

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Lawrencetown 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 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, recognizing 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. 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	13/06/25	School held an afternoon of training and collaboration to review our knowledge of the definition of bullying and to create our Anti-Bullying Policy.
Students	16/06/25	Student council consulted and draft version of child friendly policy created in a small group meeting.
Parents	Survey sent 'My year in review' 18/06/25	Google forms sent out to consult on pupil wellbeing and anti-bullying procedures.
Board of Management	09/07/25	
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	13/06/25	Ancillary staff and bus escorts attended meeting. Bus Drivers consulted via correspondence.
Date policy was approved: 09/07/25		
Date policy was last reviewed: 09/07/25		

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 school environment where they feel safe, connected and supported
- Our School Ethos (Respect, tolerance, care, integrity and trust)
- Early relationships are forged (Playschool)
- We have open communication between all stakeholders, parents and pupils are asked to share their opinions and feedback on various aspects of school life
- Culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable
- Create and foster a 'telling environment – telling to keep safe is not telling tales
- Ensure all pupils know they have a trusted adult(s) in school and that they can identify other trusted adults in their lives
- Create an environment where diversity is celebrated and included
- Challenge stereotypes
- Model and develop empathy and resilience
- Buddy Bench
- Fair Play / Team Spirit
- Classroom rules / expectations modelled and discussed at start of year. Reviews throughout the year
- Access to sensory room and safe spaces
- Safe, enclosed school grounds
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils
- Open communication
- Collaborative planning and reflection
- Shared responsibilities
- Pupils promote kindness and inclusion
- Parents foster an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated
- Group work / team work (table points / rewards) Pivotal praise
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Curriculum

- Develop self-worth through curricular and non-curricular activities
- Group work/Think Pair Share - building relationships
- Diversity and Inclusion
- SPHE Programmes - Media Education – Stay Safe Programme
- Online Safety talks - Cyber bullying talk
- 'Childhood Free' Phones
- Digital Media literacy and safety – teach responsible behavior and digital citizenship

- Regular conversations about developing respectful, kind and appropriate behaviour online
- Internet Safety Day
- My Selfie
- Religion - Grow in Love
- Garda Talk
- Yard Supervision
- Buddy System
- P.E.
- July provision
- Integration / Inclusion
- School tour / team building activities

Relationships and Partnerships

- Strong interpersonal relationships are supported through formal and informal structures e.g. student council, clubs, P.A.,
- Supporting active participation of students in school life
- Student voice
 - o Green flag
 - o Student Council
 - o Sport leagues
 - o Fundraising
 - o Hosting debates
- Supporting active role of parents in school life
- Parent- Teacher Relationship
- Parents Association
- Conducting seminars for pupils, staff, parents of what bullying behaviour is and its impact
- Build empathy, respect, resilience
- Peer support and peer mentoring
- Promoting acts of kindness
- Teaching problem solving
- Peer- relationships - encourage collaborative learning and tasks
- Model respectful behaviours and interactions between staff relationships with children/parents with each other
- Engage with the wider community – bus drivers, educational welfare staff, local businesses
- Cyber safety talk
- Community / school events and fundraising
- Educational Visits
- Afterschool
- MDT/OT / Psychological supports
- Integration with Cairdeas pupils

Policy and Planning

We consider wellbeing to be at the heart of all policies and planning

- School Ethos and Mission Statement
- Code of Behaviour

- Supervision Policy
- SEN Policy
- AUP Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment
- Communication Policy
- Teacher Professional Learning
- Collaborative approach to sharing best practice
- Training for supporting diversity and inclusion
- Restorative Practice Training
- Anti-bullying policy -monitoring/follow up/restorative practice
- Wellbeing policy
- SPHE lessons and planning is circular e.g. Stay safe program
- Dignity at work policy
- School transport policy
- Behaviour plans
- Phone-free School Policy
- Use of discrete time to resolve issues and discuss behaviours
- Cyber bullying parent and pupil talk
- Record keeping of incidents

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

- Supervision Policy
- Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment
- SEN Policy ---

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Anti-Bullying Co-ordinators - Principal and Deputy Principal

The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

- Class Teacher: deals with the initial allegation/suspicion of bullying behavior.
- Principal/Deputy Principal: where bullying behavior is suspected by the class teacher the principal/deputy principal will be informed.

Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school. All reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.

Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher

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 primary aim is to stop the bullying behavior and to restore as far as is practicable the relationships of the parties involved.

Pupils have developed a student friendly policy and are aware of the definition of bullying and have a clear understanding of the steps involved in investigating and addressing bullying behaviour.

All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All staff will have an incident copy which will be stored in their classroom. The incident that occurred, who was involved, the date, any actions taken and any discussions with those involved must be recorded.

The relevant teacher must inform the principal/deputy principal of all incidents that have been observed or they have been made aware of.

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

Where bullying behaviour is suspected, parents/guardians/peers report it to the class teacher/trusted adult. To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour we will consider the following questions:

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

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

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.

Note: One-off incidents may be considered bullying behaviour 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.

Approach to identifying if bullying behavior has occurred

- When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the teachers will consider the following; what, where, when and why?
- Two teachers will conduct the interviews
- If a group of students is involved each student will be engaged with individually at first. We will ask students from 2nd-6th Class to write down what happened. Pupils in junior classrooms will be asked questions using methodologies which are age appropriate such as storytelling etc. Thereafter, all students will be met as a group.
- At the group meeting everyone will be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views.
- Each student will be supported, as appropriate, following the meeting.

Where bullying behaviour has occurred

- Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the students involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to consult with them on the actions to be taken to address the behaviour

- It is important to listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- A record will be kept of the engagement with all involved, this record will document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known (see Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the Bí Cineálta procedures), where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students involved and their parents
- The record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour

Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred

- The Teacher will engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 days after the initial discussion to review progress
- Important factors will be 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 will document the review with the students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of their parents in relation to actions taken.
- The date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased will also be recorded
- Any engagement with external agencies will be recorded
- Ongoing supervision and support for all students involved will be provided
- If bullying has not ceased, the teacher will review the strategies implemented in consultation with the students and parents and agree to meet again after an agreed time until bullying behaviour has ceased.
- Where it is clear that the student who is displaying bullying behaviour is continuing to do so, then the school will consider using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.
- If a parent(s)/guardian(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 Schools, they should be referred to the school's complaints procedures.
- If a parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions have had a negative effect on the student.

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

- Restorative Practice
- Circle Time – to promote positive behavior, respect, tolerance, inclusion
- Yard buddies
- Timetabled sports/activities at break times
- Ensuring they are aware of their trusted adult

- Role play to practice the strategies of the Stay Safe Programme in a small group setting to develop confidence
- Close supervision and monitoring of 'hot spots'
- Developing empathy programmes
- Teach self-regulatory strategies

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: Marie Naughton Date: 9/7/25
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: [Signature] Date: 9/7/25
(Principal)