St. Finian's Primary School

Roll Number 16461C

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of St. Finian'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 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.

Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour:

- A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards another student is not considered bullying.
- However, a single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying, due to the high likelihood of it being shared multiple times, which makes it a repeated behaviour.

Disagreements or changes in friendships are not automatically bullying. For example:

- Disagreement between students, or situations where students do not want to be friends or to remain friends, is not bullying unless it includes:
    - Deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress
    - Exclusion
    - Creating dislike by others
    - Manipulation of friendship groups

Some students with special educational needs (SEN) may experience social communication difficulties, resulting in behaviours that:

- Can hurt themselves or others
- Are not deliberate or planned
- Are automatic responses which the student may be unable to control

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Bullying Behaviour That Occurs Outside of School

According to the Bí Cineálta Procedures, schools are not expected to manage bullying incidents that occur outside their duty of care. However, if the bullying has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved.

Examples of bullying behaviour outside of school (non-exhaustive list):

- In the area immediately outside the school, local shops, or the wider community
- On the journey to and from school
- During participation in clubs and groups outside school, such as sports clubs

- Online bullying (Cyberbullying)

Online bullying can cause significant harm and has a lasting impact. Because digital content is easily shared and difficult to delete, the student's home may no longer feel like a safe place.

Requests to Take No Action

Sometimes, a student who reports bullying may:

- Ask that staff "do nothing" other than “look out” for them
- Not want to be identified as having spoken up
- Fear that reporting might make things worse

In such cases:

- Staff must show empathy, deal sensitively, and work with the student to:
    - Agree on steps to address the situation
    - Decide how and when to inform their parents
    - Ensure the student feels safe and supported

Parental Requests for No Action

- Parents may also request that no action be taken.

- This request should be made in writing, or facilitated where literacy, digital literacy, or language barriers exist.

While a school should acknowledge this request, it retains the right to act in the best interests of the student(s) involved, depending on the circumstances.

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	30.05.2025	Staff Meeting Questionnaire
Students	Ongoing	Student council Questionnaire
Parents	05.06.2025	Questionnaire
Board of Management	13.05.2025 10.06.2025	Meeting Meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	Ongoing	Questionnaire
Date policy was approved: 10.06.2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: 10.06.2025		

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.

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 support for young people in this school and to help inform future prevention strategies.

Culture and Environment:

We strive to:

- Create a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour is adopted. Involve parents as active partners in fostering an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated.
- Support the idea that our school is a telling environment.
- Establish clear expectations for behaviour and enforce them consistently.
- Promote the concept of a trusted adult. This is promoted and reinforced through the yearly teaching of the Stay Safe and Walk Tall Friendship and Bullying topics.
- Celebrate diversity and create a positive school culture and climate which is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity; encourage pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and promote respectful relationships across the school community.
- Establish a system for inclusivity training throughout the school and give feedback from the courses.
- Normalise reporting and annually survey the children to check in on their well-being.
- Through the Student Council, spread the anti-bullying policy and culture.
- Promote relationships and positivity around Autism, Dyslexia, ADHD and other additional educational needs.
- Empower bystanders to identify bystanding behaviour; to stand up for each other if they see any bullying behaviour on/offline.

Ways in which we work to achieve these goals are as follows:

- Staff are briefed on the uniform approach we must take to handle all reports of bullying.
- Staff modelling of positive relationships.
- Staff modellings of welcoming and accepting different cultural/social backgrounds.
- Bí Cineálta/our school values displayed in the classrooms and throughout the school.
- Have all countries displayed in the school; do a ‘Show and Tell’ to show different customs/traditions; recognise various cultural events, particularly among the diversity within your class; have a traditional food/culture day as a whole school event.

- More frequent kindness/wellbeing events throughout the year - assembly; catching kindness in the classrooms/on yard (as part of our PBL programme)
- Monthly social/emotional activities that teaches students about empathy, conflict resolution etc. (as part of our PBL programme)
- Playground helpers – students in 5th/6th class support infant classes on the yard to help with games and positive interactions and to help facilitate that the students have the option for someone to play with.
- Buddy systems are in place throughout the school. Senior students mentors junior students in a range of activities (yard, reading etc)
- Student council will work with representatives from An Caislean to ensure that all incentives and initiatives are inclusive.
- Child Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy was formed with pupil input. The students were consulted and we will strive to review this on an ongoing basis.
- Parents receive information at times regarding useful information on Anti Bullying, Stay Safe and SPHE lessons which focus on positive behaviour.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils.
- Celebrating school, class and individual achievements through our assemblies.
- Foster positive relationships between pupils and staff members in order to nurture connections and establish open communication.
- Our school strives to raise awareness and acceptance, annually, for a range of additional educational needs. Some of these campaigns include: Autism, ADHD, Dyslexia, Down Syndrome etc.
- Give each child a ‘care/wellbeing’ writing opportunity - a place where the children can write in as they may feel more comfortable to write rather than speak.

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning):

We strive to:

- Provide teaching and promote learning which is collaborative and respectful, fostering inclusion and respect for diversity.
- Display a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact.
- Foster and enhance the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be provided opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.

Ways in which we work to achieve this:

- Teach SPHE and RSE content which fosters students' well-being and self-confidence as well as promoting personal responsibility for their own behaviours and actions. One anti-bullying/friendship lesson at the start of each term.
- Implementation of the RSE, Stay Safe and Walk Tall Programmes and associated videos/resources.
- Zippy Friends used in 1st class. Friends First programme used with 5th/6th class. 'Welcome to Well Being" in the Infant Classrooms. "Weaving Wellbeing" in 3rd and 4th class.
- Teach the children what bullying is and what it is not; the different types of bullying and that bullying is if it is 'repeated, harmful and targeted'.
- Vocabulary development e.g. racism, homophobic etc.
- Lunchtime sport activities during the school year that encourage inclusion and having fun playing with friends.
- Acts of Kindness acknowledged by class teacher and principal. (linked with PBL)
- Student 'shoutouts' at our school assemblies that highlight kindness and friendship.
- Positive affirmations by teachers and staff in classrooms and on yard.
- Student Council to allow and encourage pupil voice, including the Autism classes.
- Green Schools/Active Flag committees.
- Quiet Space in classrooms.
- School Wellbeing Area (when area/space is allocated)
- A Code of Behaviour that rewards good behaviour – Golden Time every Friday.
- Berry Street Programme

- Class contracts
- Online Safety education programmes and guest speakers to tie in with Internet Safety Day; Webwise
- Model respectful behaviour towards colleagues, pupils and visitors in our school environment.
- Curricular and extracurricular activities can help to develop a sense of self-worth, working together, inclusion and respect.
- Students are given regular opportunities to work in small groups with peers, which can help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy.
- Acknowledgment of our diverse school population – celebrating diversity and culture in our school through art, displays and photographs.
- Support for staff including access to CPD when and as required. Share feedback from the CPD courses.
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behavior.
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the Bí Cineálta Policy through our yearly reviews.

Policy and planning

The aim of St. Finian's Primary School's Bí Cineálta policy is:

- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils, parents/guardians.
- To promote a school ethos and culture where all school community members treat each other with kindness and respect.
- To promote a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour. Strive to implement a Telling Culture.
- To ensure appropriate supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
- To develop procedures for noting, investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To implement a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.

- To work with appropriate agencies in countering all forms of bullying and promoting anti bullying behaviour. The Acceptable Use Policy, Special Education Policy, Code of Behaviour, RSE Policy and Child Safeguarding Statement all support the implementation of the Bí Cineálta policy. Appropriate Teacher Professional Development will be planned for and organised in order to support the successful implementation of this policy. Effective leadership is a key component with Principal, Deputy Principal, DLP, DDLP, and all members of the in-school leadership team focused on supporting the implementation of this policy.

Ways in which we work to achieve this:

- Ensure staff/parents and children have engaged with the Bí Cineálta policy and that it is implemented.
- Policy for parental engagement - information packs; parental acknowledgement to say that the parents have read the policy through Aladdin.
- Increased uniformity across the school, from staff, on our approach to policy.
- Reinforcement of our #bestbravekind with both the pupils and parents.
- Well being policy initiatives throughout the year
- Staff collaboration on policy development is working well in the school. We can strive to use the same model with the students and involve them in a more collaborative way in the area of policy and planning.
- Accessible policies for children. Older classes could make video/games for other classes on what the policy includes.
- Annual review of the policy.
- Include a page in the policy for parents who have a child getting bullied or bullying.
- Workshops in the wider community about bullying - focus on Cyber bullying as it could be new to parents.
- Plan a supportive team approach to reporting and addressing an allegation. Class teachers may need the support of a SEN teacher or an SNA.

