



ST. PETER'S N.S. BÍ CINEÁLTA POLICY

The Board of Management of St. Peter's N.S. has adopted the following Anti-Bullying Policy within the framework of the school's overall Code of 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 recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour.

The aim of our Bi Cineálta policy is to:

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

A positive school culture is central and we work towards a climate which is:

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

Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) are a priority and these should:

- build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils.
- explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying, including homophobic and transphobic bullying.

Bullying Definition:

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.
- It is behaviour which is deliberate in nature and is unwanted. It is not accidental or reckless behaviour.

The harm can be:

- Physical (e.g.: personal injury, damage to or loss of property).
- Social: (e.g.: withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion).
- Emotional: (e.g.: low self-esteem, depression, anxiety).

A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards a pupil 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.

Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour:

- If the repeated harm is real for the pupil experiencing the behaviour, but unintended by the other pupil, this is not bullying, but, importantly, must be addressed under the school's code of behaviour.
- Disagreement between pupils is not considered bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Forms and Types of Bullying:

Forms of Bullying Behaviour

Bullying can be direct:

- Physical: pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping pupils. Physical assault and destruction of personal property are also forms of bullying behaviour.
- Verbal: continual name calling which insults, humiliates the pupil – this may refer to physical appearance, clothes, gender, accent, academic ability, race or ethnic origin.
- Written: Writing insulting remarks in public places, passing notes or drawings about the pupil.
- Extortion: where something is obtained through force or threats.

Bullying can be indirect:

- Exclusion: where a pupil is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded or ignored by a pupil or group of pupils.
- Relational: Where a pupil's attempts to form friendships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined, threats, non-verbal gesturing, malicious

gossip, spreading rumours, silent treatment and manipulation of friend groups etc. can all form relational bullying for a pupil.

Bullying can be online:

- Cyber bullying is carried out via text, direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, e-mail, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chatrooms and other online technologies.
- This can include:
 - Sending or sharing of insulting and offensive or intimidating messages or images via online means as mentioned above.
 - Posting information which is personal, private or sensitive without consent.
 - Making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other pupils.
 - Excluding/disrupting access to a pupil on purpose on online chat groups/access to accounts/from an online game.

Types of Bullying Behaviour

- There are many different types of bullying behaviour. These can include directing bullying at someone focused on the following: disability, exceptional ability, gender identity, LGBTQ+, physical appearance, racism, poverty status, religious identity, sexism and sexual harassment.
- These are not exhaustive lists. It is important to be able to identify the form and type of bullying behaviour being reported.

Education and Prevention Strategies:

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by the school. We commit to the following:

- create a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and there is a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.
- involve parents as active partners in fostering an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated.
- produce a child-friendly poster to display around the school.
- promote the core values of our school: Kindness, Respect and Belonging.
- support the idea that our school is a telling environment.
- promote the concept of a trusted adult – stay safe linkage – who to tell.
- create safe spaces in our school building and yards through effective supervision.
- create a positive school culture and climate which is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity.
- encourage pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment and promote respectful relationships across the school.
- Stay Safe and SPHE lessons focusing on positive behaviour form part of curricular content in all classes.
- modelling respectful behaviour towards colleagues, pupils and visitors in our school environment.
- curricular and extra-curricular activities that help to develop a sense of self worth, working together, inclusion and respect.
- giving 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.
- ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy.
- creating a happy and safe learning environment for the children.

- disseminating information regarding real time and online training to parents in relation to bullying (e.g. the facilitation of internet safety/cyberbullying talks for parents).
- encouraging children to tell in confidence, as early as possible (e.g. directly to teacher or worry box).
- encouraging children to say “No” to negative behaviour that they observe. They will also be made aware of the difference between telling tales about minor incidents and telling to stay safe or keep others safe.
- reminding children that if they feel uncomfortable talking to the teacher for fear others would hear, a note left on the teacher’s table will prompt a more discreet conversation.
- attending relevant training where required.
- taking a restorative approach to dealing with behaviour issues.
- holding annual events (e.g. Wellbeing Week).
- integrating a wellbeing programme across all classes.
- making clear that our school has a zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment of any kind.

Partnership with Parents:

Bullying is not a problem schools can solve on their own. Parents/Guardians need to:

1. be good role models for children and young people.
2. teach young people to respect and value difference and diversity.
3. make it their business to know what bullying is and understand the different types and forms of bullying.
4. educate themselves in relation to social media and take an active interest in how children and young people are using the internet, social media and mobile phones.
5. know, and look out for, the signs that a child or young person may be being bullied or may be engaged in bullying behaviour.

6. offer support and listen to what a child or young person wants you to do to help.
7. become aware of the dangers of cyberbullying and attend training.
8. familiarise themselves with, and cooperate with the procedures for reporting bullying behaviour.

Programme of Support:

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

- Staff have engaged in professional learning to support pupil wellbeing (e.g. Restorative Practice, JESS programme).
- Social skills groups and cooperative games.
- Social Personal Health Education including Stay Safe Programme, Walk Tall, Webwise, Relationship and Sexuality Education and the LEANS programme
- Annual events (e.g. Kindness Week) to foster more respect, empathy and support for bullied pupils and all pupils.
- 'Grow in Love' programme.
- Ongoing communication with NEPS, NCSE and TUSLA, where required.

Addressing Bullying Behaviour:

Responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour

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

Approach

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 pupils involved, rather than to apportion blame.

When addressing bullying behaviour teachers should:

- ensure that the pupil 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 pupil who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation.
- act 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 (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

Bullying is defined 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 to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools).

Bullying behaviour that occurs when pupils are not under the care or responsibility of the school

A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when pupils 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 pupils involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, schools should deal with it in accordance with their Bí Cineálta policy. Where the pupil displaying the bullying behaviour is not a pupil in the school, but the pupil who is experiencing the bullying

behaviour is a pupil in the school, the school should support the pupil who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as appropriate and engage with them and their parents to determine what steps can be taken.

General principles

- It is important for school staff to be fair and consistent in their approach to address bullying behaviour.
- Both the pupil who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the pupil who is displaying bullying behaviour need support.
- It is important that the pupil who is experiencing bullying behaviour is engaged with, without delay so that they feel listened to, supported and reassured.
- School staff should identify the supports needed for the pupil who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties and ensure that their needs are met.

Requests to take no action

A pupil who reports bullying behaviour may ask a member of staff not to do anything and just “look out” for them due to not wanting to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They might 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 pupil, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the pupil to work out together what steps can be taken to address the behaviour. It must be made clear to the pupil that other parties may need to be informed for their welfare. Parents may also make the school aware of bullying behaviour and specifically request that no action is to be taken by the school. Parents should put this in writing to the school. The school will consider each such request on a case-by-case basis while reserving the right, if determined that based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour through the Bí Cineálta procedures and/or the Code of Behaviour where appropriate.

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour the following questions will be considered:

1. Is the behaviour targeted at a specific pupil or group of pupils?
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.

What is not bullying behaviour?

- A once off instance of negative behaviour
- Disagreement between pupils
- Instances where pupils don’t want to remain friends
- Non-deliberate or unplanned behaviours of pupils with special educational needs (Bí Cineálta Section 2.2)

Cyberbullying

- Bullying behaviour including cyberbullying behaviour, which has occurred outside of school can often continue in school.

- Where a pupil engages in cyberbullying behaviour when in school, the school must address the bullying behaviour.
- Where a pupil experiences cyberbullying behaviour in school, the school must address the bullying behaviour.
- In the case of cyberbullying, although the hurtful message may have been sent outside of school hours, the pupil may view the message while in school. Where this happens, the school must address the bullying behaviour.

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred teachers should consider what, where, when and why?

Where one pupil is involved, the pupil should be engaged with individually at first. Thereafter, this pupil and the pupil who is reported to be experiencing the bullying behaviour should be met together.

If a group of pupils is involved, each pupil should be engaged with individually at first. Thereafter, all pupils involved and the pupil who is reported to be experiencing the bullying behaviour should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each pupil should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views. Each pupil should be supported as appropriate, following the group meeting. It may be helpful to ask the pupils involved to write down their account of the incident(s).

Where bullying behaviour has occurred

- 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 pupils 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.
- It is important to listen to the views of the pupil who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation.

- A record should be kept of the engagement with all involved. This record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known (see Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the Bi Cineálta procedures), where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the pupils involved and their parents (Appendix A).

Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred

The teacher must engage with the pupils involved and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement to review the outcome of the process (e.g. the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour). The date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased should be recorded. Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted.

Ongoing supervision and support may be needed for the pupils involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased.

If the bullying behaviour has not ceased the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the pupils involved and their parents. A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased.

If it becomes clear that the pupil who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school's consideration should be given to using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

If disciplinary sanctions are considered, it must be made clear to all (pupils and parents/guardians) that this is a private matter (under GDPR) between the pupil being disciplined, his/her parents/guardians and the school.

Recording Bullying Behaviour

See the template in Appendix A which includes all the required details/fields.

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 pupils and parents. The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented.

Where a support file exists, a copy of the record should be placed on the pupil's support file with a brief reference to it on a behavioural log of actions (priority document). Where a pupil support plan exists, the plan should be updated to incorporate response strategies and associated supports.

Where no pupil support file exists, open a behavioural log of actions on Aladdin and add a reference to the completed process.

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 2.4)

Complaint Process

If a parent/guardian is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour, they should be referred to the school's complaints procedures.

If a pupil and/or parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions have had a negative effect on the pupil.

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.

Review and Ratification

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 17/06/25

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron, if requested.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: Barry O Flynn

Date: 17/06/25 (CHAIRPERSON)

Signed: [Signature]

Date: 17/06/25 (PRINCIPAL)

Appendix A:

Template for recording bullying behaviour

Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____

Class _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))*

☐ Pupil concerned

☐ Other pupil

☐ Parent

☐ Teacher

☐ Other

4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))

☐ Playground

☐ Classroom

☐ Corridor

☐ Toilets

☐ School Bus

☐ Other

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es))

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Aggression | <input type="checkbox"/> Cyberbullying |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Damage to Property | <input type="checkbox"/> Intimidation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Isolation/Exclusion | <input type="checkbox"/> Malicious Gossip |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Name Calling | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) |

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

- ☐ Homophobic
- ☐ Disability/SEN related
- ☐ Racist
- ☐ Member of the traveller community.
- ☐ Other (Specify)

8. Brief description of bullying behaviour and its impact .

9. Details of actions taken

10. Review of actions taken

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher)

Date _____