



St. Tola's N.S.

Bí Cineálta Policy





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Introduction:

The Board of Management of St. Tola's National 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. Ireland ratified the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child in September 1992. In doing this we committed to promote, protect and fulfil the rights of children. Bullying is a children's rights issue. Bullying interferes with the following rights of the child:

- ☐ The right to freedom of expression (Article 13)
- ☐ The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 14)
- ☐ The right to freedom of association and freedom of peaceful assembly (Article 15)
- ☐ The right to privacy (Article 16)
- ☐ The right to be protected from all forms of abuse and neglect (Article 19)
- ☐ The right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health (Article 24)
- ☐ The right to education (Article 28)
- ☐ The right to enjoy their own culture, religion or language (Article 30)

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.

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 each person in our school is treated with respect and care, in accordance with the Catholic Schedule.

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



Definition of bullying:

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

- Bullying is **targeted** behaviour, online or offline, that causes harm.
- The harm caused can be **physical, social and/or emotional** in nature and can have lasting effects on the child experiencing the behaviour.
- Bullying behaviour is **repeated** over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society.
- It is behaviour which is **deliberate in nature and is unwanted**. It is not accidental or reckless behaviour.

The harm can be :

- ☐ Physical (eg: personal injury, damage to or loss of property)
- ☐ Social: (eg: withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion)
- ☐ Emotional: (eg: low self esteem, depression, anxiety)

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.

Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour:

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



Types of Bullying:

There are many different types of bullying behaviour. These can include directing bullying at someone focused on the following: disability, exceptional ability, gender identity, LGBTQ+ , physical appearance, racism, poverty status, religious identity, sexism and sexual harassment. Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Appendix A .

Bullying can be:

Direct:

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

Bullying can be:

Indirect:

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

Online Bullying Behaviour:

Cyber bullying is carried out via text, direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, e- mail, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chat rooms and other online technologies.

This can include:

- Sending or sharing of insulting and offensive or intimidating messages or images via online means as mentioned above.
- Posting information which is personal, private or sensitive without consent.
- Making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other students.
- Exclude/disrupt access to a student on purpose on online chat groups/access to accounts/from an online game.



A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards a student is not bullying behaviour. However, a single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be visible to a wide audience and has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and so becomes a repeated behaviour.

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	September 2024	1. Bí Cineálta procedures received by school and staff.
	Sep 24 - June 25	2. We updated the existing Anti-Bullying Policy in place.
	October 2024	3. Whole school Monday Reflection time communicates the Anti-Bullying motto for the month.
	November 2024	4. Principal attended the Leadership Webinar. Learnings shared with staff.
	December 2024	5. Principal & Deputy Principal attended the Leadership Workshop Session. Learnings shared with staff.
	March 2025	6. Pupil survey link shared. Parent Survey link shared Staff Survey link shared
	April 2025	7. Half day closure was held to discuss and engage with the new policy and the findings of the survey.
		8. First draft of Bí Cineálta policy distributed. Sharing of draft policy with staff to discuss / consult and make any amendments.
		9. Policy development and amendments.



Students/Student Council	October 2024 November 2024 December 2024 March 2025 May 2025	1. Student Council members elected. Members tasked with generating a charter based on data collected from Wellbeing Wednesday. 2. Charter established by the Student Council. 3. Student Council plan, develop and undertake an Anti-Bullying week, culminating in a whole school assembly. 4. Students were given a questionnaire to seek their input in developing an Anti-Bullying policy in Child Friendly Format – their wording, examples and suggestions were all taken into account when drafting this Policy. 5. The Student Council carries out a survey with all classes to determine the wording of the Child Friendly Policy. 6. Student Council in consultation with the school and compiling the Children's version of the Bí Cineálta Policy. See Appendix B
Parents	September 2024 December 2024 February 2025	1. Parents informed of the updated Anti-Bullying Procedures 2024. 2. Parents informed of Bí Cineálta changes and new policy implementation 2025. 3. Survey/Feedback sought from parents in relation to Anti-Bullying. 4. School arranged with NPC an online workshop for parents to explain/inform about Bí Cineálta.
Board of Management	November 2024 to June 2024/ 2025	1. Engaging with policy procedures. Reviewing pupil, parent and staff feedback. 2. Support in developing the new policy.
Wider School Community (e.g: Bus Drivers etc.)	March 2024	1. Questionnaire distributed to bus drivers and feedback sought on Anti-Bullying procedures.
Date policy was approved: 11.06.25		
Date policy was last reviewed: 16.06.26		



Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management has overall responsibility to ensure that this policy is effective, sustainable and measured. The Board of Management must ensure that accountability is of the highest standard and frequently appraise the outcomes of the strategies and measures contained within this policy. All staff are responsible for ensuring that there is a whole school approach to modelling appropriate behaviour and preventing and tackling bullying. St. Tola's School endeavours to put in place appropriate systems to ensure that ALL relevant members of the school community (pupils, parents, staff and wider community) have a shared understanding of what constitutes 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.

In developing 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 the school in a real way. St. Tola's Action Plan (Appendix C) provides an extensive list of strategies/interventions that we use to promote Anti-Bullying within the school. Listed below are some of these that are used.



Curriculum (teaching and learning)

We strive to:

- Provide teaching and promote learning which is collaborative and respectful, fostering inclusion and respect for diversity.
- Display a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact.

Ways in which we work to achieve this:

- Teach SPHE and RSE content which fosters student's well-being and **self-confidence** as well as promoting personal responsibility for their own behaviours and actions. We do this in collaboration with parents. Please see the following websites that determine links throughout the curriculum:
<https://oide.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Relational-Lessons-in-Walk-Tall.pdf>
- Model respectful behaviour towards colleagues, pupils and visitors in our school environment.
- Curricular and Extracurricular activities can help to develop a sense of self-worth, working together, inclusion and respect.
- Students are given regular opportunities to work in small groups with peers, which can help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy.
- Acknowledgment of our diverse school population – celebrating diversity and culture in our school through art, displays, photographs, international events.
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils.

Supports for staff:

- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies)
- On-going discussion/ evaluation/ review of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.
- All staff have a uniform interpretation of what is expected in relation to tackling bullying behaviour, how to identify bullying behaviour, how to manage disclosures and how to deal effectively with incidents of bullying within the classroom context.
- Ongoing CPD in relation to anti bullying is encouraged/ available to staff.
- Staff are aware that supporting one another is a key aspect to the prevention of bullying behaviours.



Policy and planning

We Strive to:

- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils, parents/guardians.
- To promote a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To ensure appropriate supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
- To develop procedures for noting, investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To implement a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- To work with appropriate agencies in countering all forms of bullying and promoting anti bullying behaviour.
- The Acceptable Use Policy, Special Education Policy and Code of Behaviour all support the implementation of the Bí Cineálta policy.
- Effective leadership is a key component with Principal (DLP), Deputy Principal (DDL), and all staff members focused on supporting the implementation of this policy.

Relationships & Partnerships: We strive to:

- Interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as our parents' association and our various and multiple student committees and groups.
- Age and stage appropriate awareness initiatives that engage the student body in looking at their own behaviour – promoting acts of kindness and friendship, being an active help to others and looking at the causes of and impact of bullying during SPHE lessons.
- Conducting workshops and seminars for students, staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying.
- Encouraging peer mentoring and peer support
- Supporting active participation of students in school life and active participation of parents in school life also. 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.
- Engaging parents and students in actively contributing to the formation of a Child Friendly Anti Bullying Policy to make them active participants in promotion of and discussion of useful ways to identify and reduce bullying behaviour and highlight procedure and how to deal with it if it does occur.



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):

Preventing Cyber Bullying, Homophobic/Transphobic bullying, Racist bullying, Preventing sexual harassment.

Technology and social media have provided many positive opportunities for entertainment, social engagement and education. Technology is a part of the modern age that can impact even the youngest members of society. However, the increase in the use of technology has led to students becoming increasingly vulnerable to cyberbullying or unacceptable online behaviour.

