

Appendix A

School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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The Board of Management of Sylane 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 behavior

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	4 th & 9 th December 2024 26/05/2025	Principal & Deputy attended the required in-service day training in local Education Centres ½ day school closure, All teachers completed the teacher questionnaire We watched the assigned webinar and discussed the policy in detail
Students	June 2025 September 2025	All students from 1 st – 6 th class were given the opportunity to complete the relevant questionnaire in class. This policy was discussed by the Student Council on June 4 th at their monthly meeting. The policy will be put up on our website
Parents	June 3 rd 2025	Questionnaire sent home to parents with newsletter, it was completed and returned to the school.
Board of Management	April 2025 June 10 th 2025	Training attended by Principal and Chairperson in Tuam Education centre Watched the CPSMA related video and discussed the policy
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	June 2025	The policy will be put up on our website for the school year 2025/2026
Date policy was approved: 11 th June 2025		
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 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.

Supervision of Yard at both breaks. Yard book completed each day by supervising teacher. This is reviewed and discussed by whole staff at each monthly staff meeting.

The **school ethos** supports a telling environment

We try to foster and create **a positive relationship between teachers, staff and children.** This helps the children to have trusted adults in the school.

We have **clear and consistent rules**, zero tolerance of bullying

We have **regular open communication with parents**, at the gate, monthly newsletter handed out and also on our website. We have open communication with parents by email or phone calls and scheduled parent teacher meeting and follow up meetings if needed. Parents are warmly welcomed into our school.

Student voice is always listened to at our monthly Student Council Meetings, which has representatives from all classes. We also have a weekly assembly to showcase the childrens work. This work is displayed on the "Work We Are Proud Of "board.

Positive signage around the school with posters and children's work

Wellbeing committee who focus on this area

Friendship week in the school each year. Every class is involved in fun activities and can partner up for this activity buddy reading and making friendship bracelets etc. This is showcased at assembly in the hall at the end of the week.

Inviting parents into the school: parents/grandparents and neighbours are invited into the school for the beginning of year prayer service, parent teacher meetings, evening annual Christmas Concert, Grandparents day and the end of year school mass.

Buddy Bench: situated in the yard and works really well.

Fun Friends /Friends For Life Programme : this is completed by the whole school every four years so all children will have completed the junior and senior programme when they complete sixth class .

This is a school -based positive mental health programme that promotes emotional resilience and reduces anxiety in children and adolescents

S.P.H.E. Programme : Friendship Terrace, Walk Tall , Stay Safe Programme

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):

The school has a **supervision policy**. The children are supervised by a teacher from 8.50 -9am daily and also from 2.40pm-2.50pm. This is a preventative measure to ensure safety.

On each breaktime there are two teachers supervising and also two S.N.A.'s. A daily yard report is written into the Yard book and reviewed at a monthly staff meeting.

On **wet days** the children remain in their rooms and are supervised by teachers and sna's.

If a **teacher is leaving their classroom, their door is left wide open** and another teacher is informed of the brief absence.

Yard **supervision of any blind spots** are highlighted at the September meeting.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

each teacher in consultation with senior management and the Principal.

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

- > ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour is heard and reassured
- > seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- > conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- > consider the age and ability of those involved
- > listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- > take action in a timely manner
- > inform parents of those involved

The steps that will be taken by the school to determine if bullying behaviour has occurred, the approaches taken to address the bullying behaviour and to review progress are as follows (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

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.**

When addressing bullying behaviour teachers should

- ensure that the student 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 the students involved
- listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- take action in a timely manner
- inform parents of those involved

Bullying is defined in Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying and Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for 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.

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 and the behaviour should be addressed using the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

2 Note: Oneoff 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. 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?

- if a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with **individually at first**
- thereafter, all students involved should be **met as a group**
- at the group meeting, each student should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that **everyone in the group is clear about each other's views**
- **each student should be supported** as appropriate, following the group meeting
- it may be helpful to ask the **students involved to write down their account of the incident(s)**.

Where bullying behaviour has occurred

Parents 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 of the students 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 behavior

- it is important to **listen to the views of the student** 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 students involved 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 behavior.
- Parents may also make the school aware of bullying behavior that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action. Schools may decide that based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behavior.

Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred:

- the **teacher must engage with the students involved and their parents 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 students involved
 - the teacher 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

- 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 students 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 students involved and their parents. A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased
 - if it becomes clear that the student 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 student, their parents and the school
 - if a **parent(s) is not satisfied** with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with the B'í Cine'alta 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 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 student

The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour (see Chapter 6 of the B'í Cine'alta procedures):

Supports are available to help prevent and address bullying behavior. These supports are available from:

N.E.P.S.:

they provide a comprehensive psychological service to schools to support the wellbeing, academic, social and emotional development of all students

Oide;

This is the Department of Education's support service for schools and it supports professional learning for school leaders and teachers. They also focus on wellbeing which

includes preventing and addressing bullying.

Webwise:

This is an online safety initiative of the Department of Education and is co-founded by the European commission

Webwise develops and disseminates resources that help teachers integrate digital citizenship and online safety into teaching and learning in schools. They address topics such as online wellbeing and cyberbullying.

National Parents Council:

The National Parents Council is the representative organization for parents of children in primary education. The NPC work to ensure all parents are supported and empowered to become effective partners in their children’s education. They deliver online and in-person courses to support parents to prevent and address bullying behavior.

Tusla: Schools contact them directly for advice where it is considered that bullying behavior is a child protection concern.

Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools

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.

Signed: Patrick Lardner _____ Date: 10/06/2025
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: Ms Sinéad Cleary _____ Date: 10/06/2025
(Principal)