St. Paul's Secondary School

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***BÍ CINEÁLTA* POLICY TO PREVENT AND ADDRESS BULLYING BEHAVIOUR**

ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

23rd March 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 St. Paul's Secondary School 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: 23rd March 2026

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: Linda O'Mara Date: 23rd March 2026

(Principal)

Charity No: CHY 17522

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of St. Paul's Secondary School 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. ***Community***

The Board of Management of St Paul's 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.

We confirm that we will take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the bullying or harassment of our students in whatever form and however motivated.

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 each person 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 all have an indispensable part to play in the school community, regardless of difference.

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;

Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures)-

- Effective leadership;
- A school-wide approach;
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact
- 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;
- Supports for staff;
- Ensure 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.

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 Positive Behaviour.

The core definition outlined above establishes clear criteria to assist school communities in preventing, identifying, and addressing bullying among students. While alleged incidents of bullying can be complex, each situation must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The key elements of the definition are explained in detail below:

1. Targeted Behaviour

Bullying involves intentional and harmful actions directed at others. It occurs when a student knowingly engages in unwanted behaviour that causes harm and is aware that their actions are perceived as

harmful by the affected individual. This behaviour is neither accidental nor reckless. The harm caused can take various forms:

- Physical (e.g., injury, damage to property)
- Social (e.g., isolation, exclusion)
- Emotional (e.g., low self-esteem, anxiety, depression)

Such harm can have severe and long-lasting effects on the targeted student. However, if the harmful impact is unintentional, it is not classified as bullying. Nonetheless, these situations still require intervention under the school's code of behaviour.

2. Repeated Behaviour

Bullying is characterised by a repeated pattern of harmful behaviour over time. A single, intentional negative act offline, even if involving a power imbalance, is not considered bullying but should still be addressed under the school's behaviour policy. In contrast, a single harmful message, image, or video posted online can qualify as bullying if it is likely to be reshared or widely circulated.

3. Imbalance of Power

In bullying incidents, the targeted student often struggles to defend themselves due to a real or perceived imbalance of power. This power imbalance can manifest in various ways, including:

- Differences in physical factors such as size, strength, or age
- Social or economic factors like peer influence, status, or financial situation
- Personal attributes such as race, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability
- Experience in care systems or receipt of special education

In cases of online (cyber) bullying, power imbalances may arise from factors like online anonymity, technological expertise, or control over harmful content. The targeted student may feel powerless to remove offensive material or escape the harassment.

Behaviour That Is Not Bullying

A single instance of negative behaviour, while harmful, does not constitute bullying. However, a hurtful message posted on social media may still be considered bullying if it is likely to be shared and cause ongoing harm. Bullying behaviour may be visible to a wide audience and is likely to be shared multiple times, thereby becoming repeated behaviour.

Disagreements between students, or situations where students do not want to be or remain friends, are not considered bullying unless they involve deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude, or manipulate others, including efforts to influence friendship groups negatively.

Some students with special educational needs may have social communication difficulties, which can lead to behaviours that inadvertently cause harm to themselves or others. It is important to recognise that these behaviours are not deliberate or planned; in some situations, they are automatic responses beyond the student's control. Bullying is not characterised by accidental or reckless behaviour.

If a student experiences repeated harm but the behaviour causing it is unintentional, this does not qualify as bullying. Nevertheless, such behaviours, while not defined as bullying, can still be distressing. Schools should address these situations through strategies outlined in their Code of Behaviour.

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. Open communication between the patron, boards of management, school staff, students and their parents help to foster a collaborative approach and shared responsibilities in relation to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. The school leadership team influences the school culture and set the standards and expectations for the school community when preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. Each member of school staff has a responsibility to develop and maintain a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and to take a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour. Students can shape the school culture by promoting kindness and inclusion within their peer group and maintain a positive and supportive school environment for all. Parents, as active partners in their child's education, can help foster an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated through promoting empathy and respect.

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 review of this policy.

