

St. Anne's School

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent
and Address Bullying Behaviour

2025/2026

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of St. Anne'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 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 steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent all 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 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. 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 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 (teachers, SNAs, school secretary, caretaker, school cleaners)	13th March 2025	Hard copy of staff questionnaire, all kept on file
Students	7th May 2025	Hard copies of student questionnaire, all kept on file
Parents	Emailed on 2nd May, hard copies sent home after this date and returned to school management	Hard copies of parent questionnaire sent home, all kept on file
Board of Management	19th May	Emailed all Board of Management members for feedback
Wider school community (bus escorts, bus drivers)	15th May	Offered to view Policy and give feedback
Date policy was approved: 22nd May 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: not applicable as new policy		

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.

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):

- Culture and Environment
 1. A telling environment- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly. Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.: Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class, hand note up with homework, get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf, ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
 2. A trusted adult - students who witness bullying behaviour should be supported and

encouraged to report the behaviour to a trusted adult in the school. The trusted adult should reassure the student that they have done the right thing by reporting the behaviour. The trusted adult should continue to support the student, as appropriate, while the behaviour is being addressed by the relevant member of staff.

3. Creating safe physical spaces in schools- Our school has good lighting to avoid dark corners or spaces. We do not have visual barriers on windows and glass panels of classrooms. Staff are visible at sos and lunchtime. We have displayed murals and artwork to promote the school's values such as equality, diversity, inclusion and respect.
4. Supervision- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra- curricular 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

- Curriculum (teaching and Learning)

1. The full implementation of the SPHE and CSPE curricula and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
2. Teacher Professional Learning for staff in delivering these programmes.
3. School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Cool School Lessons, #UP2US, Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme, On My Own Two Feet, the 3 'R's' and the Zones of Regulation.
4. School wide delivery of lessons on Relational aggression (Cool School Programme: A Friend in Deed), Cyber Bullying (#UP2US, Be Safe-Be Web wise, Think Before you Click, Let's Fight it Together, Web wise Primary teachers' resources), Diversity and Interculturalism. The school should list every resource related to the SPHE curriculum, and make a list of supports.
5. The school will specifically consider the additional needs of pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.
6. The school will implement the advice on "Sexual Orientation advice for schools" (RSE Primary).

- Policy and Planning

The policies listed will support our implementation of this Bí Cineálta Policy:

- ❖ Student Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy
- ❖ Code of Positive Behaviour
- ❖ Child Safeguarding Statement
- ❖ SSE Wellbeing in Education
- ❖ RSE Policy

- Relationships and Partnerships

Strong interpersonal connections are a vital part of preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. These interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures, e.g. Student's Council, Parent's Association, Pastoral Care System. Examples of how we implement relationships and partnerships include: age-appropriate awareness initiatives that promote awareness, supporting the active participation of students and parents in school, supporting activities to build empathy, encouraging peer support, explicitly teaching problem solving. Our school recognises the importance of positive relationships across the whole school community to promote empathy, understanding and respect.

- Preventing cyberbullying behaviour

Note - 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 purpose of data collection, students between the ages of 13 and 16 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 account.

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.

Strategies to prevent cyberbullying in At. Anne's include:

1. Implementing the SPHE curriculum
2. Having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online.
3. Implementing our Digital Learning Policy
4. Referring to the appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Positive Behaviour
5. Promoting and hosting online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online.
6. We will hold an Internet safety day to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour.
7. We will develop and communicate an acceptable use policy for technology.

- Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour

All students, including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students, have a right to feel safe and supported at school. Strategies to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour include:

1. Maintaining an inclusive physical environment- displaying relevant posters
2. Encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and circles
3. Challenge gender-stereotypes
4. Conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour
5. Encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour.

- Preventing racist bullying behaviour

Our school community is culturally diverse and we embrace different cultures and backgrounds.

Strategies to prevent racial bullying behaviour include:

1. Fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students see themselves in their school environment
2. Having the cultural diversity of the school visible and on display
3. Encouraging peer support
4. Encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour
5. Provide supports to school staff to respond to the needs of the students for whom English is an additional language
6. Provide support to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma students, and to encourage communication with their parents.
7. Inviting speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds.
8. Ensuring that reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

- Preventing sexist bullying behaviour

Our school will focus on gender equality as part of the school's measures to create a supportive and respectful environment. Strategies to prevent sexist bullying behaviour include:

1. Ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex.
2. Ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex.
3. Celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contributions of all students.
4. Organising awareness campaigns, workshops and presentations on gender equality and respect.

5. Encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home.

- Preventing sexual harassment

Our school will focus on education, awareness and clear enforceable policies. We have a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment. Sexual harassment should never be dismissed as teasing or banter.

Strategies to prevent sexual harassment include the following:

1. Using the updated SPHE specifications at post-primary level to teach students about healthy relationships and how to treat each other with respect and kindness.
2. Promoting positive role models in our school community.
3. Challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment.

