

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

The Board of Management of St Gabriel's 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.

### **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. (See section 2.1 and 2.2, pgs. 17/18, *Bí Cineálta* procedures)

A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when the 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. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, the school will deal with it in accordance with this policy.

Some students with special education needs may have social communication or behavioural difficulties (See section 2.2, pg. 18, *Bí Cineálta* procedures). This may mean that the harm being done to others is not considered bullying however the school Code of Behaviour will be applied regardless of learning, social or emotional difficulties.

Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within our 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	Jan 25 – June 2025	Meetings, Aladdin, Email
Students	April – June 2025	Class teacher with classes, SPHE, Questionnaire
Parents	Term 3 2025	Aladdin, Small groups, email, school website
Board of Management	Jan 25 – June 2025	Discussed at 3 BoM meetings and via Email. Use of CPSMA webinar
Wider school community as appropriate, e.g. SCP, EWO, SNA, Caretaker Secretary etc.	Jan 25 – June 2025	Drafts shared – feedback taken
Date policy was approved:		
Date policy was last reviewed: N/A		

## Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the range of prevention strategies that are 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):

### School-wide approach

- Implementation of our Code of Behaviour which promotes a positive, pro-active, respectful and consistent approach to behaviour management.
- Distribution of a copy of the Bí Cineálta anti-bullying policy and Code of Behaviour to all parents/guardians when enrolling their children. The policy is also on the school website.
- Discussion of the school's anti-bullying policy with pupils.
- Involving the students in the annual review of the anti-bullying policy.
- Conducting an annual audit of professional development needs, with a view to assessing staff requirements
- Whole staff professional development, through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources, as necessary, to ensure that all staff members develop an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and how to respond.
- Implementing school wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying. This includes class lessons for pupils, workshops for parents/guardians, posters to target the wider school community, distribution of leaflets/booklets and access to literature through the HSCL teacher, parents room and teacher libraries.

- Promoting the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour through posters and class lessons.
- Implementing the Zones of Regulation approach to identifying feelings and regulating emotions.
- Consistently recognising and rewarding positive behaviour
- Fostering and enhancing the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Providing pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- Rigorous supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Encouraging non-teaching and ancillary staff to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers.
- The implementation of our “Acceptable Use of IT” policy.
- Publishing our Anti-Bullying code in student journals (when possible) and displaying it in classrooms and throughout the school. (*Anti-bullying code summary: In our school we use kind words and kind actions towards each other. We tell about bullying and we support each other in solving problems.*)
- Displaying a child friendly version of the school Anti-bullying policy.
- Having a dedicated notice board in the school.
- Using a Playground Friends system to encourage a culture of peer respect and support
- Running a “Friendship Week”.
- Provision of anti-bullying themed books in class and school libraries for children.
- Using intermittent student surveys in senior classes to identify problems.
- Regular discussion at assemblies by students and or staff .
- Running an annual Internet Safety poster competition and/or competition.
- Holding workshops for parents on cyber safety.
- Holding workshops for children on cyber safety.
- Fostering a “telling” environment by ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell and that bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place. (This is achieved through using the Stay Safe programme and the antibullyingcampaign.ie online resources.)
- Fully implementing our “Parent -Teacher Meeting” policy and promoting of teacher parent partnership.

### **Implementation of curricula**

- The full implementation of the SPHE, RSE and Stay Safe Programmes as per “Our Year at a Glance” planning document.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes e.g. #UP2US (5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> classes), Stay Safe Programme, Walk Tall Programme etc.
- Use of programmes such as Friends for Life, Weaving well Being, Zippy’s Friends and Friendly kids, Friendly classroom.
- Use of lessons and resources from [www.anti-bullyingcampaign.ie](http://www.anti-bullyingcampaign.ie)
- Using Circle Time to enhance self-esteem and encourage open discussion
- Internet safety specifically covered each November by all classes
- Age-appropriate resources from the Professional Development Services for Teachers (PDST), Department of Education and Skills and others such as Web Wise Primary

teachers' resources from Internet Safety Ireland, Let's Fight it Together from Teacher tube, Intercultural Education in the Primary Schools from the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and the Toolkit for Diversity from Integrate Ireland.

