

Bí Cineálta Policy

Junior School



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**School Patron/s: Board of
Governors**

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Approved:

Review Date:

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

“We nurture, inspire and empower our students to strive for excellence in all that they do as responsible global citizens.”

We are committed to:

- Fostering a sense of identity and self-worth in each of our students.
- Developing life-long learners with skills, attitudes, sensibilities and personal initiative that will allow each to grow into a well-rounded, confident adult.
- Promoting the well-being of the whole person in a caring, inclusive, innovative, safe and secure, multi-cultural environment.
- Striving for high academic standards and promoting rich co-curricular opportunities and in so doing we seek to support and challenge each of our students to recognise and maximise their full potential.
- Promoting respectful intercultural relations, increasing tolerance and acceptance of difference and fostering in our students the ability to perceive, welcome and respect diversity, while at the same time fostering an appreciation of Irish culture in which the school is rooted.
- Promoting awareness of and facilitating our students’ ability to participate in, and contribute to, contemporary issues at local, national and global levels as informed, engaged, responsible and responsive global citizens.
- Honouring our duty of care to and protective responsibility for all students in achieving the realisation of the rights of the child.

Section A: Development/Review of Our Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour.

The Board of Management of Sutton Park 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, whether 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.

The Board of Management 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.

Engagement with the School Community:

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	January 2025	Staff Focus Group Staff Survey
Students	October, November and December 2025	Student Focus Group. Student Survey. (Grade 3 – 6)
Parents	March 2025	Parent Focus Group. Parent Survey
Board of Management	August 2025	BOM Meeting
Wider School Community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers, canteen staff,	January 2025	E-mail Staff Focus Group. Staff Survey.

cleaning staff, private sports coaches.		
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 Sutton Park School. The strategies are specifically aimed at preventing all bullying behaviours, which are defined in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures. The school recognises four areas (as identified in *The Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice*) that are key in Supporting a holistic, whole-school approach to wellbeing promotion. These include: Culture and Environment; Curriculum (Teaching and Learning); Policy and Planning; and Relationships and Partnerships.

B.1 Prevention Strategies: Culture and Environment

Creating a Positive and Inclusive School Culture

Sutton Park School fosters a culture where all students feel valued, safe, and respected. The school's ethos emphasises inclusivity, diversity, and the development of positive relationships among students, staff, and the wider school community. Through a restorative approach, we encourage open dialogue and proactive conflict resolution, ensuring a welcoming and respectful environment for all.

Encouraging a 'Telling' Environment

Recognising the barriers students may face in reporting bullying, the school promotes an environment where students feel comfortable seeking support. Regular awareness campaigns and structured opportunities for open conversations empower students to speak up without fear of retaliation or judgement. Staff are trained to respond effectively, ensuring that all reports are taken seriously and addressed appropriately. Students are encouraged to report any concerns of bullying behaviour to their class teacher or any trusted adult.

The Role of a Trusted Adult

Every student at Sutton Park School has access to a network of trusted adults, including class teachers, Deputy Principal, Principal, and the Learning Support Department (Learning Support Teachers and SNAs). These individuals provide reassurance and guidance, helping students navigate challenges related to bullying. The school prioritises ongoing staff training to equip all personnel with the skills necessary to support students in reporting and resolving bullying incidents.

Designing Safe Physical Spaces

The physical school environment is continuously evaluated to minimise areas where bullying can occur. Open and well-supervised spaces and well-supervised communal areas contribute to a safer school setting. The school also encourages student participation in creating inclusive and welcoming spaces through artwork, displays and peer-led initiatives.

Supervision and Monitoring

Ensuring student safety is a key priority, and structured supervision strategies are in place to prevent bullying. Staff members actively monitor students during break times, school events, and extracurricular activities.

B.2 Prevention Strategies: Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

At the Junior School level, we are mindful of the developmental stage of the children we are working with and recognise education as being of paramount importance in supporting the development of the students' moral judgement. The students are provided with educational opportunities to deepen their understanding of bullying behaviours and their core elements. We aim for the students to recognise the different types of bullying and the ways in which they may occur: directly and indirectly. Students learn about the impact of bullying behaviours with the aim of fostering empathy and preventing such behaviours from occurring.

Embedding Anti-Bullying Education in the Curriculum

The school integrates anti-bullying education across multiple subjects, reinforcing values of empathy, respect, and inclusion. The SPHE (Social, Personal & Health Education), the Stay Safe Programme, and RSE (Relationships & Sexuality Education) curricula provide structured learning on relationships, identity-based bullying, respectful interactions and responding to bullying behaviours. Additional subjects such as Languages, Geography, History, and ICT further support awareness and understanding of diversity, inclusion, and responsible online behaviour.

B.3 Policy Integration and School-Wide Planning

Anti-bullying measures are embedded within broader school policies, ensuring a holistic approach to student wellbeing. The school's Code of Behaviour, Acceptable Use Policy, Bi Cinealta Policy and Wellbeing Policy reinforce the expectation of respectful conduct both online and offline. Regular policy reviews and staff training ensure that the school remains responsive to emerging challenges related to bullying prevention.

B.4 Strengthening Relationships and Partnerships

Building strong interpersonal connections that foster empathy, understanding and respect within the school and wider school community is vital to preventing bullying. The school engages with members of the wider school community who are in regular contact with students (bus drivers, canteen staff, traffic wardens, etc.). Student councils, and parent engagement initiatives foster collaboration and shared responsibility. Sutton Park Junior School may at times engage with external services to provide additional support and resources.

B.5 Preventing Cyberbullying

In response to the increasing role of technology in students' lives, the school actively promotes digital citizenship and online safety. Students receive structured education on responsible internet use, and parents are provided with guidance on monitoring online activities. The school's Acceptable Use Policy outlines clear expectations for digital conduct, and incidents of cyberbullying are addressed with the same seriousness as in-person bullying.

B.6 Preventing Identity-Based Bullying

Sutton Park School is committed to addressing all forms of identity-based bullying, including homophobic, transphobic, racist, sexist, and disability-related bullying.

- **Preventing Homophobic/Transphobic Bullying**
The school fosters an inclusive environment where LGBTQ+ students feel supported and respected. Classroom discussions, curriculum, and visual representation of LGBTQ+ inclusivity across the whole school contribute to a culture of acceptance.
- **Preventing Racist Bullying**
The school celebrates cultural diversity through curriculum content and inclusive extracurricular activities. Resources reflecting diverse perspectives are integrated into library collections and classroom discussions to ensure that all students feel seen and valued.
- **Preventing Sexist Bullying and Sexual Harassment**
Gender equality is promoted across all aspects of school life, ensuring that all students have equal opportunities to participate in academic and extracurricular activities. Staff and students are encouraged to challenge gender stereotypes and foster an environment of mutual respect. The school adopts a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual harassment, ensuring that all reports are handled with sensitivity and urgency.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

- Class Teacher
- Deputy Principal
- Principal
- School Counsellor (in certain circumstances)
- Head of School (where necessary)

All members of staff are mandated as per the Child Safeguarding Statement to be mindful of potential bullying behaviour and to deal consistently with incidents as they arise.

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
- consider 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:

C.1. Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

Identifying Bullying Behaviour

At the Junior School level, we are acutely aware of the age of the children we are dealing with and recognise that young children are still learning how to behave. When identifying bullying behaviour, the school will deal with the children involved in a manner appropriate to their age and understanding of right and wrong.

When a bullying report is received, a staff member conducts an initial assessment, meeting with the students involved, collecting statements, and gathering relevant facts. If bullying is suspected, the case is escalated to the Deputy Principal, or Principal, for further investigation. In some circumstances, the case may be brought to the School Counsellor or Head of School if appropriate.

This process may include confidential interviews with the student experiencing bullying behaviour, the student displaying the behaviour, and any witnesses. Digital evidence may be reviewed where necessary. The school's policy definition of bullying determines the outcome, ensuring fairness and consistency.

Investigating Reports of Bullying

If bullying behaviour is suspected, a thorough investigation follows; The investigation will be conducted ensuring sensitivity, confidentiality, and impartiality. The student experiencing bullying behaviour is supported in sharing their experience, while the student or students displaying bullying behaviour are given the opportunity to reflect and respond. Witness statements are gathered as needed. The investigation aims to establish facts, assess the nature of the behaviour, and determine the appropriate response.

C.2 Where bullying behaviour has occurred

Engaging with Students Involved

The school prioritises education, support and resolution. The student experiencing bullying behaviour receives immediate reassurance and ongoing support, such as regular check-ins, increased supervision, or counselling where necessary.

The student displaying bullying behaviour is guided towards accountability and behaviour change, with support to manage relational difficulties and ensure their needs are met. Restorative conversations, mediation and at times counselling, may take place. Interventions will be explained and discussed in an appropriate manner.

Determining Appropriate Interventions

Interventions are tailored to the age of the children involved, the severity of the incident and may include restorative meetings, behavioural contracts, conflict resolution strategies, increased supervision or additional support. Where necessary, disciplinary actions are applied in line with the Code of Behaviour.

Communicating with Parents and Guardians

The school recognises the importance of partnership with parents in addressing bullying behaviour. Parents will be kept informed of incidents and interventions, ensuring they can provide additional support at home. If a student has concerns about parental involvement, staff ensure communication is handled sensitively.

C.3. Requests to take no action

Addressing Requests to Take No Action

Some students may request that no action be taken due to fear of retaliation or social stigma. While respecting concerns, the school has a duty of care to intervene appropriately. Staff will explore safe and discreet interventions to ensure student wellbeing while addressing the behaviour.

If a parent/guardian reports bullying but does not want action taken, this request must be made in writing to the school. However, while acknowledging the request, Sutton Park School may decide that based on the circumstances it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

C.4. Determining if bullying behaviour has ceased

Monitoring and Reviewing Progress

A follow-up review is conducted with the students and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion. Even though the bullying behaviour may have ceased, increased supervision and support may be required for both the student who has experienced the bullying behaviour as well as the student who has displayed the bullying behaviour.

If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the school will review the strategies used in consultation with the students (where appropriate) and parents and agree to meet again over an agreed timeframe until the bullying behaviour has ceased.

Where it becomes clear that the student is continuing to display the bullying behaviour, then the school will use strategies to deal with this in line with the Code of Behaviour.

C.5 Recording bullying behaviour

Recording and Documenting Incidents

All bullying incidents are formally recorded for accountability and to track behaviour patterns. Records will include details of incidents, interventions, and outcomes. Where applicable, documentation is stored in Student Profiles to inform future interventions.

C.6. Complaint process

Complaint Process for Unresolved Cases

If a parent or student is dissatisfied with how a bullying case has been handled, concerns can be escalated through the school's complaints procedure. If unresolved, further recourse is available through the Ombudsman for Children.

C.7. Supports

Sutton Park School will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour;

Supporting Students Who Experience Bullying Behaviour

Students experiencing bullying behaviour will receive immediate reassurance and emotional support to ensure they feel safe and heard. Staff will engage with them sensitively, ensuring they are involved in decision-making, where appropriate, about how the situation is addressed.

Available supports include additional check-ins with designated staff members, such as the class teacher, Deputy Principal or Principal, or counselling in some cases. If necessary, practical interventions, such as increased supervision or classroom adjustments, may be implemented to provide a secure and supportive environment.

Supporting Students Who Witness Bullying Behaviour

The school encourages students who observe bullying to report their concerns without fear of retaliation. Witnesses receive guidance on how to safely intervene or report incidents, reinforcing the responsibility of every member of the school community. The SPHE curriculum and regular awareness initiatives, such as Bullying Awareness Week ('Friendship Week' in the Junior classes), help to empower students to take collective action against bullying.

Witnesses who feel distressed by the behaviour they have observed will be offered emotional support and guidance on how to safely support their peers. The school will ensure that all students feel empowered to take action while maintaining their safety.

Guiding Students Who Display Bullying Behaviour

Students who engage in bullying behaviour will be supported in understanding the impact of their actions and developing positive interpersonal skills. Staff will work with them to identify underlying causes, such as social difficulties or external stressors.

These may include restorative conversations, behaviour management strategies and/or counselling support. Students will be encouraged to take responsibility for their behaviour, with structured opportunities to make amends and demonstrate positive change. If needed, external referrals can be made.

Engaging Parents and Guardians

The school recognises the importance of partnership with parents in addressing bullying behaviour. Parents will be kept informed of incidents and interventions, and additional support will be available to help guide their child effectively and reinforce positive behaviour.

Providing Ongoing Support and Monitoring

Long-term support ensures that all students feel safe and included within the school community. Regular check-ins and follow-ups will be provided, and ongoing supervision and monitoring will prevent recurrence and reinforce a positive school culture. Where appropriate, the school will integrate anti-bullying themes into SPHE, Wellbeing, and school wide initiatives to build resilience, empathy, and conflict resolution skills.

Referral to External Support Services

When additional expertise is required, referrals may be made to external support agencies, e.g. NEPS or Tusla.

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.

If the bullying behaviour can be considered criminal behaviour An Garda Síochána is the appropriate authority to investigate the matter.

Section D: Oversight

The Junior School 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: _____ Date: _____
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Principal)

Section E: Appendices

Appendix B

Student friendly version to be added in here on completion by students in September 2025

Appendix E – Review of Bí Cineálta Policy

Bí Cineálta Policy Review

1. When did the Board 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 Board 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?

8. Has the Board 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 Board discussed how the school is addressing all reports of bullying behaviour. ☐ Yes ☐ No

10. Is the Board 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 Board 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

Signed: _____

(Chairperson of board of management)

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Signed: _____

(Principal)

Date: _____