BÍ CINEÁLTA POLICY TO PREVENT AND ADDRESS BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

The Board of Management of St. Olaf's N.S. has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

This policy fully complies with the requirements of *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* 2024.

The Board of Management acknowledges that bullying behaviour interferes with the rights of the child as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We all, as a school community, have a responsibility to work together to prevent and address bullying behaviour and to deal with the negative impact of bullying behaviour.

We are committed to ensuring that all students who attend our school are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our students is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our students and we are fully committed to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

We confirm that we will, in accordance with our obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the harassment of students or staff on any of the nine grounds specified: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

We confirm that we will take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the 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 each person 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 all

It is very important to note that this policy is fully aligned with the *"Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools"* and that it should be read in conjunction with the procedures. Schools are required to follow the procedures fully, as set out by the Department of Education.

Catholic education places a strong emphasis on the values of acceptance, respect and the importance o reaching out to the most vulnerable and marginalised. Catholic schools, in line with their ethos, are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual where no human person is to be diminished or devalued, regardless of difference. Catholic schools recognise that it is important to take steps to prevent all types of bullying behaviour.

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.

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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.

- The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.
  Each school is required to develop and implement a Bí Cineálta policy that sets out how the school community prevents and addresses bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

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 has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and thus becomes a repeated behaviour.

Disagreement between two students, or instances where students don't want to be friends or to remain friends, is not considered bullying 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 their behaviours are not deliberate or planned, but, in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they can't control.

Bullying behaviour that occurs outside of school

As per the Bí Cineálta Procedures, a school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved.

Examples of prohibited bullying behaviours that can occur outside of school (non-exhaustive list):

- Bullying behaviour that occurs in the area immediately outside the school, the local shops and the wider local area.
- Bullying behaviour that occurs on the journey to and from school.
- Bullying behaviour that occurs in organised clubs and groups outside of school such as sports clubs.
- Online bullying (cyberbullying) behaviour, along with other types of bullying behaviour can cause significant harm and have a lasting impact on students who experience this behaviour. Access to technology means that online bullying behaviour can happen any time and that the student's home is no longer a safe place. The nature of these technologies means that digital content can be shared and seen by a very wide audience almost instantly and the content is almost impossible to delete permanently.

Requests to take no action

A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than "look out" for them. The student may not want to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They may feel that telling someone might make things more difficult for them. Where this occurs, it is important that the member of staff shows empathy to the student, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the student to work out together what steps can be taken to address the matter and how their parents will be informed of the situation. It is important that the student who has experienced bullying behaviour feels safe. Parents may also make schools aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action. Parents should put this request in writing to the school or be facilitated to do so where there are literacy, digital literacy or language barriers. However, while acknowledging the parent's request, schools have a right to act and may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

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

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

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	28th March 2025	Half Day school closure for staff training day and input to new Bí Cineálta Policy
Students	Term 3	Student Surveys for all pupils on Anti-Bullying Procedures and Wellbeing arrangements in our school.
Parents	Term 3	Parental Surveys on Anti-Bullying Procedures and Wellbeing arrangements in our school.
Board of Management	23rd January 2025 27th March 2025 2nd October 2025	New guidelines discussed at BOM meeting Training and Policy review Policy ratified as per Diocese
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	N/A	

Date policy was approved: 2nd of October

Date policy was last reviewed: AB Policy 2022

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by the 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.

In developing 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 the 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 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 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.

Culture and Environment

- Our school encourages a child friendly value system to promote positive behaviour. The values that are promoted are as follows: Include All, Respect, Community, Kindness, Try Your Best and Responsibility promoted and displayed in each classroom and around our school.
- Termly Assemblies & Newsletter to encourage whole school communication and celebrate success.
- School Uniform: promotes equality amongst pupils
- Staff model positive and respectful interactions daily
- St. Olaf's N.S. promotes pupil voice through our active Amber Flag Committee (Wellbeing), Green Schools Committee, Coiste Gaelbhratach and Student Council.
- Buddy Benches in Senior and Junior Yards.

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

- The implementation of the Social, Physical and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum, according to our school plan, including the Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE), Walk Tall and Stay Safe programmes.
- As part of the SPHE curriculum, children are explicitly taught about recognising bullying behaviour and what to do if they experience/witness any type of bullying behaviour.
- The implementation of Wellbeing Ambassadors and the rollout of Emotion Coaching via the NEPS Wellbeing Pilot Programme.
- School-wide delivery of programmes to teach about cyber-bullying (e.g. Webwise and Cybersafekids lessons).
- Seminars/workshops given by relevant professionals to older pupils and to parents/guardians, focusing on educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while online and also on developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying. The school-wide approach and the role of parents is of great importance in this regard.
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.
- Teachers can influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner through a range of curricular initiatives. There is space within the teaching of all subjects to foster an attitude of respect for all: to promote the value of diversity; to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.

Policy and Planning

- Our Bí Cineálta and Child Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy is displayed prominently around our school.
- The school's Acceptable Usage Policy ensure that smart devices (mobile phones, smartwatches etc.) are turned off and not in use on school grounds.
- The BOM and staff support and promote the P.A.'s mobile phone policy on safe and responsible child access to smart technology and the internet.
- All staff, to the best of their ability, will ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- For further relevant policies, please refer to the school's Code of Behaviour, Acceptable Use Policy, Child Protection Policy.

Relationships and Partnerships

- Consistent promotion and recognition of positive behaviour and Code of Conduct as above.
- School rules and promoted behaviour are restated at school assemblies.
- Parents are invited and encouraged to take an active role in our school (Parents Association, specialist visits during active schools, maths and science weeks).
- Various initiatives to promote collaboration and positive relationships between senior and junior classes
- Partnerships with local organisations and clubs (local library/historians, local secondary schools, sports clubs, parish meditation etc.)

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):

- Acceptable Usage Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding and Risk Assessment Policy

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Mainstream Class Teacher

The Principal/Deputy Principal will provide support and advice and will become involved where appropriate.

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

> ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour is heard and reassured

> seek to ensure the privacy of those involved

> conduct all conversations with sensitivity

> consider the age and ability of those involved

> listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation

> take action in a timely manner

> inform parents of those involved.

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

The whole school community has a responsibility to prevent and address bullying behaviour. The following approach and steps are *based on the information contained in Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.*

Stage 1 - Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

Bullying is defined in Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying and Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools as targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society. The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour you should consider the following questions:

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

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

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.
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.

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred teachers should consider what, where, when and why?

> if a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first
> thereafter, all students involved should be met as a group
> 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 be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident(s).

Stage 2: Where bullying behaviour has occurred

>Parents are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with schools, in addressing bullying behaviour. Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the students involved must be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to consult with them on the actions to be taken to address the behaviour
> it is important to listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
> a record should be kept of the engagement with all involved
> this record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known (see Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the Bi Cineálta procedures), where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students involved and their parents.
> the record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour

Stage 3: Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred

> The teacher must engage with the students involved and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement.
> Important factors to consider as part of this engagement are the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the students involved.
> The teacher should document the review with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and their parents in relation to this. The date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased should also be recorded.
> Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted.
> Ongoing supervision and support may be needed for the students involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased.
> If the bullying behaviour has not ceased the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents. A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased.
> If it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then consideration should be given to using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school.
> If a parent(s) is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools they should be referred to the school's complaints procedures (available on our website).
> If a parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions have had a negative effect on the student.

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

We take all instances of bullying behaviour on a case-by-case basis, but we may use the following approaches generally:

All students involved will be checked-in with regularly and behaviour will be monitored carefully. The teacher will check-in with parents too and will look for their ongoing support to monitor their child at home and to communicate with the school if needed.

We will use resources, as appropriate – including those developed by NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service), Oide (support service for schools) and from programmes/sites such as Webwise and Fuse.
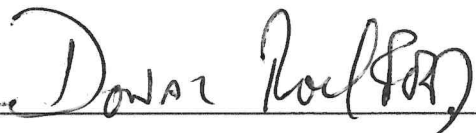
All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with students and parents. The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented. If the bullying behaviour is a child protection concern the matter will be addressed without delay in accordance with *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.*

Section D: Oversight

The Principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting. This update will include the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting, the number of ongoing incidents and the total number of incidents since the beginning of the school year. Where incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred, the Principal will also provide a verbal update which will include where relevant, information relating to trends and patterns identified, strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant. This update does not contain personal or identifying information. See Chapter 7 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

This policy is available to our school community on the school's website and in hard copy on request. A student friendly version of this policy is displayed in the school and is also available on our website and in hard copy on request.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed, following input from our school community, each calendar year or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this policy refers.

Signed: _____ Date: 2/10/25.

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____ Date: 2/10/25

(Principal)

RECORD OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Please include a record on Aladdin using the Log of Actions document

Please add additional rows as appropriate	
Name of Pupil experiencing bullying behaviour	
Class	
Name of pupil engaged in bullying behaviour	
Class	

Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))*

Pupil concerned	
Other pupil	
Parent	
Teacher/SNA/Staff Member	

Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern	
Date	

How did the Bullying Behaviour occur (tick relevant box(es))
* (see Appendix A for explanations)

Physical	
Verbal	
Written	
Extortion	
Exclusion	
Relational	
Online	

Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))*

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
Other	

Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) * (see Appendix B for explanations)

Disablist	
Exceptionally able	
Gender identity	
Homophobic/transphobic	
Physical appearance	
Racist	
Poverty	
Religious identity	
Sexist	
Sexual harassment	

Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact:

Details of actions taken:-

Date of initial engagement with student(s)	
Date of initial engagement with parent(s)	

Views of student(s) regarding the actions to be taken:-

Views of parent(s) regarding the actions to be taken:-

Date of review with student(s) to determine if behaviour has ceased	
Date of review with parent(s) to determine if behaviour has ceased	

Views of student(s) in relation to this:-

Views of parent(s) in relation to this:-

Has the Bullying ceased? Yes/No   Date _____

Engagement with external services and or supports (if any)

Signature of Teacher _____ Date _____

Signature of Principal _____ Date _____

APPENDIX A
How bullying behaviour occurs

Bullying behaviour can take many forms, which can occur separately or together. These can include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

Direct bullying behaviour:

- Physical bullying behaviour:
  - ➢ Physical bullying behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping students. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While students can often engage in "mess fights" they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.
  - ➢ Personal property can be a focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, schoolbooks and other learning material or interference with a student's locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

- Verbal bullying behaviour:
  - ➢ Continual name calling directed at a student which hurts, insults or humiliates the student should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name calling of this type refers to physical appearance; for example, size or clothes worn or gender identity. It can also refer to a student's accent, distinctive voice characteristics, academic ability, race or ethnic origin.

- Written bullying behaviour:
  - ➢ Written bullying behaviour includes writing insulting remarks about a student in public places, passing around notes about or drawings of a student.

- Extortion :
  - ➢ Bullying behaviour can involve extortion. Extortion is where something is obtained through force or threats.

Indirect bullying behaviour:

- Exclusion:
  - ➢ Exclusion bullying behaviour occurs where a student is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded or ignored by a student or group of students.

- Relational:
  - ➢ Relational bullying behaviour occurs when a student's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. Common forms include control: "Do this or I won't be your friend anymore"; a group of students ganging up against one student; nonverbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a student; giving a student the "silent treatment"; and the deliberate manipulation of friendship groups to make someone unpopular.

- Online bullying behaviour:
  - ➢ Online bullying behaviour (cyberbullying) is carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text or direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, email, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chatrooms and other online technologies.

This form of bullying behaviour can include:

➤ sending or sharing nasty, insulting, offensive, and/or intimidating messages or images via text messages, emails, direct messages or other websites or apps

➤ posting information considered to be personal, private and sensitive without consent
➤ making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other students
➤ excluding or disrupting access to a student on purpose from online chat groups, access to accounts or from an online game

Even though a message may be posted online just once by a student it can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be seen by a wide audience where it is intended to be shared or has a likelihood of being shared multiple times and is thus repeated.

As online bullying uses technology to carry out bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact it can occur at any time. Many types of bullying behaviour can be facilitated through online bullying. In many cases online bullying can relate to an "offline" experience with someone known to the student. This type of bullying may involve forms of sexual exploitation including but not limited to, sextortion and the non-consensual sharing of intimate images. The sharing or threatened sharing of images without consent is a criminal offence.

APPENDIX B

Types of bullying behaviour

There are many different types of bullying behaviour. These can include the following which is not an exhaustive list:

➢ disablist bullying behaviour: behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of a perceived or actual disability or additional need exceptionally able bullying: behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their high academic ability or outstanding talents

➢ gender identity bullying: behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual gender identity

➢ homophobic/transphobic (LGBTQ+) bullying: behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual membership of the LGBTQ+ community

➢ physical appearance bullying: behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their physical appearance. Students who "look different" can be mocked or criticised about the shape, size or appearance of their body

➢ racist bullying: behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their race or ethnic origin which includes membership of the Traveller or Roma community. Racism is defined in the National Action Plan Against Racism13 as "a form of nomination which manifests through those power dynamics present in structural and institutional arrangements, practices, policies and cultural norms, which have the effect of excluding or discriminating against individuals or groups, based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin"

➢ poverty bullying: behaviour and language that intends to humiliate a student because of a lack of resources

➢ religious identity bullying: behaviour and language that intends to harm a student because of their religion or religious identity

➢ sexist bullying: behaviour and language that intends to harm a student based on their sex, perpetuating stereotypes that a student or a group of students are inferior because of their sex

➢ sexual harassment: any form of unwanted verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on sex which affects the dignity of the student