

# Davitt College Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

## **Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour**

The Board of Management of Davitt College 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.

### **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

A positive and inclusive school culture and environment is essential to prevent and address bullying behaviour. The school environment should be a space where students and school staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported.

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

|   | Date consulted | Method of consultation |
|---|----------------|------------------------|
| School Staff  | March 2025     | Survey                 |
| Students  | April 2025     | Survey                 |
| Parents   | April 2025     | Survey                 |
| Board of management   |                |                        |
| Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers |                |                        |
| Date policy was approved:                                       |                |                        |
| Date policy was last reviewed:                                  |                |                        |

## 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):

The school is committed to a proactive, whole-school approach to preventing bullying. Our prevention strategies reflect the diverse needs of our school community and focus on building a culture of inclusion, respect, and safety for all. These strategies include targeted actions to address online bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying, racist bullying, sexist bullying, and sexual harassment, in line with Chapter 5 of the *Bí Cineálta* procedures.

## **1. Specific Strategies for Different Forms of Bullying**

### **a. Preventing Online Bullying (Cyberbullying)**

- Students are taught responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship.
- The school maintains an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP), reviewed regularly and signed by students, staff, and parents/guardians.
- Parents/guardians are advised on digital safety and responsible technology use.

### **b. Preventing Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying**

- An inclusive school culture is actively promoted through the curriculum and extracurricular activities.
- LGBTQ+ inclusion is reflected in curricular materials and student-led initiatives.
- The school prohibits discriminatory language and fosters a safe space for students of all identities.

### **c. Preventing Racist Bullying**

- Cultural diversity is celebrated through curriculum content, school events, and visual representation.
- Racist bullying is clearly defined in the policy and addressed as a serious disciplinary issue.

### **d. Preventing Sexist Bullying and Sexual Harassment**

- Gender equality is promoted through school activities and classroom discussion.
- Age-appropriate education on consent, relationships, and respectful behaviour is delivered through RSE and related programmes.
- Staff model respectful interactions and address all incidents in a timely and consistent manner.

## **2. Curriculum-Based Prevention: SPHE and RSE**

- The school embeds bullying prevention within its **Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)** and **Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)** programmes.
- Through SPHE, students learn about:
  - Emotional literacy, self-awareness, and empathy.
  - Peer relationships, inclusion, and conflict resolution.
  - Respect for diversity and understanding of equality.
- Through RSE, students explore:
  - The development of healthy relationships.
  - The importance of consent and personal boundaries.
  - Respect for gender identity and sexual orientation.
- Lessons are age-appropriate, inclusive, and aligned with the school's ethos and Department of Education guidelines.

## **3. Whole-School Culture and Ongoing Prevention**

- Kindness and inclusion are promoted through whole-school initiatives, such as Wellbeing Week, student voice programmes.
- Anti-bullying messages are reinforced regularly through assemblies and classroom discussion.
- Staff receive continuous professional development in areas such as digital safety, identity-based bullying, trauma-informed practice, and restorative approaches.
- The school fosters student leadership through the student council, ensuring students are active participants in shaping school culture.

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

#### **Supervision and Monitoring of Students**

- The school has a clear supervision procedure in place. **Active Supervision** is a key preventative measure in all areas where students congregate, including classrooms, corridors, the yard, bathrooms, and during school transitions.
- Active supervision requires staff to maintain focused attention and intentional observation of student behaviour at all times. Staff are expected to:
  - Position themselves strategically to ensure clear lines of sight.
  - Continuously circulate within their assigned area.
  - Intervene early when concerning behaviours arise.

## **Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour**

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

### **Year Heads**

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):

To identify if bullying behaviour has occurred, the following three questions must be asked:

Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?

Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?

Is the behaviour repeated?

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

If the answer to any of the above questions is **No**, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour and strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided within the Code of 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.**

Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the teacher should consider the following: 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 also be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident.

#### **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.

### **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 the school 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.
- 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):

- Student Support Team,
- Pastoral Care Team,
- SPHE Curriculum,
- National Education Psychological Service,
- Oide
- Webwise
- National Parent Council
- DCU Antibullying Centre
- Tusla

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: Cllr. B. Gavin  
(Chairperson of board of management)

Date: 17<sup>th</sup> June 2025

Signed: Mr. C. O' Reilly  
(Principal)

Date: 17<sup>th</sup> June 2025