



St Kieran's College
Secondary School
Kilkenny

Bí Cineálta Policy

School Philosophy and Mission Statement

St Kieran's College, as Ireland's oldest all-boys Catholic Secondary School, continues its founding aim of the pursuit of real excellence in education and formation, in the light of the Gospel, so as to allow all our students to realise the fullness of their potential.

Academically, spiritually, physically and emotionally our students are encouraged to strive for all that is possible in the relentless pursuit of perfecting their individual gifts and talents. In so doing they bring to life the joy intended by our motto, "Hiems Transiit", for themselves, those they love and the community where they will live, serve and lead.

Responsibilities

St Kieran's College have a responsibility to prevent and address bullying behaviour. Our school will work in partnership with our patron, board of management, staff, students and their parents to implement our Bí Cineálta policy.

St Kieran's College Board of management have oversight of the development, implementation and review of our school's Bí Cineálta policy and ensure that the appropriate preventative strategies are in place and are effective.

School staff can prevent and address bullying behaviour by promoting empathy, intervening promptly and implementing policies that create a positive and inclusive environment that fosters kindness among students. The primary aim in addressing bullying behaviour is to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

Students have an important role to play by supporting their peers, reporting incidents of bullying behaviour and working in partnership with their school community.

Parents also have an important role to play. Collaboration between parents and school staff is essential to effectively prevent and address bullying behaviour. Schools should promote active partnership with parents which can help reinforce values that discourage bullying behaviour.

The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour.

Impact of experiencing bullying behaviour

When students experience bullying behaviour, it can have a severe and profound impact on them in both the short and long term. Students may develop feelings of stress, insecurity, humiliation and anxiety and therefore become more vulnerable. Experiencing bullying behaviour can have a detrimental effect on their experience of education and education outcome. The student's self-confidence may be damaged with a resulting lowering of their self-esteem which can continue into adulthood. While they may not talk about what is happening to them, their suffering can be indicated through changes in mood and behaviour. Extreme cases of bullying behaviour may contribute to mental health difficulties.

Online or cyberbullying can be a hidden form of bullying behaviour. It can often go unnoticed as much online activity is not subject to adult supervision and the student who displays the behaviour can be offered a degree of anonymity that could protect them from being detected. It can also involve a wider audience and can be difficult to have offensive comments or material removed.

Section A

Development of our Bi 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	22/11/24, 14/1/25, 3/3/25, 29/4/25	Staff Meetings Staff Training Day
Students	5/12/24, 16/1/25, 14/3/25, 20/3/25, 29/4/25	Student Council Meetings Year Assemblies
Parents	12/12/24, 27/2/25, 1/5/25	Parents Association meetings
Board of Management	12/12/24, 17/2/25	BOM Meetings and Discussion
Wider school community	22/11/24, 14/1/25, 29/4/25	Staff Review Document
Date policy was approved: 14/8/25		
Date policy was last reviewed: 14/8/25		

The Relevant Teachers in St Kieran's College

The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

Principal
Deputy Principals
Year Heads
Chaplain / Guidance Counsellors (Student support Team)
TY/ Programme Co-ordinator
Wellbeing Teachers
Form Teachers

Section B

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (welfare) Act 2000 and Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools, the Board of Management of St Kieran's College 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.

There are many different methods of bullying behaviour, including physical, verbal and relational forms, and it can take place online and offline. There are also many different motives for bullying behaviour which can be understood on an individual level (for example, desire for dominance, status, revenge) and/or on a societal level (for example, identity based bullying such as racist, disablist, sexist or LGBTQ+ bullying). Bullying behaviour in schools is often strongly influenced by attitudes, behaviours, norms and power dynamics that are deeply engrained in our society.

The core elements of the definition are further described below:

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 the receipt of special education. In incidents of 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.

Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour

A one off instance of negative behaviour towards another 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. Disagreement between students, or instances where students don't want to be friends or to remain friends, is not considered bullying behaviour unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others including deliberate manipulation of friendship groups. 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 can't control. Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying. These behaviours, while not defined as bullying can be distressing. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

Criminal behaviour

Bullying behaviour can be considered criminal behaviour under certain circumstances and legal consequences can apply. The age of criminal responsibility in Ireland is 12 years. Some online behaviour may be illegal, and students need to be aware of the far reaching consequences of posting inappropriate or harmful content online. In cases of intimate imagery, the Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020, also known as Coco's Law, criminalises the nonconsensual sharing of intimate images and also criminalises threatening to share these images. If bullying behaviour involves physical violence or threats of violence, it may be considered assault. If bullying behaviour involves discrimination or hate speech targeting a student based on their race, religion, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation or membership of the Traveller community, it may be considered a hate crime under the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989, and those engaging in such behaviour may face criminal charges. If bullying behaviour involves sexual harassment or sexual assault, this may also be considered criminal behaviour. An Garda Síochána is the appropriate authority to investigate alleged criminal behaviour.

