De La Salle College
Churchtown

Bí Cineálta Policy
2026-2027

Approved by the Board of Management at a meeting on _____

1. Mission Statement

De La Salle College Churchtown is a Co-Education Catholic, voluntary, post primary school, founded by the De La Salle Brothers and now under the trusteeship of the Le Chéile Trust. De La Salle College seeks to foster the spiritual, moral, intellectual, social, cultural and physical education of all its pupils in a safe, secure and caring environment and in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

De La Salle is proud to welcome all students to the best of its ability. All school policies, practices and the general atmosphere of the school, allied to the excellent relations among the students, and between the students and the teachers and staff, combine to encourage the participation, integration and attainment of all the students.

The College Motto 'Recta Sapere' means 'Correct Judgement' which we interpret as 'The wisdom to know what is right and the courage to do it'.

2 Introduction

The Board of Management of De La Salle 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**.

This compliance is guided by a range of relevant legislation which includes the following:

The **Education Welfare Act 2000** provides that *the board of management of a recognised school shall, after consultation with the principal of, the teachers teaching at, the parents of students registered at, and the educational welfare officer assigned functions in relation to, that school, prepare, in accordance with subsection (2), a code of behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school.* The Code of Behaviour Guidelines for Schools requires schools to have an anti-bullying policy as part of the school's Code of Behaviour.

Schools have an obligation under the **Equal Status Acts 2000–2018** to prevent harassment (including sexual harassment) on the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, and membership of the Traveller community.

The **Children First Act 2015** places a statutory obligation on schools to ensure, as far as practicable, *that each child attending the school is safe from harm while attending school or otherwise participating in school activities.*

The Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020 also known as **Coco's Law** provides *that a person who distributes, publishes or threatens to distribute or publish an intimate image of another person (a) without that other person's consent, and (b) with intent to cause harm to, or being reckless as to whether or not harm is caused to, the other person, is guilty of an offence.*

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 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.

Aims

The Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour policy at De La Salle College aims to foster a safe, inclusive, and respectful school environment where all students feel valued, happy and safe.

De La Salle College aims to:

1. **Prevent Bullying Through Education:** To provide ongoing education to students, staff, and parents about the nature of bullying, its impact, and how to prevent it, fostering a culture of kindness, empathy, and inclusion.
2. **Promote a Safe and Inclusive Environment:** To create a positive school climate where diversity is celebrated, and all students, regardless of their background or identity, feel safe, supported, and respected.
3. **Implement Clear Reporting Procedures:** To ensure that clear procedures are in place for reporting and addressing incidents of bullying, providing students and parents with confidence in the school's response.
4. **Provide Support for Victims and Perpetrators:** To offer appropriate support to both victims and perpetrators of bullying, recognising that all students involved in bullying incidents may need guidance and intervention to promote positive behaviour.
5. **Engage the Whole School Community:** To involve the entire school community—including students, staff, Board of Management, parents, and external agencies (when possible & appropriate)—in preventing and addressing bullying, promoting shared responsibility for maintaining a safe environment.
6. **Monitor and Review Anti-Bullying Practices:** To regularly review and update anti-bullying procedures in line with evolving best practices and national guidelines, ensuring that the school's response remains effective and relevant.

Through this policy, De La Salle College is committed to maintaining a proactive and comprehensive approach to preventing and addressing bullying, ensuring that all students can learn and grow in a positive, respectful, and inclusive environment.

Scope

This policy applies to all students, staff, Board of Management, parents, and the wider school community at De La Salle College.

4.2 The policy aims to create a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment where every student can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. It provides a framework for early identification and intervention of bullying behaviour, supporting the holistic well-being of students as outlined in our *Wellbeing Policy*. Research shows that a whole-school approach, with the active involvement of all stakeholders, significantly reduces bullying and promotes positive mental health (Olweus, 2013).