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	13th November 2025	Email invitation to send feedback to Cinealtas@stpaulsoughterard.ie
Students	13th November 2025	World Kindness Day Reflection prompt & invitation to respond (MS Teams & in-person Principal & Deputy Principal class visits re Culture & Environment)
	December 2025	Whole School Kindness Action Project
	18th-20th March 2026	Year Group Assemblies

	20th March 2026 20th March 2026	Student Council in-person meeting Focus group across all year groups
Parents	24th October 2025	Email invitation to send feedback to Cinealtas@stpaulsoughterard.ie
Board of Management	6th October 2025 23rd March 2026	In-person BOM meeting Online BOM meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	4th December 2025	In-person – Bus Eireann Inspector
Date policy was approved: **8th April 2025**		
Date policy was last reviewed: **23rd March 2026**		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

In developing 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 the 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 board of management and staff meetings.

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

In continuing to develop prevention strategies, this school will listen to young people and parents, to help establish their particular context and needs. Frequent periods of reflection and 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.

St. Paul's Secondary School is fully committed to the following principles of best practice in preventing bullying behaviour:

Maintaining a positive school culture and climate that

- is inclusive, welcoming of difference, is open, supportive and encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour
- makes it clear to all members of the school community (including school management, teachers, pupils, parents, coaches, ancillary staff) that bullying of any kind is unacceptable behaviour
- promotes respectful relationships across the school community. The school will focus on building empathy and respect in all members of the school community by modelling empathy and respect in all dealings with pupils and other members of the school community

Supervision

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. A pro-active approach is encouraged during periods of supervision. Supervision is provided before school and at morning and lunch breaks. Students are assigned designated areas in which to socialise and eat. We offer a Games Room, an astro pitch and two basketball courts at designated lunchtimes.

Student Support Team

There is a Student Support Team in place which comprises Principal, Deputy Principals, Year Heads, Wellbeing Co-ordinator, Guidance Counsellor and AEN Coordinators. The school community aims to prevent cyberbullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying, racist bullying, sexist bullying and sexual harassment as outlined in sections 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8 and 5.9 of the *Bí Cineálta* procedures. These include:

- Promotion of a positive school climate and culture where RESPECT is key
- Effective Leadership
- Whole-school approach
- Fair and transparent Code of Positive Behaviour
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Promote awareness of bullying (CSPE, SPHE AND RSE Programmes)
- Anti-Bullying workshops/guest speakers
- Effective supervision and monitoring of students
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow-up of bullying behaviour
- On going evaluation of the effectiveness of the *Cineáltas* Procedure

Culture and Environment

St. Paul's Secondary School is fully committed to implementing principles of best practice to prevent bullying behaviour. These principles aim to foster a positive school culture and climate that:

- promotes inclusion by welcoming and valuing differences, creating an open and supportive environment where pupils feel safe to disclose and discuss bullying behaviour.
- sets clear expectations for all members of the school community (including school management, teachers, pupils, parents, coaches, and ancillary staff) that bullying of any kind is unacceptable.
- builds respectful relationships across the school community, by modelling empathy and respect in all interactions with pupils and other members of the community.

An inclusive school culture and supportive environment are essential for preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. The school environment should foster a sense of belonging and ensure that all students and staff feel safe, connected, and supported. Relationships within the school community should be built on respect, care, integrity, and trust.

How We Create This Culture and Environment

Open Communication: We encourage regular communication between all stakeholders, including students, staff, parents, and school leaders.

Setting Standards and Expectations: Senior school leaders set clear standards on preventing and addressing bullying behaviour through whole-school assemblies, parent evenings, and ongoing interactions with students.

Consistent Approaches: A consistent and unified approach is taken when addressing incidents of bullying.

Student Leadership: Students are encouraged to promote kindness, respect, and inclusion in their daily interactions. We also have a student council that meets regularly.

