

Bí Cineálta Policy



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

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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 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 2024	Student Focus Group Whole School Student Survey
Parents	March 2025	Parent Focus Group

	April 2025	Parent Survey School App
Board of Management	May 2025	BOM Meeting
Wider School Community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers, canteen staff, cleaning staff, private sports coaches	January 2025	E-mail Staff Focus Group Staff Survey
Date Policy was approved	August 2026	B.O.M. Meeting
Date Policy was last reviewed	August 2025	B.O.M. Meeting

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by Sutton Park 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 and disability-based bullying as appropriate.

Prevention Strategies

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.

The Role of a Trusted Adult

Every student at Sutton Park School has access to a network of trusted adults, including the Head of School, Deputy Principal, school counsellors, year heads, tutors, teachers and Special Needs Assistants (SNAs). These individuals provide reassurance and guidance, helping

students navigate challenges related to bullying. Students are encouraged to report any concerns of bullying behaviour through a dedicated school communication channel.

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 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.

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) and RSE (Relationships & Sexuality Education) curricula provide structured learning on relationships, identity-based bullying, and respectful interactions. Additional subjects such as History, Civic, Social & Political Education (CSPE), and Digital Media Literacy further support awareness and understanding of diversity, inclusion, and responsible online behaviour. The school facilitates whole year group workshops focusing on good communication, connection and integration and shared problem solving, as appropriate.

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 Usage Policy outlines clear expectations for digital conduct, and incidents of cyberbullying are addressed with the same seriousness as in-person bullying.

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 Usage Policy and the Wellbeing Policy all reinforce the expectation of respectful conduct both online and offline. Regular policy reviews ensure that the school remains responsive to emerging challenges related to bullying prevention.

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, awareness campaigns, and visual representation of LGBTQ+ inclusivity contribute to a culture of acceptance. Sutton Park School holds weekly Rainbow Alliance meetings for students and allies

supervised and supported by school staff who have received specific training in supporting LGBTQ+ students and is accredited by BelongTo as a Quality Mark school. Sutton Park school participates in the national annual Stand Up Awareness Week.

- **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.

- **Preventing Disability-Based Bullying**

Sutton Park School promotes an inclusive and accessible environment where students of all abilities are respected and supported. The school works to remove barriers to participation in academic, social, and extracurricular activities, ensuring that every student can thrive. All members of the school community are expected to treat others with empathy, understanding, and respect at all times. Any behaviour that demeans, excludes, or targets a person on the basis of disability is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

- Head of School
- Deputy Principal
- Year Head
- School Counsellor
- Student Support Team

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
- 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, 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:

C1: Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

Identifying Bullying Behaviour

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 a designated staff member, such as the Year Head, Deputy Principal, or Head of School, for further investigation.

This process includes 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

A thorough investigation follows by a member of the Student Support Team, 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.

C2: 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 counselling, peer mentoring, or increased supervision.

The student displaying bullying behaviour is guided towards accountability and behaviour change, with support to manage relational difficulties and ensure their needs are met. Where appropriate, restorative conversation, counselling or mediation may take place, provided all parties consent.

Determining Appropriate Interventions

Interventions are tailored to the severity of the incident and may include restorative meetings, behavioural contracts, conflict resolution strategies, or increased supervision. Counselling and support are available for all involved. If 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.

C3: 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 report 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.

C4: Determining if bullying behaviour has ceased

Monitoring and Reviewing Progress

A member of the Student Support Team will engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress. Even though

bullying behaviour may have ceased, additional measures, such as increased supervision and counselling support may be implemented. If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the Student Support Team will review the strategies used in consultation with the students and parents and agree to meet again over an agreed timeframe until the bullying behaviour has ceased. Ongoing monitoring ensures long-term resolution.

C5: 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 Support Files to inform future interventions.

C6: Complaint process

Complaint Process for Unresolved Cases

Our school aims to address concerns in a fair, respectful, and timely way.

1. **Raise the concern** with the school as soon as possible, verbally or in writing.
2. **Initial review:** The school will respond within a reasonable timeframe and seek to resolve the matter informally.
3. **Formal complaint:** If unresolved, submit a written complaint to the Principal/Board of Management for consideration and a written response.
4. **Board review:** If still dissatisfied, request a review by the Board of Management. Their decision is final.

All complaints are treated confidentially and with respect for all parties.

If unresolved, further recourse is available through the Ombudsman for Children.

C7: Supports

Approaches to Supporting Those Affected by Bullying

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 about how the situation is addressed.

Available supports include counselling services and check-ins with a designated staff member, such as a Year Head or Counsellor. If necessary, practical interventions, such as increased supervision or class 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. Regular awareness initiatives 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.

Supporting 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.

This 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.

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 to students affected by bullying. 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 peer-led initiatives to build resilience, empathy, and conflict resolution skills.

Referral to External Support Services

If the bullying behaviour is a child protection concern the matter will be addressed without delay in accordance with Child Protection Procedures for Primary & Post-Primary Schools.

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

Sutton Park School may at times engage with external services to provide additional support and resources e.g. NEPS/DCU Anti-Bullying Centre (ABC)/TUSLA.

Section D: Oversight

The Head of School 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 Head of School 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: 27/08/2026
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed:  Date: 27/08/2026
(Principal)

Section E: Appendices

Appendix A: Student friendly version

Appendix B: [Review of the Bí Cineálta policy](#) (as per Bi Cinealta guidelines)

Appendix C: [Notification regarding the board of management's annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy](#)

Appendix D: This Policy has been written with due regard to a number of Sutton Park School's policies. The following policies are of note:

- Acceptable Usage Policy (AUP)
- Additional Educational Needs Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Anti-Racism Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Code of Behaviour
- Counselling Policy
- Critical Incident Plan
- Exceptionally Able (Academic) Policy
- Guidance Plan
- Health & Safety Policy
- LGBTQ+ Policy
- Wellbeing Policy