



Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of St Kevin's 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 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 inherent dignity as a child of God. This is the basis for ensuring that everybody 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 everybody has a 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 Bi 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	February 2025	Google Form (survey)
Students	March & April 2025	Questionnaire (Infants & 1st Class survey administered by class teachers) Google Form (2nd -6th Class survey)
Parents	April & May 2025	Google Forms (survey)
Board of Management	May 2025	Discussion/Feedback form
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	May 2025	Feedback sought
Date policy was approved: 17/06/2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: 21/10/2025		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by this school to address all forms of bullying behaviour, in whatever form and however motivated, including online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment (see Chapter 5 of the BÍ Cineálta procedures). In developing the 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 our school in a real way.

- SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the interrelated areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships.
- Stay Safe Programme - a personal safety skills programme which seeks to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying is taught throughout the school.
- Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Programme - the programme is taught across the school and provides opportunities for children to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way.
- Walk Tall Programme taught throughout the year covering topics that will support children's learning in relation to bullying
- Respectful behaviour is at the core of class rules which are established at the beginning of the year in every classroom.
- Cyberbullying is taught during Internet Safety Week every year, incorporating cyberbullying packs from Webwise and other sources.
- CyberSafe Kids workshops are organised by Parents' Association every 2 years
- A diverse range of books read and discussed during Literacy lessons to encourage awareness of diversity and inclusivity
- Community Garda visits are organised and will cover a range of classes, where possible.
- Student Council - pupils are provided with a space to voice their concerns and suggest changes or initiatives through the Student Council.
- Anti-Bullying Month is run in the school in November each year. Pupil questionnaires about bullying are completed during this month.
- STKEV values are taught in each class and modelled throughout the school.
- STKEV assemblies are held to reward examples of our school values being demonstrated throughout the school by students.
- STKEV values are displayed in pupil friendly language.
- Culture of being a 'telling school' encouraged by all staff. We promote the concept of the 'trusted adult' and telling a trusted adult is actively encouraged and facilitated.
- Yard Duty rotas are designed to ensure adequate supervision of children.
- Explicit social skill instruction for children with AEN who may need extra support in this area.
- 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 our 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 further 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.

Supervision and monitoring

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):

- Child Protection Policy
- Anti-Bullying/Friendship Month Questionnaire
- Critical Incident Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Special Education Policy
- Health and Safety Statement
- Acceptable Usage Policy - safe use of the internet in school
- Children's First - training completed by all staff

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teacher with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour is as follows:

The class teacher of the child who is experiencing bullying behaviour. In the absence of the child's class teacher, the link AEN teacher for the class may undertake this role.

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will adhere to the following principles:

- ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to 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

Requests to take no action

A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than “look out” for them. The student may not want to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They may 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. It is important that the student who has experienced bullying behaviour feels safe.

Parents may also make schools aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action. Parents should put this request in writing to the school or be facilitated to do so where there are literacy, digital literacy or language barriers. However, while acknowledging the parent’s request, schools may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

Incidents outside school hours

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 the procedures outlined in their Bí Cineálta policy.

Coming to and from school: Bullying behaviour can occur in the area immediately outside the school, the local shops and the wider local area. Bullying behaviour can take place at the bus stop or on the journey to and from school whether the students are walking, cycling or on school buses.

If evidence of an incident of cyberbullying which took place outside the school is brought to the attention of school staff, the Principal will inform the parents/guardians of all of the children concerned. As such incidents are not covered under this policy, the school may take no further action in investigating this. However, our role will be to support the child/children who have experienced the bullying behaviour when they are at school.

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

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):

Please note that at each step in the process listed below, the relevant teacher will inform the principal in order to ensure that the principal is aware of the situation.

Step 1 - Referral:

An allegation of bullying is made to the class teacher, either by the child experiencing bullying behaviour, his/her parent/guardian or a third party (e.g. a witness).

Step 2 - Investigation and determination:

The teacher will speak to the child experiencing the bullying behaviour **within three school days** of the receipt of the allegation. The aim of the initial contact will be to reassure the child that they have been heard and that action will be taken.

Wherever possible, the teacher will also aim to speak to the child accused of bullying behaviour as well as any relevant witnesses (if appropriate) in the same timeframe.

The teacher will take a record of the above conversations and this will be saved to Aladdin.

The teacher will contact the parent of the child allegedly experiencing bullying behaviour. It is recommended that this contact would take the form of a phone call or in-person meeting, where possible. At this point, the teacher will communicate to the parent whether the complaint meets the threshold and definition of bullying as outlined on Page 1 of this policy.

Where a behaviour **does not** meet the definition of bullying, the teacher will explain their rationale and how he/she intends to support the children involved to move forward.

Step 3 - Response where bullying behaviour is determined to have taken place:

Where a behaviour **does** meet the definition of bullying, a timeline of **20 school days in which to end the bullying and seek a resolution** will commence. At this point, the teacher will also communicate with the parents of the child engaging in bullying behaviour to explain the process to them.

During this window of 20 school days, it is intended that both the child experiencing bullying behaviour *and* the child engaging in bullying behaviour will be supported. The dignity of all children concerned will be respected at all times.

