

# School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour



## Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of **St. Andrew's N.S** 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 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	<b>24-3-25</b>	<b>Half day in school planning.</b>
Students		
Parents		
Board of management		
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers		
Date policy was approved:		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

## Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

**See Appendix A**



## Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

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

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour you should consider the following:

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. These procedures are outlined in Appendix C.

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.

**Clear Policies and Education:** Implement a zero-tolerance bullying policy, and provide regular workshops for students and staff to raise awareness and educate on recognising, preventing, and responding to bullying.

**Support Systems:** Establish a confidential reporting system for students to report bullying, and ensure access to follow up discussions with teachers to address underlying issues.

**Peer Mentorship and Inclusion Programs:** Create peer support groups and buddy systems that encourage positive relationships, inclusion, and empathy among students, providing safe spaces for those affected by bullying.

**Restorative Practices:** Encourage restorative approaches that focus on repairing harm through dialogue, helping both the victim and the bully understand each other's perspectives and fostering accountability. Teachers will be trained in this area.

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*.  
(The form for recording bullying is available at Appendix B)

### **Section D: Oversight** (The form for reporting to BOM is at Appendix D)

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: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal)



## **APPENDIX A: School-Wide Prevention Strategies**

### **1. Promoting a Positive School Culture**

- Foster an inclusive and respectful environment where diversity is celebrated.
- Implement a whole-school anti-bullying policy, clearly outlining expectations and consequences.
- Display posters, artwork, and messages promoting kindness, respect, and equality.
- Celebrate diversity through themed events, assemblies, and activities.

### **2. Education and Awareness**

- Integrate lessons on kindness, empathy, and respect into the curriculum through the Stay Safe and Lust for Life programmes.
- Teach students about different types of bullying.
- Use age-appropriate books, videos, and discussions to promote understanding and acceptance.
- Deliver interactive workshops on digital citizenship, gender equality, and cultural diversity.



### **3. Digital Safety and Online Behaviour**

- Educate students on responsible internet use, privacy, and the dangers of cyberbullying.
- Encourage safe online habits, such as reporting inappropriate content and avoiding harmful interactions.
- Implement clear guidelines on appropriate technology use in school.
- Provide workshops for parents on how to support children's safe online behaviour. Our current provider for this service is Zeeko.
- We have developed a Smartphone Agreement in consultation with parents.

### **4. Staff Training and Involvement**

- Train teachers and school staff to identify and respond to bullying behaviours.
- Ensure all staff are equipped to handle incidents involving discrimination or harassment.
- Establish a clear reporting system for students and staff to address concerns confidentially.
- Avail of CPD courses relevant to this topic.



## **5. Encouraging Student Leadership and Peer Support**

- Establish peer mentorship programs where older students guide younger ones on respectful behaviour for example our Buddy System.
- Form a Student Council to promote inclusion and respect.
- Encourage bystander intervention, teaching students to stand up against bullying in a safe way.
- Within our Amber Flag initiative we have set up a Wellbeing Committee.
- We have a Hero in the Hallway initiative celebrating acts of kindness and empathy in the pupil community.

## **6. Parental Engagement**

- Promote workshops and meetings for parents on bullying prevention and promoting positive behaviour.
- Encourage open communication between parents and the school regarding any concerns.
- Provide resources to parents on how to talk to children about bullying and discrimination.



## **7. Supervision and Monitoring**

- Increase supervision in areas where bullying is more likely to occur, such as playgrounds.
- Implement an anonymous reporting system where students can report concerns safely.
- Regularly review and assess bullying incidents to improve prevention strategies.

## **8. Empowering Children to Speak Up**

- Teach students how to express their feelings through circle time, role play and the Stay Safe Programme and seek help if they experience or witness bullying.
- Promote a culture where children feel safe to report incidents without fear of retaliation.
- Reinforce the message that all forms of bullying and discrimination are unacceptable.



## Appendix B: Bullying Incident Report Form

1. Name of student being bullied: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Class: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name(s) and class(es) of students allegedly engaged in bullying behaviour:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Source of bullying concern/report (tick as relevant):

Student concerned	
Other student(s)	
Teacher	
Parent	
Other	

5. Location of incident(s) (tick as relevant)

School Yard		Classroom	
Bus		Toilets	
Out-of-school		School Hall	
Corridor		Other	

6. Name of person(s) who reported the alleged bullying concern:

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Type of bullying behaviour (tick as relevant):

Physical		Gender-identity bullying	
Verbal		Extortion	
Damage to personal property		Written bullying	
Excursion/isolation		Relational bullying	
Cyber-bullying		Other	
Intimidation			

8. Brief description of bullying behaviour:

9. Impact of bullying behaviour:

10. Details of action taken:

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## APPENDIX C - Steps to Address Bullying Behaviour

### 1. Parental Involvement and Initial Response

- Parents are vital partners in addressing bullying and must be contacted **at an early stage** when bullying behaviour is identified.
- The school will:
  - Inform the parents of all students involved.
  - Consult with parents on the actions to be taken to address the behaviour.
- The school will **listen to the views of the student experiencing bullying** to help determine the most effective response.

### 2. Documentation

- A clear record must be kept of all engagements, including:
  - The type and nature of the bullying behaviour (as per Sections 2.5 and 2.7 of the *Bí Cineálta* procedures).
  - Where and when the incident(s) occurred.
  - The date of initial engagement with the students and their parents.
  - The views of both students and parents on proposed actions to address the behaviour.



### 3. Follow-Up Procedures

- A follow-up meeting must take place **within 20 school days** of the initial engagement.
- During this follow-up, the school will:
  - Review the nature of the bullying behaviour and assess whether it has ceased.
  - Evaluate the effectiveness of strategies used.
  - Consider the current relationship between the students involved.
  - Document all findings and the views of the students and their parents.

### 4. Continuing Support and Monitoring

- Record the date when it is determined that the bullying behaviour has stopped.
- Note any involvement of **external services or supports**.
- Continue **ongoing support and supervision** for all students involved, even after the bullying has ceased.

### 5. Further Action if Bullying Persists

- If bullying continues:
  - Review and revise the intervention strategies in consultation with the students and their parents.
  - Agree on a **new timeframe** for further review and engagement.
- If a student continues to engage in bullying:
  - The school may implement behaviour management strategies as outlined in its **Code of Behaviour**.
  - Disciplinary action, if necessary, will be handled directly between the school, the student, and their parents.



## 6. Complaints Procedure

- If a parent is dissatisfied with how the school has handled a bullying incident, they should follow the school's **formal complaints procedure**.
- If still dissatisfied, they may contact the **Ombudsman for Children** if they believe the school's actions have negatively impacted the student.



## Appendix D: Guide to Providing Bullying Behaviour Update

Provided at Board of Management meeting of \_\_\_\_\_ (enter date)

Having reviewed the details of the incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the previous board of management meeting, the principal must provide the following information at each ordinary meeting of the board of management:

Total number of <b>new</b> incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the last board of management meeting.	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour currently ongoing.	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the beginning of this school year.	