

**ST. PATRICK'S NATIONAL SCHOOL
POLICY DOCUMENT**



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Revision due	

**Colgagh,
Calry,
Co. Sligo.
F91 DP48**

**Principal: David Gallagher
Deputy Principal: Ms. Deirdre Moylan**

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of St. Patrick's National School, Calry, Co. Sligo 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.

This *Bí Cineálta* policy that sets out how our school community prevents and addresses bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within our 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27th January • 12th March 2025 • May 2025 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff meeting & Email follow-up • Survey & discussion – half-day closure • Draft policy shared & feedback requested
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 31st January 2025 • May 2025 • June 2025 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole school Assembly • 3rd to 6th – Google forms anonymous survey • Pupil Friendly Policy
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 31st January 2025 • 7th April 2025 • May 2025 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email to parents • Parent Questionnaire • Draft Policy shared & feedback requested
Board of Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27th January 2025 • May 2025 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email sent to BOM • Draft policy shared & feedback requested
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers		
Date policy was approved:		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

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

- 1) The school will foster a very positive culture and promote inclusivity by providing pupils with a clear sense of belonging in a safe environment. This will be achieved in the following ways.
 - Staff will model respectful and compassionate relations towards each other and all pupils in the school.
 - Pupils will be made to feel welcome in their school environment and will participate actively in school life – Student Council, Active School’s committee, Special Occasions & events.
 - All pupils will adhere to their class Code of Conduct and to the school’s Code of Behaviour to ensure an optimum and safe learning environment is created for all pupils. Positive behaviour and interactions will be acknowledged and rewarded eg Dojo points, Golden Time, Whole School Star Chart.
 - Playground time will be carefully supervised with staff visible and actively monitoring all play areas. Engagement and participation in outdoor activities will be promoted by our senior pupils in their role as Playground Leaders.
 - Pupils will be encouraged to be ‘Up standers’ to try and prevent bullying incidences and to help empower any pupils who may be targeted. The culture of the school will encourage honesty, openness and reporting of any issues of concern to a trusted adult. Kindness and inclusion will be promoted among all pupils.

- 2) Through the teaching and learning of the different curricular areas, pupils will be provided with many opportunities to work collaboratively, to foster inclusion and to respect diversity.
 - A variety of teaching methodologies and resources will be used to ensure all pupils will be able to access the curriculum in a meaningful way, developing

their sense of self-worth and giving them the opportunity to experience success in front of their peers.

- Group and pair work will be promoted giving pupils the opportunity to work collaboratively and to develop meaningful friendships and relationships.
 - Pupils will be provided with many opportunities to partake in extra – curricular activities to allow for engagement in enjoyable activities with their peers e.g. Lunchtime Club, Grúpa Cheoil, Music Generation, Sporting events and competitions – Gaelic football, hurling, swimming, badminton, athletics etc.
 - The school has an extensive SPHE programme which incorporates many positive programmes, specifically targeting the area of bullying among pupils and promoting healthy relationships with themselves and others. Some of these programmes are: Stay Safe, Walk tall, RSE, Zippy Friends, Circle Time, Webwise etc.
- 3) Our school aims to provide all our pupils and staff with a happy, safe and effective learning environment and this ethos directs and supports all our planning and policies.
- As well as an effective Anti- Bullying policy, the school has a proactive Code of Behaviour, an Acceptable Use policy and Special Educational Needs policy which promote inclusion, diversity and which aim to promote wellbeing among all pupils. These policies support the school in limiting any negative school experiences the pupils may have.
 - Teachers are encouraged to participate in professional learning courses that will help support and foster the wellbeing of the pupils in our care and to be aware of any new resources or recommended strategies to deal with difficult situations e.g. Restorative Practices CPD
 - Our SPHE plans and policies are reviewed at the end of each year at each class level to ensure all pupils are receiving the curricular support necessary for their wellbeing.
- 4) Positive relationships and partnerships in our school community are considered vital to the wellbeing of all involved in our school. These are necessary to promote empathy, understanding and respect.
- Targeted times throughout the year are part of our annual school calendar to promote inclusion and participation e.g. Friendship Week, Wellbeing Week, Safe Internet Day. These are times when our school community focus in a particular way on building relationships.
 - Students are actively encouraged to participate in all aspects of school life. Our School Council is very active in promoting the student voice. They work tirelessly to improve our school and introduce new initiatives which benefit everyone. Our 6th class are given important roles as the Senior class in the school – they are given additional responsibilities, working together to organise school events and activities – Lá Glas, Grandparents' Day, Lenten Campaign etc. This responsibility promotes respect for each other and leads to a great sense of pride in their achievements together. Pupils from different classes are encouraged to work together on a variety of projects as peer mentoring is a

successful way of building relationships e.g. Write A Book, Maths Games during Maths week. School Trails, Art Projects etc.

- Our school promotes positive relationships with the parents of all pupils. Parents and teachers work together to support and assist pupils when necessary. The Parents' Association are very actively involved in all school events and provide the pupils with additional fun learning opportunities e.g. Fun day. They also organise a guest speaker annually to talk to the parent body about the impact of bullying or cyber-bullying on pupils.

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) The school has a very clear schedule of supervision from 9am in the morning until the last pupil leaves the school grounds. Pupils are supervised by class teachers during class time. Pupils are always supervised by the teachers and SNA's on duty during break times so pupils always have access to a responsible adult in the event of any issue arising. Teachers are always present if coaches or visiting teachers/speakers are in the classroom.
- 2) There is a Star reward systems in operation at the Senior and Junior end of the school to promote good behaviour and positive relationships during break times. There is also a Yellow/Red card system in place in the Junior Yard if pupils engage in unacceptable play or behaviour towards others.
- 3) Pupils are encouraged to report any name calling or negative behaviour towards any particular pupil immediately to avoid any type of racist, homophobic, transphobic or sexist bullying behavior occurring.
- 4) Pupils are not allowed bring phones to school. If this happens, they will be confiscated and can only be returned to a parent.
- 5) To prevent cyberbullying, pupils are never allowed access to online sites on laptops, tablets or PC's without adult supervision. Pupils who have laptops may only use them in school if there is an adult present and after they have sought or being given permission to do so.
- 6) Senior classes have 'Worry Boxes' where pupils can report any issue of concern to their teachers in a confidential manner.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

- The class teacher, in consultation with the principal/deputy principal, will oversee recording of bullying reports for students in their class – this includes using the procedure guidelines to investigate reports of bullying and recording bullying behaviour using the attached template form at appendix 1.
- The principal will follow up after twenty days to investigate if bullying has ceased.
- All staff will be vigilant to bullying behaviour.
- Principal will inform Board of Management of incidences of Bullying at each Board meeting.
- SEN team will provide supports to pupils that may be deemed necessary.
- The principal, in conjunction with the middle management team, will update the policy and keeping abreast of any changes that may occur to legislation that impact this policy.

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):

Guidelines for Teachers in Addressing Bullying Behaviour

Introduction Bullying behaviour must be addressed promptly and effectively to ensure a safe and inclusive school environment. The primary goal is to stop the bullying and restore relationships, rather than to assign blame. These guidelines provide a structured approach for teachers in handling reported bullying incidents in alignment with the *Bí Cineálta* procedures. While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the ‘Relevant Teacher(s)’ following consultation with the principal, following consultation, the ‘Relevant Teacher(s)’ and principal will use his/her/their professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.

1. Identifying Bullying Behaviour When assessing a reported incident, teachers should consider the following 3 questions:

- **Targeted behaviour:** Is the action directed at a specific student or group?
- **Harm caused:** Does it cause physical, social, or emotional harm?
- **Repetition:** Has the behaviour occurred multiple times?

If the answer to all three questions is *yes*, the behaviour qualifies as bullying and should be addressed following these procedures.

2. Initial Response and Support If a student reports bullying behaviour, the teacher should:

1. **Listen actively and reassure** the student.
2. **Ensure privacy and confidentiality** while discussing the incident.
3. **Acknowledge the student’s experience** and affirm their feelings.
4. **Ask the student how they would like the situation to be handled** while ensuring appropriate action is taken.
5. **Document** the report with key details (who, what, where, when, and how) – see appendix 1 – Recording Template.

3. Engaging with the Students Involved

- If a group is involved, first speak with each student individually.
- Hold a group meeting to clarify perspectives and encourage resolution.
- Ensure that each student has an opportunity to express their viewpoint.
- Offer support to all students involved.
- If necessary, involve additional support staff such as an SET, the principal or deputy principal.

