St. Paul's SNS

Bí Cineálta Policy

Signed: _____ Principal

Signed: _____ Chairperson of BoM

6/10/26

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of St. Paul's SNS 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 have an indispensable 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.

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	29-09-26	Croke Park meeting
Students	17-09-26	Student Council Meeting
Parents	02-10-26	Parents Council Meeting
Board of Management	06-10-26	BoM Meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	Ongoing	
Date policy was approved: 06-10-26		
Date policy was last reviewed: Sept '25		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by the school. These include strategies specifically aimed at preventing online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

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.

St. Paul's school community believes that each pupil has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation, which reflects our school motto *"**happy, confident children, respect others**"*.

At St. Paul's we strongly believe that to tackle bullying effectively we need a consistent whole school approach and therefore we follow the KiVa programme. KiVa is an innovative anti-bullying programme that has been developed using cutting-edge research on bullying and incorporating experiences from previous intervention programmes used around the world. One of the unique aspects of Kiva is that it emphasizes the role of **bystanders**. Rather than only addressing bullies and victims, Kiva aims to engage students who witness bullying. The program educates them on how their reactions—whether active or passive—can encourage or discourage bullying. The program seeks to transform bystanders into defenders of victims, reducing the power of bullies by isolating them socially and empowering others to act. The ultimate goal is to develop empathy and build respectful relationships.

Every report of bullying is treated seriously and dealt with, having due regard for the wellbeing of the targeted pupil(s) and the perpetrator(s).

The immediate priority, should a bullying incident occur, is ending the bullying, *(thereby protecting the person(s) being targeted)* and resolving the issues and restoring the relationships.

All pupils are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance of a safe environment in the school. On becoming aware of any bullying situation, involving members of the school community they should notify a trusted adult. Bullying behaviour is too serious not to report.

The KiVa lessons are:

- Child centred - Children are encouraged to think for themselves and find solutions to the themes on their own.
- Experiential - Children will be able to clarify matters through different exercises and learning by doing.
- Versatile - Children will experience lessons where themes are handled in many different ways.

The lessons consist of discussions, group work, short films about bullying and role play exercises. They proceed from Universal topics such as the importance of respect in human relationships - to bullying, including its mechanism and consequences. Many lessons concentrate on the role that the group plays in maintaining and stopping bullying. Group exercises help the pupils to think and practise different ways of supporting victimised peers. Over the course of the KiVa lessons the whole class adopts the anti-bullying rules. At the end of the school year,

all the rules that have been adopted form a KiVa contract. The skills learned in lessons should also transfer into interactions outside the lessons.

Bullying will also be raised in other ways at a number of levels including:

- **Whole School level** - Weekly assemblies, Anti-bullying Week, School Rules developed by pupils.
- **Classroom level** -pupil posters, class rules developed by pupils, Circle Time, class discussions, and cross-curricular activities.
- **Individual Pupil level** - children who are felt to be at risk of bullying will be offered additional support and guidance via Nurture groups
- **Parent level** - Parent information evenings, Parent information on school website.
- **Teacher level** - KiVa training followed by in-house training for staff.

The Board of Management and school community recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

- ***A positive school culture and climate which-***
  - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
  - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
  - promotes respectful relationships across the school community

- ***Effective leadership;***
  - There is a year head for each class band who is responsible for discipline and wellbeing of pupils.

- ***A school-wide approach;***
  - A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils;
  - The SPHE curriculum is taught in its entirety throughout the 2 year cycle.
  - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and racial bullying.
  - Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils.
  - Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies);
  - On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.
  -

- ***Supports for staff;***
  - CPD opportunities are provided for staff.

- Regular opportunities for collaboration between staff.

Restorative Practice

Restorative practices in education focus on building relationships, community, and repairing harm when it occurs, rather than simply punishing students. When a conflict, disruption, or harm has occurred, teachers can use **restorative questions** to guide a meaningful dialogue.

Here are **5 core restorative questions** a teacher should ask, especially when addressing conflict or harm

1. What happened?
2. What were you thinking and feeling at the time?
3. Who has been affected by what you did? In what way?
4. What do you think needs to happen to make things right?
5. What will you do differently next time?

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):

School Wide Approach

- KiVa offers tools to monitor the situation in the schools through annual online surveys for both students and staff. This feedback provides schools with information on how to improve their anti-bullying work.
- **Whole staff professional development** on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it- prevention and intervention. At staff meetings throughout the year behaviour is discussed and it is ensured that all are aware of procedures.
- An **annual audit** of professional development needs with a view to assessing staff requirements through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources
- **School wide awareness raising** on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
- **Supervision and monitoring** of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- **A Positive School Culture** is promoted St. Paul's:
  - Pupil of the Week and Class of the Week
  - Class Dojo implemented in all classes
  - Art Competitions
  - Digital Ninja Competitions
  - Assembly Awards
  - Best Line of the week in the yard
  - Well Done Board - celebrates our pupils' achievements
  - School Website showcases our successes and highlights achievements.
  - Extra-curricular activities: Basketball, Soccer, G.A.A, Music Generation, Gardening with Ron, School Quiz team, Athletics School Team.
  - Active School - We have an Active School Flag and there are many physical activity initiatives that are embedded in the school.
  - Pupil leadership is promoted and valued - Active Agent Committee and Digital Committee.
  - Music Generation
  - School Tours
  - St. Paul's participates in the Junior Achievement programme annually.
  - Summer Camps take place annually which offer an array of activities to promote the holistic development of all our pupils.
  - A huge emphasis is placed on staff relations in St. Paul's. There is a social committee that organises staff bonding events annually.
  - Intercultural day/week. Children of all cultures and backgrounds are celebrated through showcasing their traditions, food, dress etc.
  - Musicals/Christmas shows take place.
  - Grandparents Day takes place.

- 6th Class Graduation takes place annually involving parents also.
- Parents Council play an important role in fundraising for the school and holding raffles/competitions throughout the school annually.
- Our HSCL plays a vital role in creating and maintaining the lines of communication with our parents in the community.
- Parents Courses are organised in liaison with St. John's and take place in our Parents Room.

- The school's **anti-bullying policy** is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s). The code of behaviour and anti-bullying policies will be made available on our website www.stpaulssns.com
- **Encourage a culture of telling**, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Ensuring that pupils know **who to tell and how** to tell, e.g.:
    - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
    - Hand note up to teacher.
    - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
    - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

- Parent(s)/guardian(s) are welcomed to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied.
- Implementation of the school's **Acceptable Use Policy** in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored and the pupils' use of mobile phones is strictly prohibited.

Implementation of curricula

- The full implementation of the **SPHE** curriculum and the **RSE** and **Stay Safe** Programmes.
- **Continuous Professional Development** for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme.
- Targeted delivery of lessons on **Cyber Bullying** and **Diversity and Interculturalism** at the appropriate class levels.
- Internet Safety programme by **Zeeko** takes place annually with 5th and 6th classes.
- Some staff are accredited "**Friends for Life**" facilitators and the evidence-based programme can be implemented when deemed necessary. .
- The school will consider the additional needs of SEN pupils. S.E.T teachers may withdraw pupils with additional needs to specifically teach strategies on how to deal with and respond to bullying if needed.
- St. Paul's participates in the **School Completion Programme** which is aimed at supporting certain pupils with social skills and self-esteem.
- Many of our teachers are trained in the **Incredible Years Programme** in conjunction with NEPS.

Links to other policies

School policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying, e.g. Code of Behaviour, Child Protections policy, Supervision of pupils, Acceptable Use policy, Attendance, Sporting activities, Data Protection, record keeping and RSE.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour is (are) as follows:
The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

1. Class teacher(s) of pupil(s) involved.
2. The teacher(s) that witnesses bullying or to whom bullying is reported.
3. The Post Holder assigned to year band.

   3rd class - Mr. Murphy

   4th class - Ms. Halvey

   5th class - Mr. Harrington

   6th class - Ms. Johnson
4. KIVA co-ordinator - Ms. Connolly
5. Head of Discipline - Ms. Corey
6. Ms. Carthy (Principal)

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

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 school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows (in conjunction with the KIVA Programme):

Recording of Incidents (KIVA Team)

Form 1 - 'Screening: Is it bullying?' - to be filled in by the adult who is the first to know about a suspected bullying case.

Form 2 - 'Discussion with the victim' - to be filled out by the KiVa team.

Form 3 - 'Individual discussions with the bullies' - to be filled out by the KiVa team.

Form 4 - 'Group discussion with the bullies' - to be filled out by the KiVa team

Form 5 - 'Follow-up discussion with the victim' - to be filled out by the KiVa team.

Form 6 - 'Follow up discussion' - to be filled out by the KiVa team.

The forms will be kept in a secure folder in the Head Teacher's Office.

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame);

The school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) understand this approach from the outset.

<u>Reporting bullying behaviour</u>

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school. It is important that the class teacher (s) of the children and year heads if necessary are informed as soon as possible. **Incident report forms (Appendix 2)** will be kept in all classrooms and in the

office and are completed thereafter. Completed forms should be stored in the office.

- All reports will be investigated and dealt with by the classroom teacher of the children involved and year heads if necessary.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

Investigating and dealing with allegations of bullying behaviour:

- The teacher(s) investigates the allegation of bullying behaviour with a view to establishing the facts and bringing any such behaviour to an end. In investigating and dealing with allegations of bullying, in a calm and unemotional manner, the teacher(s) will determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible;
- The school, reserves the right to ask any teacher to write an account of what happened as part of an investigation.
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.
- Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved (along with the involvement of the KIVA Team)
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, teachers should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why.
- If a group is involved, each member may be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved may meet as a group. At the group meeting, each member may be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;
- In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved should be contacted by the KIVA team to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school should give parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils;

- Where it has been determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;
- It must also be made clear to all involved that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school;
- When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the 'relevant teacher' will complete an incident report form (Appendix 2) of the investigation.

All documentation regarding bullying incidents and their resolution is retained securely by the relevant teacher during investigation and thereafter is securely stored in the office.

Sanctions:

Where a pupil has been found to have engaged in bullying behaviour, any of the following sanctions may be imposed:

- S/he may be given a verbal warning with the condition that bullying ends;
- S/he may be required to formally sign a promise that the bullying will end;
- Loss of privileges (at the discretion of the teacher).
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be contacted by the 'relevant teacher' and informed of the nature and extent of the bullying behaviour with a view to agreeing a strategy whereby a promise to end the bullying behaviour;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be invited to a meeting with the 'relevant teacher(s)'.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s), the relevant teacher(s) and the Deputy Principal/Principal meet.
- The pupil may be suspended from the school. (See school's Code of behaviour)
- The case may be referred to the Board of Management and the pupil may be expelled from the school.

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):

Follow up and Recording:

- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
  - Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
  - Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
  - Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable;
  - Any feedback received from the parties involved,
- The KIVA team will arrange follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved.
- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Recording of bullying behaviour

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

Informal- pre-determination that bullying has occurred

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them on the incident report form. Incident report forms will be kept in the office. All incidents must be reported to the class teacher.
- While all reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports. The relevant teacher may involve as they see fit the KIVA team, Year Head/Deputy Principal/Principal of all incidents being investigated.

Formal Stage 1-determination that bullying has occurred

- If it is established that bullying has occurred, the KIVA team will be informed, the parents/guardians will be informed and relevant sanctions will be applied.

Formal Stage 2-Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)

The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 3** to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

Recording of Incidents

Form 1 – 'Screening: Is it bullying?' – to be filled in by the adult who is the first to know about a suspected bullying case.

Form 2 – 'Discussion with the victim' – to be filled out by the KiVa team.

Form 3 – 'Individual discussions with the bullies' – to be filled out by the KiVa team.

Form 4 – 'Group discussion with the bullies' – to be filled out by the KiVa team

Form 5 – 'Follow-up discussion with the victim' – to be filled out by the KiVa team.

Form 6 – 'Follow up discussion' – to be filled out by the KiVa team.

The forms will be kept in a secure folder in the Head Teacher's Office.

Bullied pupils:

- Ensuring that the bullying ceases.
- Continue to foster a school culture of respect for bullied pupils and all pupils,
- Continue to foster a school culture of empathy towards and support for bullied pupils,
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the awareness-raising programme,
- Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).
- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same, i.e. NEPS, School Completion Programme, HSE.

Bullying pupils:

- Making it clear that bullying pupils are no longer blamed or punished and get a 'clean sheet when they change their ways,
- Making it clear that bullying pupils are doing the right and honourable thing by changing their ways and giving them praise for this,
- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same, i.e. NEPS, School Completion Programme, HSE.
- Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school),
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth,
- In dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child.
- In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a 'clean sheet' and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.