

## **Sandford Parish National School**

### **Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour**

The Board of Management of Sandford Parish 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.

## Section A: Development/review of our Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour

All members of our school community were provided with the opportunity to input into the development/review of this policy.

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	March 2025	Staff Training and School Closure.
Students	May 2025	Consultation with Student Council
Parents	June 2025	Consultation through Parental Survey.
Board of Management	10 <sup>th</sup> June 2025	Review of new policy draft – discussion at BOM Meeting, final ratification after amendments made, where necessary.
Date policy was approved: 10 <sup>th</sup> June 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: Anti- Bullying Policy: 12 <sup>th</sup> November 2024		

## 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 (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):**

### Section 5.1 Bí Cineálta Procedures – Culture and Environment

We strive to:

- create a positive school culture and climate which is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity.
- create a school culture where there is a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour and where bullying behaviour is not acceptable.
- promote kindness and inclusion among the student body – peer support and positive environment.
- provide appropriate supervision to help prevent and address bullying behaviour when pupils are attending school or attending school activities.
- involve parents as active partners in fostering an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated.
- promote the concept of a trusted adult and a telling environment.
- build an environment where students feel safe, connected and supported.
- positively reinforce the Code of Behaviour.
- ensure that Student Voice is respected and heard and our Student Council is established and active.

- operate a Buddy System between younger and older children.
- promote respectful relationships across the school community.

## **Section 5.2 Bí Cineálta Procedures – Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)**

We strive to:

- encourage pupils to show respect for each other and all members of the school community.
- foster positive self-esteem among the staff and pupils by celebrating individual differences, by acknowledging good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success.
- develop curricular and extra-curricular activities to help develop a sense of self-worth, working together, inclusion and respect.
- display a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact.
- model respectful behaviour towards colleagues, pupils and visitors in our school environment.
- provide teaching and promote learning which is collaborative and respectful, fostering inclusion and respect by using appropriate programmes and resources, for example: Implementation of the SPHE Curriculum and RSE programmes, Stay Safe, Weaving Wellbeing, Zippy's Friends, Mindfulness Activities and the Patron's Programme – Follow Me.
- promote groupwork/collaborative methodologies.
- Implement 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.
- regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the Bí Cineálta Policy.

## **Section 5.3 Bí Cineálta Procedures – Policy and Planning**

Sandford Parish National School endeavours to have the wellbeing of the school community at the center of all school policies and plans.

- The school's Acceptable Internet Usage Policy, Special Education Policy and Code of Behaviour support the implementation of the Bí Cineálta Policy.
- Staff engagement in appropriate teacher professional learning courses supports the school staff in preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.
- Effective leadership is a key component with Principal, Deputy Principal, DLP, DDLP, and all middle management focused on supporting the implementation of this policy.

The aim of Sandford Parish National School Bí Cineálta Policy is:

- 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 activities 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.

#### **Section 5.4 Bí Cineálta Procedures – Relationships and Partnerships**

In Sandford Parish National School

- We encourage open, respectful communication between students, staff and parents/guardians.
- We strive to build positive relationships with our students and their families, based on mutual respect and empathy.
- We collaborate with external agencies to provide additional support and resources.
- We promote age-appropriate initiatives that engage the student body in looking at their own behaviour – looking at the causes of and impacts of bullying during SPHE lessons.
- We support interpersonal connections through a range of formal and informal structures such as our parents' association, student committees and groups.
- We conduct workshops and seminars for students and staff to raise awareness of the impact of bullying.
- We encourage peer mentoring and peer support with Buddy Reading, Playground leaders etc.
- We support active participation of students in school life and active participation of parents in school life also.

#### **Section 5.5 Bí Cineálta Procedures – Preventing cyberbullying behaviour**

In Sandford Parish National School

- We explicitly teach the issues surrounding cyberbullying and the importance of using technology safely.
- We utilise the Webwise programmes.
- We refer to appropriate online behaviour when using devices and in SPHE lessons.
- The school has developed an AUP for technology in our school and includes learning about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship.

#### **Section 5.6 Bí Cineálta Procedures – Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour**

In Sandford Parish National School

- We strive to create a safe and inclusive environment for all members of our school community, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- We endeavour to educate students about the importance of respecting all people, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- We use age appropriate, and Department of Education approved LGBTQ+ inclusive teaching resources.

#### **Section 5.7 Bí Cineálta Procedures – Preventing racist bullying behaviour**

In Sandford Parish National School

- We strive to promote diversity and inclusion in the classroom.
- We foster a culture where diversity is celebrated and students 'see themselves' in the school environment.
- We ensure that library reading material represents appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

#### **Section 5.8 Bí Cineálta Procedures – Preventing sexist bullying behaviour**

In Sandford Parish National School

- We challenge gender stereotypes.
- We ensure that students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of sex.
- We ensure that library reading material and lesson topics represent appropriate lived

experiences of both male and female role models.

- We model respectful behaviour by staff of all, irrespective of sex.

### **Section 5.9 Bí Cineálta Procedures – Preventing sexual harassment**

In Sandford Parish National School

- We teach the RSE curriculum in line with our RSE policy.
- We teach about inappropriate behaviours and consent (Stay Safe Programme).
- We make clear that our school has a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment of any kind.

**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):**

- Classes are always supervised by a member of staff.
- Staff are present and visible in the playground at breaktimes.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extracurricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers.
- A member of the ISM team has responsibility for drawing up a yard supervision roster which is in place for all breaktimes, including wet breaks.
- Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- All disclosed incidents of bullying are investigated thoroughly and consistently by following the correct procedure as outlined to staff. These records are stored in line with school procedures.
- Involvement of pupils in contributing to a safe school environment – e.g. Active Week and other activities that can help encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Ensure that pupils know who to tell and how to tell if bullying behaviours occur.
- Ensure bystanders know the importance of becoming upstanders by telling if they witness or know that bullying behaviours are taking place.

## **Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour**

All teachers have responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour; however, class teachers are usually the best placed to investigate reports of bullying behaviour.

The 'Relevant 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.
- The DLP or DDLP will follow up after twenty days to investigate if bullying has ceased.
- All staff will be vigilant to bullying behaviour.
- The principal will inform the Board of Management of any incident of bullying.

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

- > Ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour is heard and reassured.
- > Seek to ensure the privacy of those involved.
- > Conduct all conversations with sensitivity.

- Consider the age and ability of those involved.
- Listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation.
- Take action in a timely manner.
- Inform parents of those involved.

**The steps that will be taken by the school to determine if bullying behaviour has occurred, the approaches taken to address the bullying behaviour and to review progress are as follows (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):**

**The school's procedures for investigation, follow up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies that may be used by the school for cases of bullying behaviour are based on Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures and are as follows:**

**Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred:**

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

- Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?
- Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?
- Is the behaviour repeated?

If the answer to each of the above questions is **yes**, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour, and the behaviour should be addressed using the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

If the answer to any of the questions is **no**, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with such inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the Sandford Parish National School Code of Behaviour.

- 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 the same.
- When analysing incidents of alleged bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when and why. This should be done in a calm and logical 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 each other's statements.
- It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).
- Each member of the group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from other members of the group after interview by the teacher.

- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
- Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- 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 efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

*Sandford Parish National School notes that 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 repeated behaviour.*

#### **Where bullying behaviour has occurred:**

The primary aim for the relevant teacher 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).

- 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 that he/she is in breach of the school's BÍ Cineálta.
- 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.
- A record should be kept of the engagement with all involved. This record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known, where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students involved and their parents. The 'Relevant Teacher(s)' must record the bullying incident on the school recording template (Appendix A) and add it to the relevant pupil's file and copies to the files of all the other pupils named. The 'Relevant Teacher(s)' must inform the principal.
- The record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour.
- Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
- It is important to listen and take account of the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation.
- 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 this behaviour in accordance with the Bí Cineálta policy.

- In the event of a parent or pupil requesting no action be taken to address bullying behaviour, we refer to and follow Section 6.3 of the Bí Cineálta procedures. This will inform the school's response.

#### **Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred:**

- The teacher must engage with the students involved and their parents again no more than 20 days after the initial engagement to review progress following the initial intervention.
- 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.
- 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.
- The date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased should also be recorded.
- Any engagement with outside agencies should also be noted.
- 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.

#### **Review Progress**

- If it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then consideration should be given to 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.
- If a parent(s) is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools. they should be referred to the school's complaints procedures.
- If a parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, they 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 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.

- Support regulation strategies.
- Indicating clearly that bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations.
- Indicating clearly that bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through annual awareness-raising programmes.
- Self-esteem building activities.
- Conferences with class teacher/Principal /Deputy Principal as appropriate.
- Helping those who need to 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).
- Time out in other classrooms if required by pupil.
- Small group work to assist in building social skills.
- Buddy work to assist in self-esteem, self-confidence and social skills.
- 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.
- Referral to NEPS.
- Referral to external agencies such as School Completion Programme, NEPS, HSE, NEWB etc.

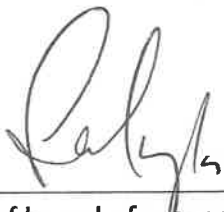
All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with students and parents. The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented. If the bullying behaviour is a child protection concern 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: 10/6/25  
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed:  Date: 10/6/25  
(Principal)

## Appendix A: Bí Cineálta - Template for recording bullying behaviour

### (Section 6.5 Bí Cineálta Procedures)

#### 1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_

#### 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	

#### 4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))\*

Yard	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
Other	

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

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#### 6. Form of Bullying Behaviour based on Section 2.5 of the Bí Cineálta Procedures (tick the relevant box(es))\*

Direct Bullying Behaviour		Indirect Bullying Behaviour	
• Physical bullying behaviour		• Exclusion	
• Damage to personal property		• Relational	
• Written bullying behaviour			
• Extortion		<b>Online Bullying Behaviour</b>	
• Verbal Bullying Behaviour			

#### 7. Type of bullying - based on Section 2.7 of the Bí Cineálta Procedures and is not an exhaustive list:

Disablist bullying behaviour		Poverty bullying behaviour	
Exceptionally able bullying behaviour		Religious identity bullying behaviour	
Gender identity bullying behaviour		Sexist bullying behaviour	
Racist bullying behaviour		Sexual harrassment	
Physical appearance bullying behaviour		Homophobic/Transphobic (LGBTQ+) bullying behaviour	

**8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact**

**9. Details of actions and supports agreed to address the bullying behaviour reported - to include the views of the pupils and their parents:**

**10. Review meeting with pupils and parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased – to include the views of the pupils and their parents in relation to this.**

<b>Date of initial engagement with pupils:</b>	
<b>Date of initial engagement with parents:</b>	
<b>Date submitted to principal/deputy principal:</b>	
<b>Note engagement with outside agencies:</b>	

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **(Relevant Teacher)**      **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_