St Louis Secondary School, Monaghan

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Mission Statement

St. Louis Secondary School is a teaching and learning community committed to quality and excellence in education. Our school recognises that each pupil is unique and has different gifts as well as different needs.

We recognise that a pupil's development is closely linked to a good self-image, so we strive to present the school's total curriculum in a manner as to allow all to realise their full potential. We see ourselves as working in partnership with parents to develop the gifts and to meet the needs of all. We regard our school as an educational establishment within a Christian community characterised by care and justice.

It is our wish that our pupils leave us with enhanced self-confidence and with life skills and attitudes which will enable them to lead lives which may contribute to the betterment of society.

Introduction

The Board of Management of St Louis Secondary School has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

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

The 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.

Catholic schools have a distinctive understanding of the human person, recognising that every person is created in God's image and likeness and has inherent dignity as a child of God. This is the basis for ensuring that each person in our school is treated with respect and care.

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

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 core elements of the definition are further described below:

• **Targeted behaviour:** Bullying is deliberate, unwanted behaviour that causes harm to others, and where the student displaying bullying behaviour knows that their behaviour is or will be perceived as harmful by the child or young person experiencing the behaviour. Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. The harm can be physical (for example, personal injury, damage to or loss of property), social (for example. withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion) and/or emotional (for example, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety) and can have a serious and long-term negative impact on the student experiencing the bullying behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying but, importantly, must still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour.

• **Repeated behaviour:** Bullying takes the form of a systematic pattern of behaviour which is repeated over time. Single offline incidents of intentional negative behaviour involving an imbalance of power are not considered bullying but must still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour. Posting a single harmful message/image/video online, and which is highly likely to be reposted or shared with others can therefore be seen as bullying behaviour.

• **Imbalance of power:** In incidents of bullying, the student experiencing the bullying behaviour finds it hard to defend themselves as a result of the abuse of a real or perceived imbalance of power. This imbalance of power may manifest itself through

differences in size, strength, age, ability, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, race, ethnic origin including membership of the Traveller and/or Roma communities, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, experience of the care system, disability or the receipt of special education. In incidents of online (or cyber) bullying, the imbalance of power may relate to online anonymity, technical proficiency and possession of information/images/video, and the inability of the targeted student to remove offensive online material or escape the bullying.

Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour

A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards another student is not bullying behaviour. However, a single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be visible to a wide audience and has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and so becomes a repeated behaviour.

Disagreement between students, or instances where students don't want to be friends or to remain friends, is not considered bullying behaviour unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others including deliberate manipulation of friendship groups.

Some students with special educational needs may have social communication difficulties which may make them communicate their needs through behaviours that can hurt themselves or others. It is important to note that these behaviours are not deliberate or planned but, in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they can't control. Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying. These behaviours, while not defined as bullying can be distressing. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

Section A: Development/review of our Bi Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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

Date consulted Method of consultation

Student Consultation (Student Focus Group 15/09/26)
Staff Consultation 22/09/26
Parent Association 29/09/2026
Board of Management 05/10/26

School Staff Bi Cinealta half-day closure. Survey, Training Presentation, discussion, groupwork and feedback. Policy circulated for staff consultation.

Students Anti bullying survey, SPHE & Tutor time

Parents Discussion with PA September 2026,

Policy emailed out October 2026

Board of Management - Policy discussed at BoM meeting
/Policy Ratified at BOM meeting

Wider school community as appropriate,

Date policy was approved: **September 2025**

Date policy was last reviewed: **September 2026**

Policy circulated out. **October 2026**

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

In developing the preventative strategies which St Louis Secondary School will use to prevent all forms of bullying behaviour, we come from the context of our Catholic ethos, where inclusivity permeates our school in a real way. This school takes positive steps to ensure that the culture of St Louis 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 our 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 in dialogue with parents, and thereby build a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, trust and confidence.

In continuing to develop prevention strategies, this school will take as much time as is practicable listening to young persons and parents, to help establish their particular context and needs. Frequent periods of reflection and further engagement by the school, young persons and parents, will be used to discern appropriate supports for young people in this school and will help inform future prevention strategies.

St Louis Secondary School is committed to promoting a positive and inclusive school culture and environment to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

The following principles underpin this commitment:

• Each member of school staff has a responsibility to develop and maintain a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and to take a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.

• Relationships between all members of the school community should be based on respect, care, justice, integrity and trust.

• Students can shape school culture by promoting kindness and inclusion within their peer group and maintain a positive and supportive school environment for all, for example, Cairde: a peer mentoring group of TY students is linked with 1st year students.

• Parents, as active partners in their child's education, can help foster an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated through promoting empathy and respect.

• St Louis aims to support a 'telling' environment where the reporting of bullying behaviour is encouraged. Staff support this strategy by letting students know that they can talk to them and by promoting an awareness of the pastoral care supports within the school.

• Appropriate supervision is maintained to help prevent and address bullying behaviour.

• Extracurricular activities are offered to accommodate a range of preferences and interests.

• Teaching and learning in this school should be collaborative and respectful.

Students should have opportunities to work in small groups with their peers to help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy among students.

• The implementation of updated SPHE specifications aims to help students to feel empowered to create, nurture and maintain respectful and healthy relationships with themselves and others.

• Students can also consider diversity and inclusion through subjects such as, Religious Education, CSPE, History.

• The wellbeing of the school community is central to all school policies and plans.

• Policies such as Acceptable Use policy, Code of Behaviour support this policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

In addition to our strategies to address general bullying behaviours, these prevention strategies include strategies aimed at preventing online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate:

Strategies Aimed at Preventing Online Bullying Behaviour

Strategies to prevent cyberbullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

• The implementation of the SPHE curriculum for junior and senior cycle students.

• The implementation of the Digital Media Literacy curriculum which teaches students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship

• Having conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online

• The Implementation and review of acceptable use policy

• Reference to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour

• promoting or hosting online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online

• TY -digital literacy and online safety

• TY Workshops for Safer Internet Day

Strategies Aimed at Preventing Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying Behaviour

All students regardless of sexual orientation have a right to feel safe and supported at school.

Strategies to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

• Encouraging all students to tell a trusted adult when they experience or witness homophobic behaviour.

• Implementation of the SPHE specifications at junior and senior cycle • Promote inclusion by fostering values of care and justice.

Strategies Aimed at Preventing Racist Bullying Behaviour

St Louis Secondary School is a culturally diverse school and we are proud to welcome international students from many countries each year.

Strategies to prevent racist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

• fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students "see themselves" in their school environment.

• Each year we host TY culture day

• encouraging all students to tell a trusted adult when they experience or witness racist bullying behaviour.

• AEN department provide supports to school staff to respond to the needs of students for whom English is an additional language and to communicate effectively with parents using translation apps and interpreters as appropriate.

Strategies Aimed at Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour

Strategies to prevent sexist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

• Ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally

• As a single-sex school we aim to provide opportunities for students to engage in a wide variety of school activities

• celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contributions of all students

• Celebrate Empowering Our Students Day

• Implementation of Senior and junior SPHE specifications

Strategies Aimed at Preventing Sexual Harassment

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

• Implementing the updated SPHE specifications at post primary level to teach students about healthy relationships and how to treat each other with respect

and kindness

• promoting positive role models within the school community

• challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment

Supervision

St Louis Secondary School has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour:

• Supervision is provided before school from 8:30am, at break and lunch times and after school as students depart on the buses.

• Students socialise and eat in their designated base room or canteen. The park area, which is supervised, is also available to students.

• Staff should ensure that they are on time for supervision and to actively monitor their designated zone.

• Inappropriate behaviour should be corrected. Tyro should be used to record positive or negative behaviours.

• Mobile phones are not permitted to be turned on or visible during the breaktimes, exceptions are when paying in the canteen or using the coffee machine.

• Supervisors should brief the Tutor/Year Head in relation to anything unusual they notice e.g. a student who may not appear to be getting on with her peers, cases of isolation etc.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

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 when possible

• 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 address the situation

• Take action in a timely manner

• inform parents of those involved

The steps that will be taken by St Louis Secondary School to determine if bullying behaviour has occurred, the approaches taken to address the bullying behaviour and to review progress are as follows:

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 and in this policy.

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour the following questions should be considered:

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)

Where bullying behaviour has occurred

• 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.

• 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.

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 the school 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, the school may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

Support

St Louis will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour:

• Pastoral support/'Check and Connect' system is available to any student who needs it from a trusted adult, guidance counsellor, counsellor, Year Head etc.

• Counselling will be offered to students who are being bullied/have witnessed someone being bullied/are involved in bullying others

• Opportunities will be provided, when appropriate, for students to participate in activities designed to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills, and thereby build resilience.

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: 6-Oct-2026

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: _____ Date: 6-10-26

(Principal)

Review of the Bí Cineálta Policy

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

Bí Cineálta Policy Review

1. When did the Board formally adopt its Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour in accordance with the *Bí Cineálta Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*? **09/10/2026**

2. Where in the school is the student-friendly Bí Cineálta policy displayed?

Student Journal In Classrooms Office Areas

2. What date did the Board publish the Bí Cineálta policy and the student-friendly policy on the school website?
   06-10-2026

4. How has the student-friendly policy been communicated to students?

Student Focus Group **Via Tyro** **Website**

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

School website **Email** **Tyro**

6. Have all school staff been made aware of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and the *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*?

Yes	X
No	

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

Yes	**X**
No	

8. Has the Board received and minuted the Bullying Behaviour Update presented by the principal at every ordinary board meeting over the last calendar year?

Yes	**X**
No	

9. Has the Board discussed how the school is addressing all reports of bullying behaviour?

Yes	**X**
No	

10. Is the Board satisfied that all incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed in accordance with the school's Bí Cineálta Policy?

Yes	**X**
No	

11. Have the prevention strategies in the Bí Cineálta policy been implemented?

Yes	X
No	

12.Has the Board discussed the effectiveness of the strategies used to prevent bullying behaviour?

Yes	**X**
No	

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

Student Focus Group
Parent's Association
Staff consultation Meeting
Management Meeeting

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

- It was requested that the survey be completed more than once during the academic year, with one survey suggested for Autumn and another for Spring.
- It was requested that an anonymous reporting box be placed in the school, allowing students to report bullying they have witnessed or identify areas of concern within the school.
- More talks on anti-bullying were requested, including presentations focused on resilience.

- It was suggested that a QR code be placed at the entrance to Parent-Teacher Meetings to encourage greater parental participation in the parental survey and help identify issues that require attention.
- Greater use of Cairde was suggested, with an emphasis on maintaining this connection throughout the school and extending it beyond first-year students.

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

Anonymous reporting box – immediate effect – to be placed outside Principal's office.
Survey to be sent out during Wellbeing Week this year
QR code suggestion to be discussed with Management at review meeting this year.
Discussion and agreement with TY co-ordinator about greater use of Cairde moving forward agreed.

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

It will be amended in the following academic year.

Students are made aware of changes during B*i Cinealta week*.

Students will be made aware during YH assemblies and Tutor time.

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

Yes	Parents follow the school complaint Procedure Policy
No	

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

Yes	
No	X

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

Yes	
No	X

Notification regarding the board of management's annual review of Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management of St Louis Secondary School Monaghan confirms that the board of management's annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour and its implementation was completed at the board of management meeting of [date].

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

Signed: Date: 6-Oct-2026 Signed: _____

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: Date: 6-10-26 Signed: _____

(Principal)

Date of next review: Sept 2027

St Louis Monaghan

Bullying Behaviour Update for Board of Management meeting of St Louis Secondary School

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

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

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

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

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