

# St. Oliver's Special School



## Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of St. Oliver's Special 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.

Date policy was approved: 11th June 2025

Date policy was last reviewed: n/a at present, new policy

## **Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour**

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- fear that the adult may make the situation worse
- fear that the adult doesn't have the knowledge and skills to deal appropriately with the bullying behaviour
- fear that the adult may deny access to their smartphone or ipad
- not knowing what will happen when they report bullying behaviour
- fear that they will not be believed
- concerns about "getting into trouble" for reporting bullying behaviour
- not having evidence to back up the allegation of bullying behaviour, this can be seen particularly with relational bullying behaviour

St. Oliver's Special School takes these reasons for not reporting into account when developing strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

### **A Trusted Adult**

The concept of "a trusted adult" can be an effective strategy to encourage students to report if they or another student is experiencing bullying behaviour. St. Oliver's Special School supports this strategy by letting students know who they can talk to regarding bullying behaviour so that the behaviour can be addressed.

The trusted adult should, without delay, inform the member of staff who has responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour. This is the class teacher.

If unsure who to inform, the trusted adult should inform the principal or deputy principal. The trusted adult should continue to support the student, as appropriate, while the behaviour is being addressed by the relevant member of staff.

### **Creating safe physical spaces in schools**

St. Oliver's Special School will create safe physical spaces thus supporting psychological safety. This is seen as an important measure to prevent bullying behaviour. Spaces that have a clear line of sight make it easier for school staff to supervise students.

St. Oliver's Special School will look at taking the following measures to create safe physical spaces:

- ensure good lighting is present to avoid dark corners or spaces
- remove visual barriers from windows such as posters
- Artwork, posters and signage can help St. Oliver's Special School to promote values such as equality, diversity, inclusion and respect

The meaningful involvement of the board of management, staff, students and their parents in the development, implementation and review of their school's Bí Cineálta policy and student friendly version is essential to effectively prevent and address bullying behaviour.

When implementing a prevention strategy St. Oliver's Special School will consider engaging with members of the wider school community who are in regular contact with students, such as the following:

- school bus drivers and escorts,
- education welfare officers
- CDNT staff (eg. O.T., S.L.T., Psychologist etc)

These members of the wider school community can be encouraged to report any bullying behaviour to the school as appropriate.

### **Preventing Cyberbullying Behaviour**

Technology and social media have provided many positive opportunities for entertainment, social engagement and education. Technology is a part of life that can impact even the youngest members of society.

However, the increase in the use of technology has led to students becoming increasingly vulnerable to cyberbullying or unacceptable online behaviour.

St. Oliver's Special School will implement strategies to prevent cyberbullying behaviour which will include the following:

- implementing the SPHE curriculum.
- having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online.
- communicating the acceptable use policy for technology.
- Ensuring all school ipads are suitable for school use and only allow access to suitable apps/websites
- Assigning the management of the school's social media account to a responsible adult in the school
- Raising parents awareness of the dangers of online space and ensuring that all parents are aware of their children's use of technology in the home including smartphones and gaming consoles (this can be addresses at individual IEP's)

- ensure that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
- Host Sensory workshops that celebrate ethnicity eg food exploration sessions
- Incorporate the inclusion of ethnic cultures in the programmes and songs used in the classroom eg nursery rhymes and circle time activities

### **Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour**

As part of the school's measures to create a supportive and respectful environment, St Oliver's Special School will focus on gender equality. 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 irrespective of their sex.
- ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex.
- celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contributions of all students.
- encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home.

### **Preventing Sexual Harassment**

Preventing sexual harassment requires an approach that focuses on education, awareness and clear enforceable policies. St. Oliver's Special School will make it clear that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment. Sexual harassment should never be dismissed as teasing or banter.

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

- using the updated SPHE specifications at post primary level to teach students about healthy relationships and how to treat each other with respect and kindness
- promote the use of good hands, social stories and the Stay Safe Programme
- promoting positive role models within the school community

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

*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:*

### **Identify if Bullying Behaviour has Occurred.**

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the teacher should consider the following: what, where, when and why.

The definition of bullying provided in Chapter 2 of “Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools” sets out clear criteria to help schools to identify bullying behaviour.

#### **Core definition of Bullying Behaviour:**

Bullying is 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

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.

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

These definitions of bullying behaviour may not apply to all the pupils in St. Oliver’s Special School. Some students with special education needs may have social communication difficulties which 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 automatic responses which they can’t control.

Adult bullying in the workplace can be addressed through the Procedures to Address Adult Bullying/ Harassment which St. Oliver’s Special School has adopted.

As many of our pupils have diagnosed cognitive impairments, we will promote acceptance of everyone within the school and use all opportunities to promote a tolerant school culture. Some of our pupils may have issues with certain peers due to sensitivity to loud noise that may emit or their unpredictable behaviour. Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour,

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):

### **Where Bullying Behaviour has occurred.**

St. Oliver's Special School 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.

When addressing bullying behaviour teachers should:

- ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured
- seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- consider the age and ability of the students 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.

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 parties involved will be contacted by St. Oliver's Special School 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.

In circumstances where a student expresses concern about their parents being informed, the school will develop a plan to support the student and for how their parents will be informed appropriately to the student and the situation.

St. Oliver's Special School acknowledges there may be communication barriers that may exist when communicating with parents, for example, literacy, digital literacy or language barriers and we will endeavour to be sensitive to these in our approach to addressing the situation.

A record of any engagement with all parties concerned will be kept.

This record will include:

- Date and time;
- What form and type of bullying behaviour was reported; (physical, verbal, written, extortion, exclusion, relational or cyber bullying) See Bí Cineálta [gov.ie](http://gov.ie) - [Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying](#) 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7 for further information.
- Where and when it took place. (inside school, outside school or online)
- This record will also include the views of the student and parents regarding the actions to be taken to address this bullying behaviour.



## 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: Tosyn Ranjith Date: 11/06/2025  
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: Mairead Scully Date: 11/6/2025  
(Principal)

Review date: June 2026