



St. Vincent's NS, Coolarne Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of St. Vincent's N.S. 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 such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the 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 each person 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 all have an indispensable part to play in the school community, regardless of difference.

Definition of bullying

Bullying is defined in *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying* and *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* as targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society. The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

Each school is required to develop and implement a Bí Cineálta policy that sets out how the school community prevents and addresses bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with

inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

Section A: Development/review of our Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour

All members of our school community were provided with the opportunity to input into the development/review of this policy.

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	January 29 th 2025 29 th May, 2025 9 th June, 2025	Bi Cinealta Seminar Staff Survey Half Day Closure
Students	May/June 2025	Pupil Survey SPHE lessons IT and art lessons
Parents	June 2025	Parent Survey Email Newsletter
Board of Management	May/June 2025	Principal's report to BoM
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	March/April 2025	Bus driver
Date policy was approved: 12 th June 2025		
Date Anti-bullying policy was last reviewed: 12th June 2025		

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, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

In developing 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 the 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 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 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.

Culture and Environment

- Positive and inclusive school culture
- Positive relationships
- Effective leadership and collaboration
- Positive culture and environment
- A telling environment- reporting bullying behaviour is encouraged
- A trusted adult to listen to reports of bullying behaviour by victims and/or witnesses and to reassure the child who reports bullying that they have done the right thing
- Safe physical spaces
- Supervision at all times, during free play, structured play and organised activities
- Worry monster in classrooms, circle time and suggestion box
- Opportunities to participate in class and whole school activities to raise self-esteem
- Encourage parents to be active partners in their child's education, promoting empathy and respect and fostering an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated.
- Students promote kindness and inclusion within their peer groups and maintain a positive and supportive school environment

Curriculum

- RSE Curriculum
- Student participation
- SPHE Methodologies
- Promoting inclusion and diversity
- Extra - curricular activities to develop positive self-worth
- Group work/ Collaboration
- Role - play, acting out scenarios
- Circle time
- Teaching and learning in SPHE

Policy and Planning

- Bí Cineálta policy
- Student friendly Bí Cineálta policy
- Code of behaviour
- Child safeguarding statement
- Acceptable use policy
- Supervision/ Yard-Duty Policy
- RSE Policy
- SEN policy
- SSE Wellbeing in education
- Appropriate TPL (Teacher Professional Learning)

Relationships and Partnerships

- Age-appropriate awareness initiatives e.g. friendship week, anti-bullying week, Friendly February

- Supporting active participation of students in school life
- Supporting active participation of parents in school life- Parents' Association to school activities e.g. school mass, school maintenance
- Conducting workshops and seminars to raise awareness of the impact of bullying- Autumn 2025
- Supporting activities that build empathy, respect and resilience
- Promoting acts of kindness – Random acts of kindness
- Restorative practice

Preventing Specific Types of Bullying Behaviour

Preventing cyber-bullying behaviour:

(Note - the digital age of consent is the minimum age a user must be before a social media or internet company can collect, process and store their data. In Ireland the digital age of consent is 16. Children between 13 and 16 must have parental permission to sign up to social media services. Most social media platforms have a minimum age requirement and for the majority of these, this is 13 years old.

Therefore, children under the age of 13 should not have a social media account))

- promoting digital citizenship
- implementing SPHE curriculum
- open conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- referring to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour
- Promoting online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online
- holding internet safety day

Preventing homophobic/ transphobic bullying behaviour

- maintaining an inclusive physical environment such as displaying relevant posters
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- challenging gender-stereotypes

Preventing racist bullying behaviour

- fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated.
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour
- providing supports to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma students, and to encourage communication with their parents
- 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
- celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contribution of all students
- encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home

Preventing sexual harassment:

- promoting positive role models within the school community
- challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment

Our school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

Appropriate supervision is an important measure in St. Vincent's N.S, to help prevent and address bullying behaviour. We take all reasonable measures to ensure the safety of our students and to supervise students when students are attending school or attending school activities.

We offer a mix of organised activities during break times, with a view to accommodating a range of preferences and interests e.g. hula hoops, skipping ropes, play buddy system and sports.

The school playground is split into two separate areas, to minimise risks and encourage positive, playful interactions.

In St. Vincent's N.S. we have created murals, artwork and signage to promote equality, diversity, inclusion and respect.

As a staff, we have agreed procedures and practices in place to ensure appropriate supervision and monitoring of our children, during play time, on school trips and at sporting events during school hours.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour is (are) as follows:
Class teacher in conjunction with the principal.

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):

To Determine if Bullying Behaviour has Occurred

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: A one-off incident may be considered bullying in certain circumstances. A single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and thus becomes 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 teachers should consider what, where, when and why?

Requests no action taken:

A student/parent/guardian who reports bullying behaviour may ask a member of staff not to do anything and just "look out" for them due to not wanting to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They might feel that telling someone might make things more difficult for them.

Where this occurs, it is important that the member of staff shows empathy with the student, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the student to work out together what steps can be taken to address the behaviour. It must be made clear to the pupil that other parties may need to be informed about their welfare.

Parents may also make the school aware of bullying behaviour and specifically request that no action is to be taken by the school. Parents should put this in writing to the school. However, schools may decide that based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour through the Bí Cineálta procedures and/or the Code of Behaviour where appropriate.

Approaches Taken to Address Bullying Behaviour

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 (in a safe space)
- 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
- Invite students to write an account of what happened/ reflection on events (as appropriate)
- take action in a timely manner
- inform parents of those involved

To Review Progress:

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

Even though the bullying behaviour may have ceased, ongoing supervision and support may be required for both the student who has experienced the bullying behaviour as well as the student who has displayed the behaviour.

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.

Recording Bullying Behaviour:

All incidents of bullying should be recorded. The following details should be included in the record:

- form (see section 2.5 of Bí Cineálta procedures)
- type (see section 2.7 of Bí Cineálta procedures)
- where and when (if known)
- the date of initial engagement with the students and their parents
- the views of the students and their parents* regarding the action to be taken to address the bullying behaviour (*only in relation to their own child)
- When review takes place, it should be noted if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of the students and parents in relation to this.
- note the date of reviews and engagements
- note the date that the bullying behaviour has ceased
- any engagement with external services/ supports should also be noted
- if a SSF (student's support file) exists for a pupil involved, schools are encouraged to place a copy of the record on the SSF

Complaint Process:

If a parent is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed, in accordance with these procedures (Bí Cineálta Policy), they should be referred to the school complaints procedure.

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):

Help child who experiences, displays and witnesses bullying behaviour. Support with resilience, cooperative games etc.

FUSE (DCU Programme) may be used by class teachers to supplement lessons

Kids suggested small group SET to rebuild relationships (restorative Practice)

Oral Focus on what each staff member does to support the three groups of children:

As Principal,

As Class teacher,

As SET,

Where appropriate, additional support will be sought from some of the following agencies: NEPS, Tusla, CAMHS, CDNT (Childhood Disability Network Team), Network 6, Gardaí, Webwise, National Parents Council, Oide, NCSE, GAP, Family Support Services, etc.

All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the **type of behaviour, where and when it took place**, and the **date of the engagement with students and parents**. The actions and **supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented**. If the bullying behaviour is a child protection concern the matter will be addressed without delay in accordance with *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Section D: Oversight

The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting. This update will include the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting, the number of ongoing incidents and the total number of incidents since the beginning of the school year. Where incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred, the principal will also provide a verbal update which will include where relevant, information relating to trends and patterns identified, strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant. This update does not contain personal or identifying information. See Chapter 7 of the *Bí Cineálta* procedures.

This policy is available to our school community on the school's website and in hard copy on request. A student friendly version of this policy is displayed in the school and is also available on our website and in hard copy on request.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed, following input from our school community, each calendar year or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this policy refers.

Anne Boland

Date: 12-6-25

(Chairperson of board of management)

Roisin Reilly

Date: 12-6-25

(Principal)