

**St. Joseph's  
Stanhope Secondary School**



**Bí Cineálta: Anti-Bullying Policy**

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

The Board of Management of Stanhope Secondary 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 well-being of our students is at the forefront of everything we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our students and 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. Note that **serious one-off incidents may still be treated as bullying**.

A detailed definition is provided in *Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures*.

Each school is required to develop and implement a Bí Cineálta policy that sets out how the school community prevents and addresses bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

## **Section A: Development / Review of Our Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour**

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

<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Date Consulted</b>	<b>Method of Consultation</b>
School Staff	13/5/25	Whole Staff
Students	5/5/25	Student Council Discussion
Parents	5/5/25	Parent Survey
Board of Management	14/4/26	Policy Review Meeting
Date Policy was approved:	14/4/26	
Date policy was last reviewed:	14/4/26	

## **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*).

### **Culture and Environment**

Creating a positive and inclusive school culture is vital to preventing bullying. Our school will strive to:

- Foster a safe and inclusive school culture.
- Build an environment where every student feels a sense of belonging.
- Kindness and respect are embedded in daily interactions.
- Conduct regular assessments to identify areas of risk.
- Display anti-bullying messages and values throughout the school.

### **Curriculum and Teaching**

Education is key to preventing bullying. By embedding anti-bullying content within the curriculum, we equip students with the knowledge and skills to recognise and respond to bullying. Our curriculum will:

- Promote understanding of empathy, diversity, and inclusion through targeted lessons and workshops.
- Integrate digital literacy to teach students about online safety and the consequences of cyberbullying.
- Provide students with opportunities to learn about conflict resolution, kindness, and emotional intelligence, reinforcing the values of *Cineáltas*.
- Encourage students to participate in peer education programmes to help prevent bullying and build positive relationships.
- Include anti-bullying education in SPHE and Wellbeing programmes.
- Provide workshops on empathy, respect, and inclusion.

### **Relationships and Partnerships**

Strong relationships are the foundation of a supportive school environment. Building positive relationships among students, staff, and parents can prevent bullying and foster a sense of belonging. Our school will:

- Encourage student-led initiatives such as peer mentoring programmes and leadership roles for students to take active steps in promoting kindness and inclusion.
- Foster open communication between teachers, parents, and students to ensure that bullying concerns are addressed promptly and appropriately.
- Work in partnership with the Parents Association to ensure that parental engagement is an integral part of the school's anti-bullying efforts.
- Engage parents through workshops and awareness initiatives.

- Strengthen student voice through leadership opportunities i.e., Senior Prefects and Student Council.

### **Policy and Planning**

The *Bí Cineálta* policy ensures that anti-bullying efforts are embedded into the school's planning processes. Our school will:

- Regularly review and update this policy to reflect new developments, including feedback from students, staff, parents, and the Board of Management.
- Maintain clear, accessible procedures for reporting bullying, including anonymous reporting options for students and families.
- Incorporate anti-bullying goals into the school's broader well-being and academic plans, ensuring consistency across initiatives.
- Use data collection to track and analyse bullying incidents, informing policy improvements.
- Develop a Code of Responsibility and Behaviour that reinforces positive interactions.
- Conduct regular staff training on bullying prevention.

## Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Year head for each year group assisted by Principal and Deputy Principal.

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*):

- Where a member of the teaching staff has a concern about a student being bullied, either as a result of a personal observation or as a result of receiving a report from a third party, the teacher should without delay refer the matter to the Year Head, Deputy Principal and/or Principal.
- Students may report bullying to a Year Head, Class Tutor, Guidance Counsellor, Deputy Principal or Principal, or through the school's anonymous reporting system where available.
- In investigating bullying behaviour or addressing bullying behaviour in any way, Year Heads are welcome to seek the assistance and support of the Principal, Deputy Principal or the student support team at any time. Year Heads should check in with Principal or Deputy Principal before taking any action in relation to bullying behaviour.
- The School reserves the right to investigate allegations of bullying (and to take disciplinary action where necessary) where bullying is perpetrated by a member of the school community and it impinges on the work or well-being of a student in the school, even where the bullying acts are committed outside of the school.
- The School reserves the right, in accordance with Section 6 Bi Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools to seek the assistance of agencies such as NEPS, the HSE, and the Gardaí, where it deems such assistance is necessary to deal effectively with bullying behaviour. In any case, where the School deems bullying behaviour to be potentially abusive (Section 2 Bi Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools) it will consult with the HSE's Children and Family Services to assist it in drawing up an appropriate response or to obtain advice or to make a formal child protection report to the HSE or the Gardaí (as appropriate) in accordance with

the DES Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary (revised 2023)

- Concerns about or allegations of bullying will be investigated and addressed in accordance with Section 6 Bi Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools.

Parents are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with the school, in addressing bullying behaviour. Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties will 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 as outlined in the school's Bí Cineálta policy.

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred relevant teachers will consider: what, where, when and why?

- If a group of students is involved, each student will be engaged with individually at first thereafter, all students involved will be met as a group when appropriate.
- 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)

In circumstances where a student expresses concern about their parents being informed, the school will develop an appropriate plan to support the student and for how their parents will be informed. The school will consider communication barriers that may exist when communicating with parents, for example, literacy, digital literacy or language barriers.

### **Recording of bullying behaviour**

Those involved in investigating and resolving bullying behaviour will note and report developments as follows and, in doing so, they will comply with relevant data protection legislation. It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

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

- Record all incidents of bullying behaviour (using appendix B)
- Document the following details:
  - Type and form of bullying behaviour (if known).
  - Where and when it took place.
  - The date of the first engagement with the students and their parents.
- Include the views of students and parents on actions to address the bullying.
- Track the review process with students and parents to check if the bullying behaviour has stopped and get their feedback.
- Record the date of each engagement and when it is confirmed that the bullying has ceased.
- Note any involvement with external services or supports.
- Keep the records according to the school's record-keeping policy and in line with data protection rules.
- If there's a Student Support File, place a copy of the record there to help the support team provide consistent help for the student's wellbeing

## **Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred**

### **Engagement with Students and Parents:**

The Year Head/Deputy Principal/Principal must engage with the students involved in the bullying and their parents. This engagement should occur no later than 20 school days after the initial contact.

#### Factors to Consider:

- The nature of the bullying behaviour.
- The effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying.
- The relationship between the students involved.

#### Review of Strategies:

If the bullying behaviour has not stopped, the Year Head/Deputy Principal/Principal should:

- Review the strategies used to address the bullying.
- Consult with the students involved and their parents to determine next steps.
- Agree on a Timeframe - A timeframe should be set for further engagement and follow-up until the bullying behaviour ceases.

#### Further Action if Bullying Continues:

- If the bullying behaviour continues, the school should consider using strategies from the school's Code of Behaviour to address the inappropriate behaviour.
- Disciplinary Sanctions: If disciplinary sanctions are necessary, the matter should be handled between the student, their parents, and the school.
- If Parents Are Unsatisfied: If a parent is not satisfied with how the bullying has been addressed, they should refer to the school's complaints procedures, as outlined in the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.
- Complaint to Ombudsman for Children: If a parent remains dissatisfied after the complaint process, they can contact the Ombudsman for Children if they believe the school's actions negatively affected 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 schools 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, schools may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

## **Support**

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):

- Pupils may need counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed.
- In this regard the relevant Student Support Team will work closely with the student to ensure they are actively supported in the school and to engage in school-based activities they enjoy.
- The Student Support Team, will put in place a program of support in conjunction with the Year Head.

### **Students who display bullying Behaviour:**

- Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others. The Year Head in conjunction with the relevant Student Support Team will work closely with the student in this regard.
- Outside agency support: The school in certain circumstances may also seek the support and advice of TUSLA, NEPS, Jigsaw, CAMHS, School Completion Programme, second level school support services, HSE and any other agency deemed appropriate to support the school in dealing with incidents of bullying.

## **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 been reported since the last meeting, the principal will also provide a verbal update which will include where relevant:

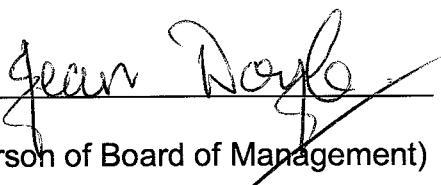
- information relating to trends and patterns identified,
- strategies used to address the bullying behaviour,
- any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant.
- any incidents that have had a significant adverse impact on a student
- If a parent has informed the school 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 needs 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.

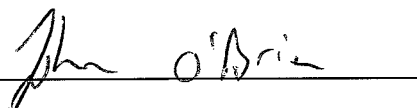
The minutes of the Board of Management meeting will document the number of new incidents of bullying behaviour; the number currently ongoing and the total number of incidents of bullying behaviour since the beginning of the school year. The minutes will also note where the board has considered the bullying behaviour verbal update and document when the board has decided that an urgent review of the policy is required. 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.

## Conclusion

Stanhope Secondary is committed to ensuring a school environment where every individual is treated with kindness, respect, and dignity. By embedding well-being principles into our daily practices, we aim to create a safe and supportive school community for all.

Signed:   
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: 14-04-26

Signed:   
(Principal)

Date: 14-04-26