos of our school. Bullying behaviour, by its very nature, may cause deep psychological harm and can damage the whole process of education as well as denying students of their rights. The aim of this policy is to ensure John Scottus Secondary School is an environment where:

- Students, staff and parents treat each other fairly and with respect.
- Bullying behaviour in all its forms and types is not tolerated including; direct forms of bullying behaviour (Physical Bullying, Verbal Bullying, Written bullying behaviour and Extortion), indirect forms of bullying behaviour such as Exclusional and Relational and Online Bullying Behaviour. Types of bullying behaviour include Disablist, exceptionally able, Gender identity, Homophobic/transphobic/LGBTQ+, Physical appearance, Racist, Poverty, Religious identity, Sexist, Sexual harassment
- Students, staff and parents feel safe and are able to report bullying without being afraid.
- People support each other, and problems are resolved.

Definition of bullying

Bullying is defined 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.**

Once off incidents may be considered bullying in certain circumstances: A single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as there is a likelihood of it being shared.

A once off instance of negative behaviour, a disagreement between students, instances where students don't want to remain friends and non-deliberate behaviours of students with special educational needs are **not considered bullying behaviour.**

Section A: Development/review of our Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour

All members of our school community were provided with the opportunity to input into the development/review of this policy.

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	20 March 2025	Bí Cineálta Training Day – Staff Survey
Students	24 February 2025, 31 March 2025	Student surveys, Meetings with Student Council
Parents	3 March 2025	Parents’ Survey
Board of Management		
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	20 March 2025	Ancillary staff included in Bí Cineálta Staff Training
Date policy was approved: 7/4/25		
Date policy was last reviewed: : 7/4/25		

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 (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

It is School policy to provide education on bullying behaviour in the following manner:

- Appropriate and timely consequences for bullying behaviour
- All year groups are facilitated through the Wellbeing Education and SPHE programmes, which incorporate information on bullying behaviour and its effects, cultural changes, gender identity and more.
- Regular assembly themes help develop strategies for developing empathy, compassion, respect and resilience
- Implementing the Digital Media Literacy curriculum which teaches students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship
- Developing and communicating an acceptable usage policy for technology and having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- The Well-being co-ordinator who promotes well-being activities, including House lunches, house activities, Founders Day etc.

- Theme weeks that promote inclusivity, tolerance and compassion – eg, Stand Up week, World Culture Day – We will implement a student –led bullying awareness week in 2025/26 to raise awareness of Bí Cineálta measures.
- The development of self-esteem is supported through both curricular and extracurricular activities
- Extensive support for all students is provided through our class tutor system
- Extensive support through our learning support and care teams helps develop positive communication and social skills
- Fostering an attitude of respect for all through the teaching of all subjects
- Positive reinforcement of behaviour for the better good of the community is encouraged through the student administration system of VSWare, the House team system, individual prizes for good behaviour, the annual Inclusiveness Award and most importantly, sincere verbal praise from a teacher
- Promoting an environment of speaking up when any bullying behaviour is witnessed – this will be developed in 2025/2026 through school assemblies
- Guest speakers are invited to the school who educate students on online behaviour and the dangers therein, eg, The Gardaí.
- Parents are given the opportunity to speak to class Teachers at the start of the school year and class teachers flag the importance of phone monitoring to parents,
- Developing a student friendly version of the policy to be displayed in all classrooms and in the student diary for Sept '25

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):

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students, our school has implemented a comprehensive set of supervision and monitoring policies aimed at preventing and addressing bullying behavior. These measures include:

1. Wellbeing Structures: Student wellbeing is overseen through various frameworks, including:
 - a. Student Administration (VSWARE)
 - b. The Buddy System
 - c. The Student Leadership Team
 - d. Class Teachers and Year Heads
 - e. The Helping Hands initiative
 - f. The Care Team
2. Reporting Channels: Students are encouraged to report bullying behavior through several channels:
 - a. They may confide in a teacher to discuss their experiences and feelings regarding bullying.
 - b. Students can seek advice or simply express their concerns in a safe and supportive environment.
 - c. Parents are also welcome to reach out to the school if they suspect their child is experiencing bullying.
3. Helping Hands Program: This program identifies vulnerable students and facilitates inclusive measures within classrooms. Class teachers work to help these students develop friendships and foster a supportive community.
4. Active Supervision: Supervision is crucial in preventing and addressing bullying. The school organizes structured activities during break times and encourages diverse engagement to accommodate varying student interests.
5. Safe Physical Spaces: A commitment to creating safe physical environments is essential. The school conducts regular reviews of building and campus supervision to ensure all areas are safe and welcoming.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour is are as follows: Deputy Principal, Junior/Senior Cycle Heads and Class Teachers.

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 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. Important factors to consider as part of the review are the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the students involved.

While there may be different levels of severity of bullying behaviour, all incidents deemed to be bullying will be recorded and investigated. This will be done in accordance with the John Scottus guidelines for investigating such behaviour. A teacher who receives a complaint/disclosure that a pupil is the subject of bullying behaviour will complete a Serious Incident Report form detailing the date, time, individuals involved and precise details of what you saw or heard happening. This will be passed on to the relevant Class Teacher(s) as soon as possible.

