Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Holy Spirit Senior 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.

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	31st March 2025 11th April 2025 13th May 2025	Survey In-school consultation ISLM
Students	13th May 2025 13th and 14th May 2025	Whole class activity (3rd and 4th classes) Focus Group (5th classes)
Parents/Guardians	3rd April 2025	Focus Group
Board of Management	9th June 2025 16th June 2025	Draft Review - by email BOM Meeting - due for ratification
Wider school community	11th April 2025 30th May 2025	In-school consultation Email feedback
Date policy was approved: 16th June 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: 21st September 2026		

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

1. Culture and Environment

The school fosters an inclusive and respectful culture through daily practices that make all community members feel valued. Warm greetings at the entrance and multilingual signage in the reception area create a welcoming environment that celebrates diversity. Restorative Practice is embedded throughout the school's approach to relationships and discipline, encouraging open dialogue, empathy, and repair of harm when conflict arises. Students are encouraged to report bullying safely, with trusted adults identified as key support figures. Enhanced supervision in

high-risk areas and student involvement in decorating shared spaces promote safety and a sense of ownership. Additionally, the school promotes student voice through focus groups, Bí Cineálta committee, Holy Spirit FM, and a student council, empowering students and reinforcing a positive, inclusive atmosphere.

2. Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

The school integrates a range of curricular programmes and subjects to promote empathy, inclusion, and respectful relationships. Programmes such as SPHE, RSE, Stay Safe, and FUSE are central to helping students develop self-confidence, empathy, and an understanding of healthy relationships, while also fostering respect for diversity. Anti-bullying themes are further reinforced through cross-curricular integration in subjects such as History, Literacy, and Religious Education, promoting values of inclusion and social awareness. Additionally, digital literacy is actively taught to equip students with the skills to engage responsibly online, understand digital citizenship, and prevent cyberbullying.

3. Policy and Planning

The *Bí Cineálta* policy is embedded within a whole-school approach and is supported by key policies such as the Code of Behaviour and the Acceptable Use Policy, ensuring consistency in promoting respectful behaviour and addressing bullying. Ongoing teacher training and professional development are prioritised to equip staff with effective strategies for both prevention and intervention. This includes training in Restorative Practice, enabling staff to respond to incidents in a way that fosters accountability, empathy, and the repair of relationships.

4. Relationships and Partnerships

Strong interpersonal connections are a vital part of effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. These interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as student councils, school clubs, our parents' association, HSCL teacher and student support teams.

5. Targeted Prevention

The school implements tailored strategies to address specific types of bullying, ensuring a proactive and inclusive approach. Cyberbullying is tackled through comprehensive digital education, reinforcement of the Acceptable Use Policy, participation in Safer Internet Day activities, and by providing parents and guardians with access to helpful resources via the school website. To prevent identity-based bullying—such as racist, homophobic, or sexist behaviour—the school actively promotes inclusivity, challenges stereotypes, and ensures diverse representation across teaching materials and displays. Programmes like *Give Racism the Red Card* further support these efforts by fostering awareness and encouraging respectful attitudes among students.

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour:
The school actively works to ensure that no areas of school life are left vulnerable to bullying. Clear supervision plans, consistent policy implementation, and strong communication between staff, students, and families help maintain a safe and supportive environment. Regular review of practices ensures that emerging risks are identified and addressed promptly.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teachers with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour are those working with the children involved and/or year heads, if appropriate.

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:

The whole school community has a responsibility to prevent and address bullying behaviour. Schools should work in partnership with their 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 practicable, the relationships of the students involved, rather than to apportion blame.

When addressing bullying behaviour teachers will endeavour to:

- 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

Step 1 - Determine if bullying behaviour has occurred

The following questions will be considered:

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.

If the answer to any of these questions is **No**, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour.

The relevant teacher will use **Restorative Practice** questions in Appendix 3 to ascertain this information.

- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have you thought about since?
- Who has been affected and in what way?
- How could things have been done differently?
- What do you think needs to happen next?

Outside School

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 bullying behaviour has an impact in school the students involved will be supported by the school.

Step 2 - Record and Address

- Appendix 3 will be completed by the relevant teacher. When bullying behaviour occurs, parents or guardians of the students involved are contacted early, as they play a key role in working with the school to resolve the issue. The school will listen carefully to the student who experienced the bullying to understand how best to support them.

