

Our Lady's Grove Primary School

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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Our Lady's Grove Primary School

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Introduction

The Board of Management of Our Lady's Grove (OLG) Primary 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).

At OLG, every child has the right to feel safe, respected, and included. Guided by our Catholic ethos and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, we work together—children, staff, parents, and the wider community—to ensure a culture where:

- Differences are welcomed
- Voices are heard
- Respect and empathy are central to learning and play

We all share a responsibility to prevent and address bullying behaviour and to deal with the negative impact it causes.

The Board of Management is committed to ensuring that all students are kept safe from harm. The wellbeing of our students is at the forefront of everything we do. We recognise the serious impact bullying behaviour can have on the lives of young people, and we are fully committed to prevention and intervention.

In line with our obligations under equality legislation, we will take all reasonably practicable steps to prevent 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. We also commit to preventing bullying or harassment in whatever form and however motivated

Scope of this Policy

This policy applies to bullying behaviour that takes place in school, during school-related activities, or through school digital platforms.

Where bullying occurs outside of school and impacts on a child's life in school, the school will provide support to the pupil and their family. However, the school is not responsible for addressing or investigating incidents of bullying that take place entirely outside the school context.

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 (physical, social, and/or emotional)
- It involves **repetition** and an **imbalance of power** (*Bullying behaviour is repeated over time* and involves an **imbalance of power**, real or perceived, in relationships between two people or groups of people)
- Posting a single harmful message/image/ video online, which is likely to be reshared may also be considered bullying
- Negative behaviour that does not constitute bullying is addressed through the school's Code of Behaviour (single incidents of intentional negative behaviour offline involving an imbalance of power do not constitute bullying)

Section A: Development / Review of this Policy

This policy was drafted following consultation with staff, pupils, parents, and the Board of Management.

Group Consulted	Method of Consultation	Date Consulted
Staff	ISCHOOLLIOSIIRE/SIIRVEV/STATT MEETINGS	02/05/2025 06/2025
Pupils	Survey / Student Council / Class discussions	10/06/2025
Parents	Survey / PA meetings	05/06/2025
Board of Management	Policy draft discussion / approval	05/09/2025 30/09/25

Approval date: 30/09/2025

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by this school to address all forms of bullying behaviour, in whatever form and however motivated, including online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment.

In developing prevention strategies, we come from the context of our Catholic ethos where inclusivity permeates the school in a real way.

Our Lady's Grove takes positive steps to ensure that the culture of the school welcomes respectful dialogue and encounter with diversity and difference, by ensuring that prevention and inclusivity strategies are given priority and revisited regularly at staff and Board of Management level. The school also listens closely to and engages in dialogue with pupils and parents, building mutual understanding, respect, trust, and confidence, and using their input to shape ongoing prevention strategies.

1. School Culture and Climate

At Our Lady's Grove, all members of the school community—staff, pupils, parents, and visitors—share responsibility for modelling respectful behaviour in how we speak, act, and interact with one another.

Our anti-bullying work is rooted in:

- the dignity of every child as a unique person,
- our commitment to fostering healthy relationships built on kindness, respect, and inclusion,
- and our aim of preparing children to participate as responsible citizens in school, at home, and in wider society.

At OLG we promote a school culture where bullying is unacceptable, and diversity is valued in all aspects of school life. This is supported through:

- Whole-school events that celebrate inclusion (e.g. Active Week, Intercultural Week, Lá Glas, Hallowe'en Parade, Grove Vision, Sports Day, Wear Red Day)
- Assemblies and class discussions that build empathy and resilience
- Effective supervision and monitoring of children, especially during break times and other unstructured periods, with vigilance towards pupils who may be at risk of bullying or being bullied
- Supervision organised through a rota that accommodates a range of pupil interests and ensures safe physical spaces for play and interaction
- Encouraging pupils to identify and seek support from a trusted adult (as set out in Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures)
- Encouraging a 'telling' culture, which includes an emphasis on bystanders

