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Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Stokane 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.

We are committed to ensuring that all students who attend our school are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our students is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our students and we are fully committed to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

We confirm that we will, in accordance with our obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the harassment of students or staff on any of the nine grounds specified: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

Definition of bullying

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

2. 1 Definition of bullying behaviour https://oide.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Bi-

Cinealta.pdf

- 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
- ➢ Verbal
- ➢ Relational, which can be online or offline.

2. 2 Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour

- A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards a student is not bullying behaviour. However, a single hurtful message posted online (eg. 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.
- 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.

2.3 Criminal Behaviour

Bullying behaviour can be considered criminal behaviour under certain circumstances and legal consequences can apply. The age of criminal responsibility in Ireland is 12 years.

2.5 How Bullying Behaviour Occurs

There are many different types of bullying behaviour, which can occur separately or together. These can include directing bullying at someone focused on the following: disability, exceptional ability, gender identity, LGBTQ + transphobic, physical appearance, racism, poverty status, religious identity, sexism and sexual harassment. This is not an exhaustive list.

2. 7 Types of Bullying Behaviour (not an exhaustive list)

- Disablist bullying behaviour

- Exceptionally able bullying
- Gender identity bullying
- Homophobic, transphobic (LGBTQ+) bullying
- Physical appearance
- Racist
- Poverty
- Religious identity
- Sexist
- Sexual harassment

Bullying can be indirect:

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 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, email, 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.

2.6 Where bullying behaviour can occur (this list is not exhaustive)

Our 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 the bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, schools deal with it in line with their Bí Cineálta Policy. (see section

6.2 of procedures) https://oide.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Bi-Cinealta.pdf

Inside School:

- School yard
- In the classroom

Other areas:

- Outside School
- Coming to and from school
- On the bus
- Organised groups and clubs
- Online bullying

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	29/03/2025	Half-day school closure
Students	06/02/2025 07/04/2025 September, 2025	Online survey Follow up paper survey My Thoughts About School *All anonymous
Parents	11/02/2025	Online survey-anonymous
Board of Management	16/12/2024, 07/04/2025 Ongoing	Discussion of policy Principal Report & CPOR Report
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	30/04/2025 Ongoing	Bus Driver Cleaner
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 the school. These include strategies specifically aimed at preventing online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate. These lists are not exhaustive.

5.1 Culture and Environment

- Create a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.
- Involve parents as active partners in fostering an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated.
- Support the idea that our school is a telling environment.
- Promote the concept of a trusted adult – stay safe linkage – who to tell.
- Appropriate supervision to ensure the safety of our students

- Create safe spaces in our school building and yards – visibility
- Incorporate artwork and signs to promote our school values – creation of a school charter promoting rights – equality, inclusion and respect.
- Encourage a sense of belonging with ownership over their own space through art and creativity.
- Create a positive school culture and climate which is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity
- Encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and promotes respectful relationships across the school community

Ways in which we work to achieve these goals are as follows: Staff are briefed on the uniform approach we must take to handle all reports of bullying – this is distributed to staff and a copy is displayed on the Staff Room notice board for ease of access also.

- Anti-Bullying week activities such as Random acts of Kindness homework, Poster making, slogan making etc.
- Playground helpers – students in higher classes volunteer to support younger classes on the yard to help with games and positive interactions. Minders at lunchtime also.
- The Child Friendly Anti- Bullying Policy was formed with pupil and parent input and is distributed to parents, children and staff to discuss. This policy outlines various ways to tell.
- Parents receive information at times regarding useful information on Anti Bullying
- Stay Safe, RSE and SPHE lessons focusing on positive behaviour form part of curricular content in all classes.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils.
- Class and School Charter development as well as notice board to promote kindness & build responsibility amongst pupils.

5.2 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.
- 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; and explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including, in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.

Supports for staff:

- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and on-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.
- EAS: poster with Employee Assistance Service to support staff members who may need guidance

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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):

A) To determine if bullying behaviour has occurred, we will consider the following questions:

B)

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.

C) Approaches taken to address the bullying behaviour:

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

D) To review progress:

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

- Listen
- Support the student
- Regularly check in with the student
- Create a Buddy system if suitable
- Through SPHE lessons, children will develop strategies to deal with bullying situations.

The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour.
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.

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

- 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 on Aladdin.
- The DDLP will follow up no more than twenty days after the initial engagement to investigate if bullying has ceased.
- All staff will be vigilant to bullying behaviour.
- The principal will inform the Board of Management of incidents of bullying.
- Deputy principal /SENCO is available to provide up to date information and support if needed to assist class teachers in addressing concern.

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

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
- Making adequate counselling facilities available to pupils who need it in a timely manner (subject to available funding)
- 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 & in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).

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: _____ Date: _____

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Principal)

Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour in accordance with Bí Cineálta Guidelines and Stokane NS Bí Cineálta Policy and Stokane NS Code of Behaviour

Before completing this, please go through these three key 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?

- Must answer 'yes' to all three
- Factual statements only
- No narrative

Recording Teacher: _____

Name: _____

Date Recorded: _____

Names of Children Involved

1. Student(s) Reporting to be Experiencing Bullying: _____

2. Student(s) Allegedly Engaging in Bullying Behaviour: _____

3. Other Witnesses (if any):_____

Form of Bullying (Alleged) (Section 2.5)

Tick all that apply

- Disablist Bullying
- Gender Identity Bullying
- Exceptionally Able Bullying
- Homophobic / Transphobic Bullying
- Physical Appearance Bullying
- Racist Bullying Poverty Bullying
- Religious Identity Bullying
- Sexist Bullying Sexual Harassment
- Other Type of Bullying

(Section 2.7) Tick all that apply

- Peer-to-Peer
- Teacher-to-Student
- Student-to-Teacher
- Group Bullying
- Prejudicial Bullying (e.g., based on race, religion, gender)
- Sexual Bullying (e.g., inappropriate comments, harassment)
- Other: _____

Where and When: (If known)

Location: _____

Date/Time: _____

Date of Initial Engagement:

With Student(s): _____

With Parent(s): _____

Views of Student(s)/Parent(s): (Regarding the actions to be taken to address bullying behaviour- in support of own child)

Student:

_____

_____

Parent:

_____

_____

Date of Review (within 20 school days of the reported behaviour):

(To determine if bullying behaviour has ceased)

Review Date: _____

Outcome: _____

Views of Student(s): _____

Views of Parent(s): _____

Engagement with External Services/Supports: (If any) Services Contacted:

_____

_____

Details of Engagement:

_____

_____