Parental Support: Parents play a vital role in fostering an anti-bullying culture by promoting empathy and respect. We support parents by organising regular parent evenings to discuss these values.

Creating a 'Telling Environment': We aim to create a safe and supportive space where students feel empowered to report bullying incidents.

Strategies include:

Supporting students who witness bullying: We aim to support students who witness bullying by providing strategies and encouragement to report incidents through surveys, online forms, or direct conversations with counsellors or other adults.

Safe Physical Spaces: We maintain physical safety by ensuring that areas like bathrooms, stairwells, Canteen, Year Bases the school yard, basketball courts, Astro area are monitored by staff with clear lines of sight while on supervision. Rooms are also locked when not in use to limit unsupervised space.

Promoting Positive Messages: Expectations and values are reinforced through visible messaging on school corridors and in classrooms. Posters and artwork, co-created with students, promote inclusion, empathy, and respect.

Fundraising and Volunteerism: St Paul's has a long history of fundraising and volunteerism especially in LCVP and TY. Fundraising has been shown to increase empathy and self-esteem. Volunteering opportunities empower students to take active roles in promoting kindness and inclusion. Both fundraising and volunteerism help build a sense of community and shared responsibility in tackling bullying.

Inclusive extra-curricular activities: We encourage all students to participate in after-school activities and other extra-curricular events. St. Paul's has a wide range of sporting activities and we strive for equal participation opportunities for all students. There is a school choir and St. Paul's regularly enters teams into Maths, Science, Art competitions.

Improved use of Compass software: The use of Compass is continuously reviewed and improved. It is used to monitor attendance both whole day and partial and this information is important for potentially spotting patterns of concern.

This comprehensive approach aims to create a supportive, respectful, and empathetic school community where bullying is actively prevented and effectively addressed.

Curriculum and Learning

We promote an approach to teaching and learning that is both collaborative and respectful in St. Pauls. Students are given regular opportunities to work in small groups with their peers, which help build sense of connection, belonging and empathy among students. We also encourage that students work with as many different peers in as many different contexts as possible which also helps build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy among students even outside their direct friend group.

Students will be provided with opportunities to understand causes and effects of bullying, cyber-bullying, the issue of identity-based bullying including homophobic and transphobic bullying. Every reasonable effort will be made by the school to ensure that the full potential of the SPHE and RSE curricula are exploited to combat bullying. Suitable posters will be displayed (as appropriate) on notice boards throughout the school during various defined/themed weeks (e.g. Inclusion week, Ethical Education week, Anti-Bullying week etc)

The school will carry out an Anti-Bullying campaign annually e.g. slogans and drawings to be done during SPHE and posters to be displayed around the school. The Junior Cycle SPHE curriculum includes anti-bullying modules in 1st, 2nd and 3rd year. Film clips, audio clips and class discussions are used to supplement the book. Materials are sourced from the NCCA and the HSE.

Students complete a Wellbeing survey at the end of Term 1 and also in during term 3, usually in April. This allows them the opportunity to disclose any wellbeing/bullying issues that they may be having or which they are aware of. There is also the use of a SPHE class contract which encourages students to buy in and participate in its creation.

Class Assemblies are used throughout the year. School assemblies provide a platform to raise awareness about bullying through impactful stories, videos, or guest speakers. They can be used to promote a positive school culture by celebrating kindness, respect, and inclusion. Assemblies offer a chance to reinforce the school's anti-bullying policies and encourage students to speak up and support each other

Bullying surveys (from Tools/Incidents section of "Bullying in Irish Education") will be carried out, results will be followed up on – contracts signed and kept in office.

Anti-bullying activities in CSPE, RE, and any other curricula where it may arise – e.g. English poetry/short courses, to be taken advantage of and bullying causes and effects are explored. We also encourage the various language subjects (Irish, English, French and German) to address and review different social issues.

Learning Support classes are used to address and review different social issues while still working on a subject.

The school will publish the school anti-bullying policy on the school website.

Staff will be involved in the review of the policy at agreed intervals.

