



ST. PATRICK'S NATIONAL SCHOOL

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Principal: Rachel Harper

Deputy Principal: Hannah O'Connor

Board of Management – Chairperson: Canon David Mungavin

Bí Cinéalta

2026

Rationale

The Board of Management of St Patrick'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.

Prevention strategies:

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):

- A post holder, as well as a staff planning team, for Wellbeing has been appointed in the school to promote and coordinate wellbeing and restorative practice across the school.
- A Wellbeing team comprised of students has been developed in the school and this team are invited to the meet with the Staff leading Wellbeing regularly to update and inform policies procedures and planned initiatives. Pupils are also provided with a space to voice their concerns

and suggest changes or initiatives through the Student Council.

- Teachers influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner through a range of curricular initiatives and positive, restorative language and modelling respectful practices.
- Teacher and SNAs Professional Learning related to emotional and behavioural wellbeing, Bí Cineálta is encouraged and facilitated.
- Bí Cineálta Risk Assessment to identify risk areas around the school, and strategies implemented to minimise the risks across the school.
- A “telling environment” is promoted. Telling a trusted adult is actively encouraged and facilitated.
- Trusted adult identified for all students. In most cases this is the class teacher, but for more vulnerable pupils this may be a SET, SNA, ISM team leader. At the start of every school year, children are encouraged to identify their ‘trusted adult’ through a discreet lesson (s).
- We proactively develop positive relationships and strong communication links with parents using a variety of resources: Parent Teacher Partnership, Aladdin, email, open-door practices, school gate, in-class volunteers...etc
- Respectful behaviour is reinforced in the start of year meetings with teachers and parents.
- Restorative Practice and respectful behaviour is at the core of class rules which are established at the beginning of the year in every classroom.
- SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the interrelated areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships.
- The Stay Safe programme is a personal safety skills programme which seeks to enhance children’s self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying. The role of the bystander in these anti-bullying lessons to be highlighted and addressed.
- RSE aims to provide opportunities for children to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way.
- Other resources and programmes include: PDST Anti-Bullying Support Material, Zippy’s Friends, Walk Tall and Lust for Life.
- Focus on cyberbully during Internet Safety Week every year, incorporating Cyber Bullying information from Webwise and Prim-Ed, talks for pupils and parents.
- There is an Acceptable Use Policy in place and all members of the school community are required to sign up to it.
- Dignity in the Workplace policy in place to protect staff from inappropriate behaviour.

Addressing bullying behaviour:

The staff with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour are as follows:

- **Board of Management:** Anti-bullying report to the BOM at every meeting. Response to on-going behaviours in line with the school code of behaviour.
- **Principal/Deputy Principal:** anti-bullying coordinators; provide support for staff, parents and pupils in dealing with any incidences of bullying.
- **The In-School Management Team:** This team reviews the policy annually and monitors its implementation regularly, including the creation and implementation of annual Action Plans and support class teachers.
- **Wellbeing Team:** This team monitors and reviews Restorative Practice in the school, supporting teachers and staff in using restorative language and problem-solving circles.
- **Teaching Staff.**
 - Model positive behaviour.
 - Proactively address bullying behaviour using restorative practices (see preventative strategies above)
 - Investigate and record incidents of bullying behaviour.
- **SNAs:**
 - Model positive behaviour.
 - Assist teachers in monitoring pupils and activities on the yard and around the school
 - Report any witnessed behaviours of concern to a teacher or member of the in-school management team.
- **Administrative and Ancillary Staff:** Report any witnessed behaviours of concern to the principal.

Steps to determine bullying behaviour:

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 and Appendix C of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

1. Parents of all concerned parties will be informed by the class teacher, that a Bí Cineálta investigation is underway. This may be communicated via phone or email. At this stage, the class teacher and their year head will increase supervision and observation of all students involved. They will also speak to each of the students involved to collect relevant information on the case. This will be done privately and discreetly, ensuring every child feels supported and heard.
2. To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour, the following questions are considered:

Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?

Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?

Is the behaviour repeated?

3. 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 and is dealt with under the school's Code of Behaviour.

4. One-off incidents 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 a repeated behaviour.
5. Parents of all parties concerned will be contacted via phone or email after a maximum of **20 school days** to arrange individual face-to-face meetings with all involved. At this stage, we will communicate the findings of the investigation and determine the most suitable route forward. The principal is informed and updated.
6. Once bullying behaviour has been identified, staff will ensure that:
 - If a group of students is involved, each student is engaged with individually at first.
 - Thereafter, all students involved are met as a group, where appropriate.
 - At the group meeting, each student is asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views. We will follow restorative practice questions during this meeting.
 - At the group meeting, students collaboratively devise strategies to mend the harm caused and ensure that the behaviours are not repeated in the future.
 - Each student should be supported, as appropriate, following the group meeting.
 - The student who is experiencing bullying behaviour is consulted as to how best to address the situation e.g. what works best for them/what would they like to see happening going forward.
 - The student experiencing bullying behaviour is heard, reassured and given a clear plan going forward.
 - The privacy of those involved is maintained.
 - All conversations are conducted with sensitivity.
 - The age and ability of those involved is considered.

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. They should consider:

- the nature of the bullying behaviour
- the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour
- the relationship between the students involved

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. 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 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 consequences are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school. It is not appropriate to discuss these consequences with other children or parents.