In addition to above mentioned strategies, the school has the following in place to prevent and address cyber- bullying:

- Staff at all times endeavour to encourage pupils to show respect for each other.
- Implementation of the SPHE curriculum. Frequent review of key messages of the Stay Safe programme.
- Positive self-esteem is fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences, by acknowledging good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success.
- Digital Framework Policy includes learning about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship.
- AUP also developed for technology in our school.
- The school's Bí Cineálta Policy is discussed regularly with the pupils.
- Staff are particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of bullying/ being bullied.
- All disclosed incidents of bullying are investigated thoroughly and consistently by following the correct procedure as outlined to staff and recorded using the template for this. (Appendix D).
- School wide awareness raising on all aspects of bullying, supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extracurricular activities.
- Involvement of pupils in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Kindness/ Well-being Week, and other activities that can help to pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Refer to appropriate online behaviour when using devices and in SPHE lessons.
- Promote online safety events or material for pupils and parents.
- The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school e.g. www.tacklebullying.ie, www.antibullyingcentre.ie>fuse, www.webwise.ie
- Bank of resources for teaching of bullying including lessons from above websites – shared on the Google Drive for all teachers to access.
- Remind parents regularly via school newsletter and school communication systems that most



social media platforms and services have a minimum age requirement and for the majority of these services it is 13 years' old. Therefore, technically, children under the age of 13 should not have a social media account.

- Ensuring the library has material that reflects our diverse school population from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
- Modelling of respectful behaviour by staff of all irrespective of sex.
- Ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of sex.
- Making clear that our school has a zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment of any kind with enforceable policy - See Code of Behaviour.

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

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows

- Principal - Ms. Smyth
- Deputy Principal - Acting DP: Laura Kelleghan
- All class teachers: The class teacher will oversee recording of bullying reports for students in their class – this includes using the procedure guidelines to investigate reports of bullying and recording bullying behaviour on the correct form
- Relevant Teacher is the teacher that witnesses bullying or to whom bullying is reported. The teacher on the yard is the relevant teacher.
- Anti-bullying coordinator (Ms. Kelleghan) will report at every staff meeting.
- All staff will be vigilant to bullying behaviour.
- Principal will inform the Board of Management of incidents of Bullying.

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

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):

- 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
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the 'Relevant Teacher(s)', the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' will use his/her/their professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
- If it is established by the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' that bullying has occurred, the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- The 'Relevant Teacher(s)' must record the bullying incident on the school template by adding an Alleged Bullying Behaviour Report to the relevant pupil's file.
- The 'Relevant Teacher' must inform the Principal.

Step 1: Identifying if Bullying has Occurred:

Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school. Please see Appendix E as a simple explanatory infographic. Incident report forms will be kept in all classrooms and in the office and are completed thereafter.

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame).

With this in mind the school's procedures are as follows:

- In investigating and dealing with bullying the teacher(s) will exercise his/her/their judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type if it has and how best the situation might be resolved.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the 'Relevant Teacher(s)'. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report instances of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, SNAs, caretakers and cleaners are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them to the Class Teacher.
- **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 their Bí Cineálta policy.**
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour you should 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.

Note: One Off incidents 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

Where Bullying Has occurred:

- On being informed of an alleged incident of bullying, the teacher dealing with the report will first interview the victim(s) and discuss the feeling which the victim(s) experienced because of the bullying behaviour.
- Initial investigations of bullying will be done in class where possible but some incidents might be best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' should seek answers to questions of **what, where, who, when and why**. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- If a group is involved each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about the other's statements.
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after an interview by the teacher.
- Where the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' has/have determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- The "Relevant Teacher" does not apportion blame but should make an effort to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter.
- When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the "Relevant Teacher" will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information (See Appendix D)
- If a pupil chooses to continue the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer be considered a



once off occurrence. In this event parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted. The school should give parents an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the support for the pupil.

Follow Up where bullying behaviour has occurred:

- The teacher must engage with the students involved and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement
- Important factors to consider as part of this engagement are the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the students involved.
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may be arranged separately with a view to bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
- The teacher 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.
- Depending on the seriousness of the bullying the school's Code of Behaviour may be enacted.
- The date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased should also be recorded
- Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted
- Ongoing supervision and support may be needed for the students involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased
- If the bullying behaviour has not ceased the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents. A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- Repeated incidents of bullying behaviour will result in the imposition of sanctions. Such sanctions will be proportionate to the seriousness of the bullying behaviour. It must be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required that this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.

Sanctions:

Where a pupil has been found to be engaged in bullying behaviour, has formally promised to stop and has broken that promise, any of the following sanctions may be imposed:

- S/he may be required to sign another promise, this time countersigned by a parent/guardian;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be contacted by the 'Relevant Teacher' and informed of the nature and extent of the bullying behaviour with a view to agreeing a strategy whereby a promise to end the bullying behaviour would be honoured;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be invited to a meeting with the 'Relevant Teacher'.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s), the relevant teacher and the Principal meet in a final effort to resolve the situation.