4.3 This policy must be read in conjunction with the school's *Code of Behaviour, Acceptable Use Policy, SPHE & RSE Policy* and the *Wellbeing Policy,* ensuring a unified, supportive approach to student welfare and behaviour management. The scope includes all forms of bullying, including cyberbullying, within the school and related activities.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined in *Cineálta: Action Plan on Bullying* and the *Bí Cinealta: Procedure 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.

Examples of Bullying Behaviours

Bullying can manifest in various forms, which include but are not limited to:

Direct Bullying Behaviour

- **Physical Aggression**: Acts such as pushing, shoving, punching, tripping, or any form of physical assault.
- **Property Damage or Theft**: The deliberate destruction, damage, or theft of personal belongings.
- **Extortion**: Demanding money or valuables under threat or intimidation.
- **Verbal Abuse or Insults**: Repeated personal remarks or insults related to appearance, clothing, hygiene, or family circumstances. This includes sarcasm, humiliating comments, or derogatory statements designed to intimidate or degrade.
- **Written Abuse**: Insulting remarks or drawings shared via notes or graffiti, as well as passing around derogatory comments intended to harm another student.
- **Intimidation**: Behaviour designed to frighten or dominate another person, such as threatening phone calls, inappropriate text messages, or the misuse of mobile phones.

Indirect Bullying Behaviour

- **Exclusion**: Intentionally leaving someone out of games, group activities, or social interactions.
- **Social and Relational Bullying**: Spreading rumours, mocking someone in front of others, exclusion from peer groups, or the deliberate manipulation of social relationships.

Identity-based bullying:

- Homophobic, racist, or gender-related bullying. It may involve name-calling or slurs and the use of offensive language or derogatory comments based on someone's perceived or actual identity (e.g., sexual orientation, ethnicity, or gender).

Online Bullying:

- Also known as Cyberbullying, this includes the use of digital platforms like social media, messaging apps, and gaming sites to send hurtful messages, share private information without consent, or create fake profiles to humiliate others.
- This behaviour can be just as harmful as face-to-face bullying, as it can reach a wide audience quickly. **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. It is important to note that the age of criminal responsibility is twelve years of age.**

This list is not exhaustive. Bullying is ultimately defined by the experience of the victim and the ongoing impact it has on their emotional, social, and physical wellbeing.

When Bullying is 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 twelve years. Some online behaviour may be illegal. 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 member 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.
- Bullying behaviour involving sexual harassment or sexual assault, may be also considered criminal behaviour.
- Allegations of the above will be reported to the relevant authorities when necessary. An Garda Síochána is the appropriate authority to investigate alleged criminal behaviour.

When Bullying becomes a Child Protection Concern

- Generally Bullying can be addressed without the involvement of Tusla.
- It may become a child protection concern when it results in significant physical or emotional harm, or where it becomes a persistent and severe problem and measures taken to address it are not effective.
- In determining when bullying behaviour should be reported to Tusla, the following factors should be considered:

- The impact on the child
- Protective/ appropriate actions taken by the parents/guardians
- Protective/appropriate actions taken by the school
- Engagement of child and family with support services such as NEPs

- If in doubt whether bullying behaviour is a child protection concern, the school will contact the Duty Social Worker for advice

Behaviour that is not Bullying Behaviour

- A once off instance of negative behaviour towards another student. A single hurtful comment online can be considered bullying because it may have a wide audience and can be shared multiple times so becomes repeated behaviour.
- Disagreements or disputes among students, or instances when students don't want to be friends or remain friends, unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others, including deliberate manipulation of friendship groups.
- Students with special education needs may have social communication difficulties, which may make them communicate their needs through behaviour which can hurt themselves and others. These behaviours are not deliberate or planned but in certain situations are an automatic response which they cannot control.
- Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour, but unintentional by the other student, this is not bullying. However these inappropriate behaviours can be distressing and may be dealt with through the school's Code of Behaviour.

