



# **Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour**

**June 2025**

## Introduction

The Board of Management of St. Peter's Primary 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 of St. Peter's Primary School recognises that bullying can seriously affect a child's wellbeing and their rights, as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. As a school community, we all have a shared responsibility to prevent bullying and to respond appropriately when it happens.

Our school is fully committed to keeping all students safe from harm. Student wellbeing is a top priority in everything we do. We understand how damaging bullying can be and are dedicated to both preventing it and supporting those affected.

We also commit to taking all reasonable steps, in line with equality laws, to prevent the harassment of students or staff based on any of the following nine grounds:

- Gender
- Civil status
- Family status
- Sexual orientation
- Religion
- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Membership of the Traveller community

Every school is required to have a **Bí Cineálta** policy. This policy explains how the school works to prevent bullying and how it responds if bullying occurs. If behaviour is inappropriate but not considered bullying, it will be dealt with under the school's **Code of Behaviour**.

## 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.

## Outside School

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 the bullying behaviour continues in school, it will be dealt with in accordance with this *Bí Cineálta* policy.

## Important Note

We acknowledge that different stakeholders may have differing perceptions and experiences related to bullying and how incidents are handled. While it may not always be possible to satisfy all parties, the school will make every effort to follow the procedures outlined in this policy.

Twice a year

## Section A: Development/review of our Bí Cineálta policy

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
<b>School Staff</b>	March 3 <sup>rd</sup> 2025 April 7 <sup>th</sup> 2025 May 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Draft policy feedback Wellbeing/Inclusion team meeting Bí Cineálta In-School Consultation Day
<b>Students</b>	April 2025	Policy explained to Student Council for feedback
<b>Parents</b>	June 2025	Policy shared with BOM for feedback
<b>Board of Management</b>	April 2025 June 2025	Policy shared with BOM for feedback and approval
<b>Wider School Community</b>	March 2025	Policy shared for feedback/approval: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FM and Cleaning team</li> <li>• SCP</li> <li>• Headlamps</li> <li>• After-school facilitators/teachers</li> </ul>
<b>Date Policy was approved: 10/6/25</b>		
<b>Date policy was last reviewed: NA</b>		

## Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

### 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): A post holder has been appointed in the school to promote and coordinate wellbeing and inclusion across the school.

- Anti-bullying month. Each November the school has an anti-bullying month and participates in various lessons and activities to highlight bullying behaviour with a view to reducing/preventing them.
- Teachers influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner through a range of curricular initiatives and positive, inclusive talk and modelling respectful practices.
- A “telling environment” is promoted. Telling a trusted adult is actively encouraged and facilitated. Twice yearly, children from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class complete a bullying questionnaire. Any disclosures made are investigated and followed up on.
- Trusted adult identified for all students. In most cases this is the class teacher, but for more vulnerable pupils this may be an SET, SNA, SCP coordinator, Headlamps coordinator.
- Teacher and SNA professional learning related to emotional and behavioural wellbeing, including restorative practice, is encouraged.
- Headlamps Programme in the school, working with vulnerable pupils from families at risk of

substance misuse, providing social, emotional and behavioural support and education.

- BÍ Cineálta Risk Assessment to identify risk areas around the school, and strategies implemented to minimise the risks across the school.
- Pupils are provided with a space to voice their concerns and suggest changes or initiatives through the Student Council. The principal attends the student council meetings and will regularly check in with them and get their feedback in relation to bullying.
- We proactively develop positive relationships and strong communication links with parents using a variety of resources: HSCL, SCP, Parents' Association, Class Dojo, Aladdin, open-door practices, school gate, in-class volunteers etc.
- We have a diverse range of books in the library which encourage respect for all.
- Respectful behaviour underpins the class rules which are established at the beginning of the year in every classroom and reinforced in the start of year meetings with teachers and parents
- 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.
- The Stay Safe programme is a personal safety skills programme which seeks to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying.
- RSE aims to provide opportunities for children to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way.
- Other resources and programmes include: Oide Anti-Bullying Support Material, Fun Friends, Walk Tall.
- Focus on cyberbullying during Internet Safety Week every year, incorporating Cyberbullying packs from Webwise and talks for pupils and parents.
- There is an acceptable use policy in place in the school.
- Dignity in the Workplace policy is being developed to protect staff from inappropriate behaviours.

### 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
- Health and Safety
- Protected Disclosures
- Critical Incident Policy
- SPHE Policy
- Code of Behaviour Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Dignity in the Workplace Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Special Education Policy

## Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

- **Board of Management:** Anti-bullying report to the BOM at every meeting. Response to on-going behaviours in line with the school code of behaviour.
- **Principal/Deputy Principal:** anti-bullying coordinators; provide support for staff, parents and pupils in dealing with any incidences of bullying.
- **The Management Team:** This team reviews the policy annually and monitors its implementation regularly, including the creation and implementation of annual Action Plans and

support class teachers.

- **Teaching Staff**

- Model positive behaviour.
- Proactively address bullying and respectful behaviours (see preventative strategies above).
- Investigate and record incidents of bullying behaviour.

- **SNAs:**

- Model positive behaviour.
- Assist teachers in monitoring pupils and activities on the yard and around the school.
- Report any witnessed behaviours of concern to a teacher or member of the management team.

- **Home School Community Liaison Coordinator:** Responsibility for links with parents and dispersal of relevant information and support.

- **School Completion Coordinator:** Supporting vulnerable, target pupils and working with these pupils in a proactive and reactive way to address inappropriate behaviours and bullying.

- **Headlamps:** Supporting vulnerable, target pupils and working with these pupils in a proactive and reactive way to address self-awareness, self-regulation, social communication skills, respectful behaviours and bullying.

- **Administrative and Ancillary Staff:** Report any witnessed behaviours of concern to the principal.

### Determining if bullying 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):

- All members of the school community have access to the Bí Cineálta policy and should know what to do if they experience or witness bullying behavior.
- When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the teacher should consider the following:
  - what, where, when and why?
  - If a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first.
  - Thereafter, all students involved should be met as a group.
  - At the group meeting, each student should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views.
  - Each student should be supported, as appropriate, following the group meeting.
  - It may also be helpful to record or ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident.
- It is important for school 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.
  - It is important that the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour is engaged with **without delay** so that they feel listened to, supported and reassured.
  - School staff should identify the supports needed for the student who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties and ensure that their needs are met.

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

- 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 at an early stage and work with parents throughout the process.

### **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. 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 inform the school about bullying behaviour and specifically request that no action be taken. Parents should put this request in writing to the school or be facilitated to do so where there are 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.
- Where bullying behaviour has occurred when students are not under the responsibility of the school, but the behaviour has an impact in the school, the school will support the students involved (see below).
- Where the student displaying the bullying behaviour is not a student in the school, but the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour is a student in the school, the school will support the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as appropriate and engage with them and their parents to determine what steps can be taken.
- 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*.

### **Determining if 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 following the initial intervention. They should consider:
  - the nature of the bullying behaviour
  - the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour
  - the relationship between the students involved
- 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 on a timeline for further meetings 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 on our Aladdin system, using the approved template. A hard copy of the approved template will be given to the principal. 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.

- The Aladdin report is password protected, but will be made available to staff members where necessary to support pupils
- 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.
  - Confirmation that all these cases have been, or are being dealt with in accordance with the school's BÍ Cineálta policy.

### **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's complaints procedure.
- The school's complaints procedures can be found on the school website under "Publications."
- In the event that a student and/or parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, a student and/or parent may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions have had a negative impact on the student.
- The Office of the Ombudsman for Children can be contacted at [ococomplaint@oco.ie](mailto: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 in the school.
- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with 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:
  - School Completion Coordinator
  - Headlamps project worker
  - On-site play or art therapists
  - 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, where relevant, will include 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.

## **Ratification and Review**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 11/6/25. It will be reviewed on an annual basis.