

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of **Presentation Girls' 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 pupils who attend our school are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our pupils is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our pupils 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 pupils 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.

We confirm that we will take all steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent all bullying or harassment of our pupils 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.

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.

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.

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 (e.g. personal injury, damage to or loss of property)
- Social: (e.g. withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion)
- Emotional: (e.g. low self-esteem, depression, anxiety)
- A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards a pupil is not bullying behaviour. However, a single hurtful message posted online/ 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.

Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour:

- If the repeated harm is real for the Pupil experiencing the behaviour, but unintended by the other pupil, this is not bullying, but, importantly, must be addressed under the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Some pupils 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 pupils is not considered bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Types of Bullying

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

exhaustive list.

Bullying can be:

Direct

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

Indirect

- Exclusion: where a pupil is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded or ignored by another pupil or group of pupils.
- Relational: Where a pupil'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 pupil.

Online

Cyber bullying is carried out via text, direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, email, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chatrooms 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 pupils.
- Exclude/disrupt access to a pupil on purpose on online chat groups/access to accounts/from an online game.

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	01/04/2025	Google Forms survey for staff
Pupils	01/04/2025	Google Forms survey for pupils
Parents	01/04/2025	Google Forms survey for parents
Board of Management	7/05/2025	Email
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	7/05/2025	Text
Date policy was approved: 13 th May 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: Anti- bullying policy was reviewed 24 th June 2024		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that are and will be used by this school to address all forms of bullying behaviour, in whatever form and however motivated, including online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment.

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).

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 pupils 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 pupils in this school and to help inform future prevention strategies.

Culture and Environment

- Create a positive school climate where all pupils feel safe, respected, and valued.
- Model respectful behaviour towards colleagues, pupils and visitors in our school environment
- Promote diversity and inclusion in all aspects of school life
- Use a variety of strategies in the classroom and school environment to build a positive culture and environment
- Encourage open communication between pupils, staff, and parents. Foster a 'telling' environment to ensure pupils feel comfortable to talk about concerns regarding bullying behaviour
- Establish clear expectations for behaviour
- Promote respectful relationships across the school community
- Establish effective routines/transitions
- Behaviour charts in the classrooms, if deemed appropriate
- Code of conduct for the classroom and playground drawn up with the pupils in September
- Behaviour reflection sheets following an incident
- Buddy Benches in the playground
- Anti-bullying signs and messages will be displayed around the school. Positive messages that promote friendship and caring attitude will also be displayed.

Curriculum (Teaching & Learning)

- Integrate anti-bullying messages into the school curriculum
- Teach pupils about bullying and its effects

- Implement the SPHE curriculum
- Provide opportunities for pupils to develop social and emotional skills
- Incorporate lessons on respect, empathy, and diversity into the curriculum
- Celebrate Friendship Fortnight annually
- Teach Stay Safe programme as per SPHE policy
- Use of resources such as Friends for Life, Weaving Wellbeing Programme, Social Stories
- Explicit teaching of appropriate communication and emotional literacy, as taught in Friends for Life programme
- Group work/Collaboration
- Sensory spaces for emotional regulation breaks
- Curricular and Extra-curricular activities can help to develop a sense of self-worth, working together, inclusion and respect.

Policy & Planning

- Raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils, parents/guardians
- Promote a school ethos which encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour
- Adult supervision of yard areas at assembly time and play time
- Develop procedures for noting, investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- Provide support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- Work with appropriate agencies in countering all forms of bullying and promoting anti-bullying behaviour
- The Acceptable Use Policy, Supervision policy, Special Education Policy and Code of Behaviour all support the implementation of the Bi Cineálta policy
- Effective leadership is a key component with Principal (DLP), Deputy Principal, (DDL), and senior /middle management focused on supporting the implementation of this policy

Relationships & Partnerships

- Encourage open communication between pupils, staff, and parents
- Build positive relationships with pupils and families

- Implementation of education and prevention strategies including awareness raising measures that build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils
- TPL (Teacher Professional Learning)
- Collaborate with community organisations to provide additional support and resources e.g. community Garda
- Guest speakers may be invited to address staff and parent / guardians on the theme of bullying and online safety periodically
- Facilitate outside speakers to educate pupils and/or parents about the dangers of cyberbullying e.g. Cyber heroes, iNet Safety. Programmes e.g Webwise, Digitown are taught in the school. These programmes teach safe and responsible internet use.
- Parents / guardians are encouraged to contact the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied.

By implementing these strategies Presentation Girls' School creates a safer and more positive school environment for all pupils.

