



St. Paul's National School

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

1. Policy Statement

Bí Cineálta means be kind and this is a policy St. Paul's National School promotes. We value and promote the active involvement of the whole school community in creating a respectful and inclusive environment where bullying has no place.

The Board of Management (BoM) of St. Paul's National 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 BoM 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.

St. Paul's National School 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.

St. Paul's National School 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.

2. 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 overtime and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society. To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour you should consider the following questions:

1. Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?
2. Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?
3. Is the behaviour repeated?

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 Bí Cineálta Procedures.

Note: One-off incidents 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. If the answer to any of these questions is No, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

3. Development of our Bí Cineálta policy

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	Survey
Students	April 2025	Survey
Parents	March 2025	Survey
Board of Management	May 2025	Draft Policy
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	NA	NA
Date policy was approved:	30/9/2025	
Date policy was last reviewed:		

4. Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by the school. These include strategies specifically aimed at preventing gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

St. Paul's National School aims to prevent bullying behaviour through the following list of approaches and activities which are set under the four areas of the Department of Education's Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice.

Ref Circular 0042/2018 and 0043/2018 for guidance on programmes and external facilitators for the promotion of wellbeing.

4.1 Culture & Environment

St. Paul's National School:

- Welcomes difference and diversity.
- Encourages open reporting in a safe space.
- Operates a buddy system between senior and junior classes promoting kindness and inclusion.
- Uses restorative practice to repair relationships.
- Staff use prevention strategies to build empathy, respect, and resilience ie. circle time, restorative practice, friends for life.
- Staff wear Hi-vis bibs on yard for increased visibility.
- Encourage bystanders to report bullying behaviour by filling out surveys.
- Displays the student BÍ Cineálta policy in every classroom.

4.2 Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

St. Paul's National School:

- Use programmes such as: Friends for Life, Weaving Wellbeing, FUSE, etc. to help prevent bullying behaviour.
- Use social stories to promote awareness for pupils with additional needs.
- Implements the anti-bullying module of the SPHE programme as it applies during each school year.
- Teaches the SPHE curriculum to every class each year.
- Use the Grow in Love programme to teach about kindness, diversity and inclusion.

4.3 Policy & Planning

St. Paul's National School are committed to following the policies and procedures which support behaviour and wellbeing which include:

- Ensuring students have a voice via student council and other school committees.
- Being consistent in recording, evaluating and following through on bullying incidents.
- The ongoing professional development of staff.

4.4 Relationships & Partnerships

St. Paul's National School values and promotes:

- The development of strong relationships and partnerships with the school community to prevent bullying.
- The active involvement of the whole school community in creating a respectful and inclusive environment where bullying has no place.
- Communication through BoM meetings, PA meetings, student councils, assemblies, social media/website and newsletters.

5. Strategies to Prevent Bullying include but are not limited to the following:

At St. Paul's National School we:

- Promote open classroom discussion on bullying.
- Ensure that SPHE and Stay Safe programme is fully implemented each year.
- Promote Safer Internet Day.
- Promote positive online behaviour, modelled by staff.
- Encourage parental engagement and online safety events.
- Liaise with the community Garda on online conduct.

- Implement the school mobile phone/ digital device policy.
- Encourage student advocacy by working with the student council and other committees to identify and prevent bullying behaviour.
- Encourage inclusive displays around the school.
- Role model positive relationships by staff.
- Build positive relationships using the trusted adult concept.
- Promote equal participation in activities across the school.
- Promote awareness campaigns and gender equality education.
- Ensure the AUP is enacted see section 6.1

<https://circulars.gov.ie/pdf/circular/education/2018/43.pdf>

6. Addressing Bullying Behaviour

“The primary aim in addressing bullying behaviour is to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.” (Bí Cineálta 1.4). The class teacher investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour, with a view to establishing the facts and bringing any such behaviour to an end.

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.

When bullying behaviour occurs, St. Paul’s National 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.

6.1 School Policies Supporting Prevention

- Acceptable Use Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment
- Mobile phone and digital device policy
- Anti cyber bullying policy

6.2 Uncovering, Investigating, and Resolving Bullying Situations

The class teacher investigates all reports or suspicions of bullying behaviour.

St. Paul's National School follows clear procedures to identify, investigate, resolve, and record bullying behaviour. Here are 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).

Since bullying is often hidden from teachers, a class survey

(Document 2- Class survey) is administered at least twice a year in all classes or if the need arises, additional surveys can be administered.

- Prior to the survey being administered, (Document 1 “where St. Paul’s stands on bullying”) will be read aloud to the class.
- Surveys are adapted to the age and ability of pupils: written surveys for 2nd–6th class and read-aloud surveys for Junior Infants–1st class and for pupils with additional needs.
- If bullying is identified through a survey, the class teacher may ask any pupil or group of pupils to write an account of what happened. Restorative practise questions should be used by the teacher to guide the reflection and gather information. This is a standard procedure and does not mean that the pupil is guilty of misbehaviour. Victims of bullying will also be asked to write an account of their experience.

- Pupils involved in bullying are interviewed by the class teacher (See Document 3 A – alleged bullying interview and 3B – Bullying behaviour checklist and 3C alleged bullying interview continued) to understand what happened and why.
- If bullying is confirmed, the pupil must sign a promise (Document 4 - pupil promise) to treat others fairly and respectfully.
- The teacher uses a “Reform, not Blame” approach. The aim is to stop the behaviour and help the pupil change, not to punish. If the pupil signs and keeps the promise the matter is deemed resolved.
- Once resolved, the teacher writes a report (See Document 5 – incident report form), with the findings, actions taken, and results. This report is given to the class teacher or the anti-bullying coordinator to be filed.
- The principal will be informed that an incident of bullying has occurred.
- After any incident of bullying has been identified a follow up survey will be administered in that class within 20 school days.
- If the child refuses to sign the promise, then the matter will be referred to the parents and principal.

6.3 Sanctions for Breaking a Promise

If a pupil continues bullying after promising to stop, the following steps may be taken:

1. **First breach:** Parents and principal are informed of the bullying. A meeting is held with the class teacher and parents to understand the issue and agree a new plan. A new promise (Document 6 – pupil, supported by parent promise) is signed by the bullying pupil and is counter signed by the parents and the principal.
2. **Second breach:** A meeting with the principal is held and a school sanction may be imposed in line with the Code of Behaviour.
3. **Third/ subsequent breach:** The case is referred to the BoM for further action under the school’s Code of Behaviour.

In summary

Step 1 – Teacher reads, where St. Paul`s stands on bullying aloud: Document 1

Step 2 – Class completes a class survey: Document 2

Step 3 – If bullying is suspected, pupils write a report on what happened

Step 4 – Teacher conducts interview with alleged bully/bullies and completes bullying behaviour checklist: Document - 3A / 3B / 3C

Step 5 – Bully signs a promise to stop this behaviour: Document 4

Step 6 – Once resolved teacher fills in incident report form: Document 5

Step 7- Follow up survey is conducted within 20 school days of the incident.

Step 8 - Bully signs a pupil supported by parent promise to stop behaviour:
Document 6

7. Support for Those Affected by Bullying

St. Paul`s National School is a united school community, we take a proactive and determined approach to prevent and confront bullying behaviour. We will support and guide both the victim and the bully to break the cycle of harm, with the clear goal of eradicating bullying entirely and fostering a culture of respect, kindness, and safety for all. The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

7.1 Support for Victims

- They will be listened to, supported and reassured.
- It will be indicated clearly that the bullying behaviour is not the fault of the child who has experienced bullying behaviour.
- Regular check-ins with class teacher/SNA are important.
- In certain situations, where warranted and resources allow, a student may access additional support from teachers/SNAs in the school (including through the Continuum of Support).
- Any engagement with external services/supports should be noted.
- Ongoing supervision and support may be needed for the students involved, even where bullying behaviour has ceased.

7.2 Support for Pupils who Bully

At St. Paul's National School we believe it is important to:

- Help pupils who bully to understand the effects of their behaviour and develop empathy towards those affected.
- Make it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a 'clean sheet'.
- Make it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honourable thing and giving them praise for this.
- Promote regular Check-ins with teacher/SNAs
- Encourage staff to promote positive behaviour when observed and give appropriate praise.
- Make adequate supports available to pupils through the Continuum of Support.

7.3 Support for Witnesses

At St. Paul's National School we believe it is important to:

- Ensure witnesses are listened to, supported and reassured.
- Ensure they are praised for reporting the bullying behaviour.
- Regularly check-in with teacher/SNA.

8. 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.

9. Guide to Providing Bullying Behaviour Update

Guide to providing Bullying Behaviour Update for Board of Management meeting of DD/MM/YYYY

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

Total number of new incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the last board of management meeting.	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour currently ongoing.	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the beginning of this school year.	

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

- The trends and patterns identified such as the form of bullying behaviour, type of bullying behaviour if known, location of bullying behaviour, when it occurred etc.
- The strategies used to address the bullying behaviour.
- Any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour
- If any serious incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred which have had a serious adverse impact on a student.
- If a parent has informed the school that a student has left the school because of reported bullying behaviour.
- If any additional support is needed from the Board of Management.

- If the school's Bí Cineálta policy requires urgent review in advance of the annual review.

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

Signed:

Date:

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed:

Date:

(Principal)

Glossary

BoM - Board of Management

AUP - (Acceptable Use Policy) is a set of rules that outlines how students and staff are expected to use school technology, internet, and digital resources responsibly and safely.

SPHE – Social personal and health education.

Continuum of Support - A framework schools use to provide varying levels of support ranging from classroom support to school support to school support plus to students.

DLP - (Designated Liaison Person) is the staff member in a school responsible for managing child protection concerns and working with outside agencies to keep students safe.

Version

Policy Version: 3

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Date for next review: September 2026