When bullying behaviour becomes a child protection concern

Section 10 of the Children First Act, 2015 places a statutory obligation on schools, as a "provider of a relevant service" to ensure, as far as practicable, that each child attending the school is safe from harm while attending school or otherwise participating in school activities.

Teachers registered with the Teaching Council are Mandated Persons under the Children First Act. They have a legal obligation under the Act to report harm of children that meets or is above a defined threshold to Tusla, and also to assist Tusla if requested, in assessing a concern which is the subject of a mandated report. If the concern does not reach the threshold for mandated reporting, but a teacher feels that it is a reasonable concern about the welfare or protection of a child, a report should be made to Tusla under the Children First National Guidance. The Children First National Guidance applies to everyone. All school staff and volunteers must report reasonable concerns to Tusla. The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary

Schools (Revised 2023) provide that all school staff should report reasonable concerns to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) who may take advice and/or report the concerns to Tusla. If the staff member is a registered teacher and the concern is at or above the threshold of harm at which a mandated report must be made the concern shall be submitted as a mandated report to Tusla jointly by the DLP and the registered teacher. See Chapter 5 of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (Revised 2023). The Children First Act defines harm as assault, ill treatment, neglect or sexual abuse and covers single and multiple instances. The threshold of harm is reached where the mandated person believes that a child's health, development or welfare have been, or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected.

The Children First National Guidance document 2017 is the national, overarching guidance with regard to child safeguarding. The Guidance provides that in cases of serious instances of bullying where the behaviour is regarded as possibly abusive, a referral may need to be made to Tusla or An Garda Síochána as appropriate. Generally, bullying behaviour can be addressed without the involvement of Tusla. However, bullying behaviour may become a child protection concern when it results in significant physical or emotional harm, or where it becomes a persistent and severe problem and measures taken to address it are not effective. In determining when bullying behaviour should be reported to Tusla the following factors should be considered:

- the impact on the child
- protective/appropriate action taken by the parents
- protective/appropriate action taken by the school
- engagement of child/family with support services such as NEPS

If there is doubt about whether bullying behaviour is a child protection concern schools should contact Tusla's social work department for advice. This will enable the social worker to explore the situation with school staff and provide advice on the best course of action.

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:

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.

Where bullying behaviour can occur?

Bullying behaviour can happen anywhere, online or offline and at any time, but there are certain places and times where bullying behaviour can be more likely to occur. These can include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

Inside School

School physical environments can have a significant influence on social relationships among students and can impact on the ability of school staff to effectively prevent and address bullying. Well designed school environments play a vital role in preventing bullying behaviour and promoting inclusion, positive relationships, and a safe and supportive learning environment.

School yard: Bullying behaviour can take place in the school yard. School grounds with hidden or obscure parts may provide an environment where bullying behaviour is more likely to occur. Many common school yard games present opportunities for bullying behaviour because of their physical nature. Continuing provocation may lead to a physical fight and in some cases the student experiencing bullying behaviour may appear to be the aggressor as they give vent to their frustration.

In the classroom: Bullying behaviour can take place in class. It may occur subtly through glances, looks, sniggers or may take the more overt form of physical intimidation or deliberate isolation. Bullying behaviour may also occur between class periods when the students or the teacher moves.

Other areas: Bullying behaviour can take place in other areas such as toilets, corridors, cloakrooms, locker areas, changing rooms, showers, gym, canteen and assembly hall.

Outside School

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. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, schools should deal with it in accordance with their Bí Cineálta policy.

Coming to and from school: Bullying behaviour can occur in the area immediately outside the school, the local shops and the wider local area. Bullying behaviour can take place at the bus stop or on the journey to and from school whether the students are walking, cycling or on school buses. Bullying behaviour can also take place in organised clubs and groups outside of school such as sports clubs.

Online bullying (cyberbullying) behaviour, along with all other types of bullying behaviour, can cause significant harm and can have a lasting impact on students who experience this behaviour. Access to technology means that online bullying behaviour can happen anytime, and the student's home is no longer a safe place. The nature of these technologies means that digital content can be shared and seen by a very wide audience almost instantly and the content is almost impossible to delete permanently.

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 Racism¹³ 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

Preventative Strategies in St Kieran's College

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

Culture and Environment

- Living our ethos.
- 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 and through the many extra curricular activities offered in St Kieran's College.
- Student Leadership
- Parental Support
- Open Door Policy
- Care Team
- Cairdeas Mentoring Programme
- Classroom Seating Plans
- School Display and Notice Boards
- Display of students work
- Active Student Council and Year Reps
- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect and inclusivity for all members of the school community.
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of any SEN pupils.
- Encourage a culture of telling. 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.
- 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.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell: 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.

Curriculum

- The teaching of the SPHE, CSPE and RSE curriculums in the school will provide opportunities for students to explore issues relating to human sexuality, relationships, human rights and the importance of interdependence of people in communities at local, national and international level-LGBT+.
- Peer Teaching
- Wellbeing Indicators displayed around the school
- Wellbeing in all planning
- Form Class for 1st Years
- Ar Ais le Cheile Positive behaviour Initiative rewards system.
- 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. All staff should be familiarised with the school's Code of Behaviour and the measures taken when one encounters issues of bullying.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour. This is addressed from First Year through the First year Bí Cineálta day and the Cairdeas programme which helps First year students with the transition to secondary school.
- School wide awareness raising on aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community. Anti-bullying and LGBT+ posters will be displayed prominently. Relevant staff members will attend anti-bullying / cyber-bullying workshops.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- Emphasis is placed on student Wellbeing as an educational programme.
- Surveys - Student, teacher, parents and wider community.

Relationships and Partnerships

- Links with external services - NEPS, CAMHS, TUSLA, GARDAÍ
- SEN Team
- Student Support Team
- Guest Speakers
- Wellbeing Team
- Community Initiatives
- Workshops
- Delivery of the Garda Programmes. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying.
- Mental Health Week
- Liturgies
- All pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s)s are made aware of the Bí Cineálta Policy and the Code of Behaviour of the school available on the school's website.
- Parents can call or make an appointment to meet with relevant teachers if they suspect that their child is being bullied.

Policy and Planning

- Bí Cineálta Policy
- Code of Behaviour Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessments
- Data Protection
- Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- Mobile Phone and Smart Devices Policy
- Wellbeing Statement
- DLP/DDLP Training
- Supervision Policy
- Counselling Policy
- School Attendance Policy

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

The teachers with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour are the Year Heads assisted by Deputy Principals and Principal.

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

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

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the teacher should consider the following: what, where, when and why?

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

The definition of bullying provided in this policy sets out clear criteria to help to identify bullying behaviour. Incidents can occur where behaviour is unacceptable and hurtful but the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies that deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

Where bullying behaviour has occurred

School staff should know what to do when bullying behaviour is reported to them or when they witness bullying behaviour. The school's Bí Cineálta policy aims to prevent and address bullying behaviour and the student friendly policy clearly explains what actions will be taken when bullying behaviour is reported.

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):

- where a member of the teaching staff has a concern about a student being bullied, either as a result of a personal observation or as a result of receiving a report from a third party, the teacher should without delay refer the matter to the Year Head, Deputy Principals or Principal.
- In investigating bullying behaviour or addressing bullying behaviour in any way, Year Heads are welcome to seek the assistance and support of the principal, the deputy principals or the student support team at any time. Indeed, given the extent to which the principal and deputy principal are privy to all kinds of personal information about students, it would be prudent for year heads to check in with either of them before taking any action in relation to bullying behaviour.
- The School reserves the right to investigate allegations of bullying (and to take disciplinary action where necessary) where bullying is perpetrated by a member of the school community and it impinges on the work or wellbeing of a student in the school, even where the bullying acts are committed outside of the school/college.

- The School reserves the right, in accordance with Section 6 Bi Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools to seek the assistance of agencies such as NEPS, the HSE, and the Gardaí, where it deems such assistance is necessary to dealing effectively with bullying behaviour. In any case, where the School deems bullying behaviour to be potentially abusive (Section 2 Bi Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools) it will consult with the HSE's Children and Family Services to assist it in drawing up an appropriate response or to obtain advice or to make a formal child protection report to the HSE or the Gardaí (as appropriate) in accordance with the DES Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary (revised 2023)
- Concerns about or allegations of bullying will be investigated and addressed in accordance with Section 6 Bi Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools.

