



## **Bí Cineálta Policy**

### **Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour**

The Board of Management of St. Paul's 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 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 behaviour 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.

We confirm that we will take all steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent all bullying or harassment of our pupils 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. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

### **Culture and Environment**

A positive and inclusive school culture and environment is essential to prevent and address bullying behaviour. St. Paul's School environment is a space where pupils and school staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported. The whole school community fosters kindness and inclusion and maintains a positive and supportive school environment for all.

Parents and Guardians, as active partners in their child's education, can help nurture an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated through promoting empathy and respect. Relationships between all members of the school community is based on respect, care, integrity and trust. Open communication between the Patron, Boards of Management, school staff, pupils and their Parents and Guardians help to foster a collaborative approach and shared responsibilities in relation to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

The school leadership team influences the school culture and sets the standards and expectations for the school community when preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. Each member of school staff has a responsibility to develop and maintain a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and to take a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour. Each member of school staff has a further responsibility to report bullying or possible bullying behaviour.

### **A Communicating Environment**

It is important that the school community supports a 'communicating' environment. According to research conducted in Ireland, there is a persistent tendency not to report bullying incidents. Pupils should feel comfortable to express concerns regarding bullying behaviour. They should be supported in their ability to communicate their feelings and expect to be understood.

The reasons why pupils may not report include the following:

- fear of retaliation from the student displaying the bullying behaviour
- concerns about being seen as a "tell-tale" for reporting bullying behaviour
- fear that the adult may make the situation worse
- fear that the adult doesn't have the knowledge and skills to deal appropriately with the bullying behaviour
- not knowing what will happen when they report bullying behaviour
- fear that they will not be believed
- concerns about "getting into trouble" for reporting bullying behaviour

St. Paul's School takes these reasons for not reporting into account when developing strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

### **A Trusted Adult**

The concept of "a trusted adult" can be an effective strategy to encourage pupils to report if they or another pupil is experiencing bullying behaviour. St. Paul's School supports this strategy by letting pupils know who they can talk to regarding bullying behaviour so that the behaviour can be addressed.

Pupils who witness bullying behaviour on social media have an important role in helping to address the behaviour by reporting the witnessed behaviour to a trusted adult. The trusted adult should reassure the student that they have done the right thing by reporting the behaviour.

The trusted adult should, without delay, inform the member of staff who has responsibility

for addressing bullying behaviour. If unsure who to inform, the trusted adult should inform the Principal or Deputy Principal. The trusted adult should continue to support the student, as appropriate, while the behaviour is being addressed by the relevant member of staff.

### **Creating safe physical spaces in schools**

St. Paul's School will create safe physical spaces thus supporting psychological safety. This is seen as an important measure to prevent bullying behaviour. Spaces that have a clear line of sight make it easier for school staff to supervise pupils.

St. Paul's School will look at taking the following measures to create safe physical spaces:

- ensure good lighting is present to avoid dark corners or spaces
- remove visual barriers from windows such as posters
- install mirrors to improve visibility and reduce blind spots
- murals, artwork and signage can help St. Paul's School to promote values such as equality, diversity, inclusion and respect

### **A Sense of Belonging**

Pupils can feel a greater sense of belonging to a school community when they are given ownership of their own space through art and creativity. This helps pupils to identify and to feel a sense of responsibility for their school environment. The inclusion of spaces within schools for collaborative learning can also play a part in fostering a sense of belonging. Our outside areas and school grounds are well maintained to promote a sense of ownership and respect in our school community. We come together both for assemblies and to celebrate cultural events on a regular basis.

### **Supervision**

Appropriate supervision is an important measure to help prevent and address bullying behaviour. Pupils are supervised by school staff at all times during school hours to ensure their safety and general wellbeing.

### **Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)**

Teaching and learning that is collaborative and respectful is promoted in St. Paul's School. Pupils have regular opportunities to work in small groups with their peers, which can help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy among pupils. St. Paul's School provides opportunities for pupils to develop a sense of self-worth through curricular and extra-curricular programmes, eg. Special Olympics, swimming, horse riding, trips out and whole school celebrations etc.

The Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) curricula at primary level aims to foster pupils' well-being, self-confidence and sense of belonging and to develop pupils' sense of personal responsibility for their own behaviour and actions. Pupils' social and emotional learning skills can be improved through the SPHE curriculum.