Step 3 - Review and Follow up

- Following an incident of bullying, the teacher will meet again with the students and their parents within 20 school days to review progress, determine if the bullying has stopped, and record everyone's views. Any ongoing support or involvement with outside services will also be noted. If the bullying continues, the teacher will revisit the strategies used and agree on a new plan with the students and parents, including timelines for further follow-up. If the behaviour still does not stop, the school may use disciplinary measures as outlined in its Code of Behaviour. If parents are unhappy with how the issue is handled, they can follow the school's complaints procedure or contact the Ombudsman for Children.

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):

How the school supports students who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour

Our school is committed to fostering a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environment. As a Restorative Practice school, we place a strong emphasis on empathy, relationship-building, and accountability in addressing bullying behaviour.

1. Supporting Students Who Experience Bullying

Students who experience bullying behaviour are supported in the following ways:

At our school, every report of bullying is responded to with care, sensitivity, and appropriate urgency. While each situation is unique, we aim to address concerns in a way that supports the well-being of all students involved. Restorative practices are used, where suitable, to help rebuild trust and repair relationships in a respectful and inclusive manner. Tailored supports, which may include counselling, mentoring, or peer involvement, are considered in consultation with the student and their parents or guardians. Through our Restorative Practice approach, students are encouraged to take an active role in the process, helping to foster accountability, voice, and positive outcomes within a safe and supportive framework.

2. Supporting Students Who Witness Bullying

Students who witness bullying are encouraged to respond with kindness and courage. We support these students by promoting a safe and open environment where they can report concerns to a trusted adult without fear of retaliation. We also help students understand the important role bystanders can play in fostering a respectful school culture. Where appropriate, students may be

offered opportunities to engage in awareness-raising activities that promote empathy, inclusion, and peer support.

3. Supporting Students Who Display Bullying Behaviour

We recognise that bullying behaviour can sometimes be linked to underlying social, emotional, or behavioural challenges. Our approach focuses on addressing the behaviour, not labelling the student, and supporting them in understanding the impact of their actions. Where appropriate, restorative practices are used to encourage reflection, accountability, and to help repair relationships. Targeted supports such as social skills development, behaviour support plans, or counselling may be considered based on individual needs. Families are engaged, where possible, in developing a constructive and collaborative response that promotes positive behavioural change and personal growth.

4. Whole-School Approach

In alignment with the *Bí Cineálta* procedures and *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying*, our school applies a whole-education approach built on the principles of prevention, support, oversight, and community. All staff are responsible for cultivating a kind and inclusive culture, and we work in partnership with students, parents, and the wider school community to ensure bullying behaviour is effectively prevented and addressed.

Section D: Oversight

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 Schools*.

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: Joane Keane **Date:** 22nd September 2026
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: E. Young **Date:** 22nd September 2026
(Principal)

Appendix 1 Child Friendly Version

Bí Cineálta – Our School's Anti-Bullying Policy

What is this policy about?

At Holy Spirit Senior Primary School, we want everyone to feel safe, happy, and respected. This policy helps stop bullying and shows us how to be kind to each other.

What is bullying?

Bullying is when someone keeps being mean or hurtful to another person on purpose.
It can happen in school or online (like on phones or tablets).

Bullying:

Happens more than once.

Can hurt someone's body, feelings, or friendships.

Is unfair – the person bullying is using their power to upset someone.

If you are unsure if something is bullying, ask yourself:

Is someone being mean on purpose?

Does it keep happening?

Is the person feeling hurt or scared?

If yes, tell a trusted adult – we are here to help.

What do we do to stop bullying?

We work together to make our school a kind and friendly place.

Here's how we do that:

1. Being Welcoming and Inclusive

We say hello and smile in the mornings.

We display different languages and cultures to show everyone is welcome.

You can always talk to a trusted adult if something is bothering you.

2. Learning About Kindness

In lessons like SPHE, we talk about feelings, kindness, and friendship.

We learn how to be kind online and offline.

We learn to respect differences – everyone is important.

3. Watching Out for Each Other

Teachers keep a close eye on places like the yard and hallways.

There are always adults around to help.

We have a student council where your voice can be heard.

4. Extra Help for Certain Kinds of Bullying

We learn how to stop bullying that is:

Online (cyberbullying)

About someone's race, religion, gender, family, or abilities
We talk openly about respect and fairness for everyone.

What happens if bullying happens?

If someone is being bullied:

An adult will listen carefully and make sure they feel safe.

We will help the person who is bullying to understand their behaviour and learn to do better.

We try to fix friendships through kind conversations, called restorative practices.

Everyone involved – students, teachers, and parents – will work together to make things better.

How do we support everyone?

If you are being bullied:

- We will take you seriously.
- We will help you feel safe and happy again.

If you see bullying:

- Tell an adult – your voice matters!
- You are helping others by speaking up.

If you have bullied someone:

- We will help you understand why it's wrong.
- You will get support to change and do better.

What does the school do with this information?

We write down what happened, what was done, and how we helped.

We will also follow child protection rules.

What else does the school do?

The school principal will tell the school board (without names) about how bullying is being handled.

The school will review this plan every year to make sure it's working well.

Remember:

Everyone has the right to feel safe and respected at school.

We are all responsible for making our school a kind and caring place.

If something doesn't feel right, talk to a trusted adult – you are not alone.

Appendix 2 Bí Cineálta Child Friendly Poster



Appendix 3

Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied (allegedly): _____

2. Names and classes of pupils allegedly engaged in bullying behaviour:

Name	**Class**	**Name**	**Class**

3. Who reported the behaviour?

	Name(s)
Pupil concerned	
Other pupil(s)	
Parent	
Teacher	
SNA	
Other person	

4. Location(s) of incidents

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
Hall	
Other (please specify)	

5. Type of bullying behaviour (please tick):

Physical Aggression		Intimidation	
Appearance		Cyber-bullying	
Isolation/exclusion		Disabilist	
Identity based		Exceptionally able	
Other (specify)			

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

Racist	Disability/SEN related	Ethnicity	Homophobic	Other (please specify)

7. Please give a brief description of the bullying behaviour and its impact:

8. Details of action taken:

9. Based on the investigation that has taken place, has bullying been deemed to have taken place?

Yes ☐ No ☐

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

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

Appendix 4

Activities to promote a positive school culture

Catholic School Ethos - As a Catholic school, we continue to live, practise and proclaim Christian values, while acknowledging and respecting other cultures, religions and ethnic groupings.

Holy Spirit Senior Primary School Core Values - *Kindness and Respect* are consistently promoted and modelled by all staff and pupils throughout the school day.

Restorative Practice School - Emphasis on relationship-building, reflective listening, and repairing harm. Conflict is addressed in a respectful, inclusive, and solution-focused manner.

Daily check-ins - Regular opportunities for pupils to share how they are feeling, fostering emotional literacy and ensuring early identification of wellbeing concerns.

Student Voice - *Student Council* and *Bí Cineálta Committee* play a proactive role in shaping school culture and leading kindness initiatives. Regular student-led feedback and suggestions allow pupils to express their views and experiences confidentially.

Welcoming environment with focus on inclusion - Visual displays, bilingual signage, and culturally diverse resources affirm the identity and heritage of every child.

Homework journal - Child-friendly version of the *Bí Cineálta* Policy is included, ensuring all pupils are aware of their rights and responsibilities in relation to anti-bullying.

Wellbeing Walkway

- Positive affirmation and Bí Cineálta posters
- Ethnic and cultural diversity celebrated through visual art
- Inspirational quotes and messages promoting resilience, kindness, and empathy

Wellbeing Calendar of Events ·

- *12 Days of Christmas* and *12 Days of Summer* to celebrate joy and friendship
- *Kindness Week*, and *Safer Internet Day*
- Mental Health Awareness activities and themed assemblies

Anti bullying lessons scheduled throughout the year: Stay Safe, FUSE, RP, Give Racism the Red Card.

Child of Achievement awarded monthly.

Classroom Wellbeing Boxes and Regulation stations: Available in an outside every class, containing mindfulness tools, sensory aids, and self-regulation resources.

Diversity Day - Annual celebration of the different cultures, languages, and backgrounds within the school community, promoting intercultural understanding.

Active involvement of Parents Association - Collaborating on wellbeing initiatives, workshops, and school events that promote inclusion and respect.

Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) - Strengthening family-school links to support every child's emotional and social development.

Care Team - A multidisciplinary team who meets regularly to monitor, support, and respond to the needs of vulnerable pupils.

Trusted Adult Approach: Every child identifies a trusted adult in the school they feel comfortable turning to. This is reviewed and updated regularly.

Positive Behaviour Incentives: School-wide systems such as class rewards, kind deeds trackers, and peer nominations celebrate pro-social behaviour.

Pupil-Led Campaigns: Opportunities for senior classes to lead initiatives like *Anti-Bullying Week*, *Bí Cineálta Kindness Challenge etc.* on Holy Spirit FM