



St. Gerard's School

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

September 2025

The Senior Board of Education of St. Gerard's 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 Senior Board of Education of St. Gerard's School 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.

Our Catholic Ethos:

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 each person in our school is treated with respect and care. As a Catholic school, we are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual. No human person is to be diminished or devalued, and all have an indispensable part to play in the school community, regardless of difference.

St. Gerard's Senior School Commitment Statement:

St. Gerard's Senior School cultivates a warm and positive environment where each individual is cared for and respected. In the exceptional circumstance that bullying occurs, it is regarded as a serious infringement of individual rights and a threat to the self-esteem and self-confidence of the targeted pupil(s). Therefore, bullying, of any kind, is not tolerated in St. Gerard's Senior School. In the first instance, a pro-active approach is taken to ensure an awareness of bullying, and willingness by all members of the School community to take action to prevent or stop it. Secondly, every report of bullying is treated seriously and with due regard for the well-being of both the targeted pupil(s) and the perpetrator(s). The immediate priority is ending the bullying, resolving the issues and restoring, insofar as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved, using a "reform, not blame" approach. All pupils, parents and staff are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance of a safe environment in the Senior School. Thus, any potential bullying situation should be reported immediately to the child's class teacher or to the Head of Year, Deputy Principal or Principal.

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 society¹.

Bullying encompasses a wide range of behaviour, whether verbal or written, whether physical or social, whether targeting person or property, whether carried out directly or indirectly or through any electronic or other medium, which could harm a pupil or undermine their self-esteem or self-confidence.

¹ The detailed definition bullying is provided in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

Bullying behaviour in schools is often strongly influenced by attitudes, behaviours, norms and power dynamics that are deeply engrained in our society². Bullying behaviour can also be described as:

- **Targeted Behaviour**

Bullying is deliberate, unwanted behaviour that causes harm to others, and where the student displaying bullying behaviour knows that their behaviour is or will be perceived as harmful by the young person experiencing the behaviour.

- **Repeated Behaviour**

Single offline incidents of intentional negative behaviour involving an imbalance of power are not considered bullying. Posting a single harmful message/image /online vide, and which is highly likely to be reposted or shared with several others can therefore be seen as bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

- **Imbalance of Power**

In incidents of bullying, the student experiencing the bullying behaviour finds it hard to defend themselves as a result of the abuse of a real or perceived imbalance of power. This imbalance of power may manifest itself through differences in size, strength, age, ability, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, race, ethnic origin including membership of the Traveller and/or Roma communities, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, experience of the care system, disability or the receipt of special education. In incidents of online (or cyber) bullying, the imbalance of power may relate to online anonymity, technical proficiency and possession of information/images/video, and the inability of the targeted student to remove offensive online material or escape the bullying.

Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour

A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards another student is not bullying behaviour. However:

- A single hurtful message posted on 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.

² *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, P.17.

- Disagreement between students, or instances where students don't want to be friends or to remain friends, is not considered bullying behaviour unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others including deliberate manipulation of friendship groups.
- Some students with special educational needs may have social communication difficulties which may make them communicate their needs through behaviours that can hurt themselves or others. It is important to note that these behaviours are not deliberate or planned but, in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they can't control.

Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying.

Criminal behaviour

Bullying behaviour can be considered criminal behaviour under certain circumstances and legal consequences can apply. The age of criminal responsibility in Ireland is 12 years³. Some online behaviour may be illegal, and students need to be aware of the far-reaching consequences of posting inappropriate or harmful content online.

- In cases of intimate imagery, the Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020, also known as Coco's Law, criminalises the non-consensual sharing of intimate images and also criminalises threatening to share these images. If bullying behaviour involves physical violence or threats of violence, it may be considered assault.
- If bullying behaviour involves discrimination or hate speech targeting a student based on their race, religion, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation or membership of the Traveller community, it may be considered a hate crime under the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989, and those engaging in such behaviour may face criminal charges.
- If bullying behaviour involves sexual harassment or sexual assault, this may also be considered criminal behaviour.

An Garda Síochána is the appropriate authority to investigate alleged criminal behaviour.

³ *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, P.19.

