



Convent Hill, Ballina, Co. Mayo
Tel: 096 22768 - Roll No: 19773N
Email: office@saintnicholas.ie
Website: www.saintnicholas.ie
Charity No. 20140540

“Bí Cineálta: Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools”

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1. Introduction

Saint Nicholas Special School is committed to providing a safe, caring, and inclusive environment for all pupils. This Bí Cineálta Policy replaces the 2013 Anti-Bullying Procedures and has been developed in line with the Department of Education's Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (Circular 0055/2024), relevant circulars, and national legislation.

We affirm our commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and, in accordance with our obligations under equity legislation, will take all steps 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. The policy applies to all members of the school community and reflects our ethos of kindness, respect, and inclusion.

2. Definition of Bullying

In accordance with the Bí Cineálta Action Plan and Procedures, bullying is defined as: 'Unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time. This includes identity-based bullying and may occur in-person or online.'

Examples include name-calling, physical aggression, exclusion, damage to property, cyberbullying, homophobic or transphobic comments, racist or sexist remarks, sexual harassment, or behaviour targeting disability or membership of the Traveler community.

Each school is required to develop and implement a Bí Cineálta policy that sets out how the school community prevents and addresses bullying behavior. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behavior that is not bullying are provided in the school's code of conduct policy.

3. Development and Review of the Bí Cineálta Policy

This policy was developed through consultation with staff, parents, students, and the Board of Management, consistent with Circular 0055/2024. Opportunities for input included staff meetings, whole staff Bí Cineálta training, parent questionnaires, and adapted methods for student participation, recognising that many of our students are pre-verbal. Parents of pre-verbal pupils answered on their behalf.

Review Schedule: The policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if directed by the Board or the Department of Education.

4. Consultation Opportunities and Records

The following opportunities for input were provided during the development and review of this policy:

	Date Consulted	Method of Consultation
School Staff		Questionnaire
Students		As children are Pre verbal their parents/guardians answered on their behalf
Parents		Questionnaire
BOM		BOM informed about Bí Cineálta initiative at BOM meeting.
Whole Staff Training		Training on Bí Cineálta for whole staff. ½ Day closure
Date Policy was approved		

5. Preventing Bullying Behaviour

Whole-school strategies to promote kindness, inclusion, and respect. Tailored supports for pupils with Moderate to severe profound GLD and ASD. Staff model positive behaviour and celebrate diversity.

6. Preventing Online Bullying Behaviour

- Education on cyber safety
- Developing and communicating an acceptable use policy for technology,
- Referring to appropriate online behavior as part of the standards of behavior in the code of behavior.
- Parents/Guardians aware of the school's mobile phone policy.
- Implementing the SPHE curriculum

7.Preventing Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying Behaviour

Explicit support for LGBTQ+ pupils and staff. Inclusive curriculum and swift response to incidents.

8. Preventing Racist Bullying Behaviour

Having the cultural diversity of the school on display

Providing supports to school staff to respond to the needs of students for whom English is an additional language and help communicating with parents.

Providing supports to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities including Traveller and Roma students, and to encourage communication with parents

Ensuring that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

9. Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour and Sexual Harassment

- Education on respect and consent.
- Immediate action on sexist remarks or harassment.
- Members of staff treat all pupils equally, irrespective of sex.
- Ensure all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities, regardless of sex.
- Celebrate diversity at school and acknowledge all student contributions.
- Encourage parents to reinforce values of respect at home.
- Promote positive role models within the community.
- Challenge gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment.

10. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

- **Active supervision:**
 - At Saint Nicholas, appropriate supervision is an important measure to help prevent and address bullying behaviour.
 - All reasonable measures are taken to ensure the safety of students and to supervise them during school hours and activities.
- **Classroom monitoring:**
 - Teachers promote a positive and inclusive classroom environment.
 - Teachers are trained to recognise signs of bullying and to intervene appropriately.
- **Anonymous reporting mechanisms:**
 - Students and parents are encouraged to report bullying incidents confidentially.
 - This ensures concerns can be raised without fear of retaliation.

- **Regular staff training:**
 - Staff receive ongoing training to identify, prevent, and address bullying.
- **Communicating with parents and guardians:**
 - The school maintains open communication with parents and guardians regarding bullying concerns.
 - A collaborative approach is used to resolve issues effectively.
- **Implementation of the anti-bullying policy:**
 - The school follows the procedures outlined in *Bí Cineálta*.
 - Reports of bullying are taken seriously and addressed promptly

11. Addressing Bullying Behaviour

Teacher's responsible for addressing bullying behaviour:

Sinéad Leahy (Deputy Principal).

Class teachers of students involved

When bullying occurs, the school will:

- Ensure privacy for all students involved.
- Listen carefully to the student's account.
- Consider the age and ability of the student when responding.
- Discuss with the student how best to handle the situation.
- Take action in a timely manner.
- Inform the parents/guardians of the students involved.

12. Requests to Take No Action

School duty of care requires action even if a request to take no action is made.

- Students/Staff may fear repercussions for reporting bullying.
- Staff demonstrate empathy to ensure the student feels safe and supported.
- Discussions are held with persons involved and parental intervention is handled with empathy and sensitivity.
- All concerns and actions are documented.
- Even if parents request no action, the school may intervene if necessary, depending on the severity of the situation.

13. Determining if Bullying Behaviour Has Ceased

Follow-up checks and communication with all involved and a review will take place within 20 days of initial intervention

Continued support and supervision for the students involved.

If bullying persists, the intervention strategies should be reassessed with students and parents, with further follow ups scheduled.

Where necessary the school Code of Behaviour should be implemented with disciplinary actions being a matter between students, parents and school.

14. Supporting Those Involved

Support for victims, witnesses, and those displaying bullying behaviour. May include counselling or social skills programmes.

15. Recording Bullying Behaviour

All incidents recorded on Bullying Incident Form (Appendix 1). Principal reports to Board of Management at every meeting.

Records should document:

- The form and type of bullying.

- Location, date, and time of incidents.
- Include details of engagement with students and parents, including their views on actions taken.
- Conduct follow-up reviews to determine if the bullying has ceased.
- Note any external supports provided, if needed.
- Ensure records align with the school's Data Protection Policy.
- Add records to the student support file to maintain a holistic support system.
- Update the student support file to reflect response strategies and supports.
- Follow guidance from the **Department of Education (2023)**.

16. Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Procedures follow the Bí Cineálta Procedures and Circular 0055/2024. Includes escalation and referral processes.

17. Oversight and Monitoring

Principal and Board oversee implementation. Annual review and monitoring of effectiveness.

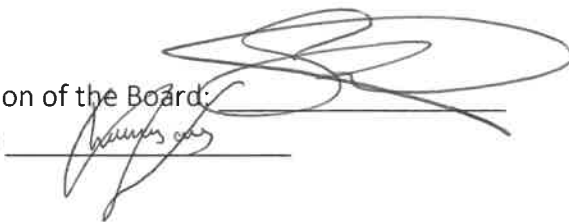
18. Ratification of the Bí Cineálta Policy

Ratified by Board on 05/11/2025. Effective from 05/11/2025. Reviewed on _____.

Signed:

Chairperson of the Board:

Principal:



19. Appendices

Appendix 1: Bullying Incident Form