

Anti-Bullying Policy

BÍ CINEÁLTA



St Patrick's Secondary School

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour.

The Management of St Patrick's Secondary School has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2024*. The board of management acknowledges that bullying behaviour interferes with the rights of the child as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We all, as a school community, have a responsibility to work together to prevent and address bullying behaviour and to deal with the negative impact of bullying behaviour. We are committed to ensuring that all students who attend our school are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our students is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our students and we are fully committed to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. We confirm that we will, in accordance with our obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the harassment of students or staff on any of the nine grounds specified: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

Definition of bullying

Bullying is defined in *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying* and *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* as targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society. The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the *Bí Cineálta* procedures. Each school is required to develop and implement a *Bí Cineálta* policy that sets out how the school community prevents and addresses bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

Section A: Development/review of our Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour

	Date Consulted	
Staff	March 14 th 2025	Staff Training to review and discuss Bi Cinealta Procedures and Policy
Students	May 2025	Questionnaire issued to all students
Parents	August 2025	Questionnaire issued to all parents
Management	August 2025	Information and Bi Cinealta Action Plan and Procedures shared and discussed.
Wider School Community	Sept 2025	Student Friendly Policy and info circulated to all. Inclusion of student friendly policy in student journals.
Date Policy was approved	September 2025	
Date Policy was last reviewed	N/A	

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.

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, 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.

A Telling Environment

It is important that the school community supports a 'telling' environment.

According to research conducted in Ireland, there is a persistent tendency not to report bullying incidents. Students should feel comfortable to talk about concerns regarding bullying behaviour.

- Teachers will use every available opportunity to raise awareness of the unacceptability of bullying behaviour and will address this behaviour if and when it arises.
- Respectful relationships will be promoted across the school community through modelling by staff and students.
- At Junior Level, the SPHE teachers will use aspects of the SPHE programme to raise awareness of the inappropriateness of bullying behaviour. This will be done in a structured way, with the teachers deciding on a series of classes for each group.
- At Senior Level, the SPHE/RSE programmes will address the topic of bullying and mutual respect.
- The lessons will aim to address issues such as empathy, assertiveness, coping skills, rights and responsibilities
- The SLT and MLT will continually remind the students of their rights and responsibilities and their entitlement to an education in a safe environment.
- Students will be encouraged by the Principal and Deputy Principal and all teachers/year heads to contribute to a school atmosphere and ethos in which the students feel free to speak up if bullying takes place.
- Students will be encouraged to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.



- Senior students will mentor first year students. It is hoped that this will help to alleviate some of the stresses associated with the transition from primary to secondary school.
- Subject and class teachers will be informed by SLT/MLT of any confirmed bullying behaviour so that they may monitor the situation.
- Year heads will discuss the Bí Cineálta policy with the students throughout the year.
- Visiting speakers will address the problems of bullying as appropriate.
- Stand-Up Awareness week will raise awareness of identity-based bullying behaviour including in particular homophobic, sexist and transphobic bullying.
- Parents and other members of the community will be encouraged to communicate concerns regarding bullying behaviour.
- Issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying behavior including homophobic, racist, sexist and transphobic bullying behaviour will be addressed through the curriculum and through visiting speakers/agencies as appropriate.
- Inclusion of the student friendly version of the Bí Cineálta Policy in the student journal. The student friendly policy will be displayed in poster format in the school notice boards.

A Trusted Adult

In St Patrick's Secondary School each year has a year head with this purpose in mind. This cultivates a relationship and environment whereby student feel comfortable having conversations with their teachers and thus have a "trusted adult" to feel supported by in school.

Year Heads 2025/26

<i>First Year White</i>	<i>Patrick McCarthy</i>
<i>First Year Orange</i>	<i>Brian Murphy</i>
<i>Second Year</i>	<i>Claire Kenny</i>
<i>Third Year Green</i>	<i>Flor Griffin</i>
<i>Third Year Gold</i>	<i>Kevin Fitzgerald</i>
<i>Transition Year</i>	<i>John Forrest</i>
<i>Fifth Year</i>	<i>Ezzedine Selmi</i>
<i>Sixth Year</i>	<i>Owen Hayes</i>



In some cases, students may approach another staff member that they are most comfortable with. This trusted adult should continue to support the student, as appropriate, while the behaviour is being addressed by the relevant member of staff.

Creating safe physical spaces in schools.

While not exhaustive, St Patricks Secondary School has implemented the following measures to help create safe physical spaces.

