



## Sacred Heart National School

### Bí Cineálta Policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

The Board of Management of Sacred Heart 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 behavior 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 pupils who attend our school are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our pupils is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behavior can have on the lives of our pupils 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 pupils 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 overtime 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.

A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards a student is not bullying behaviour. However, a single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying

behaviour as it may be visible to a wide audience and has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and so becomes a repeated behaviour.

Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour:

- If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour, but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying, but will be addressed under the school's code of behaviour.
- Some students with special educational needs may have social communication difficulties which may cause them to communicate their needs through behaviours that can hurt themselves or others. It is important to note that these behaviours are not deliberate or planned, but in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they have difficulty controlling.
- Disagreement between students is not considered bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others

### **Types of Bullying:**

There are many different types of bullying behaviour. These can include directing bullying at someone focused on the following: disability, exceptional ability, gender identity, LGBTQ+ , physical appearance, racism, poverty status, religious identity, sexism and sexual harassment. This is not an exhaustive list.

In all cases below, bullying occurs when the behavior is **Targeted, Repeated** and causes **Harm**.

### **Bullying can be Direct:**

- Physical: pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping students. Physical assault. Destruction of personal property.
- Verbal: continual name calling which insults, humiliates the student – this may refer to physical appearance, size, clothes, gender, accent, academic ability, race or ethnic origin.
- Written: Writing insulting remarks in public places, passing notes or drawings about the student.
- Extortion: where something is obtained through force or threats,

### **Bullying can be Indirect:**

- Exclusion: where a student is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded or ignored by a student or group of students.
- Relational: Where a student's attempts to form friendships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined, threats, non-verbal gesturing, malicious gossip, spreading rumours, silent treatment and manipulation of friend groups etc can all form relational bullying for a student.

### **Online bullying behaviour:**

Cyber bullying is carried out via text, direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, email, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chatrooms and other online technologies. This can include:

- Sending or sharing of insulting and offensive or intimidating messages or images via online means as mentioned above.
- Posting information which is personal, private or sensitive without consent.
- Making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other students. Exclude/disrupt access to a student on purpose on online chat groups/access to accounts/from an online game,

## **Section A: Development 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 of this policy.

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	29/1/2025	Two staff members were provided with training in the new Bí Cineálta policy and the steps to create a new policy.
	26/5/2025	Survey for teachers
	30/5/2025	½ day engagement with all staff on the development of the policy
Pupils	May 2025	Survey for children
Parents	May 2025	Survey for parents
Board of management	January and May	Meetings to inform the Board of the new policy and to plan for its development
Wider school community as appropriate		

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 the school. These include strategies specifically aimed at preventing online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behavior and sexual harassment, as appropriate (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

### 1 **Culture & The Environment**

- Positive & inclusive school culture & environment
- School ethos of peace, honesty & respect permeates all relationships within the school community
- Pupil friendly Bí Cineálta policy on display in classrooms & in the hallways
- Safeguarding statement on display
- No pupil is allowed to have access to a mobile phone during the school day. Any pupil with a mobile phone must turn it off and hand it to the teacher at the start of each school day
- Wellbeing notice board
- Wellbeing Wednesdays & Wellbeing Week
- Anti-Bullying Week
- Community Garda visits
- Class contracts
- Buddy bench "WOW" wall/boards Sensory room
- Buddy benches on all yards
- Pupil of the week
- Assemblies every month where possible with Bí Cineálta ever present Random acts of kindness "Caught being kind" rewards and acknowledgements
- Open communication between all stakeholders to foster collaborative approach & shared responsibilities in relation to preventing & addressing bullying behaviour.
- Pupils are encouraged to shape our school culture by promoting kindness & inclusion
- Our school promotes a telling environment, where pupils are encouraged to look after each other and let their teacher or appropriate adult know if they experience or see bullying behaviour
- Pupils are made aware of "a trusted adult" they can speak to
- Ensure safe areas to play with activities for all pupils throughout the school We have safe physical spaces for children to play, with supervision at all times There is appropriate supervision & supervising staff

- Develop artwork/mural to promote school's values, developing a sense of ownership & respect among pupils and linked to our Bí Cineálta policies

## **2- Curriculum(Teaching & Learning)**

- Group work & collaboration in classrooms
- Extracurricular programmes & clubs
- Team sports/games
- SPHE, Stay Safe & RSE are implemented in full – focus on promoting resilience, tolerance and inclusion with reference to neurodiversity and individuality
- Welcome to WellBeing/Weaving Well Being programme
- Webwise, HTML Heroes, Digiduck are used to promote online safety ?????
- SIP in Wellbeing
- Integration
- Our library will promote diversity, inclusion and multiple cultures
- Play Therapy
- Multisensory Room/Calm Room
- Social Stories
- Assemblies every month where possible
- Wellbeing Week
- Anti Bullying Week
- Seachtain na Gaeilge
- Catholic Schools' Week
- Religious Education
- SET
- Circle Time

## **3- Policy & Planning**

- Bí Cineálta Policy
- Pupil friendly version of Bí Cineálta Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- SPHE
- Stay Safe
- RSE
- Staff CPD
- Staff group planning meetings once a month
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Pupils' mobile phones must be turned off and handed to the class teacher at the start of every day
- Staff, Pupil and Parental input into our Wellbeing and Bí Cineálta policies
- Special Ed Policy
- SET
- SIP Wellbeing
- Staff Meetings & planning groups
- BOM meetings
  - Inclusion policy (AS class and throughout the school)
- Policy reviews

#### **4 - Relationships & Partnerships**

- Age appropriate awareness initiatives to look at the causes & impacts of bullying behavior
- Supporting the active participation of pupils in school life (student council)
- Supporting the active participation of parents in school life
- Sending relevant bullying related links & course/seminar notifications to parents
- Supporting school based activities & programmes that build empathy, respect & resilience
- Encouraging peer support (senior & junior classes: reading buddies and P.E. buddies)
- Teaching problem solving
- Competitions/sporting activities with other schools
- Promoting acts of kindness
- Active involvement of pupils, staff, BOM and parents in the development, implementation & review of our school's Bí Cineálta policy and pupil friendly version of the policy.
- School completion programme helping 6th class children transition into secondary school.

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):

**Preventing Cyber Bullying, Homophobic/Transphobic bullying, Racist bullying, Preventing sexual harassment**

The Board of management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible. A proactive approach is employed during periods of supervision. Supervision is provided at small break and lunch break. Pupils are assigned designated areas in which to play. The school community aims to prevent cyberbullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying, racist bullying, sexist bullying and sexual harassment as outlined in sections 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8 and 5.9 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

**In addition to above mentioned strategies, the school has the following in place to prevent and address bullying:**

- Staff at all times endeavour to encourage pupils to show respect for each other.
- Implementation of the SPHE curriculum.
- Positive self-esteem is fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences, by acknowledging good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed regularly with the pupils.
- Staff are particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of bullying/being bullied.
- School wide raising of awareness on all aspects of bullying
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extracurricular activities.
- Involvement of pupils in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. anti-bullying week, wellbeing week, and other activities that can help to pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Refer to appropriate online behaviour when using devices and in SPHE lessons.
- Promote online safety events and forward any related and relevant material to parents supports
- The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other available to the school [www.antibullyingcentre.ie](http://www.antibullyingcentre.ie), [www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie) e.g. [www.tacklebullying.ie](http://www.tacklebullying.ie)
- Challenge gender- stereotypes – equal participation of all. Equal recognition.
- Raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour and encourage pupils to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour.

- Foster a culture where diversity is celebrated and pupils “see themselves” in the school environment.

## Section C : Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The steps that will be taken by the school to determine if bullying behavior 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 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.**

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

- Class teachers
- Support teachers
- Principal

### **When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will :**

- Ensure that the pupil experiencing bullying behavior 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 pupil who is experiencing the bullying behavior as to how best to address the situation
- Take action in a timely manner
- Inform parents of those involved

### **1. Determine if bullying behaviour has occurred:**

- Class teacher and/or support teacher will engage with all pupils involved to establish if bullying behavior has taken place. Each pupil should be engaged with individually in the first instance.
- A group meeting will provide the opportunity for the children to give their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views. Each pupil should be supported, as appropriate, following the group meeting. It may also be helpful to ask the pupils involved to write down their account of the incident.

- **NB:** A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when pupils are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the pupils involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, schools should deal with it in accordance with their Bí Cineálta policy.

**The following questions should be considered to determine if bullying has occurred.**

1. Is the behaviour **targeted** at a specific pupil or group of pupils?
2. Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional **harm**?
3. Is the behaviour **repeated**?

If the answer to the questions above is Yes, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour and the behaviour should be addressed using the Bí Cineálta procedures.

## **2. Record and address the bullying behaviour(See Appendix A)**

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

- Form of bullying ( 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 pupils and their parents
- The views of the pupils and their parents\* regarding the action to be taken to address the bullying behaviour (\*only in relation to their own child)
- A review should be taken within 20 days of the initial engagement with pupils and parents. When review takes place, it should be noted if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of the pupils 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
- A copy of the records should be added to the pupils' file on Aladdin.

## **3. Requests for no action to be taken:**

A pupil 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 to the pupil, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the pupil 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 for 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.

#### **4. Determining if the bullying behaviour has ceased:**

The teacher must engage with the pupils and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress. Factors to consider in the review include:

- the nature of the bullying
- the effectiveness of strategies use to address the bullying behaviour
- the relationship between the pupils involved

Ongoing supervision of both the child experiencing bullying behaviour and the child displaying bullying behavior may be required as well as continued support. It can take time for relationships to settle and for supports to take effect. In some cases, relationships may never be restored to how they were before the bullying behaviour occurred.

If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the pupils and parents and agree to meet again over an agreed timeframe until the bullying behaviour has ceased.

Where it becomes clear that the pupil 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 pupil, their parents and the school.

#### **Complaints 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 complaints procedure. In the event that a pupil and/or parent is dissatisfied following the complaints procedure, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for children.

#### **Supports:**

NEPS

Oide

Webwise

National Parents Council

DCU Anti bullying centre

Tusla

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):

**Where bullying behaviour has occurred:**

All staff will be fair and consistent in their approach to address bullying behaviour. Both the pupil who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the pupil who is displaying bullying behaviour will be provided with support. The pupil who is experiencing bullying will be engaged with without delay. School staff will identify the supports needed for the pupil who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties.

It is important that a pupil's agency is not decreased further by adults deciding what will happen next without listening to the pupil and involving them in deciding on the actions that will be taken.

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

- ensure the child 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 view of the pupil 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

Parents of both parties involved will 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 as outlined in this Bí Cineálta policy. In circumstances where a pupil expresses concern about their parents being informed, the teacher must listen but let them know that they may have to inform their parents.

**Where bullying behavior occurs outside the school:**

A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when pupils are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, we are required to support the pupils involved.

Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, then we will deal with it in accordance with our Bí Cineálta policy.

## 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 pupil 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: Robert Gardner  
(Chairperson of board of management)

Date: 10/2/2026

Signed: Sean Kelly  
(Principal)

Date: 10/2/2026

Appendix A Template for recording bullying behaviour

**1.Name of pupil being bullied and class group**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

**2.Name(s) and class(es) engaged in bullying behaviour**

Name	Class

**3.Form of Bullying \***

Physical bullying	
Verbal bullying	
Written bullying	
Extortion	
Exclusion	
Relational	
Online bullying	

**4.Type of Bullying Behaviour**

Disablist bullying	
Exceptionally able bullying	
Gender identity bullying	
Homophobic/transphobic bullying	
Physical appearance bullying	

Racist bullying	
Poverty bullying	
Religious identity bullying	
Sexist bullying	
Sexual harassment	

**5. Where and When the alleged bullying took place and the nature of it after speaking to the pupils involved:**

**7. Views of pupils and parents:**

**8.Details of agreed actions:**

**9.Review**

Date of review: \_\_\_\_\_

Has the bullying ceased? Please provide details of the review

\* Note: The categories listed in the tables 3 and 4 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Relevant Teacher) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Principal) Date \_\_\_\_\_

