



Bí Cinealta Policy

School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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The Board of Management of St. Kilian's National School (Roll Number 19608V) 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.

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	Academic Year 2024/2025 Academic Year 2025 /2026	Information Sessions Term1 Information Sessions I.S.M. Meetings Staff Meeting Term 2 Survey Small Groups
Students	Academic Year 2025 / 2026	Term 1 Consultation re development of a student friendly policy Term 2 Student Survey
Parents	Academic Year 2025 / 2026	Term 1 Representatives from the PA Committee reviewed and discussed policy Term 2 Parent Survey Draft Policy available to view
Board of Management	Academic Year 2025/ 2026	Term 1 Talk and discussion re key aspects of new procedures

		Term 2 Review of draft policy
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	Academic Year 2025 / 2026	Term 2 Draft policy published on website
Date policy was approved:		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

Section B: Prevention Strategies

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):

Prevention Strategies

Culture and Environment

- Create a positive school environment where all students feel safe, respected and valued.
- Create a school culture that is welcoming to differences and diversity.
- Facilitation of open communication between all stakeholders – Open door policy, PA Committee, parental consultation in policies / procedures where appropriate.
- Create an environment where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour is used.
- Supporting a ‘telling’ environment where pupils are encouraged to disclose / discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening way.
- Teachers and staff set standards and expectations by modelling expected behaviour.
- Ensuring the school is a safe physical space for all pupils - safety audits in consultation with the student council and the Board of Management.
- Ensuring effective monitoring and supervision of pupils at all times– Supervision / Care Policy, Supervision Rota, Arrival and Dismissal Procedures, medical and care information on Aladdin (colour coded system) etc.
- Promotion of student voice and enabling their participation in decision making - Student Council, Questionnaires, Surveys, Focus Groups etc.
- Facilitation of initiatives that promote inclusivity - Wellbeing Day, Autism Awareness Day etc.
- Consistently recognising and rewarding positive behaviour - Maith Thú Initiative.
- Consistent application of school policy.

Curriculum

- Fully implementing the national curriculum in all subjects.
- Fully implementing the Social Personal Health Education curriculum in line with the school plan.
- The full implementation of the Stay Safe Programme.
- Fully teaching RSE in line with school policy.
- Participation in initiatives like the Pilot Counselling Programme offered by DES.

- Promotion and support of CPD for staff.
- The use of a variety of teaching methodologies to deliver the curriculum - promoting pair and group work where possible and appropriate etc.
- Ensuring all pupils are aware of classroom, school and yard rules.
- The development of student support plans in line with our SEN policy to enable all pupils to access the curriculum.
- Use of age-appropriate resources to support the implementation of the curriculum in the area of Wellbeing– These may include the use of a Wellbeing Diary, Growth Mindset, promotion of school ethos and community (visits to the church, church celebrations etc.), Active Week, use of local amenities.
- Supporting a telling environment – ensuring pupils know the difference between telling or tattling.

Policy and Planning

- Consistent implementation of Bí Cineálta Policy.
- Student Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy ensuring all pupils are aware of the policies and procedures in place.
- Ensuring the consistent implementation of relevant policies that support the Bí Cineálta Policy – Supervision Policy, Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment, Health and Safety Policy, AUP, SEN Policy, Attendance Strategy, SPHE Policy (Stay Safe, RSE etc.), Code of Behaviour.
- Supporting the active participation of pupils in the development and implementation of school policies and plans where appropriate – Student Council, Questionnaires, Student Surveys.
- Supporting the participation of parents in the development and implementation of school policies and plans where appropriate – PA Committee.
- Supporting and facilitating the participation of staff in CPD.

Relationships and Partnerships

- Encourage open communication between staff, pupils and parents.
- Supporting the development of interpersonal connections through various initiatives/groups in the school – PA Committee, Student Council, SEN Team, I.S.M., small planning groups, staff meetings.
- Support the active participation of parents in school life – PA Committee, notices home, seeking volunteers for certain initiatives.
- Informing parents / guardians about school events in a timely manner – Aladdin / PA Facebook Page.
- Support the active participation of students in school life through formal and informal structures – student council, sports teams, circle time activities, peer tutoring, co-operative activities – maths trails etc.

