

Bansha NS Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Bí Cineálta 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.

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.

It is behaviour which is deliberate in nature and is unwanted. It is not accidental or reckless behaviour.

The harm can be:

- Physical (e.g.: personal injury, damage to or loss of property)
- Social: (e.g.: withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion)

- Emotional: (e.g.: low self-esteem, depression)

A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards a student is not bullying behaviour. However, a single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be visible to a wide audience and has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and so becomes a repeated behaviour.

The detailed definition of bullying 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.

Types of Bullying:

There are many different types of bullying behaviour. These can include directing bullying at someone focused on the following: disability, exceptional ability, gender identity, homophobic / transphobic, physical appearance, racism, poverty status, religious identity, sexism and sexual harassment. This is not an exhaustive list.

Bullying can be: Direct:

Physical: pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping students. Physical assault. Destruction of personal property.

Verbal: continual name calling which insults, humiliates the student – this may refer to physical appearance, clothes, gender, accent, academic ability, race or ethnic origin.

Written: Writing insulting remarks in public places, passing notes or drawings about the student.

Extortion: where something is obtained through force or threats.

Bullying can be: Indirect:

Exclusion: where a student is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded or ignored by a student or group of students.

Relational: Where a student's attempts to form friendships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined, threats, non-verbal gesturing, malicious gossip, spreading rumours, silent treatment and manipulation of friend groups etc. can all form relational bullying for a student.

Online bullying behaviour

Cyber bullying is carried out via text, direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, email, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chatrooms and other online technologies. This can

include:

- Sending or sharing of insulting and offensive or intimidating messages or images via online means as mentioned above.
- Posting information which is personal, private or sensitive without consent.
- Making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other students.
- Exclude/disrupt access to a student on purpose on online chat groups/access to accounts/from an online game.

Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour:

- If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour, but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying, but, importantly, must be addressed under the school's code of behaviour.
- Some students with special educational needs, may have social communication difficulties which may make them communicate their needs through behaviours that can hurt themselves or others. It is important to note that these behaviours are not deliberate or planned, but in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they cannot control.
- Disagreement between students is not considered bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

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	09/05/25	School half- day closure for Bí Cineálta training for all school staff. Staff consultation on draft policy.
Students	15/05/25	Questionnaire completed by children. Child friendly Bí Cineálta policy developed by senior pupils and this policy discussed with all children in the school.
Parents	13/05/25	Draft Bí Cineálta policy sent to parents and feedback on policy sought.
Board of Management	May 2025	Draft Policy sent to Board members prior to May BOM meeting. Policy ratified on 19/05/25

Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	N/A	N/A
Date policy was approved: 19/05/25		
Date policy was last reviewed: 28/01/26		

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):

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.

Culture and Environment:

- Positive and inclusive school culture and environment -

The school culture and environment will be one where students and staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported.

- Positive relationships

Relationships between all members of the school community will be based on respect, care, integrity and trust. There will be open communication between the patron, Board of Management, school staff, students and parents.

- Effective leadership

The BOM has overall responsibility that this policy is effective, sustained and measured. The principal will influence the school the school culture and set and expectations for the school community when preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

- A telling environment

Our school will promote an environment where reporting of bullying is encouraged. Students are encouraged to tell a member of staff in the classroom / yard immediately regarding this incident. A staff member will investigate at an appropriate time. Beyond the school community, bullying behaviour may extend to outside the school. Where this negatively impacts on a school- parents and pupils have a responsibility to support the school in helping to address the issue. This applies particularly (but not exclusively) to cyber bullying. Collective vigilance is needed throughout the whole school community to identify and deal with bullying in a fair and equitable manner.

- A trusted adult

The concept of “a trusted adult “can be an effective strategy to encourage students to report if they or another student is experiencing bullying behaviour. Staff should support this strategy by letting students know that they can talk to them.

- Safe physical spaces

Safe physical spaces with clear lines of sight are an important measure to prevent bullying behaviour.

- Supervision

Appropriate supervision is an important measure to help prevent and address bullying behaviour.

Curriculum (Teaching and learning)

Teaching and learning that is collaborative and respectful should be promoted.

Children should have regular sessions to work in small groups with their peers, this can help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy among students.

- Teaching and learning in SPHE
- RSE Curriculum
- Student participation
- SPHE Methodologies
- Promoting inclusion and diversity
- Extra - curricular activities to develop positive self - worth
- Group work/ Collaboration
- Role - play, acting out scenarios
- Circle time

Policy and Planning

The wellbeing of the school community should be at the heart of school policies and plans.

- Policy and Planning:
- Bí Cineálta policy
- Student friendly Bí Cineálta policy
- Code of behaviour
- Child safeguarding statement
- Acceptable use policy
- Supervision Policy
- RSE Policy
- SEN policy
- SSE Wellbeing in education
- Appropriate TPL (Teacher Professional Learning)

Relationships and partnerships

Strong interpersonal connections are a vital part of effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. These interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as e.g.

- Bullying awareness initiatives
- Parent participation e.g. conducting workshops for parents
- TPL (Teacher Professional Learning)
- Critical thinking Skills
- Promoting peer support
- Supporting activities that build empathy, respect and resilience
- Teaching problem solving
- Promoting acts of kindness

Preventing Cyber bullying behaviour

Technology and social media have provided many positive opportunities for entertainment, social engagement and education. Technology is a part of life that can impact even the youngest members of society.

However, the increase in the use of technology has led to students becoming increasingly vulnerable to cyberbullying or unacceptable online behaviour.

Our school will proactively address these challenges by promoting digital literacy, digital citizenship, and fostering safe online environments. Strategies to prevent cyberbullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- implementing the SPHE curriculum
- Implementing the Digital Media Literacy curriculum which teaches students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship.
- Having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online.
- Communicating the acceptable use policy for technology referring to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour
- Promoting or hosting online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online.
- Holding an Internet safety day to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour.
- The digital age of consent is the minimum age a user must be before a social media or Internet Company can collect, process and store their data. In Ireland the digital age of consent is 16. For the purposes of data collection, students between the age of 13 and 16 years old must have parental permission to sign up to social media services where companies use the legal basis of consent to collect process and store users' data. Most social media platforms and services have a minimum age requirement and for the majority of these services it is 13 years' old. Therefore technically, children under the age of 13 should not have a social media account. It is important for their child's safety, that parents are aware of their children's use of technology including

smartphones and gaming consoles. Resources have been developed to support parents who wish to develop voluntary codes regarding smartphone use among primary school children. These are contained in the Resources Guide which accompanies these procedures.

Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour

Strategies to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- Maintaining an inclusive physical environment
- Encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- Challenging gender - stereotypes
- Raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour
- Encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour.

Preventing racist Bullying behaviour

Strategies to prevent racist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- Fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students “see themselves” in their school environment
- Conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of racism
- Encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- Encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour
- Providing supports to school staff to respond to the needs of students for whom English is an additional language and for communicating with their parents.
- Providing supports to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma students, and to encourage communication with their parents
- Inviting speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds
- Ensuring that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds
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Preventing sexist bullying behaviour

Strategies to prevent sexist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- Ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex
- Ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex
- Celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contributions of all students

- Organising awareness campaigns, workshops and presentations on gender equality and respect
- encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home

Preventing sexual harassment

Strategies to prevent sexual harassment include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- Promoting positive role models within the school community
- Challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour:

- Staff have a distinct responsibility to ensure that supervision of pupils arriving / departing, in the school, yard and activities / events outside the school building is effective
- Ancillary staff are well placed to inform if any behaviour which may constitute bullying is noticed
- If patterns of inappropriate behaviour are detected these are investigated and documented
- If there are reported incidents or issues between children that warrant closer monitoring on yard / trips this is carried out by relevant staff
- If incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred they are reported at every Board of Management meeting

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Approach: The primary aim in addressing bullying behaviour should be to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore as far as practicable the relationships of the students involved.

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 school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the Teacher. She/ he will use his/her/their professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same. All reports of bullying must be investigated within a 20 day period.

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the teacher should consider the following; what, where, when and why. If a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first. Thereafter, all students should be involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each student should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure everyone in the group is clear about each other's views. Each student should be supported as appropriate, following the meeting.

Age Appropriate Response

Our approach to addressing bullying incidents will be tailored to the developmental stages and emotional maturity of the children involved. Whether addressing the experiences of younger children or older students our aim is to provide understanding, empathy and constructive resolutions while providing support to all parties,

If it is established by the teacher that bullying has occurred, the teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

The teacher must record the bullying incident on the "Recording of Bullying behaviour" form. The Teacher must inform the Principal. The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame).

With this in mind the school's procedures are as follows:

- In investigating and dealing with bullying the teacher(s) will exercise his/her/their judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type if it has and how best the situation might be resolved.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the teacher. 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 instances of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Non-teaching staff are encouraged to report any incidences of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them to the Class teacher.
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
- On being informed of an alleged incident of bullying, the teacher dealing with the report will first interview the child experiencing bullying behaviour and discuss the feelings which the child.
- Experienced because of the bullying behaviour.

- Initial investigations of bullying will be done in class where possible but some incidents might be best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.

When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour the teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, who, when and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.

Where bullying has occurred

Where the teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the perspective of the pupil being bullied.

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 of the child displaying bullying behaviour / to support the child experiencing bullying behaviour. It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of parent(s) / guardian(s) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required that it is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s) / guardians and the school. Disciplinary sanctions will be in line with the school's code of behaviour.

The teacher/Principal must engage with the students involved and their parents no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement to review progress following the initial intervention.

- Factors considered 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/Principal should document the review with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and 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 will 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, and after the Board of Management's complaint process has concluded, 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.

Requests no action taken:

A student who reports bullying behaviour may ask a member of staff not to do anything and just "look out" for them due to not wanting to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They might feel that telling someone might make things more difficult for them. Where this occurs, it is important that the member of staff shows empathy to the student, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the student to work out together what steps can be taken to address the matter and how their parents will be informed of the situation.

Parents may also make the school aware of bullying behaviour and specifically request that no action is to be taken by the school. Parents should put this in writing to the school. However, schools may decide that based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour through the Bí Cineálta procedures and/or the Code of Behaviour where appropriate.

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):

- Ending the bullying behaviour through the rapid investigation and resolution of the bullying situation.
- Ensuring that the school culture fosters respect, empathy and support for all pupils
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil and commending them for telling, reassuring them and offering them support.
- Praising and supporting pupils who are remorseful about their behaviour and willing to work towards a resolution of the issues involved.
 - Helping affected pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help them develop friendships and social skills (e.g. group work in class, team sports, extra-curricular activities)
- Draw attention to issues relating to appropriate assertiveness strategies (e.g. body language, saying no, etc.), emotional regulation and anger management strategies where necessary.
- Ongoing work related to curricular objectives regarding friendships, communications, tolerance, diversity, individual uniqueness etc. (SPHE, Religion)
- Where appropriate, implementation of social awareness programmes or similar with Special Needs Children in the Special Education setting.
- Supporting the child to develop preventative strategies to avoid similar incidences recurring (e.g. telling relevant adult, keeping a diary, appropriate response to emotions, friendships etc.)
- Working with parents in helping them to support their children
- 'Checking-in' with affected children periodically to ensure that the resolution of the problem is successful in the long-term.
- Ensuring that relevant staff are aware of particular children's difficulties so that they can provide extra support or supervision as appropriate.
- When necessary, additional support may be sought from external agencies such as NEPS, Tusla, NPC, Oide etc;
- Resources such as those provided by Webwise and the DCU Anti-Bullying Centre (FUSE programme), may prove helpful in supporting pupils impacted by bullying behaviour.

All bullying behaviour will be recorded. 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*.

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 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.

Policy Reviewed on 28/01/2026

Signed:



Date: 28 January 2026

Paddy Flanagan (Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed:



Date: 28 January 2026

Martina Sexton (Principal)

Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the antibullying policy

Implemented on	7 th July 2014
Reviewed on	20 th January 2015
Reviewed on	4 th February 2016
Reviewed on	9 th February 2017
Reviewed on	28 th February 2018
Reviewed on	13 th February 2019
Reviewed on	3 rd February 2020
Reviewed on	24 th February 2021
Reviewed on	28 th March 2022
Reviewed on	7 th March 2023
Reviewed on	27 February 2024
Reviewed on	25 February 2025
Reviewed on (Bí Cineálta)	17 June 2025
Reviewed on	28 January 2026
Next review	February 2027