- The pupil may be suspended from the school. (See school's Code of behaviour)
- The case may be referred to the Board of Management and the pupil may be expelled from the school.

Follow Up:

- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
 - o Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
 - o Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
 - o Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable;
 - o Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s) or the school Principal or Deputy Principal
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent must be referred to the school's complaints procedure.
- In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their rights to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.
- The School will maintain care for the victim over time. This will be done by speaking to the child a number of weeks after the incident to check on their continuing welfare. The child's parents will also be consulted.
- If a child makes a report of bullying, but asks that nothing is to be done about it, the relevant teacher will support the child appropriately to explore how it will be handled sensitively and how parents may be notified. If a parent does so, they must submit in writing that they require no further action to be taken, but even so, the school may still deem it necessary to be investigated and handled appropriately.

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):

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves a whole school approach. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, no one intervention/support programme works in all situations.

Supporting Bullied pupils:

- Ending the bullying behaviour,
- Fostering respect for bullied pupils and all pupils,
- Fostering greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils,
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through annual awareness-raising programmes,



- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations,
- Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).

Supporting Bullying pupils:

- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a 'clean sheet,'
- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honourable thing and giving them praise for this,
- Making adequate supports available to help those who need it learn other ways of meeting their needs besides violating the rights of others,
- Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school),
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth,
- In dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child,
- In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a 'clean sheet' and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.

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 (See Appendix E) 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 (See Appendix F)

Signed: Seamus Ó hÉanaigh
Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: June 2026

Signed: Eileen Smyth
Principal

Date: June 2026

This policy was reviewed in June 2026. The next review will take place in June 2027.



Appendices:

Appendix A: Types of Bullying

Appendix B: Student Friendly-Bí Cineálta Policy

Appendix C: St. Tola's Action Plan

Appendix D: St. Tola's NS Bullying Behaviour Incident Report Form

Appendix E: Is it Bullying?

Appendix F: Guide to Providing Bullying Behaviour Update

Appendix G: Review of the Bí Cineálta Policy

Appendix H: Notification regarding the board of management's annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy

Appendix I: Overview of the Bí Cineálta Procedures for Preventing and Addressing Bullying Behaviour



Appendix A: Example of Bullying Behaviours

Examples of bullying behaviours:

General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying	• Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc. • Physical aggression • Damage to property • Name calling • Slagging • The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person • Offensive graffiti • Extortion • Intimidation • Insulting or offensive gestures • The “look” • Invasion of personal space • A combination of any of the types listed.
Cyber	• Denigration: Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person’s reputation • Harassment: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual • Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person’s name • Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight • Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online • Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images • Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group • Cyber stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety • Silent telephone/mobile phone call • Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls • Abusive text messages • Abusive email • Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles • Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures • Abusive posts on any form of communication technology



Identity Based Behaviours Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).	
Homophobic and Transgender	● Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation ● Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation ● Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner ● Physical intimidation or attacks ● Threats
Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community	● Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background ● Exclusion on the basis of any of the above
Relationale	This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include: ● Malicious gossip ● Isolation & exclusion ● Ignoring ● Excluding from the group ● Taking someone's friends away ● "Bitching" ● Spreading rumours ● Breaking confidence ● Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear ● The "look" ● Use or terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way
Sexual	● Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching ● Harassment
Special Educational Needs, Disability	● Name calling ● Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs ● Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying ● Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues. ● Mimicking a person's disability ● Setting others up for ridicule



Appendix B: Child Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy

KNOW THE TRUTH



ABOUT BULLYING.

T – TARGETED
Bullying picks on someone

R – REPEATED
It happens again and again

U – UNKIND
Hurts feelings or body

T – THOUGHT-OUT
Done on purpose

H – HURTFUL
Makes others sad or scared



WHAT TO DO
IF YOU ARE BEING BULLIED



SAY NO



GET AWAY



TELL



BÍ CINEÁLTA

We want everyone in our school to feel safe and happy. We want everyone to “Know The Truth About Bullying” and follow the steps so that we can help you!