2. Leadership, Roles and Responsibilities

- Board of Management: oversees policy and supports staff in upholding the school's Catholic
 ethos
- Principal / Deputy Principal / In-School Management: ensure implementation, monitor trends, provide staff CPD, liaise with NEPS/external agencies
- Teachers: deliver SPHE/Wellbeing programmes, foster inclusive classrooms, and record and address concerns
- SNAs and Ancillary Staff: support pupils, observe and report concerns
- **Student Council:** represents pupil voice, promotes kindness and respect initiatives, and works with staff to strengthen inclusion and wellbeing across the school
- Parents/Guardians: support respectful behaviour at home, raise concerns promptly, and work in partnership with the school
- Pupils: treat others with respect, report bullying, and participate in kindness initiatives

3. Curriculum and Teaching

- SPHE and Wellbeing programmes teach empathy, resilience, and digital safety
- Online safety is explicitly taught (Webwise, school AUP, workshops)
- Additional needs are addressed sensitively through SET teaching, strong links with home and support from outside agencies where applicable

4. Policy and Planning

Prevention is supported by the following school policies which are reviewed and updated regularly:

- Code of Behaviour
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Mobile Phone / Electronic Device Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Dignity at work
- Bí Cineálta policy (A child-friendly version of this policy is displayed throughout the school.)

5. Relationships and Partnerships

- Peer support and buddy systems
- Student Council involvement
- Parent Association and Parent Information Evenings on online safety, wellbeing, and positive parenting
- External supports (Community Garda, RSE facilitators, Internet Safety speakers)

6. Education and Prevention Strategies

In line with DES guidelines and the Bí Cineálta Procedures, OLG implements the following strategies to prevent and address all forms of bullying:

- SPHE Curriculum: Walk Tall, Stay Safe, RSE, Weaving Wellbeing, Fuse Programmes
- Assemblies: Raising awareness of positive relationships
- Staff Training: Anti-bullying strategies, CPD updates
- Active Supervision: Structured supervision is maintained across classrooms, corridors, yards, and transition times, with particular attention to unstructured periods such as break times, arrival, and dismissal. Supervisors remain vigilant for early signs of bullying and intervene proactively. A carefully planned supervision rota ensures an appropriate adult-to-pupil ratio and adequate coverage of all areas. Additionally, different year groups are timetabled to separate yard areas, promoting safe use of space and supporting a range of pupil activities.

- **Structured Yard Alternatives:** To support children who may find yard time challenging, the school provides a range of supervised options and equipment. These include access to library time, hall use and structured play groups, alongside yard equipment that encourages positive play. We remain flexible re groupings and activities, to suit needs as they evolve.
- **Wet Day Rota:** On wet days, a rota is put in place so that children have access to the hall under supervision. When children are eating, teachers supervise corridors while an SNA circulates between classrooms in year group.
- **Partner Rule:** Children use the central stairwell and do not travel alone around the school (e.g. delivering messages, going to the office); they always go with a partner or adult to ensure safety and accountability (exception being if travelling to nearby SET room or classroom where an adult can see them).
- **Toilets**: Only one child is permitted in the toilet at a time to ensure privacy and safety.
- **Pupil Education:** Age-appropriate lessons/workshops
- Student Involvement: Student Council initiatives, peer support, buddy systems
- **Speakers/Workshops:** Community Garda, RSE facilitators
- Cyber-safety: Responsible online behaviour, culture of reporting
- Inclusive Events: e.g. Active Week, Intercultural Week, Grove Vision, Lá Glas, Wear Red Day, Hallowe'en Parade, Bakesale, Sports Days
- **Supports for SEN Students:** Targeted discussions during SET time, links with home and external agencies where appropriate
- **Parent Partnership:** The school works closely with parents and guardians to promote respectful behaviour and address issues promptly. Parents are encouraged to contact the school with any concerns, however small, and staff commit to keeping parents informed in return. Information evenings and workshops on topics such as online safety, wellbeing, and positive parenting are organised in collaboration with the Parent Association.
- Positive School Culture: Promoting belonging, inclusion, safety, respect, kindness
- **Trusted Adult Approach:** Students are regularly reminded to talk to an adult should any issue arise
- Bystander Education: Students are taught about the role of bystanders, encouraged to act
 responsibly, and supported in reporting any incidents they witness. Emphasis is placed on
 fostering empathy, courage, and a sense of shared responsibility for maintaining a safe and
 respectful school environment.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

Staff Responsible:

- Class teachers (with SET support where appropriate)
- Principal / Deputy Principal

Approach:

At Our Lady's Grove, the primary aim when addressing reports of bullying behaviour is to stop the behaviour and, as far as practicable, to restore relationships between the students involved. Our approach is restorative rather than punitive, seeking accountability and change while supporting all parties.