Relationships and Partnerships

- Interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as our Parents Association, and our student council, committees and groups.
- Age and stage appropriate awareness initiatives that engage the student body in looking at their own behaviour – promoting acts of kindness and friendship, being an active help to others and looking at the causes of and impact of bullying during SPHE lessons.
- For students, staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying.
- Positive home school links and relationships: Help parents to communicate with teachers at an early stage if they suspect their child is being bullied.
- Encouraging peer mentoring and peer support

  ➢ Playground Helpers & Yard Buddies

  ➢ Wellbeing/Buddy Walks

  ➢ Buddy Reading, Science Share and other activities between older and younger classes.

  ➢ Student council to enure inclusion with students in An Caisleán.

- Supporting the active participation of students and parents in school life.
- The meaningful involvement of the BOM, staff, pupils and their parents in the development, implementation and review of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and student friendly version is actively pursued by the school through the regular use of discussion groups and surveys.
- Work with parents and students to educate them about the dangers of cyberbullying, by facilitating outside speakers. (An Garda Siochana/ Webwise)

Clear protocols are in place to encourage parents/ guardians to approach the school should they suspect that their child is being bullied.

Ways in which we work to achieve this:

- Restorative practice: when early issues arise encourage restorative practice. Getting students to build mutual respect for each other (eg) students who clash are given tasks to do together to build respect and relationships.
- Ensure a whole school understanding of the approach to the Bí Cineálta process by fostering strong relationships with home and school.
- Ensuring that we have a robust and strong student council.
- By creating a safe environment for the student to share information.
- Continuing with our Buddy Systems throughout the school.
- Investigate ways in how we can teach conflict resolution and peer mediation to students at their level in a formal capacity.
- Continue with the collaborative approach of staff meetings. ‘What’s working well and how can we improve’ our strategies that are yielding lots of constructive data for the staff.
- Look into partnering with local charities (jigsaw). Fundraiser and raise awareness of the charities as well as invite them in to speak in the school.
- Organize an annual student led anti bullying campaign.
- Review the PBL approach in the school. Active campaigns to reward positive behaviour.
- Strive to build positive relationships with parents. Invite them in for coffee morning and open mornings.

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):

Supervision Policy

Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy

Code of Behaviour

Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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 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. The following approach and steps are based on the information contained in Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Approach

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

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

Stage 1 - 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 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.

Where bullying behaviour is suspected, parents/guardians report it to the class teacher.

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour we will consider the following questions:

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 behaviour 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 (Stage 1), teachers should consider what, where, when and why? as follows: (Note that these steps are required – as outlined in the Procedures):

> Where one student is reported to be involved, the student should be engaged individually at first.

>Thereafter, this student and the student who is reported to be experiencing the bullying behaviour should be met together.

> If a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first.

> Thereafter, all students involved and the student who is reported to be experiencing the bullying behaviour 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 be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident(s).

> Parents will be supported by the school, if needed, with recommendations for useful resources/guides to help them support their children,

Stage 2: Where bullying behaviour has occurred

> Parents are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with schools, in addressing bullying behaviour. Where bullying behaviour has occurred the parents of the students 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.

> It is important to listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation.

> All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the form and type of behaviour if known (see pages 20-24, Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the Bí Cineálta procedures for descriptions/examples of the forms and types of bullying 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 record should be shared with the Principal.

Stage 3: Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred

> The teacher must engage with the students involved and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement. Important factors to consider as part of this engagement are the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the students involved.

> The teacher should document the review with students and their parents to determine if the 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 and support may be needed for the students involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased.

> If the bullying behaviour has not ceased the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents. A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased.

> If it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then consideration should be given to 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.

> If a parent(s) is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools they should be referred to the school's complaints procedures (available on our website).* September 2025

> If a parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, they 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 school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

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 regularly 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.

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 BOM 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. September 2025

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: 10.06.2025

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: Date: 10.06.2025

(Principal)