

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour



The Board of Management of St. Lassara's National 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.

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	19/2/2025	Staff meeting (Half day closure)
Students	24/2/2025 26/2/2025	Review of Bí Cineálta Poster Survey - google form
Parents	19/2/2025	Survey - google form
Board of Management	9/5/2025	Board of management meeting
Wider school community	N/A	
Date policy was approved: 5th June 2025 (Board of management meeting)		
Date policy was last reviewed: N/A		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by the school. These include strategies specifically aimed at preventing online bullying behaviour, disability/needs-related bullying, poverty-based bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

- Culture and Environment:
 - The school community supports a ‘telling’ environment where children feel confident and safe in reporting of bullying behaviour.
 - The concept of “a trusted adult” will be explained to the children through our SPHE lessons and will also become part of the school culture.
 - The concept of “Kind Hands, Kind Feet, Kind Words” to be adopted by students and staff across the school
 - Regular whole-school assemblies focusing on wellbeing and anti-bullying strategies
 - Promotion of resilience among children through programmes such as Weaving Wellbeing
- Curriculum:
 - Proper adherence to the SPHE and RSE policy in the school.
 - Use of religion/geography/history curricula to explore and consider diversity.
- Policy and Planning:
 - Regular review of related policies such as acceptable use policy, supervision

- policy, special education teaching policy and Code of Behaviour
 - Supporting the participation of students in the development and implementation of school policies
 - Engaging in appropriate teacher professional learning courses can support school staff to prevent and address bullying behaviour
- Relationships and Partnerships:
 - conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying
 - supporting activities that build empathy, respect and resilience
 - encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring through our Book Buddies and Friendship Squad initiatives
 - promotion of acts of kindness, e.g. awarding 'green cards' or class certificates
 - the school takes part in debating competitions throughout the year which foster empathy and understanding of diversity
- Preventing cyberbullying:
 - having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online
 - developing and communicating an acceptable use policy for technology
 - referring to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour
 - holding an Internet safety day to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour
 - promoting or hosting online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online
- Preventing poverty-related bullying:
 - staff maintaining vigilance around protecting more disadvantaged students from negative experiences related to poverty-related bullying
 - teachers create awareness of poverty locally and internationally through lessons and charitable initiatives
- Preventing disability/needs-related bullying
 - teachers will aim to ensure a limiting of stigma related to children who receive extra support by modeling empathy and through involvement in specific national/international awareness days
- Preventing religion-related bullying:
 - staff will endeavour to ensure children in the school are not bullied based on their religious beliefs
 - exploration of different religions and belief systems during religion/spe time
- Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour:
 - maintaining an inclusive physical environment such as by displaying relevant posters
 - encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
 - challenging gender stereotypes
 - encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour
- Preventing racist bullying behaviour:
 - fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students "see themselves" in their school environment
 - having the cultural diversity of the school visible and on display
 - conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of racism
 - encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour
 - providing supports to school staff to respond to the needs of students for whom English is an additional language and for communicating with their parents

- inviting speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds
- ensuring that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds
- Preventing sexist bullying behaviour:
 - ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex
 - ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex
 - organising awareness campaigns, workshops and presentations on gender equality and respect
 - encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home

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):

- Adherence to the school's supervision policy by staff.
- The creation of safe physical spaces to try to ensure that, as much as possible, there is a clear line of sight for school staff to supervise students.
- Offer a mix of organised activities during break times to accommodate a range of preferences and interests

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

DLP Aodán Brennan and DDLP Jane Harding

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

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):

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred:

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the teacher should consider the following: what, where, when and why? If a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first. Thereafter, all students involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each student should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views. Each student should be supported, as appropriate, following the group meeting. It may also be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident. The definition of bullying provided in Chapter 2 of the Bi Cineálta Procedures sets out clear criteria to help schools to identify bullying behaviour. The questions included in Appendix C can further assist schools in this regard. 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.

Where bullying behaviour has occurred:

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

- > ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured
- > seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- > conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- > consider the age and ability of those involved
- > listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- > take action in a timely manner
- > inform parents of those involved

Recording:

All incidents of bullying behaviour should be recorded. The record should document the form (Section 2.5 of procedures) and type (See Section 2.7) of bullying behaviour, if known, where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students 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. It 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. It is important to document the date of each of these engagements and the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased. Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted. These records should be retained in accordance with the school's record keeping policy and in line with data protection regulations. Where a Student Support File exists for a student, schools are encouraged to place a copy of the record on the student's support file.

If the bullying behaviour is a child protection concern the matter will be addressed without delay in accordance with *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Determining if bullying behaviour has ceased:

The teacher must engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress following the initial intervention. 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.

Complaint process:

If a parent is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with these procedures, they should be referred to the school's complaints procedure. In the event that a student and/or parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, a student and/or parent may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions have had a negative effect on the student. The Office of the Ombudsman for Children can be contacted at ococomplaint@oco.ie

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):

- Consultation, when necessary, with outside agencies such as National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), The National Parents Council, Tusla and Oide.
- Use of Webwise online safety initiative to promote safer, better internet use through awareness raising and education initiatives targeting teachers, students and parents

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: _____ Date: _____
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Principal)