- Facilitation of the Garda SPHE Programmes by Community Gardaí, covering issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying.
- Preparation and or follow-up lessons as necessary by Special Education Needs (SET) teachers to address the additional needs of SEN pupils in understanding and implementing skills learned in class-based Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programmes.
- Implementation of the advice in "Sexual Orientation advice for schools" (See Relationships and Sexuality Education Primary, booklet).
- Ensuring consistent implementation of other relevant policies including Child Protection, Supervision of pupils, Acceptable Use, Parent–Teacher Meetings, Attendance, Health and Safety and the Code of Behaviour.

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):

- Child Safeguarding statement and annual assessment.
- Health & safety statement & annual risk assessments.
- Supervision Policy
- Special Education Policy
- Parent School Partnership policy
- Educational Trips
- Relationships & Sexuality Education
- Acceptable use of the Internet.
- Stay safe programme policy

### **Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour**

The teachers with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour are the Principal and the Deputy Principal. They will work in collaboration with the Home-school Community Liaison teacher, class teachers and or SET teachers as appropriate.

#### **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 and Appendix C of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

1. When bullying behaviour is alleged the class teacher or other teacher with responsibility for the child should **Investigate** and determine if bullying behaviour has occurred. Teachers should use the school definition as a guide. They should ask What, where, when, why and speak with children individually at first and then as a group. Teachers should ask for written accounts if appropriate. Teachers should support students if necessary. If the behaviour is not bullying it will be dealt with in line with our school Code of Behaviour. If the behaviour is bullying we will proceed to step 2.
2. The Principal/Deputy will **Record** the form, type, location, time and date of the bullying behaviour. Arrange necessary meetings. Record the views of the students and their parents. Date the initial engagement with students and parents. Document whether or not the behaviours have ceased and record any involvement with outside agencies. Set a date for review within the next 20 school days. Document the review with student and parents. Keep a copy of the record on Aladdin on the files of children being bullied and those with bullying behaviours. Use the school designed "Record of Bullying Behaviour" form. (Records should be as per 6.5 of Bí Cineálta Guidelines).
3. **Address** the behaviours. Having recorded the behaviours and informed parents the school will complete any agreed actions and/or implement a behaviour plan. This will be monitored and evaluated.
4. **Review:** No more than 20 school days after the initial engagement the matter will be reviewed with students and Parents. A date for review should be set at the initial meeting. (See section 6.4)
5. **Determine if the bullying has ceased:** if the bullying has ceased continue to monitor. If bullying has not ceased, review strategies, seek external support if appropriate and review within an agreed timeframe.
6. **Complaints procedure:** If parents are not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed in accordance with the Bí Cineálta procedures they can refer to the school complaints procedure. If still dissatisfied they can contact the office for the Ombudsman for children.

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

- Stay safe programme
- SPHE programme
- Use of programmes such as Friends for Life, Weaving Well Being, Zippy's Friends and Friendly kids, Friendly classroom, FUSE.
- On-line resources
- Recommendation of on-line courses
- Referral to the School Completion Programme.
- Links with after-school clubs e.g. ABAL, Candle.
- Support from NEPs
- Referral to outside agencies

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:

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed:

Date:

(Principal)

## Record of Bullying Behaviour – Appendix 1

1. Name of pupil being bullied:

Class:

2. Name(s) and class (es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour:

3. Location/s where the bullying behaviour took place:

4. Date/s the bullying behaviour took place:

5. Type of Bullying Behaviour - tick all relevant boxes

Physical Aggression		Exclusion – being deliberately and repeatedly ignored or isolated	
Written		Online-bullying	
Verbal		Relational – see pg. 22 Bí Cineálta Guidelines	
Extortion – obtaining something through force or threats		Other (specify) Isolation/	

6. Type of Bullying – indicate all relevant categories.

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist (Including Traveller identity)	Gender Identity	Religious Identity
Physical appearance	Poverty	Sexist	Sexual harassment	Other

7. Description of bullying behaviour - views of both student and parent:

8. Details of agreed actions and supports to be taken:

9. Date that bullying behaviour has stopped:

10. Record of any related engagement with outside agencies or supports:

11. Date for review Meeting:

Signed:

Date of initial Meeting: