



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

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The Board of Management 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.

Catholic schools have a distinctive understanding of the human person, recognising that every person is created in God's image and likeness and has inherent dignity as a child of God. This is the basis for ensuring that everybody in our school is treated with respect and care. As a Catholic school, we are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual. No human person is to be diminished or devalued and everybody has a part to play in the school community, regardless of difference.

## **Definition of Bullying**

Bullying is defined in *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.

Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of 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.

Under the Children First National Guidance document 2017, 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.

### 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	21/01/2025 SST 13/02/2025	Survey Policy appendices feedback
Students	27/01/2025 TBC student council	Survey
Parents	27/01/2025 TBC Parent Assoc	Survey
Board of Management	11/03/2025	New draft submission for review
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	21/01/2025 Parents were appraised of the policy review and changes to definition of Bullying.	Via our school App and Website.
Date policy was approved:		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

### 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 online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate. In developing the preventative strategies which this school will use to prevent all forms of bullying behaviour, we come from the context of our Catholic ethos, where inclusivity permeates our school in a real way. This school takes positive steps to ensure that the culture of the school is one which welcomes a respectful dialogue and encounter with diversity and difference by ensuring that prevention and inclusivity strategies are given priority and discussed regularly at our board of management and staff meetings.

The dignity and the wellbeing of the individual person is of paramount concern in our Christian response. This school will listen closely to, and in dialogue with parents, and thereby build a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, trust and confidence. In continuing to develop prevention strategies, this school will take as much time as is practicable listening to young persons and parents, to help establish their particular context and needs. Frequent periods of reflection and further engagement by the school, young persons and parents, will be used to discern appropriate support for young people in this school and will help inform future prevention strategies.

## **PREVENTATIVE STRATEGIES**

### *Education Programmes*

Salesian Secondary College is committed to providing a comprehensive Social, Personal and Health Education Programme for all students. All classes will complete specific Anti-Bullying Education Programmes. A cross-curricular approach is taken.

### *Our educational aims achievable through an anti-bullying curriculum*

- To prevent bullying by empowering young people with knowledge, skills and positive attitudes
- To seek to develop an awareness bullying
- To seek to develop coping strategies for bullying and other unwanted behaviours, including the fostering of resilience and the ability to recover from conflict and difficult situations which arise between people in the normal course life
- To facilitate self-development in a safe learning environment
- To raise awareness among students of the school's Anti Bullying Policy
- To foster an atmosphere in which students / staff feel comfortable about seeking help, and in which they know how to seek help
- To seek to minimise the occurrence of situations in the school day which make bullying likely to occur
- The school will use initiatives across the student body to raise awareness and to build collegiality for example Friendship Day, Induction Days, TY Team Building, the Nurture Programme etc.

### *School-wide approach*

To provide a school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community, according to our Salesian ethos, we commit to:

- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our students through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Students will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.

- Whole staff professional development on bullying, to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on students' lives and the need to respond to it-prevention and intervention.
- Regular opportunities for communication between Tutors, Year Heads and students.
- 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 a Relevant Teacher. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communications and information technology within the school.
- Involvement of the Student Council and Mentoring teams in contributing to a safe school environment, which can help to support students and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying Code for the school-to be included in student journals, school website ([www.salesiancollege.ie](http://www.salesiancollege.ie)) and displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.
- The school's Anti-Bullying Policy is discussed with students and parent(s) / guardian(s) are given access to the policy through our normal communication channels.
- Mission Statement, School Ethos and Code of Behaviour are outlined to parent(s) / guardian(s)
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Identify clear protocols to encourage parent(s) / guardian(s) to approach the school by contacting a member of the Pastoral Care Team if they are concerned about negative behaviour or bullying.
- Regular meetings of the Pastoral Care-Team and of Middle Management (Assistant Principals and Year Heads) with Principal and Deputy Principals.
- Personal Technology and Safe Internet Usage Policies, which outline the measures taken by the school to prevent cyber bullying.
- Aim towards approachability of all members of school community: each student should be able to identify "One Safe Adult".
- Use of a Merit System to acknowledge / reward positive behaviour, as per our Salesian ethos.
- Parent (s) / guardian (s) are invited to attend information session for incoming First Years.
- Regular Parent-Teacher meetings.
- Appropriate use of CCTV, to add to sense of a secure environment for all the school community and to assist with clarification needed on issues which may arise
- Tutor System and Chain of Referral, which is based on our Pastoral Care structure and Salesian values.
- Talks for parents / guardians and students.
- Counselling support provided as necessary, through the Guidance Department

### *Implementation of curriculum*

To provide a curricular approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community, according to our school Salesian ethos, we commit to:

- Use of established school curricula to raise awareness of, and discuss strategies for reporting and coping with conflict, negative relationships and bullying.
- Supports and resources available to the school, which may be found on the SPHE website- [www.sphe.ie](http://www.sphe.ie)
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence-based programmes.
- School wide delivery of age-appropriate lessons.
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at post- primary level. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardaí, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying.
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of AEN and ASD students regarding programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all students to respond appropriately.
- The school will refer to “Sexual Orientation Advice for Schools” and appropriate RSE materials.
- Guidance and Counselling Service provided. First Year students are met regularly to assess how they are settling into school.
- Informal curriculum, e.g. extra-curricular activities.

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

- Teachers on supervision duty should supervise corridor areas, social areas, classrooms and assembly area(s).
- The supervisors should walk around the corridors and enter the classrooms during supervision periods.
- The supervisors should be alert to students who are constantly alone.
- The supervisors should disperse students clustering around toilet areas and ensure that students use the toilet block assigned to them.

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

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

- Year Head
- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

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

The steps that will be taken by the school to determine if bullying behaviour has occurred, the approaches taken to address the bullying behaviour and to review progress are as follows:

#### **Step 1**

- A student/parent/unnamed source may bring a bullying concern to any member of staff verbally/email etc.

#### **Step 2**

- Teacher completes Form 1 to notify relevant teacher or Year Head completes it if the report is made to them. Form is submitted to Year Head and Deputy Principal.

#### **Step 3**

- The YH notes receipt of this Form on VSware notes of student(s). The YH begins the investigation (opens file) and determines using professional judgement if the incident(s) is bullying. Students may be interviewed.

#### **Step 4**

(a) If the incident(s) is deemed bullying:

- The student/s involved in the alleged bullying will be interviewed individually by the Year Head.
- The allegations will be listened to and addressed seriously and sensitively.
- While confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, all allegations will be dealt with discreetly.
- Details of the reported allegation of bullying will be written down and read back to the student/students for confirmation.
- If they so wish, the student may write down their account of the situation.
- Parents/guardians will be informed of the process.

(b) If the incident(s) is not determined as bullying, the bullying case is closed, and the matter is dealt with under the Code of Positive Behaviour and noted on VSware.

#### **Step 5**

- When the investigation is complete, all records should be uploaded to the Care Team file. Resolution strategies should be put in place. Form 2 Word Document should be completed as a summary of the investigation. Completion of this form should be noted on VSware notes.
- If it is concluded that a student has been engaged in bullying behaviour she will be informed:
  - that he/she is in breach of the school Code of Behaviour and that he/she must stop his/her unacceptable behaviour immediately.
  - that their parents/guardians will be informed to support him/her in changing her unacceptable behaviour.
  - that his/her class teacher and subject teachers will be informed.
- that support is available in the school from the Guidance Counsellors to enable him/her to change their unacceptable behaviour.

- that if their bullying behaviour continues, sanctions will be put in place.

• **The victim of bullying will be informed:**

- that their parents/guardians will be contacted so that they are in a position to help and support him/her.
- that he/she has behaved in a most responsible way in bringing the incident to the attention of the school authorities.
- that if he/she wishes to see the guidance counsellor, an appointment will be made for him/her.
- that continuing support will be available as long as it is necessary.
- that his/her class teacher and subject teachers will be informed.

**Step 6**

- The Year Head will check in with both parties within 20 days after the conclusion of the investigation. If the issues have been resolved the case is closed. If the issues are not resolved, the Bi Cínealta procedure in Appendix C shall be followed.

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

A programme of support for pupils who have been bullied shall be put in place. Such pupils may need counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed.

The following supports will be put in place for such students:

- Referral to the school Guidance Counsellor.
- Meetings with the relevant Year Head.
- Lunchtime club for students to have lunchtime activities to get involved in and to engage with a wider social circle.
- Pairing with other students.
- Encouragement to report further bullying instances.
- The school will address the attitudes of bullying within the school community through assemblies, pastoral care, SPHE, Religion and/or any opportunity that may arise.
- Bullying will be incorporated into SPHE lessons.
- In a case where sanctions need to be imposed, they will be enforced, as per the school's Code of Behaviour, by the Principal/Deputy Principal.
- If it is established that the bullying activity has not stopped, sanctions will then apply.
- Those found to be bullying will be supported to raise their awareness of the effects of their actions and to prevent such behaviour continuing. If appropriate he/she will be sanctioned in line with the school's Code of 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. (Appendix D). This update will include the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting, the number of ongoing incidents and the total number of incidents since the beginning of the school year. Where incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred, the principal will also provide a verbal update which will include where relevant, information relating to trends and patterns identified, strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant. This update does not contain personal or identifying information.

This policy is available to our school community on the school's website and in hard copy on request. A student friendly version of this policy is displayed in the school and is also available on our website and in hard copy on request.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed, following input from our school community, each calendar year or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this policy refers.

Signature –Chairperson, Board of Management:



Date: 28/4/2025

Signature – Secretary, Board of Management:



Date: 28/4/2025