Addressing bullying is not only about responding to incidents, but also about reinforcing our school's positive climate where kindness, respect, and inclusion are the norm. Staff respond in a collaborative, sensitive, and structured way, following the *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2024)*.

When addressing bullying behaviour, the teachers with responsibility will:

- 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.

Addressing Bullying Behaviour (Detailed Guidance for Staff)

Stage 1: Identifying if Bullying Behaviour Has Occurred

Checklist for Teachers (Is it Bullying? - OIDE):

- 1. Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group?
- 2. Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social, or emotional harm?
- 3. Is the behaviour repeated?
- If answer to all of these questions is Yes → bullying behaviour has occurred and should be dealt with using the Bí Cineálta Procedures
- If answer to any of these questions is No → bullying behaviour has NOT occurred and should be dealt with using use Code of Behaviour

Note: One-off **online incidents** may be considered bullying if likely to be reshared (e.g., a hurtful text message or social media post).

Engagement Process:

The teacher will respond promptly and sensitively ensuring the student feels heard, believed and safe. He/She will investigate calmly and discreetly asking key questions: "What happened? When? Where? Who was involved"

- Where one student is reported to be involved, the student should be engaged with individually at first.
- Thereafter, this student and the student who is reported to be experiencing the bullying behaviour should be met together.
- If a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first.
- Thereafter, all students involved and the student who is reported to be experiencing the bullying behaviour 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).
- Parents will be supported by the school, if needed, with recommendations for useful resources/guides to help them support their children

Stage 2: Responding Where Bullying Behaviour Has Occurred

- Parents 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
- Teachers will listen carefully to the views of student experiencing bullying as to how best to address the situation
- The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be recorded using the school template (Appendix A). This will include the form and type of behaviour if known, where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with students and parents.
- 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*.
- A copy of this report will be shared with the Principal and securely stored in the school office.

Stage 3: Reviewing / Follow-Up

- The teacher will 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:
 - o the nature of the bullying behaviour,
 - o the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour

- o and the relationship between the students involved.
- The teacher will document the review with students and their parents to determine:
 - o if the bullying behaviour has ceased
 - o 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 will consider implementing additional strategies as provided for within the Code of Behaviour.
- If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school.

Complaint Process

- If a parent(s) is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with the B Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools they will be referred to the school's complaints procedures (available on request).
- If a parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, having gone through all the channels of the school's complaints procedure 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.

The school recognises the impact bullying can have on children and will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour:

Support is for all parties involved, the child bullying, the child being bullied and the onlookers

Class Teacher and Principal talk to and observe the child/children involved in order to determine the effect of the bullying behaviour.

The Class Teacher may alert other relevant members of staff for their support if it is deemed necessary e.g. for monitoring and support on yard and trips

- Class Teachers and Special Education Teachers work on models of self-esteem and resilience within the classroom, and in wider school activities such as Stay Safe, Weaving Well-being, Walk Tall, RSE, eSafety,
- Parents/Guardians are informed of these programmes and encouraged to reinforce the message with their child at home and outside of school
- The school may seek additional help in dealing with bullying behaviour, from external parties such as school psychologist, HSE, SENO, the Community Garda
- At all times, the emphasis is on the need for a common approach to the resolution of ongoing difficulties

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: Signed: Signed:

Chairperson of Board of Management Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 30 September 2025 Date of next review: September 2026



Appendix 2:

Our Lady's Grove Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour
This template is only to be used when bullying behaviour has been identified, in line with the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

Date of engagement with student(s) and pa	arent(s):	
Staff member investigating:		
Name(s) of students(s) bullied:		
Name(s) of alleged students(s):		
Source of bullying report:		
Location(s) of the incident(s):		
Date(s) of incident(s):		
Form of Bullying behaviour:		
Physical bullying behaviour		
Verbal bullying behaviour		
Written bullying behaviour		
Extortion		
Exclusion		
Relational		
Online		
Other		
Type of bullying behaviour:		
Disablist bullying behaviour		
Exceptionally able bullying		
Gender identity bullying		
Homophobic/transphobic (LGBTQ=)		
bullying		
Physical appearance bullying		