Preventing Cyberbullying Behaviour

Technology and social media offer many positive opportunities for entertainment, social engagement, and education. However, increased use of technology has made students more vulnerable to cyberbullying and unacceptable online behaviour. At St. Paul's, Oughterard, strategies to prevent cyberbullying include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- We promote digital literacy, digital citizenship, and safe online environments through initiatives such as a digital literacy, assemblies, SPHE classes, and visiting speakers.
- Assembly topics and guest speakers cover themes such as respectful and kind online relationships.
- We have developed and communicated an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) for technology to students and parents.
- Appropriate online behaviour is outlined in the school's Code of Behaviour.
- We organise online safety events for parents, who play a key role in overseeing their children's online activities.
- Mobile phones are not allowed in school unless used by a teacher in the classroom for educational purposes.

Preventing Homophobic/Transphobic Bullying Behaviour

All students, including gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender students, have the right to feel safe and supported at school. At St. Paul's, Oughterard, our strategies to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- We maintain an inclusive physical environment by displaying relevant posters and flags throughout the school.
- We hold workshops and seminars for students, staff, and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying, including homophobic behaviour.
- We encourage students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour.

Preventing Racist Bullying Behaviour

Schools today are much more culturally diverse, with students from many different backgrounds. At St. Paul's, Oughterard, we strive to prevent racist bullying by implementing the following strategies, which is not an exhaustive list:

- We foster a school culture that celebrates diversity, where students see their own identities reflected in the environment.
- We strive to showcase the school's cultural diversity through photos and social media content.
- We empower bystanders to report incidents of racist behaviour.
- We provide staff with resources to support students learning English as an additional language and to communicate effectively with parents from diverse backgrounds.
- We offer support for students from ethnic minority communities, including Traveller and Roma students, and maintain regular communication with their parents.

- We ensure that library resources and textbooks reflect the lived experiences of individuals from different national, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.

Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour

As a mixed school, we place a strong focus on gender equality as part of our measures to create a supportive and respectful environment. At St. Paul's, Oughterard, our strategies to prevent sexist bullying include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- We ensure that staff model respectful behaviour and treat all students equally, regardless of their sex.
- We provide equal opportunities for all students to participate in school activities, regardless of gender.
- We celebrate diversity by acknowledging and valuing the contributions of all students.
- We organise awareness campaigns, workshops, and presentations on gender equality and respect during Friendship/Anti-Bullying Week and at other times throughout the year.

Preventing Sexual Harassment

Preventing sexual harassment requires a comprehensive approach focused on education, awareness, and clear policies. At St. Paul's, Oughterard, we have a zero-tolerance policy for sexual harassment, which is never dismissed as teasing or banter. Strategies include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- We use the updated SPHE curriculum to educate students about healthy relationships and respectful behaviour.
- We promote positive role models within the school community.
- We actively challenge harmful gender stereotypes that contribute to sexual harassment.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour 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 practicable, the relationships of the students involved, rather than to apportion blame. All staff (class teachers, year heads, guidance counsellor, Deputy Principal, Principal) have a responsibility to report suspected incidences of bullying. These should be brought to the attention of the Year Head who will complete a Bullying Incident Report Form.

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 the Year Head of the student(s) 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
- email the appropriate year head
- make a phone call to the school
- ask a parent/guardian or friend to talk on your behalf
- report via *Bí Cineálta* letterbox under Compass kiosk at Reception
- send an email to the designated email address Cinealtas@stpaulsoughterard.ie
- discuss an incident of bullying with a teacher or another trusted adult within the school is responsible behaviour rather than "telling tales".

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

The staff member will

- listen, take notes, reassure the student, ensure the student's safety as far as possible
- all reported instances will be passed on to the Year Head for investigation

Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, SNAs, study supervisors, caretakers, cleaners, sports coaches, those taking extra-curricular activities and those driving school buses will be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them, to either a teacher, year head or the Deputy Principal or the Principal

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

Bullying is defined in *Bí Cineálta:* Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools as *"Bullying is 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".*

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour you should consider the following questions:

- **Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?**
- **Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?**
- **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. When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred teachers should consider what, where, when and why?

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.

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

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
- The school is obliged to fully investigate any alleged incidents of bullying which are reported by parents.
- 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 including the initial 'Bullying Incident Report Form' (Appendix C).
- This record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known (see Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the *Bí Cineálta* procedures and Appendix B and C of this document), 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
- It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset

- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents
- Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to what, when, where, who and why.
- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.
- It may be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incidents. Appendix D should be used for this

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 to obtain 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 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

Referral of Serious Cases to the HSE

In situations where "the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school must consult the HSE Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan".

Programme of Supports for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

Students who have been bullied will be:

- Offered appropriate counselling
- Provided with opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise self-esteem, develop their social skills and build resilience
- The year head will monitor how the student is coping and ensure that there are no further problems by meeting them at intervals

Students who have been involved in bullying behaviour will be:

- Provided with counselling to help them to learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others, and
- Provided with appropriate opportunities to build their self-esteem and feelings of self- worth

Students who observe incidents of bullying behaviour will be encouraged to discuss them with their teachers and their parents and to avail of counselling where they feel it may assist them to cope effectively with what they have experienced.

Supports

The school may seek the support of any of the following when working with students affected by bullying

- Counselling service
- Building self-esteem and developing social skills
- Use of restorative practices to re-build and maintain relationships
- Co-operation with parents
- Referral to outside agencies (if necessary) in co-operation with parents
- National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)
- Oide
- Webwise
- National Parents Council
- Tusla

Requests to Take No Action

A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask a member of staff not to take any action other than to "look out" for them. The student may not want to be identified as the person who reported the bullying behaviour. They might worry that telling someone could make their situation worse. In such cases, it is crucial for the staff member to show empathy, handle the situation sensitively, and collaborate with the student to determine what steps can be taken to address the issue. Together, they should agree on how the student's parents will be informed. It is essential that the student who has experienced bullying feels safe and supported.

Parents may also notify the school of bullying behaviour and request that no action be taken. In such instances, parents should put their request in writing or be facilitated to do so if there are literacy, digital literacy, or language barriers. While the school should acknowledge the parent's request, it may still decide, based on the circumstances, that addressing the bullying behaviour is appropriate.

Determining if Bullying Behaviour Has Ceased

The Year Head must follow up with the students and parents involved no later than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress. During this review, the teacher should assess key factors, including the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used, and the relationship between the students involved.

Even if the bullying behaviour appears to have stopped, ongoing supervision and support may still be necessary for both the student who experienced the behaviour and the student who exhibited it. Relationships may take time to heal, and the effectiveness of support strategies may require a sustained period to fully take hold. In some cases, relationships may never return to how they were before the bullying occurred.

If the bullying behaviour persists, the teacher should reassess the strategies used, consult with the students and parents involved, and agree to a further review within a set timeframe. This process should continue until the bullying behaviour has ceased.

If it becomes evident that the student displaying the bullying behaviour is not changing their actions, the school should implement strategies outlined in its Code of Behaviour to address inappropriate behaviour. If necessary, the school may consider disciplinary sanctions in line with these procedures.

Record-Keeping

All bullying behaviour will be recorded on the "Bullying Incident Report Form" (Appendix D). This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with students and parents. The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented. If the bullying

behaviour is a child protection concern the matter will be addressed without delay in accordance with Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

All files and documents will be stored with a Bullying Case file number by the Year Head's and attached to each relevant student's file.