- Promotion of workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of bullying.
- Support activities that build empathy, respect and resilience: Wellbeing Day, SPHE lessons, Friends for Life Programme, School Choir, Walk for Funds, use of a variety of methodologies- pair work, group work, buddy benches.
- Encourage peer support / peer mentoring – group / pair work.
- Promoting acts of kindness – Wellbeing Day or similar initiatives.
- Teach problem solving skills – SPHE.
- Actively notice and acknowledge good problem-solving skills.
- Age-appropriate activities that look at the causes and impact of bullying behaviour including those dealing with navigating friendships, identity-based bullying, racist bullying, homophobic bullying, sexism and sexual harassment.
- Stay Safe Programme – use of worksheets, videos and role play.
- Engage with outside agencies / support services (NEPS, OT, SLT, TUSLA) where possible and as appropriate.

Preventing Cyber Bullying Behaviour

- Fully implementing the SPHE curriculum in line with school policy – Agreed SPHE policy / Agreed RSE policy / Stay Safe Policy.
- Consistent application of the AUP. It is important this policy is communicated to parents and pupils.
- Promoting online safety events for pupils and parents who are responsible for overseeing their children’s activities online.
- Informal conversations with pupils about developing respectful and kind relationships online in an age-appropriate manner.

Social Media – The digital age of consent is 16 years of age. Children under 13 years of age should not have social media accounts. We recommend that children do not engage with class whats app / snapchat groups / tic tok.

Preventing Homophobic / Transphobic Bullying Behaviour

- All strategies listed above are also applicable to the prevention of homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- Challenge gender-stereotypes – through talk and discussion, literature, school materials / resources.
- Encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour.
- Encourage parents to reinforce values of respect at home.

Preventing Racist Bullying Behaviour

- All strategies listed above are also applicable to the prevention of racist bullying.
- Foster a school culture where diversity is celebrated – Displays, Autism Day.
- Encourage critical thinking skills so as to challenge racist and other stereotypes.
- Cultural diversity of the school visible and on display.
- Encourage peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities.
- Encourage bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour.
- Ensure reading material represents appropriate lived experiences of the pupils.
- Providing supports for school staff to respond to the needs of students for whom English is an additional language / for students of ethnic minorities.
- Ensuring that there is an effective means of communication where possible with pupils and parents who may not have English language proficiency.

Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour and Sexual Harassment

- All strategies listed above are also applicable to the prevention of sexist bullying behaviour.
- Modelling of respectful behaviour to all (student, staff) regardless of gender.
- Challenging gender stereotypes.
- Ensuring all students have the same opportunity to engage in activities irrespective of their gender in school.
- Clarifying that sexual harassment should never be dismissed as teasing or banter.
- Promotion of positive role models within the school community.
- Encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home.
- Staff are alert to the signs when a student might be experiencing bullying.

-Anxiety about travelling to and from school

-Refusal to attend school

-Change in pupil's performance at school

-Pattern of physical illness

-Unexplained changes in mood / behaviour

-Visible signs of anxiety / distress

-Out of character comments about others

-Missing possessions

-Increased requests for money

-Unexplained injuries / damage to clothes

-Reluctance to speak about what may be bothering them

(See page 26 Bí Cineálta, 2024 for more details)

- Recording and monitoring of all reports of concerns by staff – class teacher notes, yard record.
- Parents are encouraged to raise any concerns they may have about their child with the class teacher at the earliest opportunity.

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):

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

- Supervision / Care Policy
- Arrival and Dismissal Procedures
- Supervision Rota
- Yard Incident Records
- Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment
- Mobile / Smart Phone and Personal Electric Device Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- AUP

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

- Class teacher of the child making the bullying allegation
 - Other mainstream class teachers and SET where appropriate
 - The Principal / Deputy Principal will become involved where appropriate
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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):

What is Bullying Behaviour ?

Bullying behaviour is targeted behaviour both on and off line that causes harm. The harm 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.

Aim in addressing reports of bullying behaviour is to

1. Stop the bullying behaviour.
2. Restore as far as practical the relationship between students rather than apportion blame.

It is important to be fair and consistent in our approach

Determining if bullying behaviour has occurred

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour the following questions should be considered:

1. Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?
2. Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?
3. Is the behaviour repeated?

If the answer to each of the above questions is yes then the behaviour is bullying behaviour and the behaviour should be addressed using Bí Cineálta Procedures.

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 repeated behaviour.

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

Investigation

When unwanted behaviour is reported the class teacher conducts an investigation to establish the facts insofar as possible.

Pupils may be asked to write down their account of events.

The class teacher may be supported in their investigation by other mainstream teachers, the SET team, deputy principal and/or principal as appropriate.

If a group of students is involved pupils should be engaged with individually first. After this, students should be met as a group. At this meeting each student should be asked for their account of events to be sure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's point of view. It is important to support students after the group meeting as appropriate. It may be helpful to ask students to write down their own accounts of the incident(s)

When unwanted behaviour isn't bullying behaviour

If unwanted behaviour does not meet the criteria for bullying but is in contravention of the school rules it will be dealt with as per the Code of Behaviour.

If a parent reports unwanted behaviour as bullying and it is found not to meet the criteria an investigation report will be completed and submitted to the principal. The class teacher will also contact the parent to inform them of the outcome of the investigation.

When it is established bullying behaviour has occurred

Where it is established, bullying has occurred, it is important to contact the parents of all parties involved at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to consult with them on the actions to be taken to address the behaviour.

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

If a student who is experiencing bullying behaviour doesn't want their parents informed a plan should be developed to decide how parents will be informed and how best to support the pupil. Pupils should be made aware that their parents / guardians must be informed and the student should be supported in this process.

Supports should be identified for both parties (pupil experiencing bullying behaviour and the pupil engaging in bullying behaviour).

It must be acknowledged that no one approach works in all situations and the class teacher in consultation with the support team will decide the appropriate action / supports needed.

Requests for no action by parent

A parent having informed the school of bullying behaviour may request that no action is taken. If this occurs, they will be asked to submit this request in writing.

The school however, while acknowledging the request may decide based on circumstances that it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

Determining if bullying behaviour has ceased

It is important to engage with students and parents no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion.

The following should be considered at this time:

- The nature of bullying
- The strategies used to address the bullying behaviour
- The relationship between the students involved

It should be noted that ongoing support and supervision may be needed for the pupils involved even when it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased.

If bullying behaviour has not ceased

If the bullying behaviour has not ceased the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students and parents involved. A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased.

If it becomes clear that the student engaged in the bullying behaviour is continuing to display this behaviour then consideration should be given by the school to deal with this behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour. If disciplinary actions are considered / taken, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school.

Recording Bullying Behaviour

All incidents of bullying behaviour must be recorded.

This record should note

- The form and type of bullying behaviour that has occurred
- Where and when it occurred
- The date of initial engagement with pupils
- The actions to be taken / followed
- The views of students and their parents regarding actions to be taken to address bullying behaviour
- The review with students and parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of parents and students in relation to this
- The date and details of all engagements with the parties involved
- The date that it has been determined that the bullying has ceased
- Any engagement with external services / supports

Where a Student Support File exists for a pupil, their file may be updated to incorporate response strategies and supports. A note of the record will be made in the support file about the incident / investigation. Bullying investigation documents will be stored in the principal's office for reference.

Criminal Behaviour

Bullying behaviour can be considered criminal behaviour under certain circumstances and legal consequences may apply.

See section 2.3 Criminal Behaviour of Bí Cinealta Publication for further information in relation to this.

Bullying Behaviour as a Child Protection Concern

Generally, bullying behaviour can be addressed without the involvement of Tusla. However, bullying behaviour may become a child protection concern when it results in significant physical or emotional harm, or where it becomes a persistent and severe problem and measures taken to address it are not effective. To determine if bullying behaviour is a child protection concern the following should be considered

- The impact on the child
- Protective / appropriate action taken by the parents
- Protective / appropriate action taken by the school
- Engagement of family / child with support services – NEPS etc.

Tusla should be contacted if there is any doubt about whether the bullying behaviour is a child protection concern.

See section 2.4 When Bullying Behaviour Becomes a Child Protection Concern of Bí Cinealta Publication for further information in relation to this.

Complaints Process

If a parent / guardian is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour was addressed by the school in accordance with the Bí Cinealta 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 / guardian is unsatisfied with how the complaint is handled, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

See Appendix C – Guide to Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The 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 this behaviour continues in school the school should deal with it as per the school's Bí Cinealta Policy.

When a pupil displaying bullying behaviour is not in our school but the person experiencing the bullying behaviour is, the school must support the pupil who is experiencing this behaviour insofar as possible and engage with parents.

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):

It is acknowledged that no one approach works in all situations.

It will be made clear that the bullying behaviour needs to stop immediately.

The views of the student experiencing the bullying behaviour will be taken into consideration.

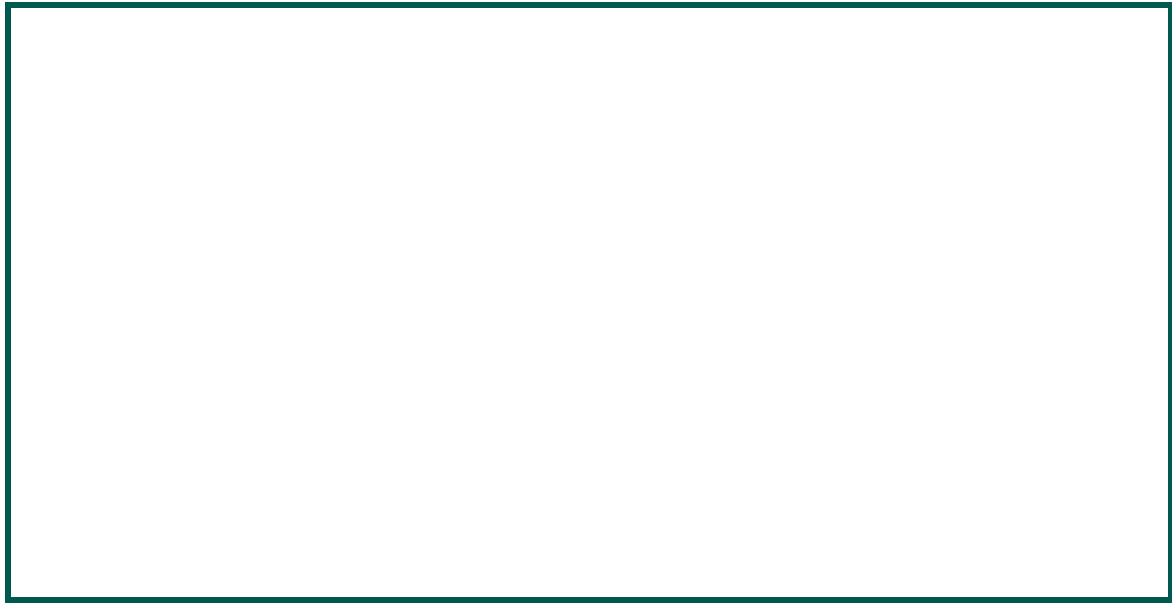
Parents and pupils will be met and consulted with as appropriate.

There will be regular check-ins and monitoring of pupils involved.

Home school links may be established.

The support of outside agencies may be sourced (NEPS, Oide, Tusla)

Specific programmes and resources may be utilised (Webwise, FUSE, Self Esteem programme etc.)



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.

Policy was ratified by the Board of Management on Monday 16th February 2026