Strategies to attempt to resolve the issue during this period include:

- The class teacher (with AEN support if required) discusses the bullying behaviour with the child concerned and explains why it is inappropriate. The child will be supported to empathise with the child experiencing bullying behaviour.
- Where a child is suitably mature to do so, a reflection sheet will be completed

at home by the child and their parent, and subsequently discussed with the class teacher.

- Teacher intervention to restore the relationship between the children involved.
- Whole-class approach to addressing a particular negative behaviour (per Section B).
- Additional vigilance by class teacher and other staff members at locations where bullying most commonly occurs (e.g. yard at break time, hall during PE, corridors during transitions, toilets, bike sheds).
- The parents of the child who was engaged in bullying behaviour may be advised of any suitable external services (e.g. play therapy) which may be of benefit to the child.
- Routine check-ins between the class teacher and child experiencing bullying behaviour to assess success of the above interventions.

Step 5: After 20 school days have passed, the class teacher will contact the parents of both/all children concerned to determine if the situation has improved and the bullying behaviour has stopped.

- Even though the bullying behaviour may have ceased, ongoing supervision and support may be required for both the student who has experienced the bullying behaviour as well as the student who has displayed the behaviour. It can take time for relationships to settle and for supports to take effect. In some cases, relationships may never be restored to how they were before the bullying behaviour occurred.
- If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students and parents and agree to meet again over an agreed timeframe until the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- Where it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school should consider 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.

Recording 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*.

All bullying behaviour will be recorded on our Aladdin system, using the approved template. 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, engagement with external supports and the outcome.

At each Board of Management meeting, the Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template) to the Principal or Deputy Principal since the previous report to the board.

Complaints Process

If a parent is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with these procedures, they should be referred to the school's complaints procedure. The schools' complaint procedures can be found on the school website under publications.

In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, a student and/or parent 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 Office of the Ombudsman for Children can be contacted at ococomplaint@oco.ie.

Support

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):

A range of appropriate in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience.

These may include:

- Social skills groups
- Buddy Programmes
- Group work such as circle time
- Revision of specific Stay Safe lessons with class groups
- Individualised support with a trusted adult (e.g. AEN teacher, SNA)
- Walk Tall
- Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)
- Weaving Wellbeing
- Emotional Regulation programmes (ie. Autism Level up, Zones of Regulation)
- Webwise
- Tacklebullying.ie
- <https://antibullyingcentre.ie/fuse/> (4th-6th classes)
- <https://heroes.webwise.ie/1st-and-2nd-class-html-heroes/> (1st/2nd classes)
- <https://heroes.webwise.ie/3rd-and-4th-class-programme/> (3rd/4th classes)
- <https://www.belongto.org/support-for-someone-else/at-school/primary/all->

[together-now/](#) (5th/6th classes- LGBTQ+)

If pupils require counselling or further support, the school will endeavour to direct parents/guardians towards the appropriate agencies to organise the same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour. This may include:


- NEPS psychologist
- Primary Care
- Jigsaw
- CAMHS
- GP
- Education Welfare Service – TESS
- TUSLA

Section D: Oversight

The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting. This update will include the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting, the number of ongoing incidents and the total number of incidents since the beginning of the school year. Where incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred, the principal will also provide a verbal update which will include where relevant, information relating to trends and patterns identified, strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant. This update does not contain personal or identifying information. See Chapter 7 of the BÍ Cineálta procedures.

This policy is available to our school community on the school's website and in hard copy on request. A student friendly version of this policy is displayed in the school and is also available on our website and in hard copy on request.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed, following input from our school community, each calendar year or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this policy refers.

Signed:  Date: 21/10/2025
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed:  Date: 21/10/2025
(Principal)

Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour

Name:					Class:				
Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour									
Name(s)					Class(es)				
Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))*									
Pupil concerned	<input type="radio"/>	Other pupil	<input type="radio"/>	Parent	<input type="radio"/>	Teacher	<input type="radio"/>	Other	<input type="radio"/>
Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern									
Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *									
Disablist			<input type="radio"/>	Physical Appearance			<input type="radio"/>		
Exceptionally able			<input type="radio"/>	Racist			<input type="radio"/>		
Gender Identity			<input type="radio"/>	Poverty			<input type="radio"/>		
Homophobic/Transphobic			<input type="radio"/>	Sexist			<input type="radio"/>		
				Sexual Harassment			<input type="radio"/>		
How the bullying occurred (tick relevant box(es))									
1. Direct Bullying behaviour (tick one of the boxes below)									
Physical <input type="radio"/>			Verbal <input type="radio"/>			Written <input type="radio"/>		Extortion <input type="radio"/>	
2. Indirect Bullying behaviour (tick one of the boxes below)									
Exclusion <input type="radio"/>					Relational <input type="radio"/>				
3. Online <input type="radio"/>									
Description of bullying behaviour and its impact including									
Details of conversations you with relevant parties									
Details of actions taken									
Signed: (Relevant Teacher)			Date:			Date informed principal:			
Follow up (Please record any other information that may be relevant. This information could be months after the initial report but is still relevant. Please ensure you inform the principal of any important new information)									