Say No, Get Away and Tell



- ★ You Did a Brave Thing ★
- 💬 Thank you for telling me.
- 😊 I'm really glad you came to me.
- 🚫 You don't deserve to be treated unkindly.
- ❤️ You're not alone—I'm here for you.
- 💡 I'm listening, and what you say matters.
- I will talk to the right people to help stop this.
- 💬 I may have to talk to you again about this to make sure everything is OK.
- 💛 If you ever feel sad or worried, please come and talk to me anytime.



SCAN ME



Appendix C: St. Tola's Action Plan: Activities to promote Anti-Bullying within our school.

Actions and activities to promote anti-bullying within St. Tolas N.S.

General:

- Modeling of desired behaviour – respect is key.
- SCP – Targeted groups & individuals for social skills, self-esteem etc.
- Parent courses, talks and resources available- ensuring communication lines are open.
- Extra-curricular activities; hurling, football, cross country etc. for targeted students
- Links with the community – GAA Club, Karate, Cross Country
- Curricular – each child is given the opportunity to succeed; differentiation, playing to strengths and interests.
- Incredible Years – Some staff are trained but all are aware of prevention strategies and use them daily. The ethos of the school is to focus on the positive and promote positive behaviour and student interaction.
- Assemblies –, celebrating achievements, showcasing talents, celebrating milestones, praising positive and respectful behaviour.
- Worry Box/Feelings Box in class, pupils are encouraged to write or draw their emotion/feeling and the teacher will best support on 1/1 or group or whole class basis.
- Email & School Website – showcase our successes, keeping parents informed, highlighting achievements; individuals, groups and the whole school.
- Awareness amongst staff; each September staff meeting (and regularly throughout the year) behaviour is discussed and it is ensured that all are aware of procedures.
- All school staff are asked to monitor children and report any concerns to the relevant teacher.
- Whole School Initiatives: Internal & external Friendship Benches to encourage pupils to sit amongst friends and to share how they are feeling
- Feel Good Friday is an extremely popular activity which pupils relish, this includes DJ song day, DEAR day, wear odd socks to school day and many other creative ideas to promote student wellbeing.
- Whole School Wellbeing Week
- Staff initiatives e.g. – Anti-bullying CPD training.
- Staff relations – social committee organise events.
- Internet Safety – Paula gives parent sessions on internet safety
- Cybersafekids webinar for children and parents
- Supervision – Monitoring effectively on yard- promoting positive student relationships. On wet days these adults circulate around the classrooms and monitor behaviour.
- Student council (initiated in 2021)
- Best line on yard & PE equipment for each class group. Point system with rewards.
- Play-stations on yard/gym (Buddy Systems) with older children acting as play leaders.
- Whole school awareness measures:
 - o Friendship week
 - o Maths/Literacy/Science for Fun
 - o Anti-bullying surveys
 - o Assembly awards
 - o Anti-bullying parent's session
 - o Random act of kindness week
 - o SPHE curriculum – walk tall, stay safe & RSE
- Strong culture of telling, pupils and parents are always encouraged to communicate issues to teachers. Our strong communication links with parents is very helpful with this, they are never afraid to call, email or talk to staff if problems arise.
- Principal 'meet and greet' in the morning.
- Anti-bullying policy – clear and structured guidelines for teachers, parents and pupils – expectations are clear.
- DFL – discipline for learning – step system – clear boundary setting.

By Month

Action/Activities Monthly Outline

Anti-bullying *Motto of the Month* shared at school assembly



Classrooms have a dedicated display area for the motto of the month. As part of mindfulness/wellbeing, students in each class colour and display the motto. Class teachers choose one or two to be laminated and displayed around the school from each class to promote anti-bullying awareness while developing a positive and safe school environment.