4. Informing Parents

- Contact the parents of all students involved at an early stage.
- Explain the nature of the incident and planned interventions.
- Encourage parents to work collaboratively with the school to support their child.
- If a student is hesitant about informing their parents, create a support plan to facilitate communication.

6. **Implementing Interventions** Teachers should use appropriate intervention strategies such as:

- Restorative conversations to rebuild relationships.
- Peer support e.g. buddy system.
- Increased supervision in areas where bullying may occur.
- Behavioural contracts or agreements between students.
- Ensure all staff are on the alert for any further signs of bullying taking place.
- Referral/Consultation with outside agencies where deemed appropriate.

7. Follow-Up and Monitoring

- A review should be conducted no later than **20 school days** after the initial intervention.
- Check in with all students involved to assess whether the bullying has ceased.
- Document progress and any further actions required on template Appendix 1
- Maintain ongoing supervision to prevent recurrence.

8. Escalation and Additional Support If bullying persists or escalates:

- Convene whole staff meeting to consider options.
- Implement disciplinary measures in accordance with the school's *Code of Behaviour*.
- If necessary, involve external support agencies or child protection services.
- Ensure affected students receive continued emotional and psychological support.

9. Recording and Reporting

- Maintain a record of all reported incidents and interventions.
- Ensure records are stored securely and shared only with relevant staff.
- Report patterns or recurring issues to the principal and consider if further action required.

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):

Supporting Students Involved in Bullying Behaviour The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness, and display bullying behaviour:

For Students Who Experience Bullying:

- 1:1 session with a teacher or SET.
- Peer support groups via a buddy system.
- Access to wellbeing and resilience-building programmes via SET sessions.
- Ongoing monitoring and regular check-ins.

For Students Who Witness Bullying:

- Encouragement to report bullying through a safe, confidential system.
- Education on how to intervene safely as a bystander.
- Group discussions on empathy and peer relationships.

For Students Who Display Bullying Behaviour:

- Behavioural intervention plans tailored to the student's needs for a defined period of time with regular reviews.
- Restorative practices approaches, including mediation and accountability discussions.
- Increased supervision.
- Referral to external services if deemed necessary.

Recording

All bullying behaviour will be recorded (See appendix 1). 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: _____ Date: _____
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Principal)

Appendix 1 - Template for Recording Bullying Incidents (Refer to Appendix 2 below)

Bullying Incident Report Form

Name of person completing this form: _____

- Name of Child experiencing bullying behaviour: _____
- Form & Type of Bullying Behaviour (See Appendix 2 for guidance):

- Where bullying incident took place: _____
- When bullying incident took place: _____
- Date of initial engagement with the students & their parents: _____
- Views of the students and their parents regarding actions to be taken:

_____ Date: _____

- Review with students & parents to determine if bullying behaviour has ceased and their views in relation to this:

_____ Date: _____

- Date that it has been determined that bullying behavior has ceased:

Engagement with external services/supports:

Appendix 2 - Explanation of Forms & Types of Bullying

Forms of Bullying Behaviour

Bullying can manifest in multiple ways. Consider the following categories when assessing incidents:

- **Physical Bullying** – Includes hitting, kicking, pushing, tripping, spitting, pinching, throwing objects, damaging property, or any form of physical aggression.
- **Verbal Bullying** – Involves name-calling, insults, teasing, threatening remarks, or derogatory comments.
- **Social/Relational Bullying** – Includes exclusion, spreading rumours, intentional public embarrassment, isolating someone, or manipulating friendships.
- **Cyberbullying** – Using digital platforms (e.g., social media, messaging apps, gaming platforms) to harass, threaten, impersonate, spread harmful content, or engage in online shaming.

Types of Bullying Behaviour

Bullying behaviour can take various forms and may target individuals based on specific characteristics. Below are the common types:

- **Racist Bullying** – Targeting someone based on their race, ethnicity, nationality, or cultural background, including racial slurs, exclusion, or offensive jokes.
- **Sexist Bullying** – Discriminating against or harassing someone based on gender, including reinforcing gender stereotypes.
- **Sexual Bullying** – Includes unwanted sexual comments, inappropriate gestures, or physical advances.
- **Homophobic/Transphobic Bullying** – Targeting someone based on their actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.
- **Disability Bullying** – Mocking, excluding, or mistreating someone due to a physical, intellectual, or developmental disability.