



St. Brigid's B.N.S.
Howth Road, Killester, Dublin 5, D05A386
Phone 01 8336149
Roll Number: 19308J



Email: info@stbrigidsbns.ie Website: www.stbrigidsbns.ie

Bí Cineálta Policy

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of St. Brigid's B.N.S. Killester 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 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.

We confirm that we will take all steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent all bullying or harassment of our students in whatever form and however motivated.

Catholic schools have a distinctive understanding of the human person, recognising 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 everybody 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 everybody has a part to play in the school community, regardless of difference."

Definition of bullying

Bullying is defined in *Cineálta: Action Plan on Bullying* and *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* 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.

Each school 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.

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	March 2025 April 2025	Half Day Bí Cineálta Training- the staff assessed current practice with regard to education around bullying, prevention of bullying activity, investigation of incidents and the new Bí Cineálta procedures. Staff Surveys were completed online via Google Forms.
Students	April/ May 2025 June 2025	Students from Junior Infants to 2 nd Class took part in focus groups, supported by a class teacher, to gather their understanding, knowledge and experience of bullying. Similarly, students from 3 rd to 6 th class completed individual surveys based on safety in and around the school and the classroom, understanding of bullying and bullying prevention. A Student Friendly Version of our Bí Cineálta Policy was created.
Parents	April 2025 June 2025	Via Google Forms parents completed a survey based on safety in school, our school's Anti-Bullying Policy and bullying prevention. Draft Bí Cineálta Policy was reviewed by Parents' Association
Wider school community as appropriate, e.g. bus escorts/drivers	June 2025	Draft Bí Cineálta Policy was reviewed by school wardens, bus escorts & drivers
Board of Management	24/09/24, 6/02/25 & 26/03/25 June 2025	Bí Cineálta Procedures introduced at Board of Management meetings Draft Bí Cineálta Policy was reviewed by Board of Management
Date policy was approved by Patron: 13 th October 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: 25 th June 2025 and again 13 th October 2025		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by this school to address all forms of bullying behaviour, in whatever form and however motivated, including 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):

Culture and Environment

At St. Brigid's B.N.S. we adopt a school-wide approach to develop and promote respectful relationships between all members of the school community as a strategy to prevent bullying. This includes, but is not limited to,

- the fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our students through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Students will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions
- whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develop an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on students' lives and the need to respond to it-prevention and intervention
- Student Council – meet regularly with teacher with responsibility for Student Council and any issues or concerns by students can be brought to the attention of the teacher
- the implementation of regular whole school awareness measures e.g.
 - Whole school Positive Behaviour Programme
 - Friendship Week in September (Friendship Resource Pack)
 - Sports & Wellbeing Week in June
 - Parent(s)/Guardian(s) seminars organised by the Parents' Association
 - Biannual Anti-Bullying student surveys (September & April)
 - School Assemblies
 - Buddy Benches
 - Niggle Boxes (3rd – 6th Classes) to log worries and concerns
- encouraging a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way students will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all students that when they report incidents of bullying, they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly. (Anti-Bullying - Motto – SAY NO, GO, TELL) (Behaviour Motto – Kind Words, Kind Hands, Kind Feet)
- ensuring bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- displaying Bí Cineálta student-friendly posters prominently around the school

Curriculum

- The implementation of the Social Physical and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum, according to our school plan, including the Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE), Weaving Wellbeing and Stay Safe Programmes.
- School-wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence-based programmes, e.g.
 - Walk Tall
 - Fun Friends & Friends for Life

- Webwise and www.cybersafekids.ie
- Zippy Friends Programme – Junior Infants – Senior Infants
- Webwise – ‘HTML Heroes’ online Safety Programme – 1st – 4th Class, ‘My Selfie and the Wider World’ – 5th – 6th Class
- Novels & Picture Books dealing with issues of anti-bullying and inclusion e.g. *Wonder*, *Meesha makes Friends*
- DCU Anti-Bullying Centre – ‘FUSE’ anti-bullying and online safety programme
- Explicitly teach students about the appropriate use of social media.
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN students with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all students to respond appropriately.

Policy and Planning

- Whole School Positive Behaviour Programme – rewards for teamwork and respect shown
- The school policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying, e.g.
 - Code of Behaviour, including Behaviours of Concern
 - Child Safeguarding Statement
 - Acceptable Use Policy
 - Attendance
- Smartphone Free Pledge 2025 drawn up with Parents’ Association – encourage parents to delay buying phones for their children
- Circle Time lessons and activities
- All staff, to the best of their ability, will ensure there is adequate playground/outdoor supervision

Relationships and Partnerships

- Catch the children being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention (Reward with tokens as per Positive Behaviour Programme)
- At assemblies, school rules are reinforced on a regular basis. Raise awareness of the definition of bullying behaviour and how the school deals with such behaviour.
- Give constructive feedback to students when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Encourage parents/guardians to sign up to the voluntary agreements to defer smartphone/device ownership during the primary school years.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Support the active participation of students in school life through formal and informal structures, e.g. Maths Carnival, Wake up Shake up, circle-time activities, assemblies, sports’ teams, student council, paired readers, and use of Buddy Bench.
- Guided by the NCSE *Relate* Framework, our school fosters respectful, inclusive relationships across the whole school community as a proactive approach to preventing bullying and promoting a culture of empathy and understanding.
- Support the active participation of parents in school life, e.g. being a member of the Parents’ Association, volunteering for Credit Union/Maths for Fun/school library.

In developing the preventative strategies which this school will use to prevent all forms of bullying behaviour, we come from the context of our Catholic ethos, where inclusivity permeates our school in a real way.

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 our 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 further 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.

To prevent cyberbullying behaviour, our students (not an exhaustive list)

- complete targeted SPHE and Circle Time lessons from the Mindful Matters series of textbooks
- use and engage with Webwise Resources including HTML Heroes Online Safety Programme for 1st to 4th classes, My Selfie and The Wider World for 5th and 6th classes run by Oide Technology for Education
- use Zippy Friends Programme in Junior/Senior Infants
- read and sign our Acceptable Usage Policy for internet usage.
- are monitored while using school iPads and laptops
- receive a visit from our Community Garda (5th Class) to discuss the issues of personal safety online and cyberbullying prevention.
- partake in an Internet Safety Day to reinforce awareness around safe internet usage.
- complete lessons and activities from DCU's FUSE Anti-Bullying and Online Safety Programme.
- Parents are encouraged to oversee their children's activities online when not in school. Encourage parents/guardians to sign up to the voluntary agreements to defer smartphone/device ownership during the primary school years.

To prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, our school (not an exhaustive list)

- completes appropriate SPHE and RSE lessons including the Stay Safe Programme
- promotes the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlights the unacceptability of bullying behaviour
- promotes and nurtures the confidence of all our students through both curricular and extracurricular activities
- teaches our students about the negative impact of homophobic bullying
- encourages students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour.

To prevent racist bullying behaviour, our school (not an exhaustive list)

- fosters an environment which promotes inclusion and respect for cultural diversity
- helps students learn and develop an understanding of different cultural backgrounds by exploring traditions, values, customs and languages from around the world through school assemblies and our SESE and SPHE curriculum
- raises awareness of racism through workshops and activities conducted by outside agencies e.g. 'Sport Against Racism' (SARI) – 5th Class

- provides support to school staff to respond to the needs of students from ethnic minorities and for whom English is an additional language and to encourage communication with their parents

To prevent sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment (as appropriate), **our school and staff** (not an exhaustive list)

- models respectful behaviour to all, irrespective of gender
- challenges any sexist behaviour by students or staff
- implements the SPHE curriculum, including and not exclusively, using appropriate social stories to teach students about healthy relationships and how to treat each other with respect and kindness
- promotes positive role models of both sexes and acknowledge their contributions within the school and the wider community
- challenges any gender stereotypes that could contribute to sexual harassment
- encourages students and families to reinforce these values of respect at home.

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

- Teachers will always be vigilant to ensure that bullying behaviour does not happen between students
- Students will be appropriately supervised and monitored in classrooms, corridors, school grounds, during school tours and extra-curricular activities
- Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report any potential bullying behaviour to relevant teachers
- Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school
- Students will be monitored at the school gates as they arrive and leave each morning and afternoon
- A comprehensive teacher supervision rota is in place in the school to ensure that students are monitored during school recreation times.
- All staff are watchful and observe relationships between students in class and let it be known that high standards of behaviour are always expected
- Survey of Students - Students are surveyed biannually regarding bullying behaviour
- Student Council – meet regularly with teacher with responsibility for Student Council and any issues or concerns by students can be brought to the attention of the teacher
- School Mottos are taught - (Behaviour Motto – Kind Words, Kind Hands, Kind Feet) (Anti-Bullying Motto – SAY NO, GO, TELL)

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

- The **Class Teacher** is usually the relevant teacher with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour. Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if the circumstances warrant it
- Assistant Principal 2 with responsibility as Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator is available to provide up to date information and support if needed to assist the class teacher in addressing a concern
- Principal will inform Board of Management of incidences of Bullying.

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 the Bí Cineálta procedures):

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 students involved, rather than to apportion blame.

When addressing bullying behaviour, the teachers with responsibility will:

- ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured
- seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- consider the age and ability of the students 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.

Is it bullying behaviour?

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour we will consider the following questions:

1. Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?
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.

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.

Note: A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards another student is not bullying behaviour. However, 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.

Investigation

- The class teacher (relevant teacher) will oversee the investigating, recording and reporting of any cases of alleged bullying.
- The teacher will seek answers to questions of **what, where, when, who and why**. This will be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a problem-solving and sensitive manner
- Where possible, incidents will be investigated outside the classroom to ensure the privacy and well-being of all involved.
- If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed **individually at first**. Thereafter, all those involved will be **met as a group**. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for his account of what happened to ensure everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.
- Each member may be asked to write down their account of the incident, if appropriate.
- The investigating teacher must keep a written record (**Incident Report Form**) of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them.
- The relevant teacher must inform the Principal of all incidents being investigated and a copy of the Incident Report Form must be given to the Principal.

Addressing Bullying behaviour

- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a student has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him how he is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to try to get him to see the situation from the perspective of the student being bullied.
- The parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school will give parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the students;
- It must be made clear to all involved (each set of students and parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is private matter between the student being disciplined, his parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school.
- Once it has been established that bullying behaviour has occurred, records will be retained by the relevant teacher on the **Bullying Report Form** and copies will be stored in the student file and with the Principal.
- The Bullying Report Form will record
 - i) the form and type of bullying
 - ii) where and when it took place
 - iii) the date of initial engagement with the students involved and their parents.
 - iv) the views of students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour.
 - v) the review with students and parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and parents in relation to this.
 - vi) any engagement with external services/supports

Review of progress

- The relevant teacher must engage with students and parents involved again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement.
- The teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
 - The nature of the bullying behaviour
 - The effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour
 - Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable.
- The teacher should document the review with students and parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and parents in relation to this.
- If it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to do so, then the school shall consider using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within our school's Code of Behaviour.
- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Bullying behaviour that occurs outside of school

As per the Bí Cineálta Procedures, a school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, schools should deal with it in accordance with their Bí Cineálta policy.

Requests to take no action

- A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than "look out" for them. The student may not want to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. Where this occurs, it is important that the member of staff shows empathy to the student, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the student to work out together what steps can be taken to address the matter and how their parents will be informed of the situation.
- Parents may also make schools aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action. Parents should put this request in writing to the school.
- However, while acknowledging the parent's request, schools have a right to act and may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

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

Supporting those who experience or witness bullying behaviour

- Take all necessary steps to stop the bullying behaviour.
- Ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured.
- Indicate clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted student.
- Listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation, ensuring action is taken in a timely manner and the parents of those involved are informed.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness, or know, that bullying is taking place. (Remember our school Anti-Bullying Motto – SAY NO, GO, TELL).
- Praise/reward students for upstanding
- Helping students who experience bullying behaviour raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. team sports, student council, paired readers and use of Buddy Bench).
- Teachers must show empathy to the student who reports bullying behaviour but requests that no further action be taken. They should work with the student to see what steps can be taken to address the matter and how their parents will be informed of the situation.
- If a student is being bullied by a student from outside of St. Brigid's B.N.S environment, the school will continue to support them and work with the student and their parents to determine the best course of action.

Supporting those who display bullying behaviour

- Clearly communicate that those students who reform their behaviour are not held accountable for past bullying and are offered a 'clean slate'.
- Highlight to students who choose to reform that they are doing the right and honourable thing and give them appropriate praise and acknowledgement for this.
- Make sure to all involved (each set of students and parent(s)/guardian(s)) that any disciplinary sanctions required are a private matter between the student being disciplined, his parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school.

Supports for All – Students who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour

- Stay Safe, Walk Tall, Fun Friends, Friends for Life and Weaving Wellbeing Programmes will be used to support all students involved by raising self-esteem and resilience and helping to further develop friendships and social skills.
- Webwise – the online safety initiative which develops resources that help teachers integrate digital citizenship and online safety into teaching and learning in schools
- If students require counselling or further support, the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies such as, but not exclusively, National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), Department of Education support service (Oide) and Tusla.

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: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: _____

Signed: _____

(Principal)

Date: _____