The relevant teacher must use the recording template at Appendix 3 to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

1. In cases where s/he considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after s/he has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred; and
2. Where it is necessary to report serious bullying behaviour immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal
3. The non-consensual sharing of sexting content always warrants a report (using Appendix 3 to record the incident) regardless of whether the issue is resolved within 20 days and whether the teacher thinks the incident warrants a report. The sharing of explicit images is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved. All incidents involving creating, storing or sharing of explicit images of children under the age of 17 will be reported to the Gardaí and Túsla

At any point in the investigation/resolution of the bullying matter, the relevant teacher may seek the advice and support of the Principal or Deputy Principal while still retaining responsibility for the matter. Also, at any point in the investigation of the matter the relevant teacher may hand over the matter to the Principal/Deputy Principal. In doing so, however, s/he must complete the recording template at appendix 3, retain a copy of the completed template in his/her files and provide a copy for the Principal/Deputy Principal.

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: 23rd March 2026

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: Linda O'Hara Date: 23rd March 2026

(Principal)

Appendix A *Bí Cineálta* Cover Sheet & Bullying Case Flowchart

Case Reference Number: _____

Stage 1: Investigation

Name of Person(s) who received allegation: _____

Have they submitted their notes: Yes/No or have you attached your notes of verbal conversation Yes/No

(i) Student(s) experiencing bullying

No. of Students: _____

Have they submitted their notes: Yes/No or have you attached your notes of verbal conversation Yes/No

No. of Parents: _____

Have they submitted their notes: Yes/No or have you attached your notes of verbal conversation Yes/No

(ii) Student(s) alleged to be bullying

No. of Students: _____

Have they submitted their notes: Yes/No or have you attached your notes of verbal conversation Yes/No

No. of Parents: _____

Have they submitted their notes: Yes/No or have you attached your notes of verbal conversation Yes/No

(iii) Student(s) who witnessed the bullying

No. of Students: _____

Have they submitted their notes: Yes/No or have you attached your notes of verbal conversation Yes/No

No. of Parents: _____

Have they submitted their notes: Yes/No or have you attached your notes of verbal conversation Yes/No

Stage 2: Determination

Has bullying occurred? (See Appendix B)	Yes/No
If Yes: Have you recorded details on appendix B	Yes/No
If No: (i) Have you informed parents of the determination?	Yes/No
(ii) Have you referred to code of behaviour?	Yes/No
(iii) Have you issued sanctions?	Yes/No
(iv) Have you recorded and attached all notes?	Yes/No

Stage 3: Actions

Have you consulted with all parents and all students, how to proceed?	Yes / No
If applicable: have they WRITTEN to request no action?	Yes / No
Have you recorded and attached all notes?	Yes / No

Stage 4: 20 Day Review

Have you consulted with all parents and all students, how to proceed?	Yes / No
Have you recorded and attached all notes?	Yes / No

Stage 5: File Closed or referred to Principal

Closed: All files scanned and uploaded to student file storage system	Yes / No

Referral: Yes / No

To Principal to be dealt with under Code of Behaviour

Appendix B Bullying Determination Checklist

Bullying Determination Checklist

Bullying is 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.

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour you should consider the following questions:

Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?	Yes	No
Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?	Yes	No
Is the behaviour repeated?	Yes	No

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.

Schools are not expected to address bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, if this bullying behaviour, including cyberbullying behaviour, continues into the school environment, schools are required to address the bullying behaviour. Bullying behaviour, including cyberbullying behaviour, which has occurred outside of school can often continue in school.

Where a school is made aware of cyberbullying behaviour that has occurred while a student was not under the care or responsibility of the school, the school is required to support the student. Ways that the school could support the student include listening, showing empathy, reassuring the student, and asking the student to let the school know if the bullying behaviour occurs in school.

Where a student engages in cyberbullying behaviour when in school, the school must address the bullying behaviour. Where a student experiences cyberbullying behaviour in school, the school must address the bullying behaviour.

In the case of cyberbullying, although the hurtful message may have been sent outside of school hours, the student may view the message while in school. Where this happens, the school must address the bullying behaviour.

If bullying behaviour occurs when students are on a school trip and are therefore under the care and responsibility of the school, the school must address the bullying behaviour.