Recording Bullying Behaviour:

- All incidents of bullying behaviour should be recorded and logged on the child's Aladdin profile. The record should document the form and type 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.
- 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. This will assist the school's student support team, where they exist, in providing a consistent and holistic response to support the wellbeing of the students involved. The Student Support File should be updated to incorporate response strategies and associated supports.

Support

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):

- A range of appropriate in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience. These may include:
 - Social skills groups
 - Buddy Programmes
 - Group work such as circle time
 - Revision of specific Stay Safe lessons with class groups
 - Individualised support with a trusted adult (Class teacher, SET, ANA...etc)
- If pupils require counselling or further support, the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise the same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour. This may include:
 - On-site play therapists
 - NEPS psychologist
 - DCU Anti-Bullying Centre
 - CAMHS
 - GP
 - Education Welfare Service – TESS
 - National Parents Council
 - Oide

○ TUSLA

Where bullying behaviour has occurred when students are not under the responsibility of the school, but the behaviour has an impact in the school, the school will support the students involved (see below).

Where the student displaying the bullying behaviour is not a student in the school, but the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour is a student in the school, the school will support the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as appropriate and engage with them and their parents to determine what steps can be taken.

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*.

Requests to take no action:

A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than “look out” for them. Where this occurs, it is important that the member of staff shows empathy to the student, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the student to work out together what steps can be taken to address the matter and how their parents will be informed of the situation. It is important that the student who has experienced bullying behaviour feels safe.

Parents may also make schools aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action. Parents should put this request in writing to the school or be facilitated to do so where there are literacy, digital literacy or language barriers. However, while acknowledging the parent’s request, schools may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

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. The schools’ complaint procedures can be accessed by contacting the school office.

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

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.

Ratification and communication

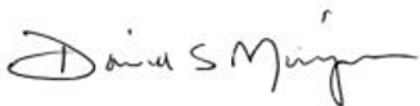
This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management in 2025. It is available to all the school's education partners on the school's website and in hard copy through the school office.

Implementation

This policy is officially implemented throughout the school, from the date of its ratification by the Board of Management.

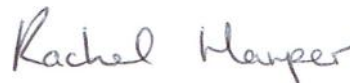
Policy review

This policy is scheduled for review in September 2026, unless the Board of Management considers that a review is required at an earlier date. Co-ordination of the review is the responsibility of the SDP co-ordinator, in consultation with the principal. Those involved in review will include the Board of Management, the Principal, SDP co-ordinator, staff/ISM team, and parent representatives, and may include pupil input.



Signed: _____

Canon D Mungavin
Chairperson
Board of Management



Signed: _____

R Harper
Principal

Date: 28th April 2026

Date: 28th April 2026

Appendix 1: Bullying Behaviour Incident Report Form

Date: _____

Staff Member(s) involved: _____

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour you should 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.

1. Name of pupil(s) involved in engaging in bullying behaviour(s):

2. Name of pupil(s) experiencing bullying behaviour(s):

3. Person reporting / concerned about bullying behaviour (tick as appropriate)

Pupil involved in behaviour / experiencing behaviour	
Other pupil (s)	
Staff member	
Parent	
Other	

4. Location of reported bullying behaviour (tick as appropriate)

School classroom	
School yard	
School devices	
Other	

5. Type of bullying behaviour reported (tick as appropriate)

Physical	
Verbal	
Written bullying behaviour	
Extortion	
Exclusion / Isolation	

Cyber Bullying	
Relational	
Other (please specify)	

6. Brief description of bullying behaviour:

7. Impact of bullying behaviour:

8. Details of action taken (tick as appropriate)

Parents informed	
Restorative Conversation / Problem Solving circle	
Social skills group / SET support	
SPHE lessons	
Social Stories	
Close / specific observation	
Other (please specify)	

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Staff member)

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Principal)

Review date: _____

Bullying Behaviour ceased? Yes / no

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Student Information

Bullying Behaviour Definition

Bullying behaviour is targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm.

Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power.

Is it bullying behaviour?

1: Targeted:

Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?

2: Harm:

Is the behaviour intended to cause harm?

3. Repeated:

Has it happened more than once?

If the answer to ALL questions is yes then this is bullying behaviour.

What can I do?

Say no, get away and tell a trusted adult straight away.

Keep telling until the behaviour stops.

Help everyone, even if you see unkind behaviour happening to someone that you don't know!



Bí Cineálta

Parent Information

Bullying Behaviour Definition

Bullying behaviour is targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm.
The harm can be physical, emotional and/or social in nature.
Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups.

Is it bullying behaviour occurring in our school?

Targeted:

Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?

Harm:

Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social and/or other emotional harm?

Repeated:

Is the behaviour repeated? Online single hurtful messages may be considered bullying behaviour as it can be reshared many times.

If it happened last year, it is not repetitive.
Repetitive is two or more times within a term.
Sept-Dec and Jan-June.

School:

Schools are not expected to deal with bullying behaviour which occurs outside of school.
Schools will support but not investigate.

If the answer to ALL questions is yes:

Speak to the class teacher as soon as possible or support the child in speaking to the class teacher.

If the answers to ANY questions is no:

Speak to the class teacher about the Code of Behaviour.

FOCUS

The focus of Bí Cineálta is on preventing and addressing bullying behaviour, restoring relationships and building trust.

The school will support all children affected by and displaying bullying behaviour.

