

Patrician Primary School

'Bí Cineálta'

Anti-bullying Policy



Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Patrician Primary 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*.

These procedures can be accessed at the below link:

[Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools](#)

Note: The Bí Cineálta procedures refer to alleged bullying behaviour between pupils. A separate school Dignity at Work policy is in place for staff members.

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

According to the *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying* and *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which can be found on the below link, bullying is defined 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.

[Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying](#)

Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour

Section A: Development 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 March 2026	-Discussion and questionnaire as part of half-day training closure -Further review at Croke Park meeting in March 2026
Students	May 2025 March 2026	-Student Council worked together to design Children's version of policy -Student Council Meeting discussion in March 2026
Parents	May 2025 March 2026	Discussed at Parent Association Meeting Parent Association continue to be consulted as part of each annual review (see Cineálta file)
Board of Management	June 2025 March 2026	Policy initially examined and ratified in June 2025 Policy reviewed and re-ratified in March 2026
Date policy was initially approved: 16 th June 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: 24 th March 2026		

Bí Cineálta and Patrician Primary School Catholic Ethos

We confirm that we will take all steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent all bullying or harassment of our students in whatever form and however motivated.

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 everybody 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 everybody has a part to play in the school community, regardless of difference.

In developing the 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 our school in a real way.

This school takes positive steps to ensure that the culture of the school is one which welcomes a respectful dialogue and encounter with diversity and difference by ensuring that prevention and inclusivity strategies are given priority and discussed regularly at our Board of Management and staff meetings.

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.

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 further 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 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)

* see Patrician Primary School Anti-Cyberbullying policy for full details on this

Patrician Primary School - Strategies to Prevent Bullying

Positive school culture

- o Positive relationships with children
- o Opportunities to praise (principal awards, 6th class end of year awards, teacher designed praise systems)
- o Clear expectations (three golden rules “Work hard. Be kind. Have fun.”, yard rule posters, schoolwide displays promoting kindness, class contracts, consistency in messaging from code of behaviour “Actions have consequences.”)
- o Poster competition to promote mantra “Is it true? Is it helpful? Is it kind?”
Professional reprinting of winning entry placed on all yard spaces and regularly referred to in whole-school assemblies and when necessary
- o Regular themed events to focus on positive relationships (International Week, themed weeks celebrating different elements of AEN, Friendship Week etc.)
- o Staff strive to balance the need to nurture emotional needs of all the children as well teaching them the importance of resilience

Positive communication

- o Staff modelling courtesy to children
- o Key messaging reinforced with children during regular assemblies and principal class visits
- o Key messaging reinforced with parents/guardians as part of weekly newsletter
- o Regular and prompt communication with parents/guardians when necessary, using a problem-solving and partnership approach
- o Regular communication between staff to report on noted items during supervision
- o Children are consistently listened to and asked for their input into accounts of problematic situations and possible solutions
- o Surveying pupils on potential bullying situations, how happy they are in school, “worry boxes” etc.

Teaching and Learning

- Stay Safe programme is taught in 3rd and 5th consistently across the school
- SPHE whole-school plan provides for a consistent approach to teaching and learning social skills
- Drama lessons used to role-play situations in a safe environment
- Guest speakers provided when apt to provide another voice for reinforcing key messages

Problem-solving approach

- Staff strive to remain aware and alert to potential situations
- Where appropriate, teachers will make environmental changes to classrooms to ensure good relationships
 - e.g. changing seating arrangements, assigning children different tasks or roles in order to create harmonious space.
 - e.g. Bring the children in conflict together in tasks more, so that they can appreciate the positive aspects of each other's company
- Using resources available to help remediate and talk through difficult situations
 - e.g. nurture room, play therapy sessions

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):

Supervision

- All yard times are supervised by multiple staff.
- During rainy days, pupils play indoors. This playtime is also supervised by staff
- Teachers/ SNAs are aware of potential bullying hotspots around the school (e.g. communal toilets, corners of the yard space etc.)

Creating safe physical spaces both on yard and indoors

- We endeavor to maximize the usage of our play areas, in order to give the children as much physical space as possible to play comfortably. This includes endeavouring to give children who are experiencing difficult social interrelationships space from each other
e.g. opening up the pitch and grass areas for yard play during good weather months
- Structured games are also organized at different points in the year for the same reason as above
e.g. chess, soccer, basketball games
- The school 'nurture room' is available to be used to defuse situations that may arise as a result of alleged bullying
- Situations that require investigation or restorative conversations from teachers are dealt with sensitively. We endeavor to hold these conversations in as private a space as possible

Creating a 'Telling Environment'

- Classes are reminded through structured Stay Safe and other regular SPHE lessons about the importance of telling a member of staff if they have witnessed or been involved in a potential bullying situation
- This messaging is also reinforced on a whole-school level during assemblies and as part of principal class visits

Providing a 'Trusted Adult'

- All staff are responsible and encouraged to be this person
- Children are encouraged to confide in any member of staff whom they deem a 'trusted adult'

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

- All staff are deemed to be responsible in monitoring for potential bullying situations
 - Teachers on yard are responsible for informing class teachers of potential bullying situations that they are observed while on yard duty
 - Class teachers are responsible for investigations, home communication and restorative conversations.
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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):

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

- According to the Bí Cineálta procedures, bullying is defined as:
 - o targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature.
 - o repeated over time
 - o involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society.
- To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour, the class teacher will 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 should be addressed using the Bí Cineálta Procedures.
- Note: Once-off incidents may be considered bullying in certain circumstances. A single hurtful message posted on social media, a whatsapp group (or similar) can be considered bullying behaviour, as it has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and thus becomes a repeated behaviour.
- see Patrician Primary School Anti-Cyberbullying policy for full details on this
- 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.
- Note: In the event of a "he said, she said" situation where two parties have very different accounts of events, it is very difficult for the school to make judgements without having witnessed evidence of bullying or inappropriate behaviour. In this situation, relevant class teachers will be made aware of possible inappropriate behaviour and will monitor closely in the relevant environments in as thorough and subtle a way as possible for an extended period of time.
- Note: repeated false accusations of bullying or repeated overreactions to minor unwanted behaviour can be deemed to be bullying itself

Addressing Bullying Behaviour

- It is important to listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the alleged bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation. The same applies to students who are alleged carrying out the bullying behaviour. It may be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident(s). All conversations between class teachers and students in alleged bullying situations will be conducted with sensitivity. There will always be a restorative focus to these conversations, with an aim for everyone involved to move forwards
- Parents/guardians are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with schools, in addressing alleged bullying behaviour. Where confirmed cases of bullying behaviour have occurred, the parents/guardians of the students involved will 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. There will always be a restorative focus to these consultations, with an aim for everyone involved to move forwards
- Note: Parents/guardians 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. The school is aware that being the parent/guardian of a child who is being bullied or accused of bullying can be very upsetting. All communications from the school will be carried out as sensitively as possible. Parents/guardians should be aware that school staff are there in a supportive role for all of the children. The school Dignity at Work policy provides full details on courteous communications.
- Note: It will be made clear to all involved (each set of students and parents/guardians) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the student being disciplined, his or her parents/guardians and the school. The school cannot discuss the consequences for pupils with other people's parents/guardians.
- Class teachers will record progress and any other relevant information using the template provided in the appendix to this policy

Reviewing Progress

- The class teacher will engage with the students involved and their parents/guardians again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement with pupils/parents and action-plan over confirmed bullying (refer to Q10 on Bí Cineálta Bullying record in appendix.)
- 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 afterwards
- The class teacher will 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 (see recording form in appendix)
- Where possible this record will include the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased
- Any engagement with external services/supports will also be noted in this record if applicable (see below for a list of external supports)
- Ongoing supervision and support may be needed for the students involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased. This may include regular check-ins with relevant students from the class teacher or another 'trusted adult'.
- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed, the class teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
 - o Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased
 - o Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents/guardians or the school principal
 - 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 Note: Relationships between children may never be cordial after bullying allegations but they must be civil. That is sufficient for a satisfactory resolution. Each child has the right to be happy in school but this does not equate to every child being their friend.
- If the bullying behaviour has not ceased within 20 school days, the class teacher will review the strategies used, in consultation with the students involved and their parents/guardians. An additional timeframe will be agreed between the school and relevant parents/guardians for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased. If an agreement cannot be made within the timeframe, the school will make the decision on its length.
- If it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display such behaviour after 20 school days as well as the agreed additional timeframe, then the school may consider using sanctions from the Code of Behaviour. Each situation is unique and the school may consider using sanctions from the Code of Behaviour before 20 school days.
- If parent(s)/guardian(s) are not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, they should be referred to the school's parental complaints procedures
- If a parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children

The school may use the following external agencies to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

NEPS (National Education Psychological Service)

- o In relation to bullying, NEPS psychologists often advise schools on best practice to prevent and address bullying when issues arise in schools and/or provide training in preventative initiatives, such as developing social and emotion skills, social skills, executive function skills, promoting resilience and skills in relationship repair between peers as appropriate.

Tusla

- o The schools may contact Tusla directly for advice in cases where it is considered that bullying behaviour is a child protection concern.

Oide

- o Oide provides continuing professional learning support to schools to support implementation of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

NPC (National Parents Council)

- o The NPC delivers online and inperson courses to support parents of both primary and post-primary students to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

DCU Anti-bullying Centre

- o The DCU Anti-Bullying Centre is a university-designated research centre located in DCU's Institute of Education. The centre is known globally for its research in bullying and online safety. The Anti-Bullying Centre offers a range of modules as part of its FUSE programme for the entire school community that can be used to help to promote a positive school culture and assist in preventing and addressing bullying behaviours.

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 new bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting and are unresolved after 20 school days
- the total number of bullying incidents that ongoing and unresolved after 20 school days
- the total number of incidents that were unresolved after 20 school days since the beginning of the school year.

Where incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred, the principal will also provide a verbal update to the Board of Management, 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.

Communication and Review

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: Brian Hedweg Date: 24/3/2026
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: Darral DeLo Date: 24/3/26
(Principal)

Appendix 1

- *Child-friendly version of Patrician Primary School Cineálta Policy*

Appendix 2

- *Template for class teacher recording alleged bullying incidents*

Bí Cineálta Bullying Record



1) Name of pupil being allegedly bullied	
Name:	Class:
2) Name of pupil allegedly engaged in bullying behaviour	
Name(s):	Class(es):
3) Reporter of bullying concern (tick appropriate)	
Pupil(s) directly involved	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other pupil(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent/guardian	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
4) Name(s) of person who reported the bullying concern	
5) Where did the alleged incident(s) take place? (tick appropriate)	
School yard	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coming to and from school	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outside school	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
6) When did the alleged incident(s) take place?	
7) Form of bullying behaviour (tick appropriate) (See Bí Cineálta procedures chapter 2.5 for full description)	
Physical bullying behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/>
Verbal bullying behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/>
Written bullying behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/>
Extortion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Relational	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cyberbullying (see Patrician Primary Cyberbullying policy)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
8) Type of Bullying (See Bí Cineálta procedures chapter 2.7 for full description)	
Disablist bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exceptionally able bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Homophobic/transphobic/LGBTQ+ bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical appearance bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Racist bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Poverty bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religious identity bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexist bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual harassment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender identity bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>
9) Brief Description of alleged bullying behaviour and its impact (See Bí Cineálta procedures chapter 3.1 and 3.4 for full description)	

10) Initial engagement with pupils/parents and action-plan taken over confirmed bullying
Date:
11) View of parents/pupils regarding action-plan
12) Review with pupil/parents to determine if bullying behaviour has ceased
Date:
13) Outcome of review (At least 20 school days after initial concern raised)
Date:
14) Engagement with external services if applicable (NEPS, TUSLA etc. – see p10 of School Bí Cinealtá policy for others)
Signed:
 (Relevant class teacher)
Date*
(Date of signature is when this document was first opened by class teacher)
Date submitted to principal / deputy principal by class teacher
Date this document was placed in student file by the principal