Types of Bullying behaviour checklist

Types of Bullying behaviour	**Yes/No**
Disablist bullying behaviour:	
Exceptionally able bullying:	
Gender identity bullying:	
Homophobic/transphobic (LGBTQ+) bullying:	
Physical appearance bullying:	
Racist bullying:	
Poverty bullying:	
Religious identity bullying:	
Sexist bullying:	
Sexual harassment:	
Other	

How the bully behaviour occurred

How the bully behaviour occurred	**Yes/No**
Physical bullying behaviour:	
Verbal bullying behaviour:	
Written bullying behaviour:	
Extortion	
Exclusion	
Relational	
Cyberbullying	
Other	

Appendix C - 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 D Bullying Incident Report Form

Name of student being bullied: _____

Year: _____

Name(s) and class(es) of students allegedly engaged in bullying behaviour:

_____

_____

_____

Source of bullying concern/report (tick as relevant):

Student concerned	
Other student(s)	
Teacher	
Parent	
Other	

Location of incident(s) (tick as relevant)

School Yard		Classroom	
Bus		Toilets	
Out-of-school		Changing Rooms	
Corridor		Canteen	
Basketball Court		Astro	

Name of person(s) who reported the alleged bullying concern:

_____

Type of bullying behaviour (tick as relevant):

Physical		Gender-identity bullying	
Verbal		Extortion	
Damage to personal property		Written bullying	
Exclusion/isolation		Relational bullying	
Cyber-bullying		Other	
Intimidation			

Brief description of bullying behaviour:

Impact of bullying behaviour:

Details of action taken:

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Year Head)

Appendix E Bullying Update for Board of Management meeting of ____/___/____

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 F Review of the *Bí Cineálta* Policy

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

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? **8th April 2025**

2. Where in the school is the student friendly *Bí Cineálta* policy displayed?- **Reception & in year bases**

3. What date did the Board publish the *Bí Cineálta* policy and the student-friendly policy on the school website? **9th April 2025**

4. How has the student-friendly policy been communicated to students? **MS Teams, Year Bases, Reception area & school website**

5. How has the *Bí Cineálta* policy and student-friendly policy been communicated to parents? **Email & on school website**

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? **Yes**

7. Does the *Bí Cineálta* policy document the strategies that the school uses to prevent bullying behaviour? **Yes**

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? **Yes**

9. Has the Board discussed how the school is addressing all reports of bullying behaviour? **Yes**

10. Is the Board satisfied that all incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed in accordance with the school's *Bí Cineálta* Policy? **Yes**

11. Have the prevention strategies in the *Bí Cineálta* policy been implemented? **Yes**

12. Has the Board discussed the effectiveness of the strategies used to prevent bullying behaviour? **No – scheduled for close of academic year 2025-2026 following one full year of *Bí Cineálta* policy & related initiatives.**

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

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: **Increase efforts to encourage reporting – both parents and students admit to feeling hesitant to report**

15. Where areas for improvement have been identified, outline how these will be addressed and whether an action plan with timeframes has been developed. **Action taken so far: introduction of a new email address only accessible by Principal and Deputy Principal for parents to safely communicate info learned from their child that they believe we need to be aware of. We need to create opportunities for meaningful dialogue with students around safe reporting of bullying behaviours.**

16. Does the student-friendly policy need to be updated as a result of this review and if so, why? **Yes, Student Council members were involved in development of current student-friendly policy. An updated student-friendly policy will include a broader range of student voices and permit specific consultation on how we can encourage safe reporting. This can be incorporated into Term 3 Wellbeing surveys and inform a new student-friendly policy which will be completed for return to school in August 2026.**

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

18. Has a parent informed the school that a student has left the school due to reported bullying behaviour? **Yes (following an incident that occurred between school students outside school hours)**

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? **No**

Signed: _____ Date: 23rd March 2026
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: Kirole O'Hara Date: 23rd March 2026
(Principal)

Date of next review: **23rd March 2027**