Where Bullying Behaviour Can Occur

- In the school yard
- In the classroom
- Any area in the school building- toilets, changing rooms, assembly hall etc
- On the way to and from school
- Clubs, activities, groups outside school
- Online

Outside School

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 this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, the school should deal with it in accordance with this Bi Cinéalta Policy.

Signs and Effects of Bullying

Bullying can severely affect students in a variety of ways, such as:

- Increased anxiety or insecurity
- Loss of confidence and self-esteem
- Changes in behaviour, mood swings, or reluctance to attend school
- Poor academic performance or difficulty concentrating
- Physical signs, such as unexplained bruises or damaged belongings
- Withdrawal from social activities or peer relationships
- Expressions of suicidal thoughts or behaviours

Parents and staff are encouraged to stay alert to any changes in a student's behaviour that might indicate they are experiencing bullying.

Section A : Development/Review of our Bi Cineálta Policy

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

6.2

	Date consulted	*Method of consultation*
School Staff	August/September 2026	The 2025-26 Bi Policy was discussed and reviewed at AP meetings, meetings with the Wellbeing Coordinator, and the staff meeting at the beginning of the new year. Staff were happy and no amendments were deemed necessary
Students	September 2026	The Lasallian Leader Coordinator carried out a review of the policy with the Student Council, Mentor and Prefects. The Yearheads and Principal discussed the policy at all assemblies at the beginning of the academic year. There will be reminders of this policy in C&C class and assemblies throughout the year.
Parents	September 2026	The policy was given to the PA for discussion and review.
Board of Management	September 2026	The Board of Management reviewed the policy at the first BOM meeting of the academic year.
Date Policy was approved: 15/9/26		Date policy was last reviewed: 9/6/25

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

Fostering a Positive School Culture

Central to the prevention of bullying at De La Salle College is the promotion of a positive and respectful school culture. We aim to create an environment where empathy, inclusion, and respect are central to all interactions. The school leadership team, staff, students, and parents work collaboratively to build an atmosphere of trust, respect and support. Regular communication between staff, students, and parents encourages an open dialogue, ensuring any concerns related to bullying behaviour are addressed early and effectively.

- *First Year Induction*: Students are made aware of Bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour during their induction programme in first year and through programmes such as SPHE.
- *5th Year Mentor & Buddy System:* A Buddy System has been implemented which pairs 5th Year Mentors with incoming first-year students to promote integration and mutual respect.
- *6th Year Prefects:* The 6th Year Prefects & Lasallian Leaders support 2nd Years throughout the year.
- *TY Digital Leader:* Students in TY are appointed as TY Digital Leaders who deliver Cyber Safety workshops to 1st Year students.
- *Student Council & Drop in Clinics:* plays an active role in promoting a positive school climate and addressing bullying behaviour. They run regular Lunchtime Drop In Clinics

- *Student Council Notice Board:* The Student Council notice board is centrally placed in the school. It displays contact details for helplines, outside agencies and information to support teenage mental health issues.
- *School Charter:* School Charters are prominently displayed around the school and in every classroom.
- *Lasallian Core Principles:* The Lasallian Core Principles are prominently displayed in the Assembly Hall – Respect, Inclusivity, Concern for Social Justice, Quality Education & Faith in the Presence of God
- *The Lasallian Ethos:* All members of the school community, including the Board of Management, staff, students, and parents, are encouraged to embody the values of Respect and Inclusivity in their interactions. This reinforces a culture where bullying is unacceptable.

Curriculum and Educational Programmes

At De La Salle College, we use the curriculum as a key tool to develop students' understanding of respect, empathy, and the impact of bullying behaviour. Subjects such as *Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)* and *Civic, Social, and Political Education (CSPE)* incorporate lessons on building healthy relationships, the importance of inclusion, and strategies for standing up to bullying.

- All 1st Year students participate in the Friends for Life Programme
- All 1st Year students participate in Cyber Safety classes delivered by TY Digital Leaders
- All Junior Cycle students participate in Wellbeing Week. Workshops in the area of: Building Healthy Relationships, Bullying Prevention, Online Safety, Coco's Law etc.
- All TY and Senior Cycle students participate in SPHE/RSE Classes
- The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming students' attitudes and values. As self-esteem is the single most influential factor in determining behaviour, teachers provide students with opportunities to develop a positive sense of worth.
- Regular classroom discussions on digital literacy and responsible use of social media are integrated into the broad curriculum to prevent cyberbullying.
- Anti-bullying education is reinforced during C&C Classes and assemblies and students are encouraged to report concerns in a safe, confidential manner.

Building Strong Relationships and a 'Telling' Environment

Research consistently shows that a strong sense of connection between students and trusted adults is essential for bullying prevention. Therefore, De La Salle College encourages students to speak out if they experience or witness bullying behaviour. Our staff are encouraged to be approachable and responsive to concerns, ensuring that all students feel heard and supported.

- *A Trusted Adult:* The concept of a *trusted adult* is promoted throughout the school, where students know they can approach any member of staff if they feel threatened or bullied or if they witness bullying behaviour.
- *Check and Connect Wellbeing Tutor Class:* Students meet their Tutors every morning at Check and Connect Wellbeing Classes and Year Heads are also available too support and meet with students or contact parents if necessary at this time.
- *Year Heads*: Year Heads maintain regular contact with students in their year group to develop strong personal relationships and monitor student wellbeing.
- *Care Team*: Meet regularly to prioritise the needs students in crisis and to develop support plans and intervention strategies
- *Guidance Counsellor*: A key person in the care team who builds a caring and supportive relationship with students.

- *Senior Management & Assemblies:* The Principal, Deputy & Year Heads hold year group and whole school assemblies each term to remind students of the core principles and to encourage them to live the ' Lasallian Way'. They are reminded of the code of behaviour and relevant policies to ensure high standards are maintained. Students are also encouraged to report unacceptable or bullying behaviour and to avail of the many supports available to them if they are anxious, unhappy or if they feel threatened, unsafe or if they are being bullied.

Supervision and Safe Spaces
The school takes measures to ensure that all physical spaces within the school are safe and well-supervised to minimise the risk of bullying. Staff presence during breaks, transitions between classes, at the beginning and end of the school day, and in less visible areas such as corridors and schoolyards are implemented to ensure student safety.

By embedding these proactive strategies, De La Salle College is committed to fostering an environment where all students can thrive, free from bullying behaviour. Through collaboration with students, parents, and staff, we will continue to promote the values of respect, kindness, and inclusion across our school community.

Online/Cyber Safety
De La Salle College is committed to preventing cyber bullying. We educate our students about responsible online behaviour and how to maintain safety in the digital space. Parents are encouraged to remain vigilant regarding their children's use of technology, and staff closely monitor online interactions when students use school computers. Mobile phones are banned and locked in Yondr Pouches for the duration of the school day until they leave the school premises.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

De La Salle College is committed to addressing all reports of bullying behaviour in a manner that prioritises the wellbeing and safety of all students involved, ensuring alignment with the *Bí Cineálta Procedures* and national policy guidelines. Our approach focuses on stopping the behaviour, supporting the students involved, and restoring relationships where possible. This policy reflects the principles outlined in *Bí Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying* and adheres to the *Department of Education's Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice.*

In De La Salle the teachers who have responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour are the Year Heads and Senior Management.

When bullying behaviour occurs the school will:
- Ensure that the student experiencing the bullying 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 address the situation
- Take action in a timely manner
- Inform the parents of those involved

Supporting All Involved

De La Salle College acknowledges that both victims and perpetrators of bullying behaviour require support to overcome the effects of the incident and to reintegrate successfully into the school community.