- Vigilant supervision during break and lunchtime.
- Suitable doors to main area or toilets.
- Base classrooms to avoid unnecessary movements.
- Outside eating space for ease of supervision.
- Supervisors on walkabout duty should check toilet areas.
- The supervisors should be alert to students who are alone.
- CCTV cameras in corridors and outside areas.

Online Reporting:

Student can create an online report of bullying through the anti-bullying section of our school website. This is regularly monitored by school management. It offers a very important additional avenue to report bullying for student who may not be comfortable doing so besides.

<https://stpatscastleisland.com/information/>

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Year Head

Deputy Principal

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 (where appropriate)

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):

Step 1:

Student/parent/staff member/other source may report bullying concern verbally/via email to the school or through the online reporting form on school website.

Step 2:

The staff member who receives the report completes ***Bí Cineálta Appendix C Form for Reporting Bullying Behaviour available as an appendix to this policy.***

This form must be submitted to the principal and a copy added to the relevant year head journal.

Step 3:

Deputy Principal in conjunction with relevant teachers/year heads investigates the concerns using the definition of bullying from Chapter 2 (*Bí Cineálta Procedures*). Students will be interviewed by the Deputy Principal as appropriate. 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

St Patrick's Secondary School



account of the situation. Deputy Principal will document the investigation in ***Bí Cineálta Appendix C Record of Bullying Investigation.***



Section D: Oversight

The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each 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: _____
Principal

Signed: Denis O'Donovan
Manager

Date: **02/09/2025**

Date: **02/09/2025**

Appendix B



WE WANT EVERYONE AT ST PATRICK'S SECONDARY SCHOOL TO FEEL SAFE AND HAPPY

Speak up, Stand strong, stop bullying!

- Talk to a sna/teacher/year head
- Talk to a parent/guardian
- Report on our school website

Single incidents are not considered bullying. (Single incidents may still be dealt with under School code of behaviour)

Cyberbullying
One single post on social media could still be bullying as it can be reshared repeatedly.

WHAT IS BULLYING?
BULLYING IS DELIBERATE, UNWANTED BEHAVIOUR THAT CAUSES HARM TO OTHERS. PHYSICAL, VERBAL, WRITTEN, EXTORTION, EXCLUSION

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

"St Pats" is an inclusive & respectful place

Support one another!
Work as a team!
Help one another!

OUR SCHOOL HAS A BÍ CINEÁLTA (BE KIND) POLICY



Appendix C: Record of Investigation into Bullying behaviour conducted by Year

Head/Deputy Principal

Name of pupil being bullied	
Name(s) of students involved in bullying incidents	
Year Group of Students	
The form and type of bullying behaviour	
Where and when it took place	
Name of Year Head	
Date investigation commenced	
Date of the initial engagement with the students involved	
Brief Description of bullying and its impact (please include dates) (Who, Why, What, When, Where?)	



Has Bullying Behaviour occurred? Circle as appropriate.	Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students? Yes No Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm? Yes No Is the behaviour repeated? Yes No <i>If the answer to each of the questions above is Yes, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour and the behaviour should be addressed using the Bi Cineálta Procedures. If the answer to any of these questions is No, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour.</i> <i>Note: A One off incident may be considered bullying in certain circumstances. A single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and thus becomes a repeated behaviour.</i>
<i>If bullying behaviour has taken place the remainder of this document should be completed and submitted to the Deputy Principal <u>&</u> Principal.</i> <i>If bullying behaviour has not taken place, the remainder of this form does not need to be completed. A copy of the form should still be submitted to the Deputy Principal <u>&</u> Principal noting bullying behaviour has not occurred as well as other relevant information.</i>	
Details of contact made with both sets of parents. (Date/Method/Reply)	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 students 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.

Details of the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour

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.*



Details of action taken: (Sanctions Recommended/Applied Strategies employed)	
Contact with outside agencies if appropriate.	
Date of Check in after approx. 20 days	
The effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the students involved The views of student(s) The views of the parent(s)	



Has the bullying behaviour ceased? The views of student(s) The views of the parent(s)	
Date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased	
Further Comment/Recommendation	
Signed:	
Date:	

Appendix D

Guide to Providing Bullying Behaviour Update

Guide to providing Bullying Behaviour Update of management meeting of St Patrick's Secondary School.

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 Management 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 management 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 student-friendly Bí Cineálta policy displayed?

3. What date did the school 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 manager 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 manager discussed how the school is addressing all reports of bullying behaviour? ☐Yes ☐No

10. Is the manager 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 manager 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 student-friendly 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

Appendix F

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

The Management of St Patrick's Secondary School confirms that the annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour and its implementation was completed at the management on: _____

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: _____

(Manager)

Signed: _____

(Principal)

Date:

Date:

Date of next review: