



## Bí Cineálta Policy

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Scoil Phádraic Cailíní has **adopted the following anti-bullying policy** within the framework of the school's overall code of 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.

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.

## **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       |
|--------------|----------------|------------------------------|
| School Staff | 19/5/25.       | Aladdin.                     |
| Students     | 19/5/25        | Survey and class discussion. |
| Parents      | 12/5/25.       | Survey.                      |

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management at their meeting on 20/5/25

All staff engaged in training on this policy.

## **Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour**

This section sets out the prevention strategies that may 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.

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.

The dignity and the wellbeing of the individual person is of paramount concern in Christian response. This school will listen closely to and engage in dialogue with parents, thereby building a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, trust and confidence.

In continuing to develop prevention strategies, this school 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.

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) 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;

### **(b) Effective leadership**

### **(c) A school-wide approach**

### **(d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact**

### **(e) Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-**

- build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and

- explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying;
- effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;

**(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils**

**(g) Supports for staff**

**(h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and**

**(i) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.**

**School-wide approach**

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it- prevention and intervention.
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s)
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.

**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):**

**Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils**

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and Practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

**The school has a number of systems in place**

- Cara Buddy System where 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils assist and support junior pupils
- Yard Monitor System where senior pupils encourage pupils to participate in yard games for the purpose of ensuring that all pupils are included at play time.

- Supports are in place at class and learning support level for pupils who need social support and support with emotional regulation.
- There are agreed appropriate monitoring and supervision practices in the school.
- Anti-bullying surveys are administered to the pupils at least once a term to support communication about bullying.
- Care Plans are in place for pupils with care needs.
- The school uses some of the resources of the Break through the Cloud of Bullying programme.
- The Pupils Council communicates to their classes about school initiatives around anti-bullying and feeds back to the council on this.
- The Parents Association gives due consideration to all pupils and supports their participation in Parents Association organised Fun Days.
- The school has a Voluntary Smartphone Ban Initiative to support parents with delaying the introduction of smartphones to primary school pupils.
- In relation to Acceptable Use Policy in the school the following issues are addressed:
  - All Internet sessions are supervised by a teacher.
  - Pupils have been instructed to access only those chat rooms, discussion forums and messaging or other electronic communication fora that have been approved by the teacher.

(Note that the Schools Broadband Programme has blocked all social networking sites on the basis that they waste time and take up too much of the bandwidth which has been provided for educational purposes only).

#### **Implementation of curricula**

- The full implementation of the SPHE and CSPE curricula and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Cool School Lessons, #UP2US, Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme, On My Own Two Feet, Break Through the Cloud of Bullying.
- School wide delivery of lessons on **Cyberbullying, Emotional Regulation and Wellbeing**.
- Delivery of the SPHE Programmes at primary level. These lessons cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying
- 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.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- Involvement of the student council in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Buddy system, mentoring, Lunchtime Pals and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school-to be included in student journals and displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) have **access to the anti bullying policy** as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school (every year).
- The implementation of regular (e.g. per year/per term/per month/per week) whole school promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention; annual Friendship Week and parent(s)/guardian(s) seminars; annual or term or monthly student surveys; regular school or year group assemblies by principal, deputy principal etc.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance.

It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.

- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
    - Direct approach to the teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
    - Hand note up with homework.
    - Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
    - No More Worries Box
  - awareness measures e.g. a dedicated notice board in the school and classrooms.
  - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
  - Administer a confidential questionnaire at least once a term to all pupils.
  - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
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- Identify clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied. The protocol should be developed in consultation with parents.
  - The development of an Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.
  - The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school e.g. Monthly Anti-bullying Surveys and the Anti-Bullying Campaign Resources –Break Through the Cloud of Bullying.

## Allocation of School Resources

The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) is responsible for allocating learning support hours and Special Educational Needs Assistants (SNAs) to each school. These allocations are based on the overall needs of each school, which vary from one school to another. Schools are expected to operate within the allocation they receive.

NCSE policy states that no student is entitled to a specific resource. Resources are assigned to the school—not to individual pupils—and it is the responsibility of the school Principal and Management Team to allocate them according to the greatest needs within the school community.

Schools are required to foster pupil independence, including self-care and independent learning skills, for students with both medical and special educational needs. Resources should not be used in a way that creates long-term dependency. Schools must implement strategies to reduce reliance on supports over time, with progress monitored and documented in Care and Support Plans, which are reviewed by the NCSE. Parents are expected to support and cooperate with these strategies.

In line with the school's **Bí Cineálta** policy, all communication between staff and parents regarding resources must be respectful and understanding. Parents must acknowledge that resource allocation is managed in the context of meeting the needs of all pupils. The NCSE does not allocate resources in a way that allows parents to determine how their child's needs will be met. While the school values input from medical and professional support services, these professionals are not in a position to direct how school resources are allocated, as they do not have access to the full context of all

students' needs. All decisions regarding access to school resources are the responsibility of the Principal.