In assessing the situation, the Class Teacher(s) will decide on a course of action and complete the Serious Incident form and send it to the Deputy Principal for record-keeping.

The Principal, Deputy Principal or Junior Cycle Head may become involved in solving the problem depending on the severity of the case.

The Class Teacher/Principal/Deputy Principal/Junior Cycle Head will investigate the incident and deal with it according to school policy. The preferred mode in dealing with bullying is to use a restorative process. In certain instances, sanctions and referrals may be required.

The parent/student who reported the issue will be informed of the actions undertaken by the school to deal with the matter.

The steps that will be taken by the school to determine if bullying behaviour has occurred, the approaches taken to address the bullying behaviour and to review progress are as follows (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

The following steps outline the procedures that the school will take to determine if bullying behaviour has occurred, the approaches taken to address the bullying, and the methods for reviewing progress:

1. Reporting and Detection:

- a. Staff members are trained to recognize signs of bullying and encourage students to report incidents.
- b. Students are provided with multiple avenues to share their experiences, including confidential discussions with teachers or through the Buddy System.

2. Initial Assessment:

- a. Upon receiving a report of potential bullying, a designated staff member will meet with the student to gather detailed information about the incident.
- b. Conversations may cover the context of the behaviour, the individuals involved, and the emotional impact on the victim.

3. Investigation:

- a. An investigation will be initiated, which may include speaking with witnesses, other students, and involved parties to gather comprehensive insights.
- b. All information will be documented for further review.

4. Intervention Strategies:

- a. If bullying behaviour is confirmed, the school will implement appropriate interventions tailored to the situation, which may include:
 - i. Engaging the involved students in mediated conversations to address the behaviour.
 - ii. Collaborating with the Helping Hands program to support vulnerable students and foster positive relationships.
 - iii. Providing resources or counselling to both the victim and the perpetrator to address their needs.

5. Prevention Measures:

- a. Ongoing supervision during break times and organized activities will be maintained to minimize opportunities for bullying.
- b. The school will promote an inclusive culture through various programs and awareness campaigns focused on equality, diversity, and respect.

6. Review of Progress:

- a. The school will conduct follow-up meetings with the student who reported the bullying to monitor their wellbeing and the effectiveness of interventions.
- b. Additional feedback will be gathered from teachers, parents, and peers to assess the situation and ensure that bullying behaviour has ceased.

7. Continuous Improvement:

- a. The school will regularly review and update its bullying prevention policies and procedures based on the findings from investigations and ongoing feedback from the school community.

By following these procedures, the school aims to create a safe and supportive environment for all students, ensuring that bullying behaviour is effectively addressed and monitored.

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):

Approaches to Support Those Who Experience, Witness, and Display Bullying Behaviour

To foster a positive and inclusive school environment, the school implements supportive approaches for students who experience, witness, or engage in bullying behaviour. These approaches include:

1. Support for Victims:

- a. Establish confidential reporting channels for students who have experienced bullying, allowing them to share their experiences safely.
- b. Provide access to counselling and emotional support services to help victims process their feelings and build confidence.
- c. Implement the Helping Hands program to assist vulnerable students in developing friendships and a sense of belonging within the school community.

2. Support for Witnesses:

- a. Encourage students who witness bullying to report incidents and assure them that their concerns will be taken seriously.
- b. Foster an environment where witnesses feel empowered to intercede safely and support their peers, reinforcing positive bystander behaviour.
- c. Organize workshops and discussions about the impact of bullying and the importance of standing up for others.

3. Interventions for Perpetrators:

- a. Engage students who display bullying behaviour in conversations to understand the underlying reasons for their actions and the impact on others.
- b. Offer guidance and counselling to help them develop empathy, conflict resolution skills, and healthier ways to interact with their peers.
- c. Implement restorative justice practices that allow perpetrators to acknowledge their behaviour and work towards making amends with those affected.

4. Educational Programs:

- a. Conduct workshops and awareness campaigns focused on bullying prevention, encouraging a culture of kindness and respect among all students.
- b. Include lessons on empathy, diversity, and conflict resolution in the curriculum to equip students with essential social skills.

5. Creating Safe Spaces:

- a. Ensure that safe physical spaces are available within the school where students can seek refuge and support when feeling threatened or overwhelmed.
- b. Maintain active supervision during break times and school activities to deter bullying behaviour and foster positive interactions among students.

6. Collaboration with Parents and Guardians:

- a. Communicate with parents about the school's anti-bullying initiatives and encourage their involvement in supporting their children.
- b. Offer resources and workshops for parents to help them recognize signs of bullying and guide their children on how to respond effectively.

By implementing these comprehensive approaches, the school seeks to provide a supportive framework for all students, promoting a culture of respect and empathy while effectively addressing 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

Date: 7/4/2025

Chairperson, Board of Management



Signed

Date: 7/4/2025

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management