- **For Victims**: Victims will be offered emotional support through the school's pastoral care system. This may include access to the school counsellor and referrals to external agencies, such as the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), if necessary. The school will continue to monitor the victim's wellbeing post-intervention.
- **For Perpetrators**: In addition to appropriate sanctions, the school will work with students who have displayed bullying behaviour to help them understand the consequences of their actions. Support strategies, including counselling and mentoring, will be offered, and behavioural targets will be set and reviewed regularly.

Reporting and Recording Bullying Behaviour

All reports of bullying, whether observed, disclosed by students, or suspected by staff, must be taken seriously and acted upon promptly.

- **Reporting**: Bullying behaviour can be reported by any member of the school community, including students, staff, or parents. Students are encouraged to report incidents to their:
    - Tutor
    - Year Head
    - Guidance Counsellor
    - Teacher
    - SNA
    - Deputy Principal
    - Principal
    - Any trusted adult in the school
    - A student Lasallian Leader (Student Council/Mentor/Prefect)

- **Recording**: All incidents of reported bullying will be documented on an Incident Report Form (document available via hyperlink in appendices), which will be completed by the relevant year head. These forms are stored confidentially in the Principal's office.
- **Privacy**: The details of any report will be treated with the utmost privacy, and shared on a need to know basis only. All records will be stored securely. Information will be shared only with relevant staff members who are directly involved in addressing the situation.

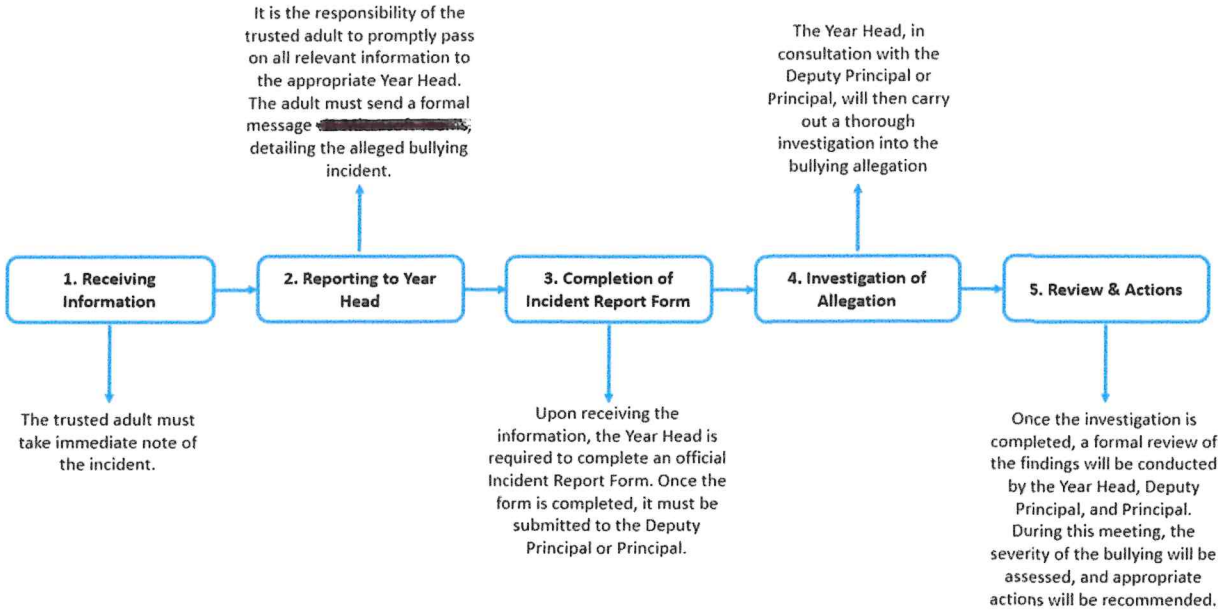
Reporting Procedure

Once a bullying incident has been reported to a trusted adult in De La Salle College, the following structured process must be followed to ensure prompt and appropriate action:

- **Receiving Information:** The trusted adult, whether they receive information directly from a student or witness the bullying behaviour themselves, must take immediate note of the incident.
- **Reporting to Year Head:** It is the responsibility of the trusted adult to promptly pass on all relevant information to the relevant Year Head. The adult must give the Year Head a written account, detailing the alleged bullying incident. Even if the report is made verbally, a written account must also be provided to ensure there is a clear, documented record of the report.
- **Investigation of the Allegation:** The Year Head, in consultation with the Deputy Principal or Principal, will then carry out an investigation into the bullying allegation.

This may involve speaking with sensitivity to the alleged victim(s), perpetrator(s), and witnesses, gathering statements, and reviewing any other relevant evidence.

- **Completion of Incident Report Form:** After all the information is gathered, the Year Head is required to complete an official Incident Report Form. This form must detail the nature of the bullying behaviour, the parties involved, and any relevant context. Once the form is completed, it must be submitted to the Deputy Principal or Principal
- **Assessment and Actions:** Once the investigation is completed in a timely manner, a formal assessment of the findings will be conducted by the Year Head, Deputy Principal, and Principal. During this meeting, the severity of the bullying will be assessed, and appropriate actions will be recommended. This may include disciplinary measures, support for the victim(s), or interventions aimed at resolving the situation and preventing further incidents. Parents of both victims and perpetrators will be informed.



Actions Following Investigation

Based on the findings of the investigation, actions will be tailored to the needs of both the victim(s) and the perpetrator(s), always prioritising the safety and wellbeing of all students involved.

- **Pastoral and Support Measures**: The school will adopt a restorative approach aimed at addressing the needs of the victim(s) while helping the perpetrator(s) understand the impact of their behaviour. With permission from parents this may involve:
  - Counselling or support services for the victim(s) and/or perpetrator(s).
  - Restorative practice sessions between the involved parties, provided both agree to the process.
  - A monitoring period to ensure the behaviour does not continue, during which regular check-ins with the victim(s) will take place.
- **Behavioural Modification**: Where necessary, students who display bullying behaviour will be required to give an undertaking (oral and written) that the behaviour will cease. They will also receive guidance on developing better social skills and empathy.
- **Disciplinary Sanctions**: when bullying behaviour occurs the perpetrator will receive the appropriate disciplinary sanctions as outlined in the school's *Code of Behaviour.* Sanctions may range from detention to suspension or expulsion, depending on the severity of the incident.

Monitoring and Follow-Up
After an initial report, the Year Head will review the situation in consultation with the student(s) and parents. The aim is to assess the aftermath of the allegation and to check that the bullying behaviour has ceased and to ensure that relevant supports are provided if required. If the behaviour persists, further steps will be taken in consultation with the students, parents and senior management to find a resolution.

Appeals Process
If any party is dissatisfied with how a case of bullying was addressed, they may appeal to the Board of Management for further review. The Board will ensure that all procedures were followed correctly and that appropriate actions were taken.

Addressing Bullying by School Staff
Allegations of bullying behaviour involving school staff will be addressed under the *Complaints Procedure for Teachers* or the *Disciplinary Procedure for Staff*

Section D Oversight

Reporting to Board of Management

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
- the total number of incidents since the beginning of the school year.

The Principal will complete the form Appendix D page 63 of the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

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
- any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour
- if any serious incidents of bullying behaviour have occur 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 Bí Cineálta policy requires urgent review in advance of the annual review.

This update does not contain personal or identifying information. See Chapter 7 of the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

The Board of Management must undertake an annual review of the policy and its implementation in consultation with the school community.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management, following input from our school community, each year or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this policy refers. As part of this review, 'The Review of the Bí Cineálta Policy' Appendix E page 64-65 must be completed. The Chairperson & Principal will also complete and sign the 'Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy, Appendix F.

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.

Reviewed by the BOM on 15/9/2026

Ratified by the BOM on 15/9/2026

Signed _____ Date 15/09/2026

Chairperson of Board of Management