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

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

	Date Consulted	Method of Consultation
School Staff	29th April 2025	Working Groups Meeting 1
	6th May 2025	Email- all staff re: Half-Day Closure & Staff Questionnaire
	7th May 2025	Email reminder re: Half Day Closure & Staff Questionnaire
	7th May 2025	Working Group Meeting 2
	9th May 2025	Half-Day School Closure
	12th May 2025	Email- Presentation to all Staff
Students	30th April 2025 (3 x reminders sent)	Student Questionnaire through HOY Google Classroom
Parents	30th April 2025 (4 x notifications sent)	Parent Questionnaire through School App.
Board of Education	6th November 2024	Update on Cineáltas Programme
	27th January 2025	Presentation on new Bí Cineálta Policy
	19th March 2025	Update on Bí Cineálta Half-Day Closure Plan
Admin/Sport/Finance Catering/Health/Sports Teams		

Date Policy was approved:

10th September 2025

Date Policy was last reviewed:

10th September 2025

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by St. Gerard's Secondary 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. In order to have a holistic, whole-school approach to wellbeing promotion, the following areas were considered in developing measures to prevent bullying behaviour⁴:

- Culture and Environment
- Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)
- Policy and Planning
- Relationships and Partnerships

(i) Prevention within our School Culture and Environment

As a Catholic School, the dignity of each person lies at the core of St. Gerard's Secondary School's ethos. This core belief is reflected in the Christian golden rule of treating others as we would wish to be treated ourselves, which guides all interactions within our school community and forms a key principle in preventing bullying behaviour. Our school motto, **Memor**, reinforces this by encouraging mindfulness and respect for everyone.

St. Gerard's Secondary School is committed to:

- Fostering a positive and inclusive school culture where kindness and respect are central.
- Ensuring a school environment where all pupils and staff experience a sense of belonging, safety, connection and support.
- Fostering respectful, caring and trusting relationships throughout the School community.
- Promoting open communication and collaboration among staff, the Senior Board of Education, pupils and parents to share responsibility for preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.
- Actively promoting kindness, inclusion, empathy and respect.
- Supporting a 'telling environment' where reporting bullying behaviour is encouraged.
- Ensuring pupils understand the concept of 'a trusted adult' as an effective strategy and that pupils know they can talk to trusted adults in our School community.
- Ensuring the school leadership team influences the school culture and sets the standards and expectations for the St. Gerard's school community when preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.
- Ensuring that each member of the school staff has the responsibility to maintain a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and take a consistent

⁴ *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, P.33.

approach to addressing bullying behaviour.

- Maintaining **safe and visible physical spaces** throughout our School and ensure **good lighting** is present to avoid dark corners or spaces.
- Providing appropriate supervision of pupils at all times.
- Promoting a sense of belonging and ownership by displaying pupil **artwork and signage** that celebrate respect, inclusivity and friendship, recognising and fosters a stronger connection to our School community.
- Promoting of 'Bí Cineálta' through initiatives such as our Wellbeing Week and Neurodiversity Day.

(ii) Prevention within our Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

Students in St. Gerard's Secondary School have regular opportunities to work in small groups with their peers, which can help build sense of connection, belonging and empathy among students⁵. The curricular subjects offered to students provide opportunities to foster inclusion and respect for diversity.

The updated SPHE specifications aim to help students to feel empowered to create, nurture and maintain respectful and healthy relationships with themselves and others. The RSE strand of the specification also provides space for post-primary students to examine and consider relationships and human sexuality which can foster an understanding of diversity which may help to reduce gender and identity-based bullying as well as sexism and sexual harassment.

The curriculum in St. Gerard's Secondary School promotes diversity and inclusion while at the same time it encourages respect and understanding of different beliefs, perspectives and ways of living. This is done through a wide variety of school subjects such as:

- CSPE – there is a focus on the interdependence of people in communities.
- History – this subject is used to raise awareness of racism and colonialism.
- Religion – this course programme promotes tolerance, inclusivity and ecumenism.

St. Gerard's Secondary School also engages the student body in a wide array of initiatives which promotes participation and helps students develop a sense of self-worth which help them cope with potential incidents of bullying. These initiatives include:

- Difference Day
- Digital Awareness
- Anti-Bullying workshops/Guest speakers

⁵ *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, P.36.

(iii) Policy and Planning

The wellbeing of the school community is at the heart of all school policies and plans. There are several school policies in St. Gerard's Secondary School that support the implementation of the school's *Bí Cineálta* policy. These policies include:

- St. Gerard's Secondary School Mission, Vision and Values.
- Code of Behaviour policy
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- LGBTQ+ policy

The participation of the student body in the development and review of these policies is encouraged as this helps increase awareness and ensure effective implementation.

(iv) Prevention within our Relationships and Partnerships

St. Gerard's Secondary School recognises that strong interpersonal connections are a vital part of effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour⁶. These interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as:

- Students Council
- Parents Association
- Debating Society
- Drama Society
- Green School Committee
- Library Monitor Group
- Chess Club
- Model United Nations
- School Choir

St. Gerard's Secondary School will continue to develop relationships and partnerships with the wider school community to help prevent bullying behaviour. Examples of how we do this include:

- Parent Information Evenings
- An Garda Síochána presentations
- Anti-Bullying workshops for students
- School Tutor system

⁶ *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, P.37.

At St. Gerard's Secondary School, we are committed to proactively preventing all forms of bullying, including i) cyberbullying, ii) homophobic and transphobic (LGBTQ+) bullying, iii) racist bullying and iv) sexist bullying and sexual harassment. These preventative strategies are detailed below.

(i) Preventing Cyberbullying

The increase in the use of technology has led to students becoming increasingly vulnerable to cyberbullying or unacceptable online behaviour⁸. St. Gerard's Secondary School is steadfast in its commitment to preventing cyberbullying and our ongoing approach is meticulously aligned with the national guidance provided in the Bí Cineálta Procedures and is further informed by our school's Acceptable Use Policy and ICT Strategy. Strategies to prevent cyberbullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- implementing the SPHE curriculum
- implementing the Digital Media Literacy curriculum which teaches students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship
- having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- developing and communicating an acceptable use policy for technology
- referring to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour
- promoting or hosting online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online
- holding an Internet safety day to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour

The digital age of consent is the minimum age a user must be before a social media or internet company can collect, process and store their data. In Ireland the digital age of consent is 16.

For the purposes of data collection, students between the age of 13 and 16 years old must have parental permission to sign-up to social media services where companies use the legal basis of consent to collect process and store users' data. Most social media platforms and services have a minimum age requirement and for the majority of these services it is 13 years' old. Therefore, technically, children under the age of 13 should not have a social media account.

It is important for their child's safety, that parents are aware of their children's use of technology including smartphones and gaming consoles.

⁸ *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, P.39.

(ii) Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour

All students including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students, have a right to feel safe and supported at St. Gerard's Secondary School. Strategies to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- maintaining an inclusive physical environment such as by displaying relevant posters
- Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Post-Primary Schools
- 40 encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- challenging gender-stereotypes
- conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour
- encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour

(iii) Preventing racist bullying behaviour

Schools have become much more culturally diverse over the last number of decades. Students attending St. Gerard's Secondary School come from many different cultures and backgrounds. Students from diverse backgrounds may face discrimination and prejudice and may be subject to racist bullying behaviour. Strategies to prevent racist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students "see themselves" in their school environment
- having the cultural diversity of the school visible and on display
- conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of racism
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour
- providing supports to school staff to respond to the needs of students for whom English is an additional language and for communicating with their parents
- providing supports to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma students, and to encourage communication with their parents
- inviting speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds
- ensuring that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds

(iv) Preventing sexist bullying behaviour

St. Gerard's Secondary School promotes gender equality as part of the school's measures to create a supportive and respectful environment. Strategies to prevent sexist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex
- ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex
- celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contributions of all students organising awareness campaigns, workshops and presentations on gender equality and respect
- encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home

(v) Preventing sexual harassment

In St. Gerard's Secondary School there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment. Sexual harassment should never be dismissed as teasing or banter.

Strategies to prevent sexual harassment include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- using the updated SPHE specifications at post-primary level to teach students about healthy relationships and how to treat each other with respect and kindness
- promoting positive role models within the school community
- challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The primary aim in addressing reports of bullying behaviour should be to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the students involved, rather than to apportion blame. This restorative practice approach is central to the St. Gerard's Secondary School *Bí Cineálta* policy document. St. Gerard's Secondary School will use a '**reform not blame**' approach. Nevertheless, the school reserves the right to take disciplinary action where such is warranted.

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

All staff (class teachers, class tutors, year heads, guidance counsellor, Deputy Principals, Principal, Pastoral Care team) have a responsibility to report suspected incidences of bullying. These should be brought to the attention of the Head of Year who will complete a Bullying Incident Report Form. When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the teacher should consider the following: **what, where, when and why?**⁹

The staff will work collaboratively in addressing reported incidents of bullying behaviour.

If a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first. Each student involved in the alleged bullying incident will be interviewed individually and will be given the opportunity to give their account of what happened to establish the nature and extent of the behaviour and possible reasons for it. Thereafter, all students involved should be met as a group. As part of an investigation, pupils may be asked to write an account of what happened. It is important to note that interviews and/or written accounts are standard procedure and do not necessarily imply that a pupil is guilty of misbehaviour.

At the group meeting, each student should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views. Each student should be supported, as appropriate, following the group meeting. It may also be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident.

Where bullying behaviour has occurred

St. Gerard's Secondary School staff will be fair and consistent in their approach to address bullying behaviour. Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour will receive support. The student who is experiencing bullying behaviour will be engaged with without delay so that they feel listened to, supported and reassured. School staff will identify the supports needed for the student who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties and ensure that their needs are met.

⁹ *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, P.43.

St. Gerard's Secondary 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, St. Gerard's is required to support the students involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, St. Gerard's Secondary School staff will deal with it in accordance with our *Bí Cineálta* policy.

The following principles will be applied when addressing bullying behaviour:

- ensure that the student 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
- 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*

*** Parents are an integral part of the St. Gerard's Secondary School community and play an important role, in partnership with the school in addressing bullying behaviour¹⁰.** Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties 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 as outlined in the school's *Bí Cineálta* policy. In circumstances where a student might express concern about their parents being informed, St. Gerard's staff will develop an appropriate plan to support the student and for how their parents will be informed.

St. Gerard's Secondary School will **adopt a restorative practice to address** bullying behaviour. Mediation will only be used to address bullying behaviour when the teachers involved have been trained in how to engage in these methods and the students involved have agreed to their use.

Where Bullying Behaviour Has Not Occurred

Behaviour that is deemed inappropriate but does not meet the criteria of bullying will be dealt with under our School's Code of Behaviour.

Requests to Take No Action

St. Gerard's Secondary School recognises that a student reporting bullying behaviour may request that no direct action be taken and may simply wish for the School to be aware of

¹⁰ *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, P.44.

the situation and to monitor it discreetly. In such cases, the staff member will explain that while the pupil's concerns will be treated with sensitivity, no guarantees can be made regarding withholding the information, particularly if the situation poses a risk to the pupil or others. The staff member will:

- **Show empathy** to the student and deal with the matter **sensitively**.
- Speak with the student to **understand their concerns** about potential repercussions of taking action.
- Work together with the student, (and where appropriate their parents), to **explore what steps can be taken** to address the bullying behaviour and how their parents will be informed of the situation. The primary focus will be on ensuring the **student feels safe**.

Similarly, parents may make the school aware of bullying behaviour and specifically request that the school take no action. **Such requests should be put in writing** and St. Gerard's Secondary School will speak with parents in relation to their request. However, the School **may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour**. The School's overarching responsibility is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all pupils.

In addressing bullying behaviour, our initial response aims to be restorative. Every reasonable effort will be made to help the student(s) who engaged in bullying behaviour to understand its impact from the perspective of the student(s) who were targeted. They will be asked to make a promise to treat all students fairly, equally and respectfully, including the targeted student(s).

The parents/guardians of the parties involved will be contacted to inform them of the matter and to explain the actions being taken.

SANCTIONS:

- 1) On the first occasion, bullying behaviour will be treated as a breach of the St. Gerard's Secondary School Code of Behaviour that can and must be remedied. The intention is to help the perpetrator in understanding the harmful and hurtful nature of bullying and to seek a promise that it will stop. If this promise is given and upheld, depending on the nature of the offence and behaviour, there will be no penalty.
- 2) If a pupil has made such a promise but then chooses to break that promise and to continue the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer be considered a once-off breach of the Code of Conduct. In the event of a second unprovoked offence, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be formally informed, the student may be sent home or other disciplinary action may be taken (see below), and a written promise will be required to be counter-signed by the student's parents/guardians.

Note: 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 a repeated behaviour.

- 3) Where a pupil has engaged in unprovoked bullying behaviour for a third time, having formally promised to stop and has broken a written promise, this is regarded as a serious matter and sanctions will be imposed. In accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour these sanctions will vary, depending on the seriousness of the infringement, and may include **some or all of the following:**
 - Immediate sending home following the incident.
 - Internal Suspension i.e. temporary withdrawal from class
 - External suspension – the student must remain at home with work allocated.
 - Withdrawal from School trips
- 4) Ultimately, if serious bullying behaviour persists, and if no resolution is possible, the School's Code of Behaviour in relation to External Suspension and/or Expulsion will be invoked.

Notwithstanding the above, depending on the severity of the offence, some incidences of bullying may immediately move to serious sanctions being employed.

In all cases, when an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved a Report will be completed by the investigating teacher, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information. All documentation regarding bullying incidents and their resolution is retained securely in the school.

Recording

All incidents of bullying behaviour will be recorded on a student's file. This will include:

- The type of bullying behaviour, if known (e.g., physical, cyber, racist, homophobic/transphobic, sexist, sexual harassment).
- Where and when it took place.
- The dates of engagement with students and parents.
- The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour.
- Any engagement with external services/supports.

Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred

St. Gerard's Secondary School will engage with the students involved and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement to determine:

- Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased
- the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the students involved
- The relationships between the students involved.
- Teachers will record the details of the reviews with students and parents.
- Consider ongoing supervision and support for the students involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased.
- If the bullying behaviour has not ceased the School should review the strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents.
- A timeframe will be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased
- 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 only.

Complaint process

If a parent is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed St. Gerard's Secondary School, in accordance with these procedures, they should be referred to the school's complaints procedure.

In the event that a student and/or parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, a student and/or parent 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 Office of the Ombudsman for Children can be contacted at ococomplaint@oco.ie.

Section D – Oversight

Bullying behaviour update to the Senior Board of Education

At each meeting of the Senior Board of Education the Principal must present an update on the number of incidents of bullying behaviour and the measures taken to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

The purpose of the update is to inform discussion at board level on the effectiveness of the measures that the school is taking to prevent and address bullying behaviour and the effectiveness of the school's *Bí Cineálta* Policy.

The update must include the following:

- the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting
- the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that are currently ongoing
- the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the beginning of the school year

This update will not include any personal information or information that could identify the students involved.

Review of St. Gerard's Secondary School *Bí Cineálta* policy

St. Gerard's Secondary School's *Bí Cineálta* policy will be reviewed annually at the May meeting of the Senior Board of Education.

The review will be completed with input from the school community which includes the Senior Board of Education, staff, students and their parents and members of the wider school community.

St. Gerard's Secondary School will engage with its Student Council and the Parents Association to obtain their views on the content and effectiveness of the school's *Bí Cineálta* Policy.

Annual reporting on bullying behaviour

St. Gerard's School will be required to submit anonymised data on incidents of bullying behaviour.

Appendix A

School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Senior Board of Education of St. Gerard's Secondary 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 Senior Board of Education 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.

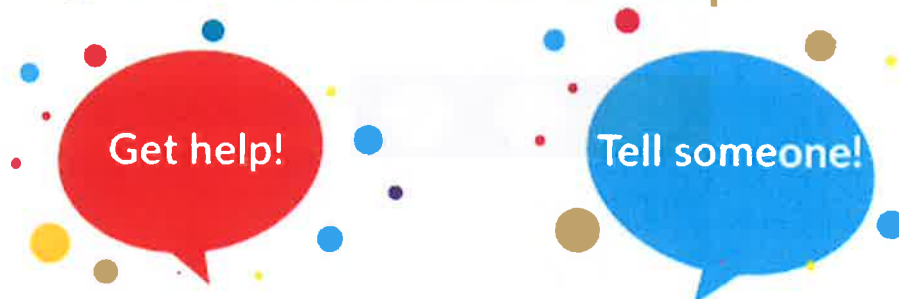
Appendix B

Student-Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy

Bí Cineálta!

We want everyone at our school to feel safe and happy.

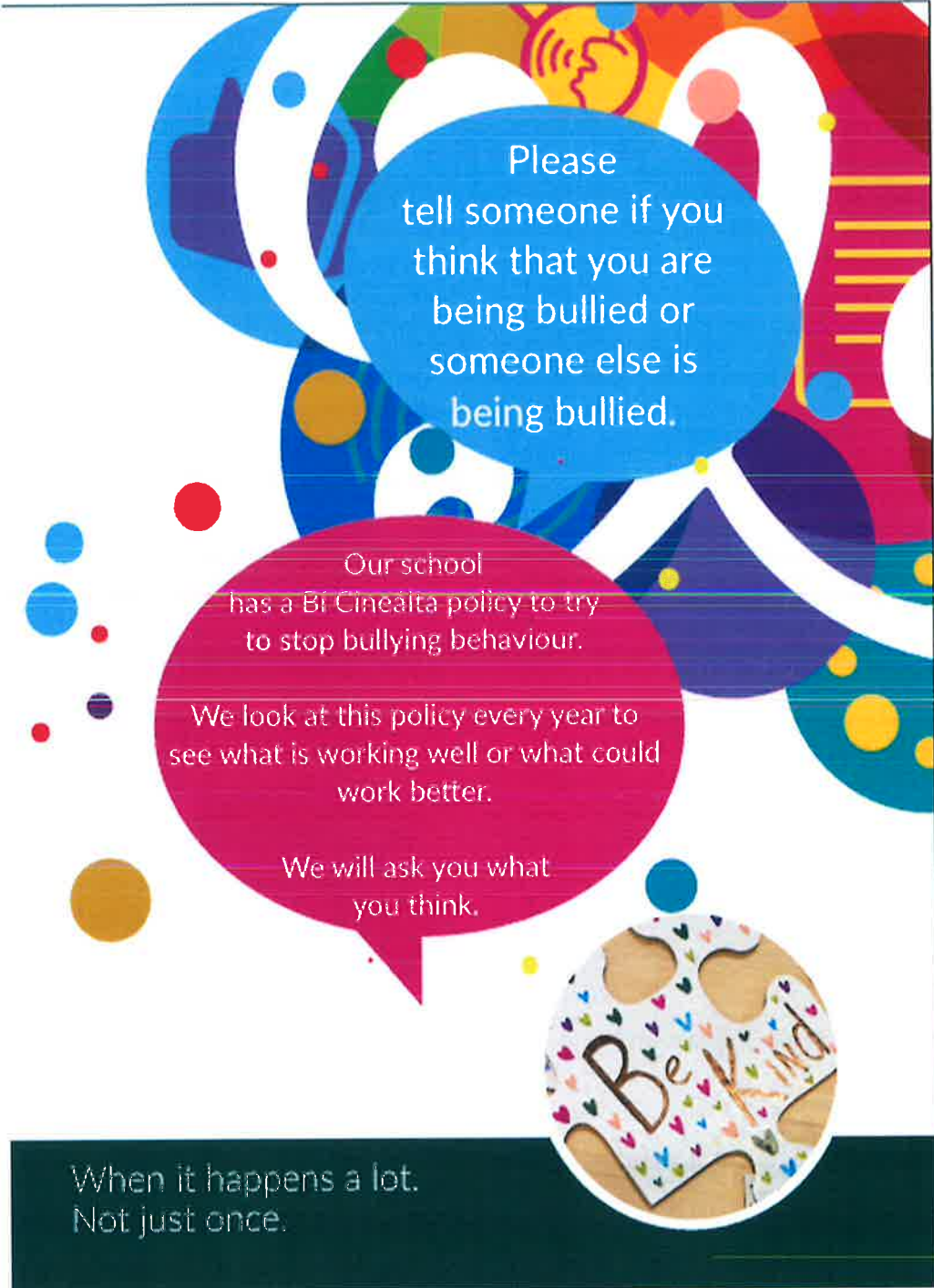
If you think that you are being bullied or someone else is being bullied, you need to tell a teacher or another adult that you trust. They will know what to do to help.



If a student tells a staff member that they think they are being bullied, we will:

- talk with the student
- ask the student what they want to happen
- work out a plan together
- talk to their parents
- talk to the other student(s) involved
- talk with the other student's parents

Bullying behaviour is when someone keeps being mean or hurtful to others on purpose over and over again.



Please
tell someone if you
think that you are
being bullied or
someone else is
being bullied.

Our school
has a Bí Cineálta policy to try
to stop bullying behaviour.

We look at this policy every year to
see what is working well or what could
work better.

We will ask you what
you think.



When it happens a lot.
Not just once.

Appendix C

Guide to Providing Bullying Behaviour Update

Guide to providing Bullying Behaviour Update for board of management meeting of DD/MM/YYYY

Having reviewed the details of the incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the previous board of management meeting, the principal must provide the following information at each ordinary meeting of the board of management:

Total number of new incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the last board of management meeting.	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour currently ongoing.	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the beginning of this school year.	

Where incidents of bullying behaviour have been reported since the last meeting, the update must include a verbal report which should include the following information where relevant:

- the trends and patterns identified such as the form of bullying behaviour, type of bullying behaviour if known, location of bullying behaviour, when it occurred etc
- the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour
- any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour
- if any serious incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred which have had a serious adverse impact on a student
- if a parent has informed the school that a student has left the school because of reported bullying behaviour
- if any additional support is needed from the board of management
- if the school's Bf Cinealta policy requires urgent review in advance of the annual review

This update should not include any personal information or information that could identify the students involved.

Appendix D

Review of the Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual (calendar) review of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and its implementation in consultation with the school community. As part of the review, this document must be completed

Bí Cineálta Policy Review

1. When did the Board formally adopt its Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour in accordance with the *Bí Cineálta Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*? Insert date when the Bí Cineálta policy was last adopted by the school. ____/____/20____
2. Where in the school is the student-friendly Bí Cineálta policy displayed?
3. What date did the Board publish the Bí Cineálta policy and the student-friendly policy on the school website? ____/____/20____
4. How has the student-friendly policy been communicated to students?

5. How has the Bí Cineálta policy and student-friendly policy been communicated to parents?

6. Have all school staff been made aware of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and the *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*? ☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Does the Bí Cineálta policy document the strategies that the school uses to prevent bullying behaviour?

8. Has the Board received and minuted the Bullying Behaviour Update presented by the principal at every ordinary board meeting over the last calendar year? ☐ Yes ☐ No

9. Has the Board discussed how the school is addressing all reports of bullying behaviour? ☐ Yes ☐ No

10. Is the Board satisfied that all incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed in accordance with the school's Bí Cineálta Policy? ☐ Yes ☐ No

11. Have the prevention strategies in the Bí Cineálta policy been implemented? ☐ Yes ☐ No

12. Has the Board discussed the effectiveness of the strategies used to prevent bullying behaviour? ☐ Yes ☐ No

13. How have (a) parents, (b) students and (c) school staff been consulted with as part of the review of the Bí Cineálta Policy?

14. Outline any aspects of the school's *Bí Cineálta* policy and/or its implementation that have been identified as requiring further improvement as part of this review:

15. Where areas for improvement have been identified, outline how these will be addressed and whether an action plan with timeframes has been developed?

16. Does the student-friendly policy need to be updated as a result of this review and if so why?

17. Does the school refer parents to the complaints procedures if they have a complaint about how the school has addressed bullying behaviour?

☐ Yes ☐ No

18. Has a parent informed the school that a student has left the school due to reported bullying behaviour?

☐ Yes ☐ No

19. Has the Office of the Ombudsman for Children initiated or completed an investigation into how the school has addressed an incident of bullying behaviour?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Signed: _____



Date: _____

10/09/2025

Mr Stephen Loughman
Chair of the Senior Board of Education

Signed: _____



Date: _____

10.09.2025

Mr Craig Petrie
Principal

Appendix E

Student-Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy

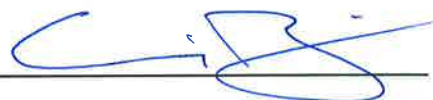
The Board of Management of St. Gerard's School confirms that the Senior Board of Education's Annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour and its implementation was completed at the Senior Board of Education meeting of **10th September 2025**.

This review was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Education's Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Signed: 

Mr Stephen Loughman
Chair of the Senior Board of Education

Date: 10/9/25

Signed: 

Mr Craig Petrie
Principal

Date: 10.09.2025