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies/ strategies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

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

- Staff at all times endeavour to encourage pupils to show respect for each other and adhere to the school moto "Kindness, Courtesy and Respect".
- Implementation of the SPHE curriculum
- Positive self-esteem is fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences, by acknowledging good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success.
- Acceptable Use Policy in place for responsible use of technology in our school
- The school's Bí Cineálta policy is discussed regularly with the pupils in class and at assemblies.
- Staff are particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of experiencing bullying/ displaying bullying behavior. All disclosed incidents of bullying are investigated thoroughly and consistently by following the correct procedure as outlined to staff and recorded using the specified template
- Supervision of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and school run extracurricular activities. External facilitators of extra –curricular activities operate independently of the school
- Monitoring that correct procedures for reporting, investigating and reviewing incidences of bullying behavior, as specified in Bí Cineálta policy are followed by all staff.
- Visitor supervision: Visitors to the school are not left alone with pupils.
- Involvement of pupils in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. student council, Playground leaders
- Friendship Fortnight, Well-being Week, which foster a culture of peer respect and support
- Ensure that pupils know who to tell and how to tell
- Ensure that bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness, or know, that bullying is taking place
- Teach responsible online behavior and use of technology
- Share online safety materials with parents
- Share SPHE resources on theme of bullying with staff
- Foster a culture of ' belonging' and where diversity is celebrated

Ensure library materials reflect our diverse school population from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Class teacher (s) of pupil(s) involved in alleged bullying behaviour, senior management team including Principal and Deputy Principal.

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

- > ensure that the pupil 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 pupil 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 dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

- Class teacher(s) investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour with a view to establishing the facts and managing the behaviour.
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the class teacher(s) will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved. Class teacher(s) should consider the following: what, where and when?
- Class teacher(s) will be fair and consistent in their approach when addressing bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
- Individual interviews with the pupils concerned will be conducted outside the classroom in a fair and consistent way. If a group has been involved, each member will be interviewed individually. Where appropriate all pupils involved will be asked to write down her account of the incident (s). When deemed useful the pupils may be interviewed as a group.
- The following principles must be adhered to when addressing bullying behaviour:
 - Ensure that the pupil experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and

reassured

- Seek to ensure the privacy of those involved. Conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- Consider the age and ability of those involved
- Consider the views of the pupil 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
- Non-teaching staff such as special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, bus escort on our school bus are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to a class teacher.
- A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when pupils are not under the care or responsibility of the school. This includes cyberbullying. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, our school will support the pupils involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, it will be dealt with in accordance with our Bi Cineálta policy.
- Support will be provided to both the pupil who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the pupil who is displaying bullying behaviour.
- Parents are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with schools, in addressing bullying behaviour.
- The primary aim of the class teacher(s) investigating bullying is to resolve issues and to restore relationships. Ongoing supervision and support may be required for both the pupil who has experienced the bullying behaviour as well as the pupil who has displayed the bullying behaviour. In some cases, relationships may never be restored to how they were before.
- The parents/guardians of the pupils involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school will give parents/guardians an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the support provided to the pupils.
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents/guardians) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter (under GDPR) between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents/guardians and the school.
- When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the teacher(s) will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information. (Ref. Template B)
- Behaviour reflection sheets filled out by pupils to be kept in pupil's folders which will be passed onto the next class teacher(s). (Ref. Template C)
- The incident will be recorded on Aladdin. Where a Pupil Support Plan exists, the plan should be updated to incorporate response strategies and associated supports.
- Staff will fill out an incident report on Aladdin (Ref. Template D)

- The class teacher(s)/ Principal / Deputy Principal must engage with the pupils and parents involved no more than 20 days after the initial discussion to review progress following the initial intervention.
 - If the bullying behaviour has not ceased the class teacher(s) / Principal / Deputy Principal should review the strategies used in consultation with the pupils involved and their parents. A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased.
 - If it becomes clear that the pupil who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour the school will revert to the Code of Behaviour. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant pupil, their parents and the school.
- If a parent(s)/guardian(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 School, they should be referred to the school's complaints procedures. (Ref. Communication and Parental Involvement Policy)

If a parent / guardian is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, they may make a complaint to 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):

- Investigate and seek to resolve the bullying behaviour as quickly as possible
- Support the pupils who have experienced bullying behaviour, displayed bullying behaviour and witnessed bullying behaviour
- Promote a positive school culture where pupils feel safe, respected and valued
- Implement the programmes identified in SPHE Policy to raise awareness about bullying behaviour and its impact
- Promote a culture of 'telling' and educate the pupils about the implications of being a 'bystander'
- Implement programmes or activities to raise pupil self-esteem
- Clarify to the school community our commitment to the Bí Cineálta policy in the belief that it is a positive step towards creating a respectful and inclusive school environment
- In addressing challenging behaviour encourage teachers and parents to focus on positive reinforcement

Use of SPHE methodologies to make our school motto "Kindness, Courtesy and Respect", a lived reality in our 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 Pupils 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 pupil 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: Duinnughean Date: 13.05.25
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: Cora Mc Gorry Date: 13.05.25
(Principal)



Presentation Girls' School – Recording Bullying concerns – Informal stage

Template A (To be completed by teacher on Ala)

1. Basic Information

Date Concern Raised: _____ Staff Member Recording Concern: _____

Name(s) of Pupil(s) Concerned: _____ Class: _____

2. Nature/Summary of Concern:

Who reported the concern?

☐ Pupil ☐ Staff member ☐ Parent/Guardian ☐ Other (specify): _____

Form of Behaviour (if known) (tick any that apply):

☐ Physical ☐ Verbal ☐ Relational (exclusion, manipulation) ☐ Cyberbullying

☐ Extortion ☐ Other: _____

3. Initial Actions Taken - Was the behaviour discussed with the pupil(s) involved?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, brief summary of conversation:

Was the behaviour observed again after the discussion?

☐ Yes ☐ No

4. Outcome of Informal Stage

Behaviour appears to have: ☐ Stopped ☐ Continued (consider moving to formal process) ☐ Needs further monitoring

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) informed:

☐ Yes ☐ No Date (if applicable): _____



Presentation Girls' School - Recording Bullying Behaviour After Investigation is Completed

Template B (to be completed by teacher)

1. Basic Incident Information

Date of Initial Engagement with Pupils/Parents: _____ Location of Incident: _____
Time of Incident: _____ Persons Involved: _____

2. Nature of Bullying Behaviour

Form of Bullying (tick all that apply):

☐ Physical ☐ Verbal ☐ Relational (exclusion, manipulation)
☐ Cyberbullying ☐ Written ☐ Extortion

Type of Bullying (tick all that apply):

☐ Racist ☐ Homophobic/Transphobic (LGBTQ+) ☐ Gender Identity/Sexist
☐ Disablist ☐ Religious Identity ☐ Appearance-Based
☐ Socioeconomic Status (Poverty-Based) ☐ Other (please specify): _____

3. Pupils Involved

Pupil(s) Targeted: _____ Pupil(s) Displaying the Behaviour: _____

Other Involved Parties (e.g., bystanders): _____

4. Summary of Incident:

5. Pupil and Parent Input

Views of the Pupil Experiencing Bullying:



Presentation Girls' School - Behaviour Reflection Sheet

Template C (To be completed by pupil)

This sheet is to help you think about your behaviour, how it affects others, and how to make better choices in the future. Please answer honestly and thoughtfully.

My Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

1. What Happened? What behaviour are you reflecting on? _____

Where did it happen? _____

When did it happen? _____

Who was involved? _____

2. What Were You Thinking and Feeling at the Time?

How were you feeling when this happened? _____

What were you thinking? _____

3. The Impact of My Behaviour

Who do you think was affected by what happened? _____

How do you think they felt? _____

How do you feel about it now? _____

4. Making It Right - What could you have done differently? _____

What would you do if this situation happened again? _____

Is there anything you need to do now to make things better? _____



Presentation Girls' School – Incident Report form

Template D (To be completed on Aladdin)

Date of Incident: _____ **Reported By:** _____

Name of person completing report: _____

Position:

Class Teacher [] Principal [] Other []

Who was involved?

What happened?

Why did it happen?

When did it happen?

Were there witnesses?

Action taken:



Presentation Girls' School - Notifying the Board of Management of Bullying Behaviour

Template E – To be completed by Principal

Date of Board Meeting: _____

Reporting Period Covered: From _____ to _____

1. Number of Reports Received - Total number of reports relating to bullying behaviour:

2. Number of Reports Where Bullying Behaviour Was Deemed to Have Occurred:

Based on the school's investigation: _____

3. Actions Taken

Confirmation that appropriate actions were taken in all cases: ☐ Yes ☐ No

- (If no, please provide explanation below)

4. Review of Policy and Procedures - Has the school's Bí Cineálta Policy been reviewed during this period? ☐ Yes ☐ No

- If yes, date of most recent review: _____

5. Additional Comments or Notes

Principal's Name: _____

Principal's Signature: _____