ST OLIVER POST PRIMARY SCHOOL
OLDCASTLE, CO MEATH

Bí Cineálta Policy
2025-26

May 2025

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Contents

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of **St. Oliver Post Primary** 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	13/3/2025 01/04/2025 01/05/2025	Survey Bí Cineálta training day – Padlets & Group Work Staff Meeting
Students	01/05/2025	Online consultation re Policy
Parents	13/3/2025 01/05/2025	Survey Online consultation re Policy
Board of Management	28/05/2025	Board of Management Meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	01/05/2025	Online consultation re Policy

Date policy was approved: 28/05/2025

Date policy was last reviewed: 28/05/2025

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):

1. Culture and Environment

    To foster a culture of respect and prevent bullying behaviour, the school promotes positive relationships, inclusion, and visibility of core values throughout daily life:
    - **Visibility of Bí Cineálta Policy:** The school's Bí Cineálta policy is communicated regularly via the school website, newsletters, journals, and prominent displays to reinforce a culture of kindness and respect.
    - **Assemblies, Awareness Weeks & Guest Speakers:** Events such as Wellbeing Week, Stand Up Awareness Week, Zero Discrimination Day, and termly assemblies raise awareness, challenge stereotypes, and promote student empathy. Guest speakers provide real-world insights that support antibullying messages.
    - **Posters & Visual Messaging:** Anti-bullying messages are displayed around the school to reinforce expectations and encourage positive behaviour.
    - **Peer Mentors & Prefects:** Trained students model respectful behaviour, and act as early responders to peer concerns, fostering a telling & supportive environment.
    - **Staff Vigilance & Supervision:** All staff, including ancillary staff, actively supervise students and promote a positive environment. This is supported by a comprehensive supervision rota.
    - **Confidential Support Access:** QR codes allow for discreet reporting of incidents to the Wellbeing Coordinator, ensuring private access to support.
    - **Extra-Curricular Activities:** Clubs, sports, debating, and lunchtime activities provide inclusive opportunities for students to build friendships, teamwork, and positive peer connections in structured, respectful settings.

2. Curriculum

    Teaching and learning play a critical role in bullying prevention by developing empathy, understanding, and inclusive attitudes:

    - **Whole-School Teaching Approach:** All teachers are encouraged to incorporate Bí Cineálta principles and the school ethos into their subject areas to promote a supportive and inclusive culture.
        o **SPHE & RSE:** These programmes equip students with skills to develop healthy relationships, manage emotions, and resolve conflict constructively.
        o **Humanities & Politics:** Subjects like History, Geography, CSPE, and Politics & Society examine justice, inequality, civic responsibility, and human rights.
        o **PE:** Promotes cooperation, inclusion, and positive team dynamics.
        o **Literacy & English:** Literature is used to explore themes of identity, difference, and empathy.
        o **Religion:** Encourages respect for diverse beliefs and the development of values rooted in compassion and understanding.
        o **Art & Drama:** Foster empathy and self-expression through collaboration and creative work.

- **First-Year Induction**: Builds early peer connections and sets clear expectations around kindness and inclusion.
- **Themed Weeks**: Events such as Stand Up Awareness Week and Neurodiversity Acceptance Week highlight respect for difference and address bullying behaviour related to identity and learning needs.
- **Mental Health Programmes**: Jigsaw and NEART support student wellbeing, resilience, and peer understanding.
- **Support for Vulnerable Students**: Curriculum differentiation ensures that students with additional needs are included and valued.
- **Programme Variety**: Programmes such as L2LP, TY, (including LIFT & Gaisce) LCE, LCA and LCVP offer diverse, engaging pathways that reduce school disengagement — a key protective factor against bullying behaviour.
- **Work Experience Opportunities**: Through programmes such as TY, LCA, and LCVP, students engage in structured work experience placements, which promote confidence, responsibility, and positive peer perceptions while supporting real-world inclusion.

3. Policy and Planning

School policies are structured to prevent bullying behaviour through clear expectations, inclusive practices, and proactive planning:

- **Bí Cineálta Policy**: this policy and our student friendly policy are visible throughout the school, which provide a clear framework for expected behaviour and respect.
- **Aligned Policies**: The Code of Behaviour, Wellbeing Policy, Acceptable Use Policy, RSE Policy, and AEN Policy all support the implementation of anti-bullying measures and outline consistent responses to incidents.
- **Positive Discipline Framework**: Encourages appropriate behaviour through clear boundaries, praise, and reflection, helping prevent escalation and conflict.
- **Teacher Professional Learning**: Staff regularly engage in continuous professional development (CPD) in areas such as wellbeing, inclusion, behaviour management, and anti-bullying strategies. Teachers then share their learning from CPD with colleagues helping to embed best practices across the school.
- **Seating Plans**: Used strategically to reduce peer conflict, promote inclusion, and support vulnerable students.
- **Supervision & Monitoring**: Staff are assigned to key areas and transitions. Internet usage is monitored under the Acceptable Use Policy to reduce opportunities for online bullying.

4. Relationships and Partnerships

Positive relationships between students, staff, families, and external supports are central to bullying prevention:

- **Student Council**: Empowers students to have a voice in creating a safe school environment and to lead initiatives that promote inclusivity and respect.
- **Peer Mentoring Programme**: Strengthens student connections, builds confidence, and creates approachable student leaders who support peers.
- **Tutor and Year Head System**: Ensures students have trusted adults they can turn to, promoting early identification of issues and consistent follow-up.
- **Additional Needs Team Meetings**: The student support team meets weekly to identify and respond to emerging student needs. This team ensures early intervention, coordinated

support, and effective communication among staff in relation to student wellbeing and any bullying concerns.

- **Parent and Community Engagement**: Regular communication with families - Parents' Association, Compass, newsletters, phone calls, emails - reinforces shared values and fosters collaboration in addressing concerns.
- **External Partnerships**: Ongoing collaboration with agencies such as Jigsaw, NEPS, and CAMHS enhances student wellbeing and provides additional support for those at risk.
- **Inclusive SEN Policies**: Ensure that students with additional needs are supported, valued, and included in all aspects of school life, reducing vulnerability to bullying behaviour and social exclusion.

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):

- **Break and Lunchtime Supervision Rota:** A structured teacher supervision rota ensures that key areas such as corridors, bathrooms, stairwells, the canteen and outdoor areas are monitored during all break and lunch times. This consistent presence of staff helps deter negative behaviour and supports early intervention.

- **Supervision by All Staff:** All staff, including ancillary staff, are encouraged to maintain a presence and report any concerns. This whole-staff approach promotes vigilance and shared responsibility for student wellbeing.

- **Classroom Monitoring:** Teachers are encouraged to remain alert to dynamics within the classroom and take proactive steps to address exclusion, conflict, or signs of bullying behaviour including implement class charters, seating plans and groupings that promote inclusion & prevent isolation.

- **Transition Points:** Particular attention is paid to times of movement — before/after school, between classes, and during transitions — which are monitored by staff to reduce risk of unsupervised negative interactions.

- **Acceptable Use Policy:** The school has an Acceptable Use Policy in place. Digital citizenship is also promoted as part of SPHE, CSPE and whole-school guidance.

- **Behaviour Tracking Systems:** Incidents of concern are logged and monitored via the school's behaviour system, allowing for patterns to be identified and addressed promptly.

- **Collaboration with Support Team:** Regular meetings of the support team ensure that supervision concerns or patterns of behaviour are shared & addressed in a coordinated manner.

- **Student Voice and Reporting Mechanisms:** Students are encouraged to report concerns either in person to a trusted adult or via anonymous methods (e.g. referral QR code). Staff are trained to respond sensitively and appropriately.

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Year Head / Tutor / Wellbeing Coordinator

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):

Reporting Suspected Bullying Behaviour

We encourage a culture of openness where bullying behaviour is reported and addressed promptly. Any incidents of suspected bullying behaviour must be reported to the Wellbeing Coordinator or relevant Tutor, Year Head, Deputy Principal, or Principal.

Students, whether they are victims or witnesses, are encouraged to speak with a teacher about any suspected bullying. This is part of fostering a responsible and open environment where communication is valued.

Parents or guardians who become aware of suspected bullying behaviour through their children, relatives, friends, or other parents should contact the Tutor or Year Head. To make reporting easier, a QR code is available for parents to use.

All staff members are expected to be vigilant and report any incidents of suspected bullying. Our school policies and procedures are designed to promote an atmosphere of mutual respect and acceptance for everyone.

Requests to Take No Action

A student reporting bullying behaviour may request that no formal action be taken, other than for staff to remain aware of the situation. The student may not want to be identified as the source of the report due to concerns about potential consequences. In these cases, staff will respond with empathy and sensitivity, working with the student to determine appropriate steps and how their parents will be informed. The student's safety and well-being will remain the priority.

Parents may also request that no action be taken regarding reported bullying, provided the request is made in writing, or assistance is offered if there are literacy, digital literacy, or language barriers. However, the school may decide to address the bullying behaviour, depending on the situation, even if a student/parent requests no action.

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

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?

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

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 following Bí Cineálta Procedures:

To effectively address bullying behaviour, Year Head will consider what, **where**, **when**, and **why** of each incident:

- **What:** We will gather specific details about the incident, including actions, words, and who was involved.
- **Where:** We will identify where the incident took place to understand the context.
- **When:** We will note when the incident occurred, determining if it's an isolated event or part of a pattern.
- **Why:** We will investigate the underlying reasons for the behaviour, including any triggers or causes.

To effectively investigate bullying behaviour, Year Head will:

1. engage each student involved individually to gather their perspective.
2. ask students involved to write down their accounts of the incident (Pink Sheet) for clarity and documentation.
3. meet with all students involved as a group, if necessary, to clarify each student's account and ensure understanding.
4. provide appropriate support for each student, including follow-up actions and counselling if needed (see below).

Where bullying behaviour has occurred

When bullying behaviour takes place, we will act promptly and in partnership with all those involved. Our primary goal is to address and resolve any issues, rather than to assign blame. Parents are a vital part of our school community, and we will contact the parents of the students involved at an early stage to inform them of the situation and to agree on steps to address the behaviour.

We will ensure that the student experiencing bullying is heard and that their views are central to deciding how best to respond. We will also make sure that all involved understand that resolving the issue and restoring relationships is the priority.

A written record will be kept throughout the process. This will include details of the bullying behaviour (including form, type, location, and timing), the date of initial contact with students and parents, and the views of all involved.

Follow-up

We will follow up with the students and parents no later than 20 school days after initial contact. This review will consider the nature of the bullying, the effectiveness of our interventions, and the relationships between the students. We will record whether the behaviour has stopped and note any involvement of external supports. Even when bullying has ceased, we recognise that some students may still need support and supervision.

If bullying continues, we will reassess our strategies with the students and their parents and agree on a plan with a clear timeframe for further review. Where necessary, and in line with our Code of Behaviour, disciplinary measures may be considered. These will be discussed directly with the relevant student and their parents.

If a parent is not satisfied with how the school has responded, we will direct them to our complaint's procedure. If they remain dissatisfied and believe their child has been negatively affected, they may contact the Ombudsman for Children.

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):

We will ensure that all students involved—whether they are victims, witnesses, or those displaying bullying behaviour—are treated with respect and supported in addressing the issue. Our goal is to resolve conflicts, restore relationships, and maintain a safe and respectful learning environment for all.

- Where the incident is deemed to be minor, a verbal warning will be given to the student to stop the inappropriate behaviour, pointing out how he/she is in breach of the Bí Cineálta policy and trying to get him/her to see the situation from the victim's point of view. If deemed appropriate, parents may be contacted.
- If the incident is deemed to be serious, appropriate sanctions may be imposed in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.
- The 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, the school will support the students involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, the school will deal with it in accordance with the Bí Cineálta policy.
- The school also reserves the right to report any such bullying activity to the proper authorities.
- Offenders and victims of bullying may be referred to Counselling/Guidance.

External Supports:

1. **National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS):**
   NEPS provides psychological support to students, offering advice and training on preventing and addressing bullying. This includes developing social and emotional skills, promoting resilience, and repairing relationships between peers.

2. **Oide:**
   Oide supports continuous professional learning for school leaders and teachers. It fosters a culture of lifelong learning and provides resources to help prevent and address bullying, including through school-wide professional development.

3. **Webwise:**
   Webwise promotes online safety and responsible internet use. The initiative offers resources for teachers, students, and parents on digital citizenship, online wellbeing, and tackling online bullying.

4. **National Parents Council (NPC):**
   NPC works to empower parents to be active partners in their children's education, including preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. The council offers online and in-person courses to support parents.

5. **Dublin City University (DCU) Anti-Bullying Centre:**
   The DCU Anti-Bullying Centre offers research-based programs that promote a positive school culture and provide strategies for preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

6. **Tusla:** In cases where bullying may also involve child protection concerns, Tusla provides expert guidance. Schools can contact Tusla directly for advice and support.

These supports help create a collaborative approach involving students, staff, parents, and external agencies to prevent and address bullying in our school community.

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: _Ui ó Reilly_   Date: 28.05.2025

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: _Brendan Boylan._   Date: 28.052025

(Principal)

2 8 MAY 2025
ST OLIVER POST PRIMARY
OLDCASTLE

BOM Ratification

Date Ratified by the Board of Management: _28.05.2025_

Proposed By:_PHILOMENA Mc ENROE LYNCH_

Seconded By:_NICHOLAS KENNY._

Signed: _[signature]_

(Chairperson, BOM):_

(Principal):_Brendan Corcoran._

Scheduled Date for Review of the Policy: _August 2026_

LMETB Ratification/Resolution of the ETB Board

Date of Resolution of ETB Board:_____

Signed:

(Chairperson):_____