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):

- Our school has a rota for sos and lunch time supervision. On yards, there is one teacher and up to eight SNAs on duty. Classes are organised according to age, e.g. primary are separate to post-primary.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular 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.
- The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.
- We offer a mix of activities during break times to accommodate the range of students preferences and interests.

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 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, 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 further 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.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

all class teachers.

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):

- Identify if bullying behaviour has occurred:

Two staff members can be present when engaging with children individually initially without parents' notification and presence.

Two staff members can be present when engaging with a group of children to investigate what happened. Teacher's discretion can be used with this approach about when best to use it.

A group meeting will provide the opportunity for the children to give 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 also be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident.

The following three questions should be considered to determine if bullying has occurred.

- 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.

- Requests no action taken:

A student who reports bullying behaviour may ask a member of staff not to do anything and just "look out" for them due to not wanting to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They might feel that telling someone might make things more difficult for them.

Where this occurs, it is important that the member of staff shows empathy to the student, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the student to work out together what steps can be taken to address the behaviour. It must be made clear to the pupil that other parties may need to be informed for their welfare.

Parents may also make the school aware of bullying behaviour and specifically request that no action is to be taken by the school. Parents should put this in writing to the school. However, schools may decide that based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour through the Bí Cineálta procedures and/or the Code of Behaviour where appropriate.

- Determining if the bullying behaviour has ceased:

The teacher must engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress. Factors to consider in the review include:

- ❖ the nature of the bullying
- ❖ the effectiveness of strategies use to address the bullying behaviour
- ❖ the relationship between the students involved.

Ongoing supervision of both the child experiencing bullying behaviour and the child displaying bullying behavior may be required as well as continued support.

It can take time for relationships to settle and for support to take effect. In some cases, relationships may never be restored to how they were before the bullying behaviour occurred.

If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students and parents and agree to meet again over an agreed timeframe until the bullying behaviour has ceased.

Where it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to

display the behaviour, then the school should consider using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and school.

- Recording bullying behaviour:

All incidents of bullying behaviour should be recorded. The following details should be included on the record:

- ❖ form (see section 2.5 of Bí Cineálta procedures)
- ❖ type (see section 2.7 of Bí Cineálta procedures)
- ❖ where and when (if known)
- ❖ the date of initial engagement with the students and their parents
- ❖ the views of the students and their parents* regarding the action to be taken to address the bullying behaviour (*only in relation to their own child)
- ❖ when review takes place, it should be noted if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of the students and parents in relation to this.
- ❖ note the date of reviews and engagements
- ❖ note the date that the bullying behaviour has ceased
- ❖ any engagement with external services/ supports should also be noted
- ❖ a copy of the record to be kept on the student's support file.

- Complaint process:

If a parent is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with these procedures, they should be referred to the school complaints procedure. In the event that a student and/or parent is dissatisfied following the complaints procedure, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for children.

Supports:

CDNT

NEPS

Oide

Webwise

National Parents Council

DCU Anti-bullying centre

TUSLA.

The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

Where bullying behaviour has occurred:

A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved. If the bullying continues in school, then the school can deal with it in accordance with Bí Cineálta policy. It is important for staff to be fair and consistent in their approach to address bullying behaviour. Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour need support. Engage with the student who is experiencing bullying without delay. School staff should identify the support needed for the student who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties. It is important that a student's agency is not decreased further by adults deciding what will happen next without listening to the student and involving them in deciding on the actions that will be taken. The following principles must be adhered to when addressing bullying behaviour:

- ensure the child 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 those involved
- listen to the view 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

Parents of both parties 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 as outlined in the school's Bí Cineálta policy. In circumstances where a student expresses concern about their parents being informed, the school should develop an appropriate plan to support the student and for how their parents will be informed.

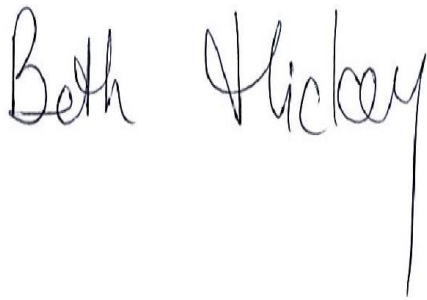
All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with students and parents. The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented. If the bullying behaviour is a child protection concern 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:

Date: 02/07/2025

Chairperson of board of management



Signed:

Date: 02/07/2025

Principal

Appendix A: Board of Management Guide to providing bullying behaviour update

Having reviewed the details of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the previous board of management meeting, the details are as follows:

Total number of new incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the last board of management meeting	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour currently ongoing	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the beginning of the school year	



Bí Cineálta Anti-Bullying Pledge



Use Kind Words
with Our voices,
Lámh signs, or AAC devices.



Use Kind Hands
To help not hurt.



Use Kind Feet
To walk safely, not kick or run into others.



Speak Up
Or show with our signs/devices if we see someone being hurt.

Include Everyone
no matter how we move, talk or play.



**We are all different. We are all unique.
We are all friends.**



**We pledge to create a school that is safe and kind for all.
Place your fingerprint below to show your promise**