

St. Brendan's Boys' N.S.



Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of St. Brendan's Boys' Primary 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.

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.

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.

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 and can have lasting effects on the child experiencing the behaviour.
- Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society.
- It is behaviour which is deliberate in nature and is unwanted. It is not accidental or reckless behaviour.

The harm caused can be:

- Physical (eg: personal injury, damage to or loss of property)
- Social: (eg: withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion)
- Emotional: (eg: low self-esteem, depression, anxiety)

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, importantly, must be addressed under the school's code of behaviour.
- Some students with special educational needs, may have social communication difficulties which may make them 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 cannot control.
- 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, physical appearance, racism, poverty status, religious identity, sexism and sexual harassment. This is not an exhaustive list.

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, sex, 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.

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	22/01/2025 06/06/2025	Two members of staff attended training with Oide in Galway Education Centre. Feedback and discussion with staff at Croke Park sessions. Half day closure provided all staff with the opportunity to discuss the new Bí Cineálta action plan and staff were informed of and discussed the important points in relation to dealing with an incidence or report of bullying behaviour. Staff, in small groups, discussed various scenarios to ascertain as to whether or not bullying behaviour had occurred. All staff were given extracts of pertinent points and given a questionnaire to complete
Students	April 2025	Questionnaire 1 st to 6 th Class Members of the Health Promoting Schools Committee distributed and explained questionnaires to all pupil seeking pupil input in developing our school's Bí Cineálta policy. Their suggestions were all taken into account when drafting the school's Bí Cineálta Policy.
Parents	June 2025	Parent Questionnaire – parents were given a questionnaire on our Anti Bullying policy to seek their input in developing our Bí Cineálta policy.
Board of Management	2025	Review of new policy draft – leading to consultation and final ratification after amendments made where necessary.
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	June 2025	Consultation with relevant non-teaching staff and school bus drivers to discuss expectations in relation to behaviour for students.
Date policy was approved: 22/10/2025		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

Preventing Bullying Behaviour

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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 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.

As part of a holistic, whole school approach, measures to prevent bullying behaviour, were developed under the following headings

Culture and Environment:

- The school environment should be a space where students and school staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported. Relationships between all members of the school community should be based on respect, care, integrity and trust.
- There is a strong sense of community and cooperation between Board of Management, staff, pupils and parents, and each has a clear role in the prevention of bullying.
- 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.

- Positive self-esteem is fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences/achievements, by acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success.
- To foster an atmosphere of togetherness, cooperation, and mutual respect, our school has a Student Council, Green School Committee, Health Promoting Committee and Active School Committee. These groups meet on a regular basis and provide valuable feedback from pupils.
- Monthly Assemblies serve as a platform to recognise and celebrate the achievements of students, fostering a sense of pride within the school community. During these assemblies, the school's Bí Cineálta Policy is regularly referenced to remind students of the importance of respect, kindness, and empathy and that bullying behaviour is unacceptable.
- The Parents Association provides a valuable link between school and home. The projects which it organises, such as The Uniform Recycling Project, the refreshments after First Holy Communion for all the families involved and its role in helping with the fundraising Table Quiz promote connection, empathy respect and cooperation within the school community.
- We actively promote the concept of a 'trusted adult'—a reliable and caring staff member that students can turn to for guidance, support, and reassurance. This trusted adult helps ensure that students feel safe and confident in expressing their concerns and seeking help when needed. By nurturing a culture of trust and communication, we aim to provide a space where every student feels supported.
- Staff will encourage students to report if they or another student is experiencing bullying behaviour and support this as part of a “trusted adult” strategy by letting students know that they can talk to them.
- Students can shape the school culture by promoting kindness and inclusion within their peer group and maintain a positive and supportive school environment for all.
- Our school grounds are carefully maintained to foster a sense of ownership and respect within the school community, including classrooms, play spaces and our school sensory garden.
- All school staff consistently model respectful behaviour towards colleagues, students, and visitors, demonstrating professionalism, courtesy, and consideration in all interactions.
- Consistent supervision strategies and ongoing monitoring of students are implemented throughout the school day, including during transitions, break times, and extracurricular activities. These efforts are designed to ensure a safe and supportive environment,

effectively prevent bullying, and quickly identify and address any concerns related to student behaviour, well-being, or safety.