If a parent has the opportunity to receive external medical or professional services that may increase or reduce their child's dependency on school resources (e.g., participation in a reading class, medical treatment, insulin pump or toileting support), the school must be informed **at least two weeks in advance** of any meeting affecting the pupil's care needs. The school must be involved in any meetings that impact its resources. Parents and external professionals cannot independently decide or instruct the school regarding ongoing access to supports, as such decisions affect the health and safety of the broader student population.

For medical needs, parents must provide the school with the names and contact details of the child's medical team, including relevant doctors or consultants.

Information regarding changes to a pupil's Care Plan must be communicated to the school a week in advance of the school being able to assume responsibility for these changes. Adequate time must be provided for staff to be briefed on this information. In addition to this, parents must provide required training in advance of the pupil returning to school, before the school can assume responsibility for the pupil's care.

The Board of Management expects full cooperation from parents with this policy. The Principal and Management Team have the right to fulfil their responsibility to allocate the school's limited resources and supports free of pressure and duress. The school is committed to meeting the needs of all students; however, decisions about how those needs are met rest solely with the Principal. If parents request access to resources at a level that the school cannot offer or do not believe are in the best interest of the pupil, they must obtain written confirmation from the SENO that he/she will allocate these resources to the school for this specific purpose (Special Educational Needs Organiser).

## Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

The Relevant Teachers in this school are: Class Teacher/Supervising Teacher  
The Principal/ Deputy Principal thereafter if necessary

The Class/Supervising Teacher will inform the Principal of all incidents of bullying.  
**Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.**

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

listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation

conduct all conversations with sensitivity

consider the age and ability of those involved

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):

### **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 a balance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society.

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour you 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 above questions 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.

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred teachers should consider what, where, when and why?

- If a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first.
- Thereafter, all students involved should be met as a group.
- At the group meeting, each student should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views.
- Each student should be supported as appropriate, following the group meeting .
- It may be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident(s)

### **Where bullying behaviour has occurred**

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 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

It is important to listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation

A record should be kept of the engagement with all involved.

This record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known (see Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the Bi Cineálta procedure), where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students involved and their parents .

The record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred . The teacher must engage with the students 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 students involved.

The teacher should document the review with students and their parents, to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and document the views of students and their parents in relation to this.

The date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased should also be recorded Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted.

Ongoing supervision and support may be needed for the students 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 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 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 student, 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 Cineálta 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 student

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

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.
  - Pastoral care system
  - Buddy / Peer mentoring system
  - Care team / Student Support Team
  - Group work such as circle time
- If pupils require counselling or further support the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise the same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.
- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

## 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 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)

### **Other relevant school policies**

- Other relevant school policies include the Code of Behaviour, Child Protections Policy, Supervision of Pupils Policy, Acceptable Use policy and Attendance Strategy.

**Appendix 1 Behaviours that should be reported to the Principal or Deputy Principal immediately and if this is not possible they should be reported as soon as is practicable**

This list is not exclusive nor exhaustive.

The Board of Management recognises the professionalism and experience of the teachers in these incidences.

The Board of Management recognises that it may not be safe/ practical or possible to leave the supervision of children immediately to report such incidences however these are examples of incidences that should be reported to the Principal or Deputy Principal as soon as possible.

Any behaviour by a pupil that puts that pupil or any other pupil or staff member at risk of physical harm.

Any physical hurt, judged to be intentional by the supervising staff member, visited on a pupil or staff member.

Any aggressive, threatening or bad language visited on a pupil or staff member by another.

Any reported incident of cyber-bullying.

Any incident investigated by the supervising teacher that is deemed to be bullying

Any report by a parent of alleged bullying.

Any communication to the school, verbal or electronic, that does not meet the threshold of respect and uphold the ethos of the school.

**Appendix 2: Template to record bullying behaviour.**

|                                                                                            |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Date</b>                                                                                |  |
| <b>Type and form of bullying (Refer to sections 2.5 and 2.7 of Bí Cineálta.</b>            |  |
| <b>Where and when bullying took place.</b>                                                 |  |
| <b>Date and details of initial consultation with pupils.</b>                               |  |
| <b>Date and details of initial consultation with parents.</b>                              |  |
| <b>Views of pupils on action to be taken to address bullying behaviour</b>                 |  |
| <b>Views of parents on action to be taken to address bullying behaviour</b>                |  |
| <b>Date of review of pupils and parents to determine if bullying behaviour has ceased.</b> |  |
| <b>Views of pupils.</b>                                                                    |  |
| <b>Views of parents.</b>                                                                   |  |
| <b>Engagement with external supports and services if applicable.</b>                       |  |

