



St. Edan's National School

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of St. Edan'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.

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	29 th January 2025 3 rd March 2025 7 th March 2025	Half day training (SM/VE) Staff Questionnaires Plan, read, review & give feedback on draft policy.
Students	7 th March 2025	Student Questionnaires
Parents	3 rd March 2025 Term 3 2025	Parent Questionnaire via Google Forms Feedback requested from parents
Board of Management	7 th April 2025	BOM Meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	14 th March 2025	Discussion with Bus Driver
Date policy was approved:		16.06.2025
Date policy was last reviewed:		Old Policy was reviewed on 2 nd September 2024 (Policy, Checklist and Notification of Review)

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):

Culture and Environment:

- positive and inclusive school culture
- Positive relationships
- Effective leadership
- Positive culture and environment
- A telling environment
- A trusted adult
- Safe spaces
- Appropriate supervision in yard and in school building
- Opportunities to participate in class and whole school activities to raise self-esteem
- Proximity praise
- Problem Solving Approach
- Reward for kind behaviour
- Positive classroom rules that are drawn up by the whole class
- Acceptance of all differences

Curriculum:

- Teaching and learning in SPHE
- Stay Safe Programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- RSE Curriculum
- Student participation
- SPHE Methodologies
- Promoting inclusion and diversity
- Group work/ Collaboration
- Role - play, acting out scenarios
- Circle time
- Anti-Bullying Week
- Wellness Week
- Discrete lessons when 'incidents' arise
- Assemblies
- Specific lessons on giving constructive criticism
- Safer Internet Day
- Webwise
- Diverse learning experiences

Policy and Planning:

- Bí Cineálta policy
- Student friendly Bí Cineálta policy
- Code of behaviour
- Child safeguarding statement
- Acceptable use policy
- Supervision
- RSE Policy
- SEN policy
- Mobile Phone and Device Policy
- SSE Wellbeing in education
- Appropriate CPD

Relationships and partnerships:

- Strong interpersonal connections
- Bullying awareness initiatives
- Student and parent participation
- Appropriate CPD
- Promoting peer support
- Supporting activities that build empathy, respect and resilience
- Supports for Parents e.g. courses etc.

Preventing cyber bullying behaviour: (Note - 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. Children between 13 and 16 must have parental permission to sign up to social media services. Most social media platforms have a minimum age requirement and for the majority of these, it is 13 years old. Therefore, children under the age of 13 should not have a social media account))

- promoting digital citizenship
- implementing SPHE curriculum
- open conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- referring to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour

- Promoting online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online
- holding internet safety day
- Internet Acceptable Use Policy

Preventing homophobic/ transphobic bullying behaviour

- Inclusive and accepting environment
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- challenging gender-stereotypes

Preventing racist bullying behaviour

- fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students "see themselves" in their school environment
- 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 support students from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma students, and to encourage communication with their parents
- ensuring that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds

Preventing sexist bullying behaviour

- 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 contribution of all students
- encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home

Preventing sexual harassment

- 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 (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

- Children are always supervised by an adult when in school
- Teacher and an SNA present to supervise at small break and lunch time
- children are accompanied by at least one staff member on school trips
- children are told where to play when out at yard and what spaces to avoid
- teachers bear in mind children who may have recently clashed when organising groups for collaborative work/ teams etc with a view to giving space to the children involved to heal.
- Supervision Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- IAUP

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and Practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Sarah Murphy, Victoria Earle and Miriam Kehoe

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):

Identify if bullying behaviour has occurred:

- Two staff members can be present when engaging with children individually initially without parents' notification and presence.
- Two staff members can be present when engaging with a group of children to investigate what happened. Teacher's discretion can be used with this approach about when best to use it.
- Class teacher will keep a written record of what was said during these conversations
- It may also be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident. Teacher's discretion can be used in this instance.
- The following three questions should be considered to determine if bullying has occurred.
 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.

Note: 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 a repeated behaviour.

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.

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

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 behaviour. It must be made clear to the pupil that other parties may need to be informed for their welfare.

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.

Procedures for Investigation:

- 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:
 - a. While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the 'Relevant Teacher(s)', the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' 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.
 - b. If it is established by the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' that bullying has occurred, the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' 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.
 - c. The 'Relevant Teacher(s)' must record the bullying incident on the school information management system (Aladdin) by adding a Bullying Report Template to the relevant pupil's file which will be visible on files on all other pupils named. The 'Relevant 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 'Relevant Teacher(s)'. 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 such as secretaries, SNAs, caretakers and cleaners 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 victim(s) and discuss the feelings which the victim(s) 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 'Relevant Teacher(s)' 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.
- If a group is involved each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about the other's statements.
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.
- Where the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' has/have 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.
- The "Relevant Teacher" does not apportion blame but should make an effort to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied. 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.
- When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the "Relevant Teacher" will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information. This may be recorded on Aladdin.
- If a pupil chooses to continue the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer be considered a once off occurrence. In this event parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted. The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for the pupil.
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may be arranged separately with a view to bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
- Repeated incidents of bullying behaviour will result in the imposition of sanctions. Such sanctions will be proportionate to the seriousness of the bullying behaviour. It must be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required that this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.
- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent must be referred to the school's complaints procedure.
- In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their rights to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.
- The School will maintain care for the victim over time. This will be done by speaking to the child a number of weeks after the incident to check on their continuing welfare. The child's parents will also be consulted. And a record will be kept to documented when the bullying has ceased.

Determining if the Bullying Behaviour has Ceased:

The teacher must engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress. Factors to consider in the review include:

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

Ongoing supervision of both the child experiencing bullying behaviour and the child displaying bullying behaviour may be required as well as continued support.

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 incidents of bullying behaviour should be recorded. The following details should be included on the record:

- form (see section 2.5 of Bí Cineálta procedures)
- type (see section 2.7 of Bí Cineálta procedures)
- where and when (if known)
- the date of initial engagement with the students and their parents
- the views of the students and their parents* regarding the action to be taken to address the bullying behaviour (*only in relation to their own child)
- when review takes place, it should be noted if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of the students and parents in relation to this
- note the date of reviews and engagements
- note the date that the bullying behaviour has ceased
- any engagement with external services/ supports should also be noted
- if a SSF exists for a pupil involved, schools are encouraged to place a copy of the record on the student's support file

Complaint 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 complaints procedure. In the event that a student and/or parent is dissatisfied following the complaints procedure, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for children.

Supports:

NEPS

Oide

Webwise

National Parents Council

DCU Anti bullying centre

Tusla

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):

Where bullying behaviour has occurred:

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, then school can deal with it in accordance with Bí Cineálta policy

It is important for staff to be fair and consistent in their approach to address bullying behaviour. Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour need support. Engage with the student who is experiencing bullying without delay. School staff should identify the supports needed for the student who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties.

It is important that a student's agency is not decreased further by adults deciding what will happen next without listening to the student and involving them in deciding on the actions that will be taken.

The following principles must be adhered to when addressing bullying behaviour:

- ensure the child 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 view 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

Parents of both parties 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 as outlined in the school's Bí Cineálta policy. In circumstances where a student expresses concern about their parents being informed, the school should develop an appropriate plan to support the student and for how their parents will be informed.

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: *Dean Paul G Money*

Date: 16.06.2025

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: *Sarah Murphy*

Date: 16.06.2025

(Principal)

Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

2. Source and date of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))

Source		Date
Pupil concerned		
Other Pupil		
Parent		
Teacher		
Other		

3. Location of incident (tick relevant box(es))

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

4. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

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6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick the relevant box(es))*

Physical Aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation / Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Other (specify)	

7. Where the behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic	Disability / SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller Community	Other (specify)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact:

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9. Date of initial engagement:_____

10. Details of actions taken (including the views of pupils and parents involved regarding said action):

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11. Date of review with students and parents to determine whether bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of the pupils and parents in relation to this.

12. Engagement with external services or supports (if any):

Signed: _____ **(Relevant Teacher)** **Date:** _____

Signed: _____ **(Parent/Guardian)** **Date:** _____

Date submitted to Principal / Deputy Principal: _____