Racist bullying	
Poverty bullying	
Religious identity bullying	
Sexist bullying	
Sexual harassment	
Details of the incident(s):	
Views of pupil(s) and parent(s) regarding t	the actions to be taken:
Engagement with external services/support	orts:
Review: (To take place no more than 20 day	ys after initial discussion)
Date of review with students/parents:	
Has bullying behaviour ceased?	Yes No

Views of student(s) and Parent(s) in relation to this:
Where bullying behaviour has ceased:
Supervision/support for students who have experienced and displayed bullying behavious
Further strategies to be employed (in consultation with student(s) and parent(s):
Γimeframe for further review:
f bullying behaviour continues beyond the review timeframes, the school's Code of Behav
s to be used.
Signed:
Date:
Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal :

Appendix 3: Bullying Behaviour Update to BOM

Guide to Providing Bullying Behaviour for board of management meeting of (

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 BOM:

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.

Appendix 4: Review of the Bí Cineálta

Review of the Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management of Our Lady's Grove 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, the below document must be completed.

- 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?
- 2. Where in the school is the student friendly Bí Cineálta policy displayed?
- 3. What date did the Board publish the Bí Cineálta policy and the student friendly policy on the school website?
- 4. How has the student friendly policy been communicated to students?
- 5. How has the Bí Cineálta policy and student friendly policy been communicated to parents
- 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?
- 7. Does the Bí Cineálta policy document the strategies that the school uses to prevent bullying behaviour?
- 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?
- 9. Has the Board discussed how the school is addressing all reports of bullying behaviour.
- 10. Is the Board satisfied that all incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed in accordance with the school's Bí Cineálta Policy?
- 11. Have the prevention strategies in the Bí Cineálta policy been implemented?
- 12. Has the Board discussed the effectiveness of the strategies used to prevent bullying behaviour?
- 13. How have (a) parents, (b) students and (c) school staff been consulted with as part of the review of the Bí Cineálta Policy?
- 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:
- 15. Where areas for improvement have been identified, outline how these will be addressed and whether an action plan with timeframes has been developed?
- 16. Does the student friendly policy need to be updated as a result of this review and if so why?
- 17. Does the school refer parents to the complaints procedures if they have a complaint about how the school has addressed bullying behaviour?
- 18. Has a parent informed the school that a student has left the school due to reported bullying behaviour?
- 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?

Signed:	Date:	
(Chairperson of board of manag	ement)	
Signed:	Date:	
(Principal)		
Date of next review:		

Appendix 5: Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management of confirms that the board of management's annual review of the school's Bí		
Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Addre	ineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour and its implementation was completed at	
the board of management meeting o	of	
This review was conducted in accord	dance 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:	
(Chairperson of board of manageme	ent)	
Signed:	Date:	
(Principal)		
Date of next review:		

Appendix 6: Teacher Checklist Stage 1: Identifying Bullying Behaviour (OIDE)

\square Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student/group?
\square Is it intended to cause physical, social, or emotional harm?
☐ Is it repeated?
→ All Yes = Bullying → follow <i>Bí Cineálta Procedures</i>
→ Any No = Use <i>Code of Behaviour</i>
One-off online incidents may count if likely to be repeated.
Stage 2: Engagement Process
☐ Ask: What happened? Where? When? Why?
\square Meet students in a private, safe space (not corridors/public areas).
$\hfill\square$ For groups: meet each individually, then together with target student.
\square Ensure all share their account (written if useful).
$\hfill\square$ Reassure and support all students after meetings.
Stage 3: Responding Where Bullying Behaviour Has Occurred
☐ Inform parents/guardians early.
$\hfill\square$ Listen carefully to the views of the student experiencing bullying.
\square Record all actions using the school template.
\square Share records with Principal/DP; store securely.
\square Follow <i>Child Protection Procedures</i> immediately if required.
Stage 4: Reviewing / Follow-Up
\square Re-engage with students/parents within 20 school days.
$\hfill\square$ Document review and note external supports if used.
$\hfill\square$ Continue supervision/support even if bullying has ceased.
\square If bullying continues \rightarrow review strategies, set new timeframe.
\square Persistent behaviour \rightarrow use Code of Behaviour strategies.
$\hfill\square$ Consider disciplinary sanctions only as a last resort in consultation with
pupil/parents/school.
Reminder: The goal is to stop the behaviour and restore relationships, not to apportion
blame.