At post primary level, the updated SPHE specifications aim to help pupils to feel empowered to create, nurture and maintain respectful and healthy relationships with themselves and others. The RSE strand of the specification also provides space for post primary pupils to examine and consider relationships and human sexuality which can foster an understanding of diversity which may help to reduce gender and identity-based bullying as well as sexism and sexual harassment.

### **Policy and Planning**

The wellbeing of the whole school community is at the heart of St. Paul's School's plans and policies. Other St. Paul's Policies which support this Bí Cineálta policy are:

Code of Behaviour,  
 Acceptable Use Policy  
 Child Safeguarding Statement,  
 Dignity at Work  
 Working Together 2024,  
 SPHE Personal Care and Wellbeing Policy  
 St. Paul’s School staff are also encouraged to engage in appropriate Continued Professional Development (CPD).

**Relationships and Partnerships.**

Strong interpersonal connections are a vital part of effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. St. Paul’s School recognises the importance of positive relationships across the entire school community to promote empathy, understanding and respect. The meaningful involvement of the Board of Management, staff, pupils and their Parents and Guardians in the development, implementation and review of their school’s Bí Cineálta policy and student friendly version is essential to effectively prevent and address bullying behaviour.

Preventing Cyberbullying Behaviour

**Section A: Development/review of our Bi 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	May 19 <sup>th</sup> 2025	Staff meeting
Pupils	May 20 <sup>th</sup> onwards	Class work
Parents and Guardians and guardians/Guardians	May 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Email
Board of Management	May 19 <sup>th</sup> onwards	Email in advance of Board meeting on June 18 <sup>th</sup> 2025
Wider school community eg, Ancillary Staff, Therapists	May 19 <sup>th</sup>	Staff meeting
Date policy was approved: 18/6/25		
Date policy was last reviewed: n/a		

**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.  
 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.

St. Paul's 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 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 and Guardians and guardians, thereby building a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, trust and confidence.

In continuing to develop prevention strategies, this school will listen to pupils and Parents and Guardians and guardians, to help establish their particular context and needs. Frequent periods of reflection and further engagement by the school, pupils, and Parents and Guardians and guardians, will be used to discern appropriate supports for pupils in this school and to help inform future prevention strategies.

### ***Preventing cyberbullying behaviour***

Technology and social media have provided many positive opportunities for entertainment, social engagement and education. Technology is a part of life that can impact even the youngest members of society. However, the increase in the use of technology has led to pupils becoming increasingly vulnerable to cyberbullying or unacceptable online behaviour.

Schools should proactively address these challenges by promoting digital literacy, digital citizenship, and fostering safe online environments.

### **Strategies to prevent cyberbullying behaviour:**

- implementing the SPHE curriculum
- implementing the Digital Media Literacy curriculum which teaches pupils about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship
- having conversations with pupils 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
- promoting or hosting relevant online safety events for Parents and Guardians and guardians who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online

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.

For the purposes of data collection, pupils between the age of 13 and 16 years old must have parental permission to sign-up to social media services where companies use the legal basis of consent to collect process and store users' data. Most social media platforms and services have a minimum age requirement and for the majority of these services it is 13 years' old. Therefore technically, children under the age of 13 should not have a social media account. It is important for their child's safety, that Parents and Guardians and guardians are aware of their children's use of technology including smartphones and gaming consoles.

### ***Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour***

All pupils including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender pupils, have a right to feel safe and supported at school.

### **Strategies to prevent homophobic and 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

- conducting workshops and seminars for pupils, school staff and Parents and Guardians and guardians to raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour
- encouraging pupils to communicate when they witness homophobic behaviour

### ***Preventing racist bullying behaviour***

Schools have become much more culturally diverse over the last number of decades. Pupils attending schools come from many different cultures and backgrounds. Pupils from diverse backgrounds may face discrimination and prejudice and may be subject to racist bullying behaviour.

#### **Strategies to prevent racist bullying behaviour:**

- fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where pupils “see themselves” in their school environment
- having the cultural diversity of the school visible and on display
- conducting workshops and seminars for pupils, school staff and Parents and Guardians and guardians to raise awareness of racism
- 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 respond to the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language and for communicating with their Parents and Guardians and guardians
- providing supports to school staff to support pupils from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma pupils, and to encourage communication with their Parents and Guardians and guardians
- celebrating the pupils diverse ethnic backgrounds
- ensuring that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of pupils and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds

### ***Preventing sexist bullying behaviour***

Schools should focus on gender equality as part of the school’s measures to create a supportive and respectful environment.

#### **Strategies to prevent sexist bullying behaviour:**

- ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat pupils equally irrespective of their sex
- ensuring all pupils have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex
- celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contributions of all pupils
- organising awareness campaigns, workshops and presentations on gender equality and respect
- encouraging Parents and Guardians and guardians/guardians to reinforce these values of respect at home

### ***Preventing sexual harassment***

Preventing sexual harassment requires an approach that focuses on education, awareness and clear enforceable policies. Schools must make it clear that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment. Sexual harassment should never be dismissed as teasing or banter.

**Strategies to prevent sexual harassment:**

- using the updated SPHE specifications at post-primary level to teach pupils about healthy relationships and how to treat each other with respect and kindness
- promoting positive role models within the school community
- challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment

The school has the following policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour:

- AUP
- Anti Bullying
- Child Safe Guarding Statement
- Code of Behaviour
- Code of Conduct
- Code of Conduct for Parents and Guardians and guardians/Guardians
- Dignity at Work
- Gender Equality
- Partnership with Parents and Guardians and guardians/Guardians
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- Restrictive Practice
- Staff Mobile Phone
- SPHE Personal Care and Wellbeing
- Supervision

**Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour**

All class teachers are responsible for addressing bullying behaviour.

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

- > ensure that the pupil experiencing bullying behaviour is heard and reassured
- > seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- > conduct all communications with sensitivity
- > consider the age and ability of those involved
- > listen to the views 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 and Guardians and guardians 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:

**Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred**

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 pupils?
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.

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**

- Parents and Guardians and guardians are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with schools, in addressing bullying behaviour. Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the Parents and Guardians and guardians of the pupils involved must 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
- It is important to listen to the views of the pupil who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- A record should be kept of the engagement with all involved
- This record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known (see Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the Bi Cineálta procedures), where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the pupils involved and their Parents and Guardians and guardians
- The record should include the views of the pupils and their Parents and Guardians and guardians regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour

### **Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred**

- The teacher must engage with the pupils involved and their Parents and Guardians and guardians again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement
- Important factors to consider as part of this engagement are the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the pupils involved
- The teacher should document the review with pupils and their Parents and Guardians and guardians to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of pupils and their Parents and Guardians and guardians in relation to this
- The date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased should also be recorded
- Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted
- Ongoing supervision and support may be needed for the pupils involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased
- If the bullying behaviour has not ceased the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the pupils involved and their Parents and Guardians and guardians. A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased
- If it becomes clear that the pupil who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school consideration should be given to 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 Guardians and guardians and the school
- If a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and

Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools. they should be referred to the school's complaints procedures

- If a parent/guardian is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions have had a negative effect on the pupil

The school will use the following to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour:

- **National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)**  
In relation to bullying, NEPS psychologists often advise schools on best practice to prevent and address bullying when issues arise in schools and/or provide training in preventative initiatives, such as developing social and emotion skills, social skills, executive function skills, promoting resilience and skills in relationship repair between peers as appropriate
- **Oide**  
Oide is the Department of Education's support service for schools, and it supports professional learning for primary and post-primary school leaders and teachers in recognised schools and centres for education
- **Webwise**  
Webwise is the online safety initiative of the Department of Education and is co-funded by the European Commission. Webwise promotes safer, better internet use through awareness raising and education initiatives targeting teachers, pupils and Parents and Guardians and guardians
- **National Parents and Guardians and guardians Council**  
The National Parents and Guardians and guardians Council (NPC) is the representative organisation for Parents and Guardians and guardians of children in early years, primary and post-primary education
- **Dublin City University (DCU) Anti-Bullying Centre**  
The DCU Anti-Bullying Centre is a university-designated research centre located in DCU's Institute of Education. The centre is known globally for its research in bullying and online Safety
- **Tusla**  
Schools should contact Tusla directly for advice in cases where it is considered that bullying behaviour is a child protection concern.

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 pupils and Parents and Guardians and guardians. 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.

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: \_\_\_\_\_

Jerry Corkery

Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Anne Hartnett

Principal