- Relationships between all members of the school community are based on respect and trust. Open communication between the patron, board of management, school staff, students and their parents help foster a collaborative approach and shared responsibilities in relation to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.
- The school leadership team influences the school culture and set 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.
- Students shape the school culture by promoting kindness and inclusion within their peer group and maintain a positive and supportive school environment for all. The school's *Student Council* is an important voice in this process.
- Parents, as active partners in their child's education, help foster an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated through promoting empathy and respect.
- All reasonable measures will be employed to ensure the safety of students and to supervise students when students are attending school or attending school activities.

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

- The SPHE Curriculum, including the *Walk Tall, Stay Safe and RSE* programmes, is used throughout the school to support the BÍ Cineálta policy.
- Each year, in October every class will cover the topic of 'Bullying' with lessons facilitated through the curricular area of 'Social, Personal Health Education/SPHE' with the support of resources such as The *Stay Safe Programme*, a *RSE Programmes* and the *Walk Tall Programme*. The topic will also be referred to, where appropriate, in Religious Education and the use of the *Grow in Love Programme*.
- All classes engage in Critical Thinking using circle time. The Drama curriculum is also an avenue through which bullying may be explored with the children.
- St. Brendan's Boys' N.S. provides opportunities for students to participate in both curricular and extracurricular activities to develop a sense of self-worth, team work inclusion and respect.
 - GAA
 - Soccer – FAI
 - Tennis
 - Athletics

- Swimming
- Green Schools
- Chess
- Music and the school choir
- Arts projects
- Drama - school plays etc.
- Gardening including our sensory garden
- Debating
- Wellbeing and Friendship Week
- Active School Week
- Give Racism the Red Card Day and We are all Different Day (The Student Council)
- Catholics Schools Week
- Cultural Day for all
- Sensory Room
- Students can also consider diversity and inclusion through Religious Education via the Patron's Curricula which aim to encourage respect and understanding of different beliefs, perspectives and ways of living.
- Social and Emotional skills groups are implemented and led by Special Education teachers based on student needs or requirements. These groups aim to build students' confidence and self-esteem, foster meaningful friendships, and provide regular opportunities for staff to check in on students' well-being. By doing so, they help create a supportive environment where students can grow emotionally and socially. Our Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) are in a unique position to support and enhance the identified individual needs of our boys.
- The school acknowledges and values the rich cultural diversity within our community, actively fostering an environment where inclusivity, respect, and understanding thrive, and where students "see themselves" in the school environment.

Policy and Planning:

The wellbeing of the school community will be at the heart of school policies and plans. Our Bí Cineálta policy will be reviewed annually along with the range of other policies that contribute and support the implementation of our Bí Cineálta policy.

The following policies support the implementation of the Bí Cineálta policy.

- *SPHE Policy*
- *Acceptable Usage Policy,*
- *Digital Learning Policy,*

- *Supervision Policy,*
- *Special Education Policy,*
- *Code of Behaviour*
- *Child Safe Guarding Statement*
- *Wellbeing Statement*
- *Droichead Policy*
- Student voice will be a key component in shaping school policy and planning, promoting greater awareness and supporting the successful implementation of initiatives.
- Teachers and school staff will engage in appropriate professional learning courses to support us in preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

Relationships and Partnerships:

- Strong personal connections are a vital part of effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. These interpersonal connections will be supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as our *Student Council, Green School, Health Promoting School, Active School, Parents' Association, St. Brendan's Community Nursing Unit, Loughrea Library, Naomh Breandan Credit Union, Loughrea Community Lights, Parochial and Community events, the post primary schools, the Department of Education and Youth/ Galway Education Centre and Sporting organisations.*
- Implementing age-appropriate awareness initiatives that encourage students to reflect on their own behaviour. These initiatives will promote kindness, friendship, and supporting others, while also exploring the causes and impact of bullying during SPHE lessons.
- Promoting and facilitating age-appropriate awareness initiatives, workshops and seminars for students, staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying for example external speakers and reference to parental workshops in school newsletter in line with targets from our Digital Learning Policy (for example Aoife Noone, Think Smart Programme) and Garda Michelle Sands.
- Encouraging the active involvement of parents and students in the development of the school's *Bí Cineálta Policy*, as well as a child-friendly version of the policy. This will ensure their participation in promoting and discussing effective strategies to identify and reduce bullying behaviour, while also outlining procedures for addressing and resolving incidents if they occur.
- Supporting the active participation of parents in school life, including those who may find it difficult or daunting to engage with the school due to being unfamiliar with the education system or due to language or cultural barriers.

- Parents to be made aware of our Policy on Cineáltas at the meeting for first class parents held in September each year.

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):

- **Supervision and Monitoring:** Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils to ensure all areas of school activity are observed, reducing opportunities for bullying behaviour. This includes regular reviews of supervision schedules and identifying potential hotspots for bullying in our school.
- **Playground helpers** – The Active School Committee and students in higher classes volunteer to support younger classes on yard to help with games and positive interactions. Minders at lunchtime also.
- **Artwork and signage** to help promote the school’s values such as equality, diversity, inclusion and respect

Reporting and Recording:

- All incidents of bullying behaviour are recorded systematically on the Databiz system.
- All staff are encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers.
- The school principal provides a bullying behaviour update at each ordinary board of management meeting, ensuring ongoing oversight and accountability.

Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

All Class Teachers, Special Education Teachers, Deputy Principal and Principal

- The class teacher will oversee the recording of bullying reports for students in their class – this includes using the procedure guidelines to investigate reports of bullying and record bullying behaviour on the correct form.
- Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it
- All reports of bullying will first be addressed by the class teacher, with the Deputy Principal and Principal being notified at this stage. If the teacher’s interventions do not resolve the issue and the negative behaviour continues, the matter will be escalated to the Deputy Principal and Principal for further action. 20 days
- Principal will inform Board of Management of incidences of Bullying.
- Bí Cineálta Policy Coordinator and Principal will be available to provide up to date information and supports if needed to assist class teacher in addressing concerns.

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

As a staff we will be fair and consistent in our approach to address bullying behaviour. We are conscious that the student who is **experiencing bullying behaviour** and the student who is **displaying bullying behaviour** need support. We acknowledge that it is important that the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour is engaged with without delay so that they feel listened to, supported and reassured. School staff will identify the supports needed for the student who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties and ensure that their needs are met.

Identification:

1. When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the teacher will consider the following: what, where, when and why?
2. Students involved may be asked to write down their account of the incident if this is deemed appropriate.
3. If a group of students is involved, each student will be engaged with individually at first.
4. Thereafter, all students involved will meet as a group.
5. At the group meeting, each student will be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views.
6. Each student will be supported, as appropriate, following the group meeting.

Approaches:

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

1. Ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured and seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
2. Conduct all conversations with sensitivity

3. Consider the age and ability of those involved
4. Listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
5. Take action in a timely manner
6. Inform parents of those involved

Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the 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 policy. In circumstances where student expresses concern about their parents being informed, the school will develop an appropriate plan to support the student and for how their parents will be informed. The school will consider communication barriers that may exist when communicating with parents, for example, literacy, digital literacy or language barriers.

Ultimately it is the decision of the school to decide on the most suitable course of action. The school may respect the parent's decision not to proceed with an investigation if it is deemed to be in the best interest of those involved.

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

During this review it is important to consider 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 oral handover of information from one class teacher to another teacher will include information about bullying behaviour or incidents. This handover will take place during a Croke Park hour. In the event of a class teacher being on leave or absent, an SET teacher will take responsibility for the handover of this information.

Written reports to be stored in the Principal's Office.

All bullying behaviour will be recorded. Please see template provided

Template for Recording Incidents of Bullying Behaviour

Date:	
Person making the report	
Teacher responsible for investigating the bullying behaviour	
Name of student experiencing bullying behaviour	
Name of student engaging in bullying behaviour	
Form and type Physical Emotional Social	
Where and When Date: Time:	
Summary of the bullying behaviour:	
Views of student(s) and parent(s) regarding the actions to be taken	

Date of Review with student(s) and parent(s) (no more than 20 school days post report of the incident)	
Account of the Review with students and their parents	
Engagement with external services/supports (if any)	
Ongoing supervision and support if required	
Date that the Bullying behaviour ceased	
Date that the Log of Actions was updated for Support team to access (if applicable)	
Date of email to Support team to inform them of an update to the file (if applicable)	

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 
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: 22/10/2025

Signed: 
(Principal)

Date: 22/10/2025