



Gonzaga College SJ

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Gonzaga College SJ is committed to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour and has adopted the following policy.

This policy is in place to ensure that students and staff enjoy studying and working in a respectful and supportive environment that is in keeping with the mission and characteristic spirit of Gonzaga College, a Catholic school.

At the heart of our policy lies the virtue of charity which is promoted to ensure an orderly, harmonious and effective setting for teaching and learning, so that every student and staff member feels at home in the school.

This policy fully complies with the requirements of Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2024.

This policy is in keeping with statutory obligations and other relevant guidelines including such as are set out in Section 1.5 of Bí Cineálta and is also in keeping with, and shall be interpreted according to, the school's rights and obligations under law, including under Section 15 of the Education Act 1998.

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.

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 of any kind and towards any person and to deal with the negative impact of 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.

Gonzaga College SJ aspires to be a community that promotes mutual respect, co-operation and justice for all as core values. This Policy aims to respect the rights of all members of the College community. The fostering of personal and communal respect, responsibility and self-discipline is a central concern of the College. It is our hope that individuals and groups will learn to take the fullest possible ownership of the values enshrined in our College Mission Statement and behave accordingly.

The Policy aims to promote awareness among our community that intelligent and responsible adherence to the school rules, by which we seek to operate, is in the interest of each individual and of the whole College community. The Policy is designed to enhance the teaching and learning process, which is central to the work of the College. Each member of the school community shares responsibility for the order and well-being of our College.

EXPECTATIONS

The Gonzaga student is expected to

- Respect all members of the College community
- Respect the academic standards and expectations of the College
- Respect the College environment

RESPECT ALL MEMBERS OF THE COLLEGE COMMUNITY

Students should demonstrate respect for each and every person they come into contact with during the school day. This applies at all times within the College and at any activity or venue where Gonzaga students are in attendance (e.g. travelling on the Luas).

Respect is also demonstrated by fostering a constructive atmosphere of co-operation and learning, where any behaviour that interferes with the teaching and learning in the classroom is unacceptable.

It will be considered therefore, as a serious breach of the College's Code of Behaviour to treat any student in an inappropriate manner, or to show non-cooperation to a member of staff.

Bullying will not be tolerated. Every student has the right to an education free from fear and intimidation. Interaction between all members of the College community should respect the dignity of the individual. Just as teachers should respect the individual student, students are expected to respect each other and to co-operate with and respect all members of staff. In this regard, students and parents are invited to consult this Gonzaga College Policy on Bullying.

Definition of bullying

- Bullying is targeted behaviour, online or offline, that causes harm.
- The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature and can have lasting effects on the child experiencing the behaviour.
- Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society. (*Bí Cineálta 2024*)

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 long-term 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, 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.

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 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.

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, group chats 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 grounds: 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, locker areas, changing rooms, showers, gym or the Dining 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. See Section 6.2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

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/luas 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.

Bullying as 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 non-consensual 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.

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	March 2025 -attend half day training May 2025	Stage 1: Staff Meeting – staff provided with the opportunity to discuss the new Bí Cineálta action plan and stemming from this discussion, staff were informed of the important points in dealing with an incidence or report of bullying – noticeboard in staff room with the relevant information displayed as well as resources and record form. Staff given time to discuss and relay feedback. Staff questionnaire Staff attended half-day training Sharing of draft policy with staff to discuss / consult and make any amendments.
Students	March 2025 June 2025	Students were given a questionnaire to seek their input in developing an Anti-Bullying policy in Child Friendly Format – their wording, examples and suggestions were all taken into account when drafting this Policy. This policy was distributed to all households.
Parents	March 2025	Parent questionnaire Feedback sought from parents and children in formation of a Child Friendly Anti Bullying policy. Policy created with this information and sent out to parents/children to review together with information on same in terms of how to contact the school if needed. Attention drawn to our policy and Child Friendly policy, resources and initiatives in the school during Anti-Bullying week sent out via school website and social media. Bi Cineálta policy draft shared with parent body and parent association for feedback.
Board of Management	May 2025	Review new policy draft – leading to consultation and final ratification after amendments made where necessary.
Community	April 2025	Questionnaire

Date policy was approved: 6th May 2025
Date policy was last reviewed: 6th May 2025

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by the school. These include strategies specifically aimed at preventing all forms of bullying of any type, or on any ground(s), whatever form it may take.

Gonzaga College SJ will continue to develop a positive and inclusive school culture and environment is essential to prevent and address bullying behaviour. The school environment should be a space where students and school staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported. We will adopt a holistic whole-school approach to bullying prevention and will align our policy with the four key areas of well-being promotion. These are culture and environment, curriculum (Teaching & Learning), Policy and Planning and Relationships and Partnerships.

Supervision and Monitoring.

Gonzaga College SJ has an obligation to provide, to the best of its ability, a safe environment for all our students. We believe students need a certain amount of personal freedom to encourage and foster independence and responsibility and furthermore it is impossible to supervise and monitor all students at all times. We expect that all students adhere to a standard of acceptable and respectful behaviour, whether in the presence of a member of staff, or not.

Most cases of bullying happen outside of class time. We are fortunate to have strong staff presence outside class time as many teachers are involved in afternoon and extra- curricular activities. Incessant supervision and monitoring of all students at all times is neither possible nor desirable.

General behaviours which apply to all	• Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in equality legislation • Physical aggression. • Damage to property. • Name calling. • Slagging. • The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person. • Offensive graffiti. • Extortion. • Intimidation. • Insulting or offensive gestures. • Invasion of personal space. • A combination of any of the types listed.
Cyber	• Denigration: Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation. • Harassment: Continually sending vicious, mean, or disturbing messages to an individual. • Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name. • Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight. • Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online. • Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images. • Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group. • Cyber stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for their safety. • Silent telephone / mobile phone calls. • Abusive telephone / mobile phone calls. • Abusive text messages. • Abusive email. • Abusive communication on social networks • Abusive website comments / blogs / images. • Abusive posts on any form of

	communication technology.
Behaviours and any form of bullying relating to characteristics which are part of a person's identity.	• Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (Equal Status Acts 2000-2018).
Relational	This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include: • Malicious gossip. • Isolation and exclusion. • Ignoring. • Excluding from the group. • Taking someone's friends away. • Spreading rumours. • Breaking confidence. • Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear.
Sexual	• Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching. • Harassment. • Sexting – i.e., the sharing of explicit text and images about or of students
Special Educational Needs; Disability	• Name calling. • Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs. • Taking advantage of some students' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues. • Mimicking a person's disability. • Setting others up for ridicule.

Culture and Environment:

A telling environment is encouraged, and concerns are listened to and acted upon when appropriate by all staff, this helps foster the concept of a trusted adult. Care is taken to create safe supervised spaces and practices within the school.

A positive and inclusive school culture and environment is essential to prevent and address bullying behaviour. The school environment should be a space where students and school staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported.

Relationships between all members of the school community should be based on respect, care,

integrity and trust. Open communication between the patron, boards of management, school staff, students and their parents help to foster a collaborative approach and shared responsibilities in relation to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

The school leadership team influences the school culture and set the standards and expectations for the school community when preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

Each member of school staff has a responsibility to develop and maintain a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and to take a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.

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

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

We strive to:

- Create a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and develop a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.
- Involve parents as active partners in fostering an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated.
- Support the idea that our school is a telling environment.
- Promote the concept of a trusted adult - who to tell.
- Create safe spaces in our school building and yards – visibility with adequate supervision
- Incorporate artwork and signs to promote our school values – creation of a school charter promoting rights – equality, inclusion and respect.
- Encourage a sense of belonging with ownership over their own space through art and creativity.

Create a positive school culture and climate which-

- is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
- encourages students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
- promotes respectful relationships across the school community;

Ways in which we work to achieve these goals are as follows:

- Staff are briefed on the uniform approach we must take to handle all reports of bullying – this is distributed to staff and a copy is retained in the Staff SharePoint for ease of access also.
- Anti Bullying week activities, talks Poster making, slogan making, etc
- Prefects – students support younger classes at breaks to help with games and positive interactions.
- Student Friendly Anti- Bullying Policy was formed with student and parent input and is distributed to parents, children and staff to discuss. This policy outlines various ways to tell.
- Parents receive information at times regarding useful information on Anti Bullying.
- Stay safe and SPHE lessons focusing on positive behaviour form part of

- curricular content in all classes.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of students.
- Pastoral teams are important for the management of a preventative strategy. We have form tutors for each class, and they are supported by a Year Head and Student Support Team.
- Student Council

Student Friendly Policy development as well as notice board to promote kindness and build responsibility amongst students.

Curriculum (teaching and learning)

We strive to :

- Provide teaching and promote learning which is collaborative and respectful, fostering inclusion and respect for diversity.
- Display a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact.

Ways in which we work to achieve this:

- Teach SPHE and RSE content which fosters student's well-being and self-confidence as well as promoting personal responsibility for their own behaviours and actions.
- Model respectful behaviour towards colleagues, students and visitors in our school environment.
- Curricular and Extra-curricular activities can help to develop a sense of self-worth, working together, inclusion and respect.
- Students are given regular opportunities to work in small groups with peers, which can help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy.
- Acknowledgment of our diverse school population – celebrating diversity and culture in our school through art, displays, photographs, international events.
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-
 - build empathy, respect and resilience in students; and
 - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying
 - Achievement of the BeLong quality mark
- Supports for staff;
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

Policy and planning

The aim of Gonzaga College SJ's Bi Cinealta policy is:

- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, students, parents/guardians.
- To promote a school ethos which encourages students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To ensure appropriate supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
- To develop procedures for noting, investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To implement a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- To work with appropriate agencies in countering all forms of bullying and promoting anti bullying behaviour.

The Acceptable Use Policy, Supervision policy, Special Education Policy and Code of Behaviour all support the implementation of the Bí Cineálta policy.

- Effective leadership is a key component with Headmaster, Deputy Principal, DLP, DDLP, and all middle management focused on supporting the implementation of this policy.

Relationships and Partnerships

- Interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as our parents' association, our various and multiple student committees and groups.
- Age-appropriate awareness initiatives that engage the student body in looking at their own behaviour – promoting acts of kindness and friendship, being an active help to others and looking at the causes of and impact of bullying during SPHE lessons.
- Conducting workshops and seminars for students, staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying.
- Encouraging peer mentoring and peer support.
- Supporting active participation of students in school life and active participation of parents in school life also.

Engaging parents and students in actively contributing to the formation of a Child Friendly Anti Bullying Policy to make them active participants in promotion of and discussion of useful ways to identify and reduce bullying behaviour and highlight procedure and how to deal with it if it does occur.

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

- Code of Behaviour
- Child Protection
- Internet Safety: Acceptable Use Policy
- Mobile phone Policy
- Health and Safety
- Critical Incident Policy

- SPHE/RSE Policy
- Guidance Programme
- Attendance Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Induction for new staff and students
- Dignity in the Workplace
- Guidance & Pastoral Care Provision
- SEN Policy
- Teachers' handbook

In Addition:

- Staff at all times endeavour to encourage students to show respect for each other.
- Implementation of the SPHE curriculum.
- Positive self-esteem is fostered among the students by celebrating individual differences, by acknowledging good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success.
- Acceptable use policy includes learning about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship. AUP also developed for technology in our school.
- Removal of mobile phones during the school day.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed regularly with the students.
- Staff are particularly vigilant in monitoring students who are considered at risk of bullying/ being bullied.
- All disclosed incidents of bullying are investigated thoroughly and consistently by following the correct procedure as outlined to staff and recorded on Compass using the template for this.
- School wide awareness raising on all aspects of bullying, supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extracurricular activities.
- Involvement of students in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. anti-bullying week, Jesuit ethos, and other activities that can help to students and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Ensuring that students know who to tell and how to tell.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Refer to appropriate online behaviour when using devices and in SPHE lessons.
- Promote online safety events or material for parents.

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 practicable, the relationships of the parties involved. Our aim is to have a partnership and caring approach where all parties work together.

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

Anyone who is concerned about suspected or alleged bullying may report it by:

- Directly approaching any member of staff with whom the student feels comfortable
 - Speaking to their Form Tutor or Year Head
 - Making an appointment with or dropping into to see the Guidance Counsellor
 - Meeting with Director of Ignatian Formation
 - Speaking to the Headmaster or Deputy Principal
 - Sharing it with another student e.g. prefect, classmate or year group member and reporting it to any of the above
 - Getting a friend or parent to report it to the school office, Year Head, Form Tutor or Teacher on their behalf by phone or in person
 - Using the designated anti-bullying email address antibullying@gonzaga.ie
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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

While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the 'Relevant Teacher(s)', the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' will use his/her/their professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.

If it is established by the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' that bullying has occurred, the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

The 'Relevant Teacher(s)' must record the bullying incident on the school information management system (Compass) by adding an Alleged Bullying Behaviour Report to the relevant student's file which will be visible on files on all other students named. The 'Relevant Teacher' must inform the Headmaster.

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame). With this in mind the school's procedures are as follows:

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

In investigating and dealing with bullying the teacher(s) will exercise his/her/their judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type if it has and how best the situation might be resolved.

All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the 'Relevant Teacher(s)'. In that way students will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all students that when they report instances of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.

Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, SNAs, caretakers and cleaners are encouraged to report any incidences of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them to the Form Tutor.

Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by students, staff or parents.

On being informed of an alleged incident of bullying, the teacher dealing with the report will first interview the victim(s) and discuss the feelings which the victim(s) experienced because of the bullying behaviour.

Initial investigations of bullying will be done to ensure the privacy of all involved.

When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' should seek answers to questions of what, where, who, when and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.

If a group is involved each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about the other's statements.

Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.

Where the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' has/have determined that a student has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the perspective of the student being bullied.

The "Relevant Teacher" does not apportion blame but should make an effort to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the student being bullied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter.

Agree steps taken to stop, manage and monitor the bullying behaviour

When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the "Relevant Teacher" will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information. This may be recorded on

Compass.

If a student chooses to continue the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer be considered a once off occurrence. In this event parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted. The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for the student.

Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may be arranged separately with a view to bringing them together at a later date if the student who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.

Depending on the seriousness of the bullying some or all of the Supportive Interventions will be utilised (See School Code of Behaviour)

Repeated incidents of bullying behaviour will result in the imposition of sanctions. Such sanctions will be proportionate to the seriousness of the bullying behaviour. It must be made clear to all involved (each set of students and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required that this is a private matter between the student being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.

- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent must be referred to the school's complaints procedure.
- In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their rights to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.
- The school will maintain care for the alleged victim over time. This will be done by speaking to the student a number of weeks after the incident to check on their continuing welfare. The student's parents will also be consulted.
- If a student makes a report of bullying, but requests that nothing is to be done about it, the relevant teacher will support the child appropriately to explore how it will be handled sensitively and how parents may be notified. If a parent does so, they must submit in writing that they require no further action to be taken, but even so, the school may still deem it necessary to be investigated and handled appropriately.

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

The school's programme of support for working with students affected by bullying involves a whole school approach. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, no one intervention/support programme works in all situations.

Supporting Bullied students:

- Ending the bullying behaviour,
- Fostering respect for bullied students and all students,
- Fostering greater empathy towards and support for bullied students,
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted student through annual awareness-raising programmes,

- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted student through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations,
- Making adequate counselling facilities available to students who need it in a timely manner (subject to available funding)
- Helping bullied students raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).

Supporting Bullying students:

- Making it clear that bullying students who reform are not blamed or punished and get a 'clean sheet,'
- Making it clear that bullying students who reform are doing the right and honourable thing and giving them praise for this,
- Making adequate counselling facilities available to help those who need it learn other ways of meeting their needs besides violating the rights of others,
- Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school),
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance students' feelings of self-worth,
- In dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child.

In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a 'clean sheet' and no blame approach.

Recording the bullying behaviour

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: _____

(Headmaster)

Appendix I: Practical tips for creating an inclusive environment in which bullying behaviour are prevented

The school takes a restorative approach in fostering a safe and inclusive environment. The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- a. Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community always.
- b. Explicitly teach students what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- c. Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school.
- d. Involve students in the development of these messages.
- e. Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- f. Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – of any type, or on any ground(s), whatever form it may take. Give constructive feedback to students when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent. Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- g. Explicitly teach students about the appropriate use of social media.
- h. Positively encourage students to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.
- i. Follow up and follow through with students who ignore the rules.
- j. Actively involve parents and guardians and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- k. Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- l. Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in student friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- m. All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- n. Ensure there is adequate recreation space/school yard/outdoor supervision.

School staff can get students to help them to identify bullying “hot spots” and “hot times” for bullying in the school

- Hot spots tend to be in the recreation areas, outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors, and other areas of unstructured supervision.
- Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when students are in the recreation areas, outdoor areas or moving classrooms.

Appendix 2: Template for Reporting Bullying Behaviour

1. Details of the Student Being Bullied:

- **Name:** _____
- **Class Group:** _____

2. Details of Student(s) Engaged in Bullying Behaviour:

- **Name(s):**

- **Class(es):**

3. Source of Bullying Concern/Report (Tick all that apply)

- ☐ Student Concerned
- ☐ Other Student
- ☐ Parent/Guardian
- ☐ Teacher
- ☐ Other: _____

4. Location of Incidents (Tick all that apply)

- ☐ Recreation Areas
- ☐ Classroom
- ☐ Corridor
- ☐ Toilets
- ☐ Transport
- ☐ Other: _____

5. Name of Person Reporting the Concern

- _____

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (Tick all that apply)

- ☐ Physical Aggression
- ☐ Damage to Property
- ☐ Isolation/Exclusion
- ☐ Name Calling
- ☐ Cyber-bullying

- ☐ Intimidation
- ☐ Malicious Gossip
- ☐ Other: _____

7. Identity-Based Bullying (If applicable, indicate the relevant category)

- ☐ Homophobic
- ☐ Gender
- ☐ Socio-economic status
- ☐ Disability/SEN-related
- ☐ Religion
- ☐ Racist/Ethnicity
- ☐ Membership of Traveller Community
- ☐ Other: _____

8. Description of the Bullying Behaviour and Its Impact

(Brief description of the behaviour and how it has affected the student.)

9. Actions Taken

(Steps taken to address the situation, including support for the student and any disciplinary measures.)

Signatures

- **Relevant Staff Member:** _____
- **Date:** _____
- **Date Submitted to Headmaster /Deputy principal:** ____

Appendix 3: Student Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy

This will be displayed in the school in accordance with the Bí Cineálta *Procedures to prevent and address bullying behaviour*

Bí Cineálta!

We want everyone at our school to feel safe and happy.

If you think that you are being bullied or someone else is being bullied, you need to tell a teacher or another adult that you trust. They will know what to do to help.

Get help!

Tell someone!

If a student tells a staff member that they think they are being bullied, we will:

- > talk with the student
- > ask the student what they want to happen
- > work out a plan together
- > talk to their parents
- > talk to the other student(s) involved
- > talk with the other student's parents

Bullying behaviour is when someone keeps being mean or hurtful to others on purpose over and over again.

Please tell someone if you think that you are being bullied or someone else is being bullied.

Our school has a Bí Cineálta policy to try to stop bullying behaviour.

We look at this policy every year to see what is working well or what could work better.

We will ask you what you think.

Be Kind

When it happens a lot. Not just once.

Appendix 4: Annual Review Checklist for Bí Cineálta Policy

This checklist is to be completed as part of the annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and its implementation.

Section 1: Policy Review Details

- When did the Board adopt the Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour?
Date: ____ / ____ / 20____
- Where is the student-friendly Bí Cineálta policy displayed within the school?
Answer: _____
- On what date was the Bí Cineálta policy and the student-friendly policy published on the school website?
Date: ____ / ____ / 20____
- How has the student-friendly policy been communicated to students?
Answer: _____
- How has the Bí Cineálta policy and the student-friendly policy been communicated to and guardians?
Answer: _____

Section 2: Policy Awareness and Implementation

- Have all school staff been made aware of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and its associated procedures?
☐ Yes
☐ No
- Does the Bí Cineálta policy document the strategies used by the school to prevent bullying behaviour?
☐ Yes
☐ No
- Has the Board received and minuted the Bullying Behaviour Update presented by the principal at every ordinary board meeting in the past year?
☐ Yes
☐ No
- Has the Board discussed how the school is addressing all reports of bullying behaviour?
☐ Yes
☐ No
- Is the Board satisfied that all incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed in accordance with the Bí Cineálta policy?
☐ Yes
☐ No
- Have the prevention strategies in the Bí Cineálta policy been implemented?
☐ Yes
☐ No

- Has the Board discussed the effectiveness of strategies used to prevent bullying behaviour?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Section 3: Consultation and Feedback

- How have parents and guardians, students and school staff been consulted during the review of the Bí Cineálta policy?

☐ Yes

☐ No

- Outline any aspects of the policy or its implementation identified as needing improvement:

Answer:

- If improvements are required, describe how these will be addressed and specify whether an action plan with timeframes has been developed:

Answer:

- Does the student-friendly policy need updating? If so, why?

Answer:

Section 4: Additional Considerations

- Does the school refer parents and guardians to the complaints' procedures for concerns about how bullying behaviour has been addressed?

☐ Yes

☐ No

- Has a parent or guardian informed the school that a student left due to reported bullying behaviour?

☐ Yes

☐ No

- Has the Office of the Ombudsman for Children initiated or completed an investigation into how the school addressed a bullying incident?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Signed: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: _____

Signed: _____

(Headmaster)

Date: _____

Appendix 5: Guide to Providing Bullying Behaviour Update for the Board of Management

Template for providing Bullying Behaviour Update for Board of Management Meeting of _____

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.	

Note: 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 bullying behaviour have occurred which have had a serious adverse impact on a student
- If a parent or guardian 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 6: Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the Bí Cíneálta Policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour

The Board of Managements annual review of the school's *Bí Cíneálta Policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour* and its implementation was. completed at the Board meeting of

This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in Appendix E of the *Bí Cíneálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools*

Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: _____

Signed: _____
(Head of School)

Date: _____