



Appendix A

St. Patrick's N.S. Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of St. Patrick's N.S. Crowenstown 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 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	18/3/2025 – 21/3/2025	Questionnaire
Students	18/3/25 - 21/3/2025	Questionnaire
Parents	18/03/2025 to be returned by Friday 21/3/2025	Questionnaire
Board of Management	Draft document forwarded 5/6/2025	Draft document on 5/6/2025 and at BOM meeting on 9/6/2025
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	Caretaker and School Secretary. 18/3/2025 – 21/3/2025	Questionnaire
Date policy was approved: 9/06/2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: Anti-Bullying policy reviewed on 5/11/2024 this is a new policy.		

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.

Preventing Specific Types of Bullying

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.

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 BoM 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.

Cyberbullying

- Schools and families must teach and promote safe and respectful online behaviour.

Our strategies to prevent cyberbullying behaviour include

- Implementing the SPHE curriculum
- Having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- Setting clear rules for the use of technology through our Acceptable Use Policy that is regularly reviewed and communicated with the students and parents in the school.
- Referring to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the schools Code of Behaviour
- Reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour through: Internet Safety Day, workshops for students and parents

Homophobic & Transphobic Bullying

All students including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students, have a right to feel safe and supported at school.

In St. Patrick's N.S. we teach kindness and empathy and maintain an inclusive physical environment.

Racist Bullying

We celebrate and reflect the **cultural diversity** of our school through:

- Showcasing different cultures in displays and lessons
- Supporting children learning English
- Including books and resources from different backgrounds in our school library
- Creating awareness around racism using age appropriate materials/resources

Sexist Bullying

In St. Patrick's N.S. all members of staff model respectful behaviour, treating all students equally regardless of their gender.

- All students are offered equal opportunities to engage in school activities

Sexual Harassment

- Teach students about respectful relationships and challenge harmful stereotypes.
- Promote positive role models within the school community.

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):

1. Culture and Environment

- A positive and inclusive school culture helps everyone feel safe and included.
- Staff and students should treat one another with **respect, kindness and fairness**.
- School leaders and staff set the tone – bullying is not acceptable.
- Students play a role by showing kindness, fostering inclusion and looking out for each other.
- Parents support this by promoting empathy and respect.

2. A Telling Environment

Students should feel safe to **talk about bullying**.

- Sometimes they don't tell because they're afraid of:
 - Being called a "tell-tale"
 - Retaliation from the bully
 - Not being believed
 - Getting into trouble
 - Losing access to their phone
- Our school will prioritise creating a culture where reporting bullying is safe and supported.
- Ensuring that students know who to tell and how to tell, e.g. Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
- Hand up a note with their homework.
- Ask a parent(s)/guardian(s) to tell on your behalf.
- Ask a friend/peer to tell on your behalf.
- Administer a confidential questionnaire.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

3. Trusted Adults

- Every student should know they can talk to a **trusted adult** in school.
- All staff in St. Patrick's N.S are regarded as **trusted adults** to whom bullying behaviour can be reported.
- When bullying is reported, the trusted adult informs the class teacher or principal and continues to support the student.

4. Safe School Spaces

The creation of safe physical spaces is an important measure to prevent bullying behaviour. In St. Patrick's N.S we aim to ensure that, where possible all spaces have a clear line of sight to make it easier for school staff to supervise students.

In our school we will continue to promote a strong sense of belonging through art, gardening and creative projects. This promotes inclusion, respect and positivity.

Supervision

- Students are supervised when in class and during school activities.
- Consistent visible supervision is provided during breaks both inside and outside
- Non-teaching staff encouraged to be vigilant and to report issues to relevant

teachers.

- Visitors to the school should not be left alone with students.

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

Teachers influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner through a range of curricular initiatives. There are a number of curriculum components and programmes which are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying and the promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness.

- SPHE and RSE are used to build empathy, self-awareness and respectful relationships.
- Group work and active learning are methodologies used to promote and foster belonging.
- 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.
- Many opportunities to promote inclusion and challenge prejudice can be found and used throughout the curriculum.
- Internet safety talks for parents and children are held regularly.

Policy and Planning

The wellbeing of the school community is at the heart of school policies and plans. The following policies: The Code of Behaviour, Child Protection Policy, Supervision of Students Policy, Acceptable Use Policy, SPHE Policy and SEN policy support the implementation of the school's Bí Cineálta's Policy.

- Students and parents are involved in shaping policies where appropriate.
- CPD targeted at supporting school staff to prevent and address bullying behaviour is encouraged.

Relationships and Partnerships

Strong relationships between students, parents, and staff are key. To strengthen these connections in our school:

- Students are included and consulted on relevant areas of school life
- Workshops are provided for parents and pupils
- Kindness Week takes place every year
- Acts of Kindness and positive behaviour are recognised and rewarded
- Teaching problem-solving
- Promoting empathy and inclusion
- Age appropriate awareness initiatives are undertaken to support students in the school as needed e.g. Show Racism the Red Card

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teachers with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour are as follows:

All teachers.

When bullying 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 whole school community has a responsibility to prevent and address bullying behaviour. St. Patrick's N.S. will work in partnership with our patron, board of management, staff, students and their parents to develop and implement their Bí Cineálta Policy.

Approach:

The primary aim in addressing reports of bullying behaviour should be to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved rather than to apportion blame.

In accordance with the Bí Cineálta procedures 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, schools should deal with it in accordance with their Bí Cineálta policy.

When addressing bullying behaviour teachers should:

- 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 the students 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

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred:

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 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.

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour the following questions will be used;

- 1.Targeted- Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or a group of students?
- 2.Harm- Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?
- 3.Repeated- 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 the questions is no, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Inappropriate behaviour which is not bullying behaviour will be addressed under the school's Code of Behaviour Policy.

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.

6.1. Identifying 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.

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. It may also be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident.
- 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.

Incidents can occur where behaviour is unacceptable and hurtful but the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies that deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

6.2. Where bullying behaviour has occurred

School staff should know what to do when bullying behaviour is reported to them or when they witness bullying behaviour. The school's Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour and the student friendly policy should clearly explain what actions will be taken when bullying behaviour is reported. (See Chapter 4)

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

When addressing bullying behaviour teachers should:

- Take action in a timely manner
- Inform parents of those involved 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
- A record should be taken of the engagement with all involved (see section 2.5 and 2.7 of the Bí Cineálta Procedures) the record should include the views of the students experiencing the bullying behaviour
- The record will document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known, 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.

6.3 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 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. However, while acknowledging the parent's request, schools may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

6.4 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. 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
- The teacher/Principal should document the review with students and their parents to determine if bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and their parents in relation to this.
- The date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased should also be recorded.
- Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted.
- 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 the 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 SSP exists for a pupil involved, schools are encouraged to place a copy of the record on the student's support file*

6.6 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.

****Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools (see Appendix A)**

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):

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying behaviour involves a whole school approach.

We take all instances of bullying behaviour on a case-by-case basis, but we may use the following approaches generally:

All students involved will be checked –in with regularly e.g. greeting every morning, circle time, children's news and behaviour will be monitored carefully. The teacher will check-in with parents too and will look for their ongoing support to monitor their child at home and to communicate with the school if needed.

We will use resources as appropriate – including those developed by NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service), Oide (support service for schools) and from programmes/sites such as Webwise.

Teachers will be encouraged to attend training in Restorative Practices.

Supporting Bullied Students:

- Ending the bullying behaviour
- Fostering respect for bullied pupils and all pupils
- Fostering greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils
- Supporting the pupils who have experienced bullying behaviour
- Promote a positive school culture where pupils feel safe, respected and valued
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance students' feelings of self-worth.
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- Raising awareness of appropriate programmes and teacher training
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through annual awareness-raising programmes
- Helping pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendship and social skills e.g. participation in group work in class, team activities during or after school, small social groups with SET.
- Programmes that may be used in school to raise self-esteem, develop friendships and social skills and build resilience are
 - Friends for Life
 - Walk Tall Programme
 - Stay Safe Programme
 - Friendship Week
 - A lust for Life
 - Group Work such as circle time

Supporting Bullying Students:

- Making it clear that bullying students who reform are doing the right and honourable

thing and giving them praise for this.

- Helping students raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendship and social skills e.g. participation in group work in class, team activities during or after school, small social groups with SET.
- Programmes that may be used in school to raise self-esteem, develop friendships and social skills and build resilience are
 - Friends for Life
 - Walk Tall Programme
 - Stay Safe Programme
 - Friendship Week
 - A lust for Life
 - Group Work such as circle time
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance students' feelings of self-worth.
- In dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the student.
- In dealing with bullying behaviour, seeking resolution and offering a fresh start for keeping a promise to reform.

Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools

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 Seamus Ó hEamaigh Date 9/6/2025
Chairperson Board of Management

Signed Carol Thorpe Date 9/06/2025
Principal