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**St. Ailbe’s School**

**Scoil Ailbhe Naofa**

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**BÍ CINEÁLTA POLICY**

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| Policy Area | Schools |
| Policy Reference number | ST.AIL/AN-B/002/0 |
| Version | 2 |
| Document Drafted by | St. Ailbe’s School |
| Date previous version of **Anti-Bullying Policy**  ratified by SLT  noted by TETB | 28 July 2023  5 September 2023 |
| Date Reviewed/Amended by School | April 2025 |
| Date Reviewed/Ratified by Board of Management | 7 May 2025 |
| Date Noted/to be Noted by TETB | 9 September 2025 |
| Policy Review Date | Annually |
| Date of Withdrawal of Obsolete Document | September 2025  Document Ref. No. ST.AIL/AN-B/002/2  Version No. 1 |

**St. Ailbe’s School**

# Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of **St. Ailbe’s 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.

# 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 Positive Behaviour.

# Culture and Environment

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. Relationships between all members of the school community should be based on respect, care, integrity and trust. Open communication between boards of management, school staff, students and their parents help foster a collaborative approach and shared responsibilities in relation to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. The school leadership team influences the school culture and set the standards and expectations for the school community when preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. 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. Students can shape the school culture by promoting kindness and inclusion within their peer group and maintain a positive and supportive school environment for all. 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.

# 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 | 4th April 2025 | Feedback from staff at training day |
| Students | 9th April 2025 | Student survey |
| Parents | 20th November 2024 | CAO Information Evening |
| Board of Management |  | Draft document |
| Wider school community as appropriate, local sporting club representatives | 4th April 2025 |  |
| **Date policy was approved:** | |  |
| **Date policy was last reviewed:** | |  |

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# Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible. A pro-active approach is encouraged during periods of supervision. Supervision is provided before and after school and at morning and lunch breaks. Some student groups have different lunchtimes, students are assigned designated areas in which to socialise and eat. We offer lunchtime activities, SCP room, An Cuan/An Caladh and supervised Recreational Spaces at lunchtimes. Every class has a Tutor and year head with whom they meet regularly and check-in.

# Procedure for the prevention of Bullying Behaviour

* A Telling Environment – Schools should be safe environments where reporting of bullying behaviour is encouraged.
* A Trusted Adult - The trusted adult should reassure the student that they have done the right thing by reporting the behaviour. The trusted adult should, without delay, inform the member of staff who has responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour.
* Creating safe physical spaces in School – The creation of safe physical spaces supports psychological safety and is an important measure to prevent bullying behaviour e.g. Withdrawal room
* Supervision - Appropriate supervision is an important measure to help prevent and address bullying behaviour. Some schools offer a mix of organised activities during break times.

There is a Student Support Team in place which comprises of the Principal, Deputy Principals, Year Heads, Pastoral Care team, Guidance Counsellors, SCP team, and AEN Coordinators. The school community aims to prevent cyberbullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying, racist bullying, sexist bullying and sexual harassment as outlined in sections 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8 and 5.9 of the Bí Cineálta procedures. Preventative strategies are mapped onto the four key areas of Wellbeing viz: Culture and Environment, Curriculum (Teaching & Learning), Policy & Planning and Relationships and Partnerships. These strategies focus on building healthy relationships, developing the students holistically and creating a respectful, caring, collaborative and communicative environment in St. Ailbe’s.

Some strategies St. Ailbe’s School use (this list not exhaustive):

**Culture & Environment**

* **ETB Core values:** Our lived ethos of care, community, respect, equality and excellence in education.
* **School Show**: Provides a platform for students to showcase their talents and grow in confidence.
* **Space for Religious Expression**: Ensures all religious beliefs are respected.
* **ETB Day**: Celebrates the school's educational and training board.
* **Amber Flag**: Promotes mental health awareness.
* **Sensory Garden**: Offers a calming space for students.
* **Non-Denominational Celebrations**: Inclusive events for all students.
* **Cooking International Dishes**: Involves parents and students in cultural activities.
* **Language Week**: Celebrates linguistic diversity.
* **LGBTQ+ Day**: Supports and celebrates the LGBTQ+ community.
* **Sports and Extracurricular:** Promoting confidence, resilience and team spirit.
* **Seachtain na Gaeilge**: Promotes the Irish language and culture.
* **Language Week**: Encourages appreciation of different languages.
* **HSCL Office**: Provides support for home-school-community liaison.
* **Guidance Teachers**: Offers career and personal guidance.
* **SCP (School Completion Programme)**: Supports students to complete their education.
* **Tours and Trips**: Enhances learning through real-world experiences.
* **Awards Day**: Recognizes student achievements.
* **Guest Speakers**: Brings in external expertise and inspiration.

**Curriculum (Teaching & Learning)**

* **Teaching and Learning Team**: Focuses on improving educational practices.
* **Subject Teacher Observations**: Monitors student interactions.
* **Wellbeing Indicators Posters**: Displays in classrooms to promote awareness.
* **BFL (Behaviour for Learning)**: Supports positive behaviour.
* **Transition Programme**: Helps students adjust to new school stages.
* **Pastoral Care Team**: Provides emotional and social support.
* **Breaktime and Lunchtime Clubs**: Offers activities during breaks.
* **Check and Connect**: Monitors student well-being.
* **Working Things Out**: Conflict resolution program.
* **Retracking**: Helps students get back on track academically.
* **Guidance Teachers:** Offers career and personal guidance.

**Policy & Planning**

* **Whole School Guidance**: Comprehensive support for student development.
* **Provisional Mapping**: Plans for student support services.
* **Wellbeing Team Initiatives**: Includes activities like Wednesday treats.
* **Inclusive Trips**: Ensures all students can participate to an appropriate extent.
* **Policy Availability**: Makes policies accessible on the school website.
* **Provision Mapping**: Plans for resource allocation for a few, some or all.
* **Healthy Eating Policy**: Encourages nutritious food choices.
* **Digital Media Literacy**: Educates students on responsible media use.
* **Policy Review Team**: Regularly updates school policies.
* **Code of Behaviour:** Ensuring behaviour is acceptable to all and creating a fair, reasonable approach to breaches of the code.
* **Admissions Policy:** Ensures equal access to our services.

**Relationships & Partnerships**

* **Tipperary Youth Service Links**: Collaborates for talks, speakers and supports.
* **Local Community Engagement**: Involves nursing homes, wheelchair associations, and local festivals.
* **Student-Parent-Teacher Meetings**: Facilitates communication between students, parents and teachers.
* **Staff Meetings**: Ensures staff are aligned on student support.
* **Mentoring Students**: Provides guidance and support.
* **Class Tutor and Year Heads**: Oversees student welfare and encourages the ‘telling’ environment.
* **Work Experience**: Offers practical learning opportunities and develops relationships with local businesses.
* **Workshops and School Choir**: Engages students in diverse activities.
* **Charity Events**: Encourages community service and involvement.
* **Social Media Platforms**: Shares school achievements and updates.
* **VSware**: real-time information for parents/guardians.
* **External agencies**: NEPS, NCSE, HSE, EWO.

# Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The primary aim in addressing reports of bullying behaviour should be to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the students involved, rather than to apportion blame. All staff (class teachers, class tutors, year heads, SCP team, AEN team, guidance counsellors, Pastoral Care team, Deputy Principals and Principal) have a responsibility to report suspected incidences of bullying. These should be brought to the attention of the Year Head/Deputy Principals and Principal who will complete an Incident Report Form.

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

# Identifying if Bullying Behaviour has Occurred

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

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

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

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

Note: One-off incidents may be considered bullying in certain circumstances. A single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and thus becomes a repeated behaviour.

If the answer to any of these questions is No, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour.

Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school’s Code of Positive 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

* 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.
* The school is obliged to fully investigate any alleged incidents of bullying which are reported by parents.
* 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 including the initial ‘Bullying Incident Report Form’ (Appendix 1).
* 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.

# No action requests

* Requests to take no action – Staff explain how their parents will be informed of the situation; it is important that the student who has experienced bullying behaviour feels safe and that all staff will “look out” for them.

# 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 Positive 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.

# Supports

The school may seek the support of any of the following when working with students affected by bullying:

* Counselling service (through guidance councillors)
* SCP team within the school
* Building self-esteem and developing social skills
* Use of restorative practices to re-build and maintain relationships
* Co-operation with parents
* Referral to outside agencies (if necessary) in co-operation with parents
* National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)
* Oide
* Webwise
* National Parents Council
* Dublin City University (DCU) Anti-Bullying Centre
* Tusla

# Record-Keeping

All bullying behaviour will be recorded on the ‘Bullying Incident Report Form’ (Appendix 1). 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: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(Principal)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix 1: Bullying Incident Report Form

1. Name of student being bullied: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Base class: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Name(s) and class(es) of students allegedly engaged in bullying behaviour:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. Source of bullying concern/report (tick as relevant):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Student concerned |  |
| Other student(s) |  |
| Teacher |  |
| Parent |  |
| Other |  |

1. Location of incident(s) (tick as relevant)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| School Yard |  | Classroom |  |
| Bus |  | Toilets |  |
| Out-of-school |  | Changing Rooms |  |
| Corridor |  | Other |  |

1. Name of person(s) who reported the alleged bullying concern:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Type of bullying behaviour (tick as relevant):

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Physical |  | Gender-identity bullying |  |
| Verbal |  | Extortion |  |
| Damage to personal property |  | Written bullying |  |
| Exclusion/isolation |  | Relational bullying |  |
| Cyber-bullying |  | Other |  |
| Intimidation |  |  |  |

1. Brief description of bullying behaviour:

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. Impact of bullying behaviour:

|  |
| --- |
|  |

1. Details of action taken:

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(Year Head)

# Appendix 2: Bí Cineáltas development/review form

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 |  |  |
| Students |  |  |
| Parents |  |  |
| Board of management |  |  |
| Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers |  |  |
| **Date policy was approved:** | | |