September	SPHE: teachers focus on directly teaching a clear definition of bullying. Wellbeing/emotional literacy/ self-esteem/ friendship building/ teaching of school rules and how to report bullying- focus on friendships and identifying friends who could help you to report bullying.	Motto: Let Us All Cheer, Bullying Is Not Accepted Here
October	<i>Be a part of the Puzzle for change:</i> - give every student in your classroom a small piece of a large puzzle shape to write their name on and decorate with markers and other art supplies. Sense of Belonging/Togetherness.	See it. Stop it. Be a part of the change.
November	Creation of distinct 'bully free zones' both inside and outside of the school using 'Bully Free Zone' displays.	Lend a hand, Take a Stand. Stop Bullying.
December	Friendship Friday/Mentor or buddy system Some time is set aside for 'open play' on a Friday between older and younger classes. Some rules: The students can't play with their best friends, but instead have to branch out and socialize with other children in their class (supported by older students) and/or older students (acting as mentors/buddies). They are encouraged to engage in peer building experiences such as reading books, playing games etc. Younger students would be enabled to share any worries/concerns/ bullying incidents with older student buddies/mentors in this time.	Bullying Is Bad, It Makes Others Feel Sad
January	Students create a <i>Be a Buddy Not a Bully</i> Pledge/promise-eg. I pledge to <i>be a reporter if I see bullying / be a good friend / never hurt others on purpose</i> etc.... Pledges can be displayed in classrooms and/or around the school and are signed by students. Students are given a sticker (or similar) to wear to show they are against bullies and they have made a pledge.	Be a Buddy, Not a Bully
February	Love month! Acts of kindness in classrooms and between classrooms. Challenges (give someone in another class a kind smile, a note, a compliment. Play with someone you have never played with before etc.) Creation of a 'kindness chain' either at classroom or whole school level: Each time you catch a student doing something kind, ask them to write it on a piece of construction paper with their name and add it to the 'kindness chain'.	Speak out to stay safe
March	1st Thursday in March- World book day: Book talk: Teachers choose a book on the topic of anti-bully for a classroom read aloud appropriate for their age group. (Example, Dragon and the Bully – Steve Herman).	Bully-Free, The Way to Be!



April	Designate an Anti-Bully Tree- Locate a tree near the entrance of your school and decorate it with anti-bullying messages and quotes. Ask students to add their own messages of love, kindness, and hope throughout the year to create a lasting symbol of acceptance for everyone who enters the building to see.	Go and say no to bullying
May	Self-esteem/ confidence building: Promote Acceptance and Self-Esteem Activity- write 3 'I love ___ about me' statements (ie. I love that I practice hard at music and I am getting better each day)	Be kind, words don't rewind.
June	Reflection activity: Draw/write about your experience this year engaging in anti-bullying activities. Which did you enjoy? What was your favorite? Why? Possible certificates for students who kept their pledge/promise well. 'I am a buddy, never a bully' or similar.	Bullies never win.



Appendix D: Recording Concerns in relation to Bullying

Section 1: Incident Details

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

2. Name of person reporting the Bullying Concern:

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

3. Source of bullying concern/report

(tick relevant box(es)) *

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

(tick relevant box(es)) *

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

4. Location of incidents:

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

Physical Aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Other (specify)	



7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)

7. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken

Section 2: Review & Follow-Up

- Review Date(s): _____
- Has the Bullying Behaviour Ceased? (Yes/No) _____
- Student's Views on Outcome:

- Parent's Views on Outcome:



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- Date Bullying Behaviour Ceased (if applicable): _____

Section 3: Additional Actions & Support

- Engagement with External Services/Supports (if applicable):
- If a SSF (Student Support File) exists for a pupil involved, has a copy of this record been placed in their support file? (Yes/No) _____
- If a SSP (Student Support Plan) exists has it been updated to incorporate response strategies and associated supports? (Yes/No) _____

Signed: _____
(Relevant teacher)

Date: _____

Signed: _____
Parent/Guardian (If applicable)

