



## St. Nicholas NS, Adare

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

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The Board of Management of St. Nicholas' NS, Adare 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.

### **Targeted behaviour**

Bullying is deliberate, unwanted behaviour that causes harm to others, and where the student displaying bullying behaviour knows that their behaviour is or will be perceived as harmful by the child or young person experiencing the behaviour. Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. The harm can be physical (for example, personal injury, damage to or loss of property), social (for example, withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion) and/or emotional (for example, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety) and can have a serious and longterm negative impact on the student experiencing the 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 still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour.

### **Repeated behaviour**

Bullying takes the form of a systematic pattern of behaviour which is repeated over time. Single offline incidents of intentional negative behaviour involving an imbalance of power are not considered bullying but must still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour. Posting a single harmful message/image/video online, and which is highly likely to be reposted or shared with others can therefore be seen as bullying behaviour.

### **Imbalance of power**

In incidents of bullying, the student experiencing the bullying behaviour finds it hard to defend themselves as a result of the abuse of a real or perceived imbalance of power. This imbalance of power may manifest itself through differences in size, strength, age, ability, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, race, ethnic origin including membership of the Traveller and/or Roma communities, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression. Experience of the care system. Disability or in receipt of special education. In incidents online or cyber bullying, the imbalance of power may relate to online anonymity, technical proficiency and possession of information/images/video and the inability of the targeted student to remove offensive online material or escape the bullying.

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**.

### **How bullying behaviour occurs.**

Bullying behaviour can take many forms, which can occur separately or together. These can include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

#### **Direct bullying behaviour:**

##### *Physical bullying behaviour:*

- Physical bullying behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping students. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While students can often engage in “mess fights” they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.
- Personal property can be a focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, schoolbooks and other learning material or interference with a student's locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

##### *Verbal bullying behaviour:*

- Continual name calling directed at a student which hurts, insults or humiliates the student should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name calling of this type refers to physical appearance; for example, size or clothes worn or gender identity. It can also refer to a student's accent, distinctive voice characteristics, academic ability, race or ethnic origin

##### *Written bullying behaviour:*

- Written bullying behaviour includes writing insulting remarks about a student in public places, passing around notes about or drawings of a student.

##### *Extortion*

- Bullying behaviour can involve extortion. Extortion is where something is obtained through force or threats.

## **Indirect bullying behaviour:**

### *Exclusion*

- Exclusion bullying behaviour occurs where a student is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded or ignored by a student or group of students.
- Relational bullying behaviour occurs when a student's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. Common forms include control: "Do this or I won't be your friend anymore"; a group of students ganging up against one student; nonverbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a student; giving a student the "silent treatment"; and the deliberate manipulation of friendship groups to make someone unpopular.

## **Online bullying behaviour:**

Online bullying behaviour (cyberbullying) is carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text or direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, email, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chatrooms and other online technologies. This form of bullying behaviour can include:

- sending or sharing nasty, insulting, offensive, and/or intimidating messages or images via text messages, emails, direct messages or other websites or apps
- posting information considered to be personal, private and sensitive without consent, making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other students
- excluding or disrupting access to a student on purpose from online chat groups, access to accounts or from an online game

Even though a message may be posted online just once by a student it can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be seen by a wide audience where it is intended to be shared or has a likelihood of being shared multiple times and is thus repeated.

As online bullying uses technology to carry out bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact it can occur at any time. Many types of bullying behaviour can be facilitated through online bullying. In many cases online bullying can relate to an "offline" experience with someone known to the student. This type of bullying

may involve forms of sexual exploitation including but not limited to, sextortion and the nonconsensual sharing of intimate images. The sharing or threatened sharing of images without consent is a criminal offence.

### **Types of bullying behaviour:**

There are many different types of bullying behaviour. These can include the following which is not an exhaustive list:

- **disablist bullying behaviour:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of a perceived or actual disability or additional need
- **exceptionally able bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their high academic ability or outstanding talents
- **gender identity bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual gender identity
- **homophobic/transphobic (LGBTQ+) bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual membership of the LGBTQ+ community
- **physical appearance bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their physical appearance. Students who “look different” can be mocked or criticised about the shape, size or appearance of their body
- **racist bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their race or ethnic origin which includes membership of the Traveller or Roma community. Racism is defined in the National Action Plan Against Racism as “a form of domination which manifests through those power dynamics present in structural and institutional arrangements, practices, policies and cultural norms, which have the effect of excluding or discriminating against individuals or groups, based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin”
- **poverty bullying:** behaviour that intends to humiliate a student because of a lack of resources
- **religious identity bullying:** behaviour that intends to harm a student because of their religion or religious identity
- **sexist bullying:** behaviour that intends to harm a student based on their sex, perpetuating stereotypes that a student or a group of students are inferior because of their sex
- **sexual harassment:** any form of unwanted verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on sex which affects the dignity of the student

## Development/review 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/review of this policy. Stakeholders were invited to answer questionnaires and to review the 1<sup>st</sup> draft of the policy.

