



Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of St Brigid's Girls National 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 the steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent all 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 inherit 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. 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	26/3/2025	Half Day Training
Students	31/03/2025 8/2/2025	Student Council Meetings
Parents	26/3/2025	Survey sent via Survey Monkey
Board of Management	28/1/2025 1/4/2025	Board of Management Meetings
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	April 2025	In formal conversations with school caretaker, secretary, lollipop lady and bus driver
Date policy was approved:		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

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 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:

- 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
 - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
- Effective leadership;
- A school-wide approach;
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that;
 - Build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
 - Explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying;

Curricular:

- Implementation of [Anti-Bullying Campaign](#)
- Implementation of [Zippy Friends](#) programme in junior and senior infants
- Lessons from Anti-bullying Campaign & Zippy Friends taught once per month and recorded and reviewed in monthly cuntas míosúla by teachers
- [FUSE anti-bullying lessons](#) 4th-6th implemented in May & June
- [Stay Safe-](#) Friendship & Bullying Topic 2- whole school implementation term 2 January-March
- [Walk Tall-](#) lessons on social dynamics, friendship promotion, inclusion, upstanding and anti-bullying (2nd class).
- Workshops- Emotional Intelligence Workshops for 6th class students- [Motus: January](#)
- Sixth class novel: Wonder- deals with issues of anti-bullying and inclusion

Policy and Planning- Whole School Initiatives:

- [Whole School Positive Behaviour Approach](#)
- [Smartphone Free Pledge 2025-](#) with option for delayed introduction in senior classes eradicates students' involvement in cyber-bullying in primary school. Parents of enrolling students are encouraged to consider signing the school's pledge at *Infant Induction Meeting* and *Parents Evening* in September.
- [Acceptable Use Policy.pdf](#)- parents permissions facilitated annually, comprehensive social media policy.
- [STB Code of behaviour Policy.pdf](#)- children's version of code of behaviour (student council)

- [Supervision Policy](#)
- Special Education Policy- includes [proactive and reactive strategies](#) to behaviours of concern

Relationships and Partnerships:

- Buddy system- Senior students have buddies in the infant classes to encourage peer mentoring and support
- Internet Safety Week to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour
- [Anti-Racism](#)- promoting an inclusive environment
- Wellbeing Week- January
- Pupil [Questionnaires](#) (Assessment Policy)
- Social Check Ins twice per year ([Found in SEESAW School Library](#)),
- Friendship questionnaires twice per year ([Junior](#) & [Senior](#))
- [Bullying Questionnaire.docx](#) (Senior once per month)
- Intercultural Day-celebrating diversity
- [Autism Awareness](#)- Celebrate autism awareness day. Integration of students with autism into mainstream, reverse integration.
- Media-
 - Display Screen- celebrates/raises awareness of different ethnic/cultural celebrations e.g. Catholic Calendar Events, Chinese New Year, Diwali, Eid, Thanksgiving, Orthodox Christmas
 - Brilliant Book display- Book on display monthly which addresses inclusion
- Supporting the active participation of students in school life:
 - Committees: Student council, green schools, active committee, wellbeing committee.
 - Extra-curricular: GAA, Camogie, Choir, Debating, Credit Union Quiz, SpellingBee
 - Remixing in third class, teacher swaps, mini-companies initiative
- Supporting the active participation of parents in school life:
 - Parents Evening- September
 - Intercultural Day
 - Language translations in newsletter
 - Wake Up Shake Up
 - Parents Association- Pumpkin Carving Exhibition, Spring Fair, Sponsored Walk
 - Parent directed workshops e.g. architecture
- Conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying
- Promoting acts of kindness- Awards at assembly, Heroes of Kindness- Lord Mayor Initiative
- Hosting debates

- Supporting activities that build empathy, respect and resilience

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):

In school supervision:

- Supervision: class teacher supervises class. If teacher needs to leave classroom for a short period, supervision is arranged (neighbouring teacher, SNA, SET teacher)
- Indoor eating supervision- supervising teachers allocated to every section of the school
 - Toilet breaks, except in the case of emergencies, take place before and after break and lunchtimes under the supervision of the class teacher.
- Monitoring: supervising teachers are alerted to children who are on ongoing behaviour programmes including anti-bullying. This information is stored and edited monthly on yard supervision schedule shared on Aladdin.

Meetings:

- IEP meetings- meetings with parents are scheduled at a time when both the class teacher and SET teacher are available and when supervision can be provided.
- Meetings and phone calls- all meetings and phone calls with parents (aside from PTMs) must take place outside of school hours to ensure supervision of the class.
- Dealing with incidences

Yard Supervision:

- Blind spots identified- Behind the wall to the front of the school past the hopscotch, the side of the school at the gate between both yards, on senior yard behind the shelter from the obstacle course, junior yard behind between shed and door adjacent to ramp.
- Buddy systems- Senior classes buddy up with Junior classes

In class supervision:

- Monthly anonymous [Bullying Questionnaire.docx](#): Since bullying is often hidden from teachers and not reported, but pupils “see everything,” surveys are regularly used (e.g. monthly) to uncover possible bullying situations, allowing pupils to suggest to their teacher who s/he should talk to in relation to these.
- Consideration given to seating of pupil’s within the class.
- Differentiation- whereby a student has difficulties with writing, signaling systems are put in place, e.g. moving a marker on their table.

Review:

- Timeline for review of anti-bullying promises is communicated as per procedure.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

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

The school's procedures for determining if bullying behaviour has occurred, the approaches taken to address the bullying behaviour and to review progress (e.g. the "4 Essential Steps" approach available from the 'Resolving Bullying Situations' section of the Anti-Bullying Campaign website) are as follows:

Has bullying occurred?

- The 'Relevant Teacher' investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour, whether these take place within the school or outside it but with an impact within it, with a view to establishing the facts and bringing any such behaviour to an end.
- The School, through the 'Relevant Teacher' reserves the right to ask any pupil to write an account of what happened, as part of an investigation. This will be a standard procedure and does not necessarily imply that any pupil is guilty of misbehaviour.
- Pupils who are alleged to have been involved in bullying behaviour are interviewed by the 'Relevant Teacher,' acting in loco parentis, to establish the nature and extent of the behaviour and any reasons for it.
- 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 first group meeting, each student will be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's view.

Approaches taken to address bullying behaviour:

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.

1. **Parents Informed:** In the event that bullying has occurred, the parents of the children must be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to consult with them on the actions to be taken.
2. **Binding Promise:** If bullying has occurred, the children are asked to sign a [binding promise](#) that they will treat all pupils fairly, equally and respectfully including the targeted pupil(s). The 'Relevant Teacher' does not apportion blame but rather treats bullying behaviour as something that can and must be remedied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish perpetrators - but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter. Pupils who report bullying therefore are not getting others 'in trouble' but rather enabling them to get out of trouble into which they may ultimately get if the bullying continues.

Sanctions:

Where a pupil has been found to be engaged in bullying behaviour, has formally promised to stop and has broken that promise, any of the following sanctions may be imposed:

3. For **(first) breach of promise** – i.e. a resumption of bullying behaviour – s/he may be required to sign another promise, this time countersigned by a parent/guardian;
4. In the unlikely event of a further **(second) breach of promise** – i.e. a resumption of bullying behaviour – the 'Relevant Teacher' may contact parent(s)/guardian(s) to inform them of the nature and extent of the bullying behaviour, to discuss the matter with them with a view to coming to a better understanding the reasons for the bullying behaviour, to suggest actions to be taken to help meet their child's needs and to agree a strategy whereby a promise to end the bullying behaviour would be honoured;
5. In the highly unlikely event of a further **(third) breach of promise** – parent(s)/ guardian(s) may be invited to a meeting with the 'Relevant Teacher' and the Principal and a sanction may be imposed in accordance with the Code of Behaviour of the school.
6. In the extremely unlikely event of a further **(fourth) breach of promise** – the case may be referred to the Board of Management and a further sanction may be imposed in accordance with the Code of Behaviour of the school.

Recording incidents of bullying behaviour:

- When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the 'Relevant Teacher' will complete a report [google form](#), to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information. This report must be shared with the Principal.
- An oversight report ([Appendix D](#)) on all incidents of bullying will be reported by the principal to the Board of Management at each meeting. The update will not contain personal or identifying information.

Review of progress:

- The 'Relevant Teacher' must engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress.
- If the bullying behaviour has ceased, ongoing supervision and support will be given to both the student who has experienced the bullying behaviour as well as the student who has displayed the behaviour.
- If bullying behaviour has ceased and all parties are happy that the issue has been resolved, the

'Relevant Teacher' will communicate and record resolution via Aladdin.

Remit of the school in addressing bullying behaviour:

- A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, schools should deal with it in accordance with their Bí Cineálta policy.

Requests to take no action:

- A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask that the staff member does nothing about the behaviour. The student may not want to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. Where this occurs, it is important that the staff member 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 the parents will be informed of the situation.
- If a parent notifies the school of bullying behaviour and requests no action to be taken, this request must be in writing to the school.
- However, it is up to the school's decision, based on the circumstances, if it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

Complaints Process:

- If a parent is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, they should be referred to the school's complaints procedure.
- In the event that a student and/or parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, a student and/or parent may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe the school's actions have had a negative effect on the student.

The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

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

For bullied pupils:

- Ending the bullying behaviour,
- Changing the school culture through ongoing awareness-raising to (a) foster more respect for bullied pupils and for all pupils and (b) foster greater empathy towards, and support for, bullied pupils,
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil (a reassurance bullied

pupils often need), through ongoing awareness-raising and through the speedy identification of those involved in bullying and speedy resolution of bullying situations and, after resolution, enabling bullied pupils to complete a victim-impact statement,

- Making adequate support and/or counseling facilities available to pupils who need them (who seem less resilient and are slower to recover, make friends and enjoy school life again), within or outside the school as applicable, in a timely manner,
- Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).
- Implementing a 'buddy system' in the school (if applicable).

For bullying pupils:

- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a 'clean sheet,'
- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honorable thing and giving them praise for this,
- seeking other ways to "catch them doing the right thing" and giving appropriate praise,
- Supporting them to overcome learning difficulties through Support Staff provision and to overcome emotional and/or social difficulties through class management and pastoral care within the school,
- Helping those whose self-esteem is low by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school),
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth, including creating opportunities to use appropriate praise,
- In dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child,
- In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a 'clean sheet' and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.
- Making adequate support and/or counselling facilities available to help remedy underlying issues for those who need them, within or outside the school as applicable, and to help them learn to meet their needs without violating the rights of others,

For students who witness bullying behaviour:

- Praise/reward and incentives for upstanding
- Support provided in consultation with NEPS/Tusla where necessary
- Facilitation of "one good adult"

- Whereby the bullying incident has had a perceived impact on a class, the class teacher will revisit relevant Anti Bullying lessons as appropriate e.g. Anti- Bullying Campaign, Stay Safe, Walk Tall, FUSE, Zippy Friends
- [Managing Reluctant Attendance and School avoidance Behaviour](#)
- [Webwise](#)- disseminate resources for online safety and digital citizenship.

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 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:

(Chairperson of board of management)



Signed:

(Principal)

Date: 10th April 2025