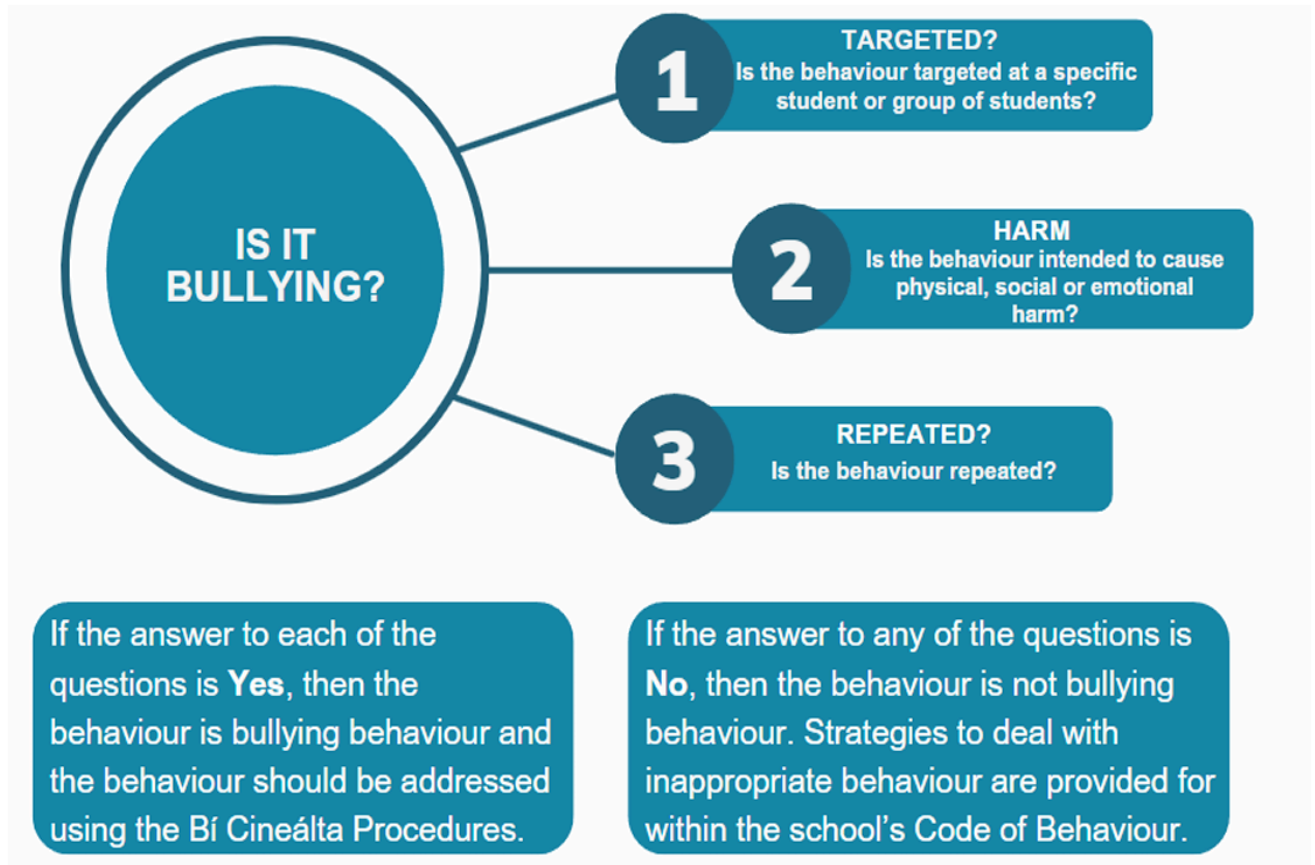
Date: _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal: _____

*** Note:** The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.



Appendix E: Is it Bullying?





Appendix F: Update on Bullying Behaviours for the BoM.

Guide to providing Bullying Behaviour Update for board of management meeting of:

Having reviewed the details of the incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the previous board of management meeting, the principal must provide the following information at each ordinary meeting of the board of management:

Total number of new incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the last board of management meeting.	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour currently ongoing.	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the beginning of this school year.	

Where incidents of bullying behaviour have been reported since the last meeting, the update must include a verbal report which should include the following information where relevant:

- the trends and patterns identified such as the form of bullying behaviour, type of bullying behaviour if known, location of bullying behaviour, when it occurred etc
- the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour
- any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour
- if any serious incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred which have had a serious adverse impact on a student
- if a parent has informed the school that a student has left the school because of reported bullying behaviour
- if any additional support is needed from the board of management
- if the school's Bí Cineálta policy requires urgent review in advance of the annual review

This update should not include any personal information or information that could identify the students involved.



Appendix G: Review of the Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual (calendar) review of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and its implementation in consultation with the school community. As part of the review, this document must be completed.

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?

YES NO

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?



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 part of this review and if so why?



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17. Does the school refer parents to the complaints procedures if they have a complaint about how the school has addressed bullying behaviour?

18. Has a parent informed the school that a student has left the school due to reported bullying behaviour?

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?



Appendix H:

**Notification regarding the board of management's annual review of
the school's Bí Cineálta Policy**

The Board of Management of _____ confirms that
the board of management's annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying
Behaviour and its implementation was completed at the board of management meeting of
_____ [date].

This review was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Department of
Education's *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary
and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed: _____
(Chairperson of board of management)

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Signed: _____

(Principal)

Date: _____



Appendix I: