



Our Lady of Lourdes N.S.

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Our Lady of Lourdes 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 2025*.

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, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and member of the Traveller community.

Catholic schools have a distinctive understanding of the human person, recognizing 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 each person in our school is treated with respect and care, in accordance with the Catholic Schedule.

As a Catholic school, we are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual. No human person is to be devalued, and all have an indispensable part to play in the school community, regardless of difference.

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 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.

Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour:

- If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying, but, importantly, must be addressed under the school's code of behaviour.
- Some students with special educational needs, may have social communication difficulties which may make them communicate their needs through behaviours that can hurt themselves or others. It is important to note that these behaviours are not deliberate or planned but in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they cannot control.
- Disagreement between students is not considered bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Types of Bullying:

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. This is not an exhaustive list.

Bullying can be: Direct:

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

Bullying can be: Indirect:

- Exclusion: where a student is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded or ignored by a student or group of students.
- Relational: where a student's attempts to form friendships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined, threats, non-verbal gesturing, malicious, spreading rumours, silent treatment and manipulation of friend groups etc, can all form relational bullying for a student.

Online Bullying Behaviour:

Cyberbullying 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 students.
- Exclude/disrupt access to a student on purpose on online chat groups/access to accounts/from an online game.

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	14 th March 2025	Staff Meeting – staff provided with the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the new Bí Cineálta action plan and stemming from this discussion, staff were informed of the important points in dealing with an incidence or report of bullying. Staff were given time to discuss and relay feedback.
	28 th April 2025	Sharing of draft policy with staff to discuss/consult and make any amendments.
Students	27 th March 2025	Junior & Senior Infants, R1 and R2 – questionnaires were sent home. R3 to R6 – questionnaires were completed on Chromebooks.
	5 th April 2025	Student Council took ownership of creating a child friendly version of the Bí Cineálta policy.
Parents		Online questionnaire created and administered.
Board of Management	7 th March 2025	Principal outlined Bí Cineálta to the Board of Management.
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 (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures).

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 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 dialogue with parents, thereby building a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, trust and confidence.

In continuing to develop prevention strategies, this school will listen to young people and parents, to help establish their particular context and needs. Frequent periods of reflection and engagement by the school, young people and parents, will be used to discern appropriate supports for young people in this school and to help inform future prevention strategies.

Culture and Environment: We strive to:

- Create a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and where there is a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.
- Creating a positive and inclusive school culture.
- Positive relations with students, staff, parents and the wider school community.
- Effective leadership.
- Support the concept that our school is a “telling” environment.
- Promote the concept of a trusted adult.
- Safe spaces in the school.
- Supervision in the yard and classrooms.
- Encouraging a sense of belonging and ownership in the school.

- Creating a positive school culture which: -
 - Is welcoming of difference and diversity and is inclusive.
 - Encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of behaviour
 - Promotes respect across the school.

Ways in which we work to achieve these goals:

- Catch them being good. We notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- “Bucket Fillers” award and rewards for students who are respectful and kind to others.
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules.
- “Pupil Promise” – each pupil signs a pupil promise sheet at the beginning of each school year. Their parents also sign the sheet.
- Adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- Our Student Council.
- School Assemblies promote a positive culture of respect and unity throughout the school.
- Restorative Practice – our school is a Restorative Practice School

Curriculum:

- Teaching and learning in SPHE –
- Walk Tall/RSE/Stay Safe/Friends for Life Programme. This promotes personal responsibility for behaviour and actions.
- Staff model respectful behaviour towards pupils, colleagues and visitors to the school.
- Curricular and extra-curricular activities promote a sense of self-worth, inclusion, respect and co-operation.
- Students given opportunities to work in groups with their peers which builds a sense of connection, belonging and empathy.
- School Shuffle – senior classes helping junior classes.
- Circle time and Giraffe talk used regularly as check-ins and also as a means of problem solving and working through difficult situations in the classroom.
- Restorative Practice – we teach Restorative Practice questions to the children and use Restorative Practice to develop empathy and solve disagreements.
- Weaving Wellbeing is used throughout the school to develop empathy and also to help the children develop knowledge of themselves and others.
- FUSE (DCU Antibullying Programme).
- The Leans Programme

Policy & Planning:

- Bí Cineálta Policy
- Student Bí Cineálta Policy
- Mission Statement promotes an ethos where “people matter” in our school.
- Supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of the school are kept under observation.
- Code of Behaviour.
- Child Safe-guarding.
- Acceptable Use Policy.
- RSE Policy.
- SEN/Inclusion Policy.
- Wellbeing Policy.
- Appropriate CPD for Staff.

Relationships & Partnerships:

- Interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as the Parents Association, Student Council, Wellbeing Committee, Green Schools Committee, School Shuffle, Meet & Greet in the morning by the Principal and Deputy Principal and Management Team.
- Promoting acts of kindness - Bucket Fillers/Random Acts of Kindness/Celebration of Birthdays/Wellbeing Week/Friendship Wednesdays and Fridays in the yard/School Shuffle/Friendship Week/Community Garden – encouraging peer monitoring and peer support.
- Supporting and encouraging active participation by students and parents in school life.
- Promoting a culture of looking out for the less fortunate and also developing a realisation in the pupils of all they have to be grateful for - collections for Simon/Homeless Cork/Edel House

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

- Two teachers and one SNA are on duty at all break times.
- Children are accompanied by at least two staff members on all school trips.

Preventing cyberbullying/homophobic/transphobic bullying, racist bullying, preventing sexual harassment. In addition to the above-mentioned strategies, the school has the following in place to prevent and address bullying.

Preventing Cyberbullying Behaviour:

Note: The digital age of consent is the minimum age a user must be before a social media or internet company can collect process and store their data. In Ireland, the digital age of consent is 16. Children between 13 and 16 must have parental permission to sign up to social media services. Therefore, children under the age of 13 should not have a social media account.

- Promoting digital citizenship.
- Implementing the SPHE curriculum.
- Webwise.
- Promoting online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online.
- Internet Safety Day.
- Community Guard visits to the school.

Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour:

- Maintaining an inclusive physical environment.
- Challenging gender stereo-types:
 - Exposing the girls to all types of sport
 - "I Wish" Programme encouraging women in science.
 - Variety of toys and games in classrooms.

Preventing Racist Bullying Behaviour:

- Fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated.
- Wellbeing Diversity Day.
- UNICEF "Gold Award" School.
- School Libraries – certain books representing different culture.
- Displays and posters celebrating difference.
- Themed Assemblies e.g. "It's OK to be different".

Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour:

- "I Wish" Programme in Senior Classes.
- Challenging gender stereotypes through playful activities.
- Exposure to a wide variety of activities – soccer, chess, hockey, Irish Dancing etc.
- Celebrate people of all sexes – creatives/athletes

- Celebrate International Women's Day.
- Bank of library resources e.g. Gender Equality Matters by Celine Keating.

Preventing Sexual Harassment:

- Promoting positive role models within the school community.
- Challenging gender stereotypes.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

All class teachers/Principal/Deputy 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.

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 Bí Cineálta procedures):

Bullying is a 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 (Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying).

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and restore as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame). With this in mind, the school's procedures are as follows:

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the relevant teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation may be resolved. A record is kept of all incidents investigated and the Principal must be informed.

- Parents and children are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
- Teachers are encouraged to take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
- Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. The pupil who has reported the bullying will usually be interviewed first. Any other pupil involved – either directly or as a bystander, will be interviewed subsequently. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first by the relevant teacher and another teacher, either the Principal or Deputy Principal.
- Thereafter, all those involved will be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.
- Each member of a group will be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.
- It may in certain circumstances be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident.
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has not occurred (e.g. an isolated incident, a misunderstanding, an accident), but where the allegation was of a serious nature, or where a pupil is particularly distressed, the parents of the parties involved may be contacted after the investigation, so that the incident and investigation can be explained to parents, so that they can speak about it with their child, if they wish.
- The bullying behaviour must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the Recording Sheet. This must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. Any other relevant information should also be recorded e.g. a record of the discussions that took place and the actions taken.
- *In cases where a teacher has determined that bullying has not occurred, or in the case of an isolated or concerning incident warranting monitoring, the teacher will refer to the Code of Conduct and an Incident Form will be completed.*

- The school should give Parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school. Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to her how she is in breach of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and efforts should be made to try to get her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- The pupil is given a verbal warning and will be requested to apologise to the victim. A Pupil Behaviour Promise must be signed by the child and her parents.
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved will be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect.

The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour (see Chapter 6 of Bí Cineálta procedures):

- NEPS
- Oide
- Webwise
- FUSE (DCU Antibullying Centre Programme)
- TUSLA
- In dealing with bullying behaviour, seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a clean sheet and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.
- Raising the self-esteem of the bully and encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills.
- Increased Circle Time and Restorative Practice lessons.
- Introduction of new peer groups so they can mix.

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. 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: Brian Twomey
Chairperson of the Board of Management

Date: 16/6/2025.

Signed: Mercedes Campion
Principal

Date: 16/6/2025

Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied: _____

Class: _____ Teacher: _____

2. Name of teacher dealing with the bullying: _____

3. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) involved in the bullying:

	Name	Class		Name	Class
1			4		
2			5		
3			6		

4. Date the bullying was brought to the school's attention: _____

5. Who brought it to the school's attention: _____

6. Where the bullying took place: _____

7. Date the bullying took place: _____

8. Form of bullying:

Physical aggression		Exceptionally able bullying	
Verbal		Gender identity bullying	
Damage to property		Homophobic/transphobic bullying	
Exclusion/Isolation		Physical appearance bullying	
Cyberbullying		Racist bullying	
Disablist bullying		Poverty bullying	
Religious identity bullying		Sexist bullying	
Sexual harassment			

9. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact:

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10. When parents were contacted: _____

Child being bullied: _____ Bully: _____

11. Details of actions taken:

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12. Supports & strategies put in place:

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13. Outside agencies involved:

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14. Date of informing the Board of Management: _____

15. Impact & Consequences:

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16. Date of Resolution: _____

17. Signature (Relevant Teacher): _____

18. Date submitted to Principal: _____