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	½ day closure – Questionnaires – 18/3/2025	Bí Cineálta half day closure Staff meeting discussion Questionnaire Whole staff discussion – 1 <sup>st</sup> draft of policy/feedback
Students	18/3/2025	Questionnaire Meeting with student council to discuss hot spots for bullying In class teaching and discussions ‘What is bullying’ Review children’s policy document Wellbeing and looking at our school
Parents	18/3/2025  22/5/2025	Questionnaire  1 <sup>st</sup> draft of the policy sent out to parents, policy reviewed and feedback welcomed  Information guide for parents to explain Bí cineálta
Board of Management	January 2025 22/5/2025	Wellbeing New Policy discussed at Board meeting Review 1 <sup>st</sup> draft of the policy and feedback welcomed
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	18/3/2025	Wellbeing Open communication policy with these members of the community Daily conversations with school cleaner and bus drivers School secretary involved in the policy development

	22/5/2025	Questionnaire sent to secretary 1 <sup>st</sup> Draft of policy shared with personnel working inside the school building
Date policy was approved:		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

## Preventing Bullying Behaviour

*St. Nicholas' NS sets out the following prevention strategies that will be used.*

*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.*

### **1. Culture and Environment:**

A positive and inclusive school culture and environment is essential to prevent and address bullying behaviour. 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.

Open communication between the Patron, Boards of Management, school staff, students and their parents 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 set the standards and expectations for the school community when preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

Each member of the 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 can shape the school culture by promoting kindness and inclusion within their peer group and maintain a positive and supportive school environment for all.

Parents, as active partners in their child's education, can help foster an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated through promoting empathy and respect.

### ***Key Elements of a positive school culture:***

- The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.
- The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.
- The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.

- The school has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of its functioning.
- The school has the capacity to change in response to pupils' needs.
- The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupils' attitudes and values.
- The school takes particular care of "at risk" pupils and uses its monitoring systems to facilitate early intervention where necessary and it responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.
- The school recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis.
- The school recognises the role of parents in equipping the pupil with a range of life-skills.
- The school recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.
- The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.
- The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school.
- Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the BÍ Cinéalta Organiser and the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community.
- A telling environment – the school supports a telling environment and students should feel comfortable to talk about concerns regarding bullying behaviour.
- The school uses the concept of a 'trusted adult' to encourage students to report if they or another pupil are experiencing bullying

behaviour. Staff will support this strategy by letting students know they can talk to them.

- The school aims to create a safe space for all as an important measure to prevent bullying behaviour, this includes improving lighting and visibility, supervision, artwork and murals displayed.
- Supervision is very important to prevent and address bullying behaviour, the staff of St. Nicholas' NS take all reasonable measures to ensure the safety of students attending school or attending school activities

### *School Wide approach to preventing bullying behaviour:*

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it – prevention and intervention.
- An annual audit of professional development needs with a view to assessing staff requirements through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources.
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teachers.
- School-wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parents/guardians and the wider community.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extracurricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report

issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.

- Involvement of the pupils in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Playground Buddies, Reading Buddies and other activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Development and promotion of our anti-bullying code, to be displayed publicly in classrooms and common areas of the school.
  - *I respect myself*
  - *I respect others*
  - *I expect others to respect me and each other*
  - *I will not tolerate disrespect*
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and parents/guardians are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school.
- The school's anti-bullying policy will be placed on the school's website.
- The implementation of regular whole-school awareness measures e.g. highlight the use of the Friendship Stop; display Playground Buddies photos in hallway; bullying prevention seminars; annual survey on bullying etc.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with the particular emphasis of bystanders. In that way, pupils will gain confidence in "telling". This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Ensure that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.
- Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example at break times or after school.
- Hand note up with homework (older pupils)
- Get a parent/guardian to tell on your behalf
- Administer a confidential questionnaire to pupils if there are concerns.

- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Worry box. (age appropriate)
- If parents/guardians suspect their child is being bullied they should contact one of the relevant teachers to arrange a meeting.
- The regular review of the school's Acceptable Use Policy to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored.
- The regular review of the school's Phone Policy and reminder to pupils and parents/guardians of the school's policy.
- Teachers will engage with the principles of restorative practice when dealing with incidents in the yard
- Random acts of kindness to promote kindness in our school

## **2. Curriculum – Teaching and Learning:**

### Implementation of curricula

- The full implementation of the SPHE, RSE and Stay Safe programmes.
- Continuous professional development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence-based programmes such as Stay Safe Programme and The Walk Tall programme.
- School wide delivery of lessons on cyber-bullying, for example Web Wise primary teachers' resource and MySelfie and the Wider World. Other programmes include HTML Heroes, All Aboard for Digitown. (cyber safety)
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately. Support teachers will support this measure.
- The school will also invite guest speakers to talk to the pupils and their parents at times examples include pat Forde 'Stop the Bully'.

## **3. Policy and Planning**

Wellbeing will always be at the heart of school policies and plans.

A range of other school policies will support and compliment the Bí Cinéalta policy including

- Acceptable use policy
- Supervision policy
- SEN teaching policy
- Code of behaviour
- Child Protection Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Wellbeing framework
- Working Together 2024 – Policy and Procedures

St Nicholas' NS will support the importance of the student voice in the development of policies.

School staff will also be encouraged to engage in CPD and training.

#### 4. Relationships and Partnerships

Strong connections are a vital part of effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. These connections are supported through structures including

- Student council
- School clubs
- Parent's Association
- Bus drives
- Members of the Parish
- Whole school community

#### 5. Preventing cyberbullying behaviour

Technology has provided many positive opportunities over the years, however the increase in the use of technology has led to students becoming vulnerable to cyberbullying or unacceptable behaviour online. St Nicholas' NS will proactively address these challenges by promoting digital literacy. Strategies to prevent cyber bullying include (this is not an exhaustive list)

- Implementing the SPHE curriculum
- Implementing the digital media literacy curriculum

- Having regular conversations with students
  - Developing an acceptable use policy for technology
- Discuss appropriate online behaviour

#### 6. Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour

Strategies to prevent bullying behaviour include (this is not exhaustive)

- Maintain an inclusive physical environment
- Encourage peer support and peer mentoring
- Encourage a telling culture in our school

#### 7. Preventing racist behaviour

Schools have become much more diverse with students attending our schools from many different cultures and backgrounds. Strategies to prevent racist bullying behaviour include the following which is not an exhaustive list:

- Fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated
- Encourage peer support and mentoring
- Encouraging bystanders to report racist bullying behaviour
- Providing supports to school staff
- Invite speakers from diverse backgrounds

#### 8. Preventing sexist bullying behaviour

St. Nicholas NS aims to focus on gender equality as part of the school's measure to create a supportive and respectful environment. Strategies to prevent sexist bullying behaviour include the following which is not an exhaustive list

- Ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour
- Ensuring all students have the same opportunities
- Encourage parents to reinforce these values at home

## 9. Preventing sexual harassment

Preventing sexual harassment requires an approach that focuses on age appropriate education and awareness. Sexual harassment should never be dismissed as teasing or banter.

Strategies to prevent sexual harassment include the following which is not an exhaustive list

- Teach students how to treat each other with respect and kindness
- Promote positive role models in the school community
- Challenge gender stereotypes

*The following are supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour.*

The Board of Management of St. Nicholas NS confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place both to prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible. Our action plan on bullying is rooted in the 4 key principles of prevention, support, oversight and community, with the aim to work together to address and prevent bullying in our school.

The following are measures that we consider to prevent bullying behaviour.:

### **1. Culture and Environment**

- A telling environment
- A trusted adult
- Creating safe physical spaces in school
- Supervision

### **2. Curriculum – Teaching and Learning**

- Teaching and Learning that is collaborative and respectful with regular opportunities to work in small groups and with their peers. The SPHE and RSE curricula at primary level aims to foster well-being, self confidence and a sense of belonging.

### **3. Policy and Planning**

- The wellbeing of the school community will always be at the heart of school policies and planning. The Bí Cineálta policy aims to be child friendly with support from other school policies including acceptable use policy and mobile phone policy.

### **4. Relationships and Partnerships**

- St. Nicholas' NS aims to promote strong interpersonal connections among our school community including our student council, after school clubs, after school extra-curricular activities and our parents association. The following are ways in which we aim to strengthen these relationships : (not an exhaustive list)
- Age appropriate initiatives to address and prevent bullying
  - Active participation of pupils
  - Active participation with parents and the wider school community
  - Conduct workshops, seminars etc. for students, staff and parents to raise awareness of bullying behaviour
  - Activities to build empathy, respect and resilience

- Promote the principles of restorative practice in our school
- Encourage peer support
- Promote acts of kindness

### **Addressing Bullying Behaviour**

The teachers with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour is as follows:

*Class teacher*

*Class teacher will be support by the **Bí Cineálta** co-ordinator – Mrs Karen MacNamara*

*Bí Cineálta Co ordinator and Principal Ms Tanya Brown can liaise with the Board of Management*

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:*

The school's procedures for investigation, follow up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows.

Our primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and restore as far practicable, the relationships of the parties involved. The school's procedures will be consistent with the following approach and every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parents/guardians) understand this approach from the outset.

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

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the school should consider the following : What? Where? When? and Why?

The definition of bullying sets out clear criteria to help identify bullying, these are

#### **Is it Bullying:**

- ✓ **Targeted?** – Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?
- ✓ **Harm ?** – Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?
- ✓ **Repeated ?** Is the behaviour repeated?

*If the answer to each of these questions 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 the question is 'NO', then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within our school's code of behaviour.*

### **2. Where bullying has occurred**

#### **Reporting bullying behaviour**

- Any pupil or parent/guardian may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.

- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as special needs assistant, secretary, cleaner etc. must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

### **Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach**

- Investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant) teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- Parents/guardians and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- Where possible, incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all the pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way;
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner;
- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher; it may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down the account of the incident(s).
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school should give parents/guardians an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils;
- The following principles must be adhered to when addressing bullying behaviour
  - *Ensure the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured*
  - *Seek to ensure the privacy of all involved*
  - *Conduct conversations with sensitivity*
  - *Consider the age and ability of all 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*
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/ she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;
  - It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents/guardians) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his/ her parents/guardians and the school.

School is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has had an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved. If the bullying behaviour continues into school then we will deal with the behaviour in accordance with our Bí Cineálta policy.

### **3. Requests to take no action**

A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the bullying behaviour other than 'look out for them'. The student may not want to be identified and they might feel that telling someone might make things more difficult. Where this occurs members of staff will show empathy towards the student and will work out a plan how to address the matter and inform their parents. It is always a priority to ensure the student experiencing the bullying behaviour feels safe.

Parents may also report bullying behaviour and specifically request that the school take no action. Parents should put this request in writing to the school. However, while acknowledging the parent's request, schools may decide that, based on the circumstances it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

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

Teachers/Bí cineálta co-ordinator must engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress following the intervention. The effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationships between the students involved.

If the bullying behaviour has not ceased the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students and parents and continue to meet again over agreed timeframes until the bullying behaviour has ceased. If the student who is displaying bullying behaviour continues to display

bullying behaviour then the school should consider to use strategies provided for in the school's code of behaviour policy.

### **5. Recording bullying behaviour**

All incidents of bullying should be recorded on the template attached to this policy – Appendix A.

These records should be retained in the central location in the Principal's office and in line with the data protection regulations

### **6. Complaints process**

If a parent is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with these procedures, they should be referred to the school's complaints procedure

### **7. Supports**

Supports are available to help and address bullying behaviour.

These include :

- NEPS
- Oide
- Webwise
- National Parents Council
- Dublin City University (DCU) Anti-Bullying Centre
- Tusla

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

The primary aim in addressing reports of bullying behaviour should be to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore as far practicable the relationships between the parties involved.

The school will use some of the following approaches to support those who have experienced bullying behaviour; but given the complexity of bullying behaviour it must be acknowledged that no one approach works in all situations.

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows;

- 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 e.g.
  - ❖ Group work such as circle time or social skills games
  - ❖ Buddy or peer mentoring
- If pupils require counselling or further supports, the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. (e.g. NEPS) This may be for the pupil affected by the bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour. Neeps may also offer advice to schools on best practice to prevent and address bullying
- Oide – can provide continuing professional learning support to schools to help support and implement the **Bí Cinéalta** procedures
- Webwise is an online safety initiative of the Dept of Education. Webwise promotes safer, better internet use through raising awareness and education initiatives for teachers, parents and pupils.
- National Parents Council – the NPC works to ensure all parents are supported and empowered to become effective partners in their children's education
- Dublin City University Anti-Bullying Centre – the centre is know globally for its research into bullying and online safety.

The anti-bullying centre offers a range of modules for the entire school community

- Tusla – Schools can contact Tusla directly for advice in cases where it is considered that bullying behaviour is a child protection concern

Other established intervention strategies used in St. Nicholas' NS (this list is not exhaustive)

- Teachers will use the principles of Restorative Practice
- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process if deemed necessary.
- Working with parents/guardians to support interventions
- Circle time
- Peer buddy
- SPHE programme
- R.E. programme

## 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*.

### **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: Janet Bray \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 11/6/2025 \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: Tanya Brown \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 11/6/2025 \_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal)