

Saint Catherine's National School



Ballyhack, Arthurstown, New Ross, Co. Wexford.

Eircode: Y34 KD29

Telephone: 051-389368 Roll No.: 18387D

E-mail: ballyhackschool@gmail.com

School Email: www.ballyhacknationalschool.ie

Bí Cineálta Policy

Name of School: Saint Catherine's National School

Address: Ballyhack, Arthurstown, New Ross, Co. Wexford.

Telephone No.: (051) 389368

Type: Diocesan mixed national school, under the patronage of the Bishop and funded by the Department of Education

Enrolment: 56 Pupils (2026/27)

Description: Currently comprising of 3 class teachers and 1 Special Education Teacher.

Introduction

The Board of Management of St. Catherine's NS 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 BíCineálta: 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 BíCineálta procedures.

Each school is required to develop and implement a BíCineálta 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 BíCineálta 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	School Closure 14 th March 2025/Ongoing consultation	Staff Meeting(s) & Digital Questionnaire
Students	June 2025/Ongoing consultation	Focus Groups & Digital Questionnaire
Parents	November 2025/Ongoing consultation	Parents Association Meeting November 2025

Board of Management	December 2025	Board of Management Meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	November 2025	In person consultation with local stakeholders
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 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. (see Chapter 5 of the BíCineálta 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 our board of management and staff meetings.

1. Culture & Environment:

- Positive and inclusive school culture
- Building and maintaining positive relationships with staff, pupils, parents and guardians
- A Telling Environment
- A trusted adult
- Effective leadership
- Safe physical environment
- Adequate adult supervision-visibility

2. Curriculum (Teaching & Learning):

- Social, Personal & Health Education (SPHE) curriculum
- Relationships & Sexuality Education (RSE)
- Positive Behaviour Week
- Anti-Bullying Week

3. Policy & Planning

- BÍ Cineálta: adult and student policies
- Positive Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) policy
- RSE Policy
- Relevant Teacher Professional Learning (TPL)

4. Relationships & Partnerships

- Strong interpersonal connections
- Strong focus on building and maintaining relationships
- Active participation of students and parents/guardians in school life
- Bullying awareness workshops/initiatives
- Supporting activities that build empathy, respect and resilience
- Promoting acts of kindness e.g. Positive Behaviour Week, Friendship Week

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):

- 1 teacher and SNA to supervise students during break times
- Children are adequately supervised (adult/pupil ratio) on school trips
- Children/classes have designated yard spaces

Preventing Cyber Bullying Behaviour:

- Promoting Digital Citizenship
- Implementation of SPHE curriculum
- Implementation of resources relevant to cyber bullying e.g. www.webwise.ie
- Safer Internet Day www.webwise.ie
- Promotion of our Positive Code of Behaviour
- Promotion amongst students of developing respectful and kind relationships online
- Promotion of online safety events for parents/guardians who are responsible for supervision of children's online activity

Preventing Homophobic/Transphobic Bullying Behaviour:

- Maintaining an inclusive school environment- recognizing and celebrating difference
- Encourage peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- Encourage students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour

Preventing Racist Bullying Behaviour:

- Promotion of a school culture that celebrates diversity
- Conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of racism
- Providing supports to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities and to encourage communication with parents/guardians
- Encourage bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour
- Library books to include material that reflects the lives of students from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds

Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour:

- Staff modelling respectful behaviour and equality irrespective of sex
- All pupils are given opportunity to engage in school activities irrespective of sex
- Celebration of diversity at school and acknowledge the contribution of all students

Preventing Sexual Harassment:

- Promotion of positive role models within the school community
- Challenging gender stereotypes that may contribute to sexual harassment

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

- Class Teachers with the support of Special Education Teachers (SSE Pupils)
- Consultation with in school management (Principal/Deputy Principal) if required

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

- o ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour is heard and reassured
- o seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- o conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- o consider the age and ability of those involved
- o listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- o take action in a timely manner
- o 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):

Core Definition of Bullying Behaviour

'Bullying is 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'. (Chapter 2 Bí Cineálta Procedures)

Identifying if Bullying Behaviour has occurred:

The following three questions should be considered to determine if bullying has occurred:

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 above questions is 'Yes', the behaviour is considered bullying behaviour and should be addressed using the BíCineálta procedures as outlined in this policy.

Note: A one off incident may be considered bullying in certain circumstances. A single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and thus becomes a repeated behaviour.

If the answer to any of these questions is No, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour.

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

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

Where possible, two staff members should be present regarding the above-mentioned procedure.

Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

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. They may feel that telling someone might make things more difficult for them. Where this occurs, it is important that the member of staff shows empathy to the 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. It is important that the student who has experienced bullying behaviour feels safe. 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 or be facilitated to do so where there are literacy, digital literacy or language barriers. However, while acknowledging the parent's request, schools may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

Recording bullying behaviour

All incidents of bullying behaviour should be recorded. The record should document the form (Section 2.5) and type (See Section 2.7) of bullying behaviour, if known, where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students and their parents. The record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour. It should document the review with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and their parents in relation to this. It is important to document the date of each of these engagements and the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased. Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted. These records should be retained in accordance with the school's record keeping policy and in line with data protection regulations.

Where a Student Support File exists for a student, schools are encouraged to place a copy of the record on the student's support file/Record on Aladdin. This will assist the school's student support team, where they exist, in providing a consistent and holistic response to support the wellbeing of the students involved. Where a Student Support Plan exists, the plan should be updated to incorporate response strategies and associated supports.

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.

Determining if bullying behaviour has ceased

The teacher must engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress following the initial intervention.

Important factors to consider as part of the review are:

- the nature of the bullying behaviour
- the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour

- the relationship between the students involved

Even though the bullying behaviour may have ceased, ongoing 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 behaviour.

It can take time for relationships to settle and for supports to take effect. In some cases, relationships may never be restored to how they were before the bullying behaviour occurred.

If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the teacher should 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.

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

If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school.

Complaint process

If a parent is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with these procedures, they should be referred to the school's complaints procedure. Additional Information relating to schools' complaint procedures are available at the following link: <https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/parental-complaints/> In the event that a student and/or parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, a student and/or parent may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions have had a negative effect on the student. The Office of the Ombudsman for Children can be contacted at ococomplaint@oco.ie.

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

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 bullying behaviour has occurred

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 this 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 our BíCineálta policy. Where the student displaying the bullying behaviour is not a student in the school, but the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour is a student in the school, the school should support the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as appropriate and engage with them and their parents to determine what steps can be taken.

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

- Parents are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with schools, in addressing bullying behaviour. Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the students involved must be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to consult with them on the actions to be taken to address the behaviour
- it is important to listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- a record should be kept of the engagement with all involved
- this record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known (see Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the Bi Cineálta procedures), where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students involved and their parents
- the record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour

External Supports

Supports are available to help prevent and address bullying behaviour.

These include the following:

- National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)
- Oide

- www.webwise.ie
- National Parents Council
- Tusla

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: Mary Mugh
(Chairperson of board of management)

Date: 16-09-26

Signed: Dee Dee Doyle
(Principal)

Date: 16/09/26