Our school community and pastoral care team adhere to the following principles when addressing bullying behaviour:

- ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured
- seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- consider the age and ability of 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

It is important for school 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.

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 should identify the supports needed for the student who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties and ensure that their needs are met.

A student's agency or sense of power can be decreased when they experience or witness bullying behaviour. When a student tells an adult that they feel that they are experiencing bullying behaviour they may feel that they are taking back some control over what is happening to them. It is very 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.

Parents are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with schools, in addressing bullying behaviour. Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the 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. Schools should consider communication barriers that may exist when communicating with parents, for example, literacy, digital literacy or language barriers. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour it is generally acknowledged that that no one approach works in all situations. International and national research also continues to evolve in this area and the effectiveness of particular approaches continues to be reviewed. Each school must therefore decide on an approach that is best suited to its own circumstances.

Requests to take no action

A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than "look out" for them. The student may not want to be identified as having told

someone about the bullying behaviour. They may 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 matter and how their parents will be informed of the situation. It is important that the student who has experienced bullying behaviour feels safe.

Parents may also make schools aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action. Parents should put this request in writing to the school or be facilitated to do so where there are literacy, digital literacy or language barriers. However, while acknowledging the parent's request, schools may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

Determining if 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 following the initial intervention. Important factors to consider as part of the review are the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the students involved. Even though the bullying behaviour may have ceased, ongoing supervision and support may be required for both the student who has experienced the bullying behaviour as well as the student who has displayed the behaviour. It can take time for relationships to settle and for supports 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 the school.

Recording bullying behaviour

All incidents of bullying behaviour will be recorded. The record will document the form and type of bullying behaviour (see Record of bullying) if known, where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students and their parents. The record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour. It should document the review with students and their parents to determine

if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and their parents in relation to this. It is important to document the date of each of these engagements and the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and PostPrimary Schools has ceased. Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted. These records should be retained in accordance with the school's record keeping policy and in line with data protection regulations.

Where a Student Support File exists for a student, schools are encouraged to place a copy of the record on the student's support file. This will assist the school's student support team, where they exist, in providing a consistent and holistic response to support the wellbeing of the students involved. Where a Student Support Plan exists, the plan should be updated to incorporate response strategies and associated supports.

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's complaints procedure. Additional Information relating to schools' complaint procedures are available at the following link: <https://www.gov.ie/en/policyinformation/parentalcomplaints/>

In the event that a student and/or parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, a student and/or parent may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that

the school's actions have had a negative effect on the student. The Office of the Ombudsman for Children can be contacted at ococomplaint@oco.ie.

Supports

Supports are available to help prevent and address bullying behaviour. These include the following:

Oide

Oide is the Department of Education's support service for schools, and it supports professional learning for primary and post-primary school leaders and teachers in recognised schools and centres for education. Oide fosters a culture of continuing professional learning among school leaders and teachers encouraging lifelong learning, reflective and enquiry based practices. The work of Oide contributes to school improvement by providing high quality professional learning experiences, supports and resources relating to curricular developments, broader educational goals and national priorities, such as wellbeing which includes preventing and addressing bullying.

Oide provides continuing professional learning support to schools to support implementation of these procedures. More information on the supports provided by Oide is included in the Resources Guide which accompanies these procedures.

Webwise

Webwise is the online safety initiative of the Department of Education and is co funded by the European Commission. Webwise promotes safer, better internet use through awareness raising and education initiatives targeting teachers, students and parents. Webwise develops and disseminates resources that help teachers integrate digital citizenship and online safety into teaching and learning in their schools. Webwise also provides information, advice, and tools to parents to support their engagement in their children's online lives. With the help of the Webwise Youth Advisory Panel, Webwise develops youth oriented awareness raising resources and training programmes that promote digital citizenship and address topics such as online wellbeing and cyberbullying. **National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS).** The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) of the Department of Education provides a comprehensive, school-based psychological service to all primary and postprimary schools to support the wellbeing, academic, social and emotional development of all students. The NEPS model of service is a consultative, capacity building model, in which there is a balance between casework and support and development work. The psychological services which NEPS provides for students are differentiated in terms of whether the service involves the psychologist's direct involvement with the student, known as Direct Casework, or involves the psychologist working through teachers or teachers/parents to provide a psychological service for a student, known as Indirect Casework. NEPS staff can support schools with issues around bullying through this direct or indirect case work service. In relation to bullying, NEPS psychologists often advise schools on best practice to prevent and address bullying when issues arise in schools and/or provide training in preventative initiatives, such as developing social and emotion skills, social skills, executive function skills, promoting resilience and skills in relationship repair between peers as appropriate.

More information on the supports provided by NEPS is included in the Resources Guide which accompanies these procedures. Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and PostPrimary Schools National Parents Council

The National Parents Council (NPC) is the representative organisation for parents of children in early years, primary and post primary education. NPC was established as a charitable organisation in 1985, under the programme for Government, as the representative organisation for parents of children attending school. It received statutory recognition in the Education Act 1998. The NPC works to ensure that all parents are supported and empowered to become effective partners in their children's education. NPC seeks to achieve true partnership and deliver better outcomes for all students.

The NPC delivers online and in person courses to support parents of both primary and post-primary students to prevent and address bullying behaviour. Details on these programmes are included in the Resources Guide which accompanies these procedures.

Dublin City University (DCU) Anti Bullying Centre. The DCU AntiBullying Centre is a university-designated research centre located in DCU's Institute of Education. The centre is known globally for its research in bullying and online safety. The AntiBullying Centre offers a range of modules as part of its FUSE programme for the entire school community that can be used to help to promote a positive school culture and assist in preventing and addressing bullying behaviours.

Tusla

Schools should contact Tusla directly for advice in cases where it is considered that bullying behaviour is a child protection concern.

Section D

Oversight

Bullying behaviour update to board of management

At each meeting of the board of management the principal will present an update on the number of incidents of bullying behaviour and the measures taken to prevent and address bullying behaviour. The purpose of the update is to inform discussion at board level on the effectiveness of the measures that the school is taking to prevent and address bullying behaviour and the effectiveness of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy.

The update will include the following:

- the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting
- the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that are currently ongoing
- the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the beginning of the school year

Where incidents of bullying behaviour have been reported since the last meeting, the update must include a verbal report which should include the following information where relevant:

- the trends and patterns identified such as the form of bullying behaviour, type of bullying behaviour if known, location of bullying behaviour, when it occurred
- the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour
- if any serious incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred which have had a serious adverse impact on a student
- if a parent has informed the school that a student has left the school because of reported bullying behaviour
- if any additional support is needed from the board of management
- if the school's Bí Cineálta policy requires urgent review in advance of the annual review

This update will not include any personal information or information that could identify the students involved.

It is important that the minutes of the board of management meeting documents the number of new incidents of bullying behaviour, the number currently ongoing and the total number of incidents of bullying behaviour since the beginning of the school year as reported by the principal. The minutes should also note where the board has considered the bullying behaviour verbal update and document when the board has decided that an urgent review of the school's Bí Cineálta policy is required. The guide at Appendix D may be helpful to assist the principal in preparing the update.

Review of a school's Bí Cineálta policy

Our school's Bí Cineálta policy is reviewed each calendar year or as soon as practicable where the board of management determines that a review is warranted. The review should be completed with input from the school community which includes the board of management, staff, students and their parents and members of the wider school community (as appropriate). Schools should engage with their student council and their parents association to obtain their views on the content and effectiveness of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy.

The template contained in Appendix E must be completed to confirm that all aspects of the annual review are completed. Aside from the annual review, it is good practice for schools to seek feedback on the implementation of their Bí Cineálta policy on a regular basis. Open discussions with school staff, students and parents around approaches taken to prevent and address bullying behaviour can help support effective implementation.

Where bullying behaviour has had a serious adverse impact on a student, schools must review the measures that they took to prevent and address bullying behaviour, with a view to identifying

lessons that could be learned, so as to prevent a similar situation arising in the future. This may require an update to the school's Bí Cineálta policy.

The school community must be given notice that the annual review has taken place and the form included at Appendix F can be used for this purpose. This confirmation should be published on the school website once the annual review has taken place.

Annual reporting of bullying behaviour

To effectively prevent and address bullying behaviour it is important that information on the prevalence of bullying behaviour and effective strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour is available at a national level. As part of the implementation of Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying the Department is progressing the development of a national database to facilitate data on bullying behaviour being collated in an anonymised manner with a view to informing an annual national report on bullying behaviour in schools. This information will not identify individual schools or students.

This information is important to inform continuing professional learning, programmes to prevent and address bullying behaviour, further research in the area, awareness raising campaigns and the development and review of national policy such as Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying and the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice. Schools will be required to submit anonymised data on incidents of bullying behaviour. Schools will receive notification of the process for data submission once the system has been developed and the process is launched.

Appendices

Appendix D

Guide to Providing Bullying Behaviour Update

Guide to providing Bullying Behaviour Update for board of management meeting of DD/MM/YYYY

Having reviewed the details of the incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the previous board of management meeting, the principal must provide the following information at each ordinary meeting of the board of management:

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 this school year.	

Where incidents of bullying behaviour have been reported since the last meeting, the update must include a verbal report which should include the following information where relevant:

- the trends and patterns identified such as the form of bullying behaviour, type of bullying behaviour if known, location of bullying behaviour, when it occurred etc.
- the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour
- if any serious incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred which have had a serious adverse impact on a student
- if a parent has informed the school that a student has left the school because of reported bullying behaviour
- if any additional support is needed from the board of management
- if the school's Bí Cineálta policy requires urgent review in advance of the annual review

This update should not include any personal information or information that could identify the students involved.

Appendix E

Review of the Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual (calendar) review of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and its implementation in consultation with the school community. As part of the review, this document must be completed.

Bí Cineálta Policy Review

1	When did the Board formally adopt its Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools? Insert date when the Bí Cineálta policy was last adopted by the school. _____/_____/20____
2	Where in the school is the studentfriendly Bí Cineálta policy displayed?
3	What date did the Board publish the Bí Cineálta policy and the student friendly policy on the school website? ____/____/20____
4	How has the student friendly policy been communicated to students? _____ _____ _____ _____
5	How has the Bí Cineálta policy and student friendly policy been communicated to parents _____ _____ _____ _____
6	Have all school staff been made aware of the, school's Bí Cineálta policy and the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools? ☐ Yes ☐ No
7	Does the Bí Cineálta policy document the strategies that the school uses to prevent bullying behaviour? ☐ Yes ☐ No
8	Has the Board received and minuted the Bullying Behaviour Update presented by the principal at every ordinary board meeting over the last calendar year? ☐ Yes ☐ No
9	Has the Board discussed how the school is addressing all reports of bullying behaviour? ☐ Yes ☐ No

10	Is the Board satisfied that all incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed in accordance with the school's Bí Cineálta Policy? ☐ Yes ☐ No
11	Have the prevention strategies in the Bí Cineálta policy been implemented? ☐ Yes ☐ No
12	Has the Board discussed the effectiveness of the strategies used to prevent bullying behaviour? ☐ Yes ☐ No
13	How have (a) parents, (b) students and (c) school staff been consulted with as part of the review of the Bí Cineálta Policy? _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
14	Outline any aspects of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and/or its implementation that have been identified as requiring further improvement as part of this review: _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
15	Where areas for improvement have been identified, outline how these will be addressed and whether an action plan with timeframes has been developed? _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
16	Does the studentfriendly policy need to be updated as a result of this review and if so why? _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
17	Does the school refer parents to the complaints procedures if they have a complaint about how the school has addressed bullying behaviour? ☐ Yes ☐ No

18	Has a parent informed the school that a student has left the school due to reported bullying behaviour? ☐ Yes ☐ No
19	Has the Office of the Ombudsman for Children initiated or completed an investigation into how the school has addressed an incident of bullying behaviour? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Signed:	Signed:
(Chairperson of board of management)	(Principal)
Date:	Date:

Appendix F

Notification regarding the board of management's annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management of St Kieran's College confirms that the board of management's annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour and its implementation was completed at the board of management meeting of _____.

This review was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Education's Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Signed:	Signed:
(Chairperson of board of management)	(Principal)
Date:	Date:

Record of bullying

Form of Bullying	Tick	Please explain where necessary	Type of bullying	Tick	Please explain where necessary
Physical Bullying			Disablist		
Verbal bullying			Exceptionally able		
Written bullying			Gender		
Extortion			Homophobic/transphobic		
Exclusion			Physical appearance		
Online			Racist		
Other			Poverty		
			Religious identity		
			Sexist		
			Sexual harrassment		
Where did the bullying behaviour take place?					
Date of bullying behaviour					
Views of students on actions taken to address behaviour Student Name: Date:					
Views of students on actions taken to address behaviour Student Name: Date:					
Views of students on actions taken to address behaviour Student Name: Date:					
Views of parents on actions taken to address behaviour Parent Name: Date:					

Views of parents on actions taken to address behaviour Parent Name: Date:	
Views of parents on actions taken to address behaviour Parent Name: Date:	
Any engagement with external services/ supports?	
Date of 20 day review and notes	
Has the bullying ceased?	

Extra notes: