ST. LOUIS HIGH SCHOOL
Bí Cineálta Policy
to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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MISSION STATEMENT

St. Louis High School is a dynamic community of learning
where we aspire to foster a happy and inclusive environment.
We nurture creativity, embrace diversity and cherish our values
while building on our rich traditions
in an atmosphere of respect, gratitude and generosity.
As active global citizens we share in the journey
towards a deeper understanding of and engagement in our complex, ever-changing and inter-dependent world.

Rationale

The development of a comprehensive policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour policy is critical for promoting a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment in St Louis High School. This rationale draws on existing educational frameworks and policy documents, including Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying and the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (2019), UNESCO's Whole Education Approach, to build a policy that is both preventive and responsive to bullying behaviour.

Prevention is the cornerstone of effective anti-bullying procedures. Research by the Department of Education shows that schools with positive, inclusive cultures are more likely to prevent bullying incidents (Department of Education, 2023). Bullying prevention strategies include fostering empathy and promoting respect for diversity through the curriculum, especially through Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Wellbeing programmes. The introduction of these topics early in education, supported by clear behavioural expectations, will contribute to a decrease in bullying incidents.

Despite preventive measures, bullying may still occur. Therefore, robust reporting and intervention procedures are essential. The policy integrates a clear, step-by-step process for identifying and responding to bullying, guided by the Cineáltas framework.

The policy ensures that students are supported holistically, considering the emotional and psychological needs of those involved in bullying incidents. The school's support teams of pastoral care structure, year heads, class teachers, care team, senior management and student leadership will play a crucial role in this support, coordinating interventions, liaising with parents, and ensuring that students feel safe and understood. The policy also prioritises early intervention and continuous monitoring to mitigate long-term effects.

Bullying prevention and intervention are most effective when the entire school community is involved. St Louis High School promotes the active participation of students, parents, and school staff in developing anti-bullying measures, emphasising the importance of school culture. As a shared responsibility, regular engagement with parents, student councils, and staff is essential for fostering an environment that encourages open dialogue and collective ownership of anti-bullying strategies.

Introduction

The Board of Management of St Louis High 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.

This compliance is guided by a range of relevant legislation which includes the following:

- The Education Welfare Act 2000
- The Equal Status Acts 2000–2018
- The Children First Act 2015
- The Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020 also known as Coco's Law

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.

St Louis High School's Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of students and is therefore fully committed to the following **key principles of best practice** in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

A positive school culture and climate which

- is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity.
- encourages students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
- promotes respectful relationships across the school community.
- The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.
- The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.
- The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.
- The school prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members.

- The school has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of its functioning.
- The school has the capacity to change in response to students' needs.
- The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming students' attitudes and values.
- The school takes particular care of "at risk" students and uses its monitoring systems to facilitate early intervention where necessary and it responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.
- The school recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents/guardians informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis.
- The school recognises the role of parents/guardians in equipping the student with a range of life-skills.
- The school recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.
- The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.
- The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school.
- Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community.

We are committed to ensuring that all students who attend St Louis High 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 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.

What can bullying look like?

Bullying behaviour can take many forms, which can occur separately or together. These can include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

Direct bullying behaviour

Physical bullying behaviour

- Physical bullying behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking, pulling hair, and tripping students. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While students can often engage in "mess fights" they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.
- Personal property can be a focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, schoolbooks and other learning material or interference with a student's locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

Verbal bullying behaviour

- Continual name-calling directed at a student which hurts, insults, or humiliates the student should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance; for example, size or clothes worn or gender identity. It can also refer to a student's accent, distinctive voice characteristics, academic ability, race, religious or ethnic origin.

Written bullying behaviour

- Written bullying behaviour includes writing insulting remarks about a student in public places, passing around notes about or drawings of a student and online posts.

Extortion

- Bullying behaviour can involve extortion. Extortion is where something is obtained through force or threats.

Indirect bullying behaviour

Exclusion

- Exclusion bullying behaviour occurs where a student is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded blocked or ignored by a student or group of students.

Relational

- Relational bullying behaviour occurs when a student's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. Common forms include control: *"Do this or I won't be your friend anymore";* a group of students ganging up against one student; non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a student; giving a student the "silent treatment"; and the deliberate manipulation of friendship groups to make someone unpopular.

Online bullying behaviour:

St Louis High School is committed to preventing cyberbullying. We educate our students about responsible online behaviour and how to maintain safety in the digital space.
St Louis High School is a member of the FUSE (DCU Anti-Bullying and Online Safety) Programme.
Parents are encouraged to remain vigilant regarding their children's use of technology, and staff closely monitor online interactions when students use school computers.

Online bullying behaviour (cyberbullying) is carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text or direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, e-mail, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chatrooms and other online technologies.

This form of bullying behaviour can include:

- sending or sharing nasty, insulting, offensive, and/or intimidating messages or images via text messages, emails, direct messages, live recordings or other websites or apps.
- posting information considered to be personal, private and sensitive without consent.
- making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other students.
- excluding or disrupting access to a student on purpose from online chat groups, access to accounts or from an online game.
- identity-based bullying—such as homophobic, racist, or gender-related bullying. The use of offensive language or derogatory comments based on someone's perceived or actual identity (e.g., sexual orientation, ethnicity, or gender) is strictly against school policy. Homophobic name-calling or slurs will be addressed immediately as a breach of the school's Bí Cineálta Anti-bullying Policy.

Even though a message may be posted online just once by a student it can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be seen by a wide audience where it is intended to be shared or has a likelihood of being shared multiple times and is thus repeated.

As online bullying uses technology to carry out bullying behaviour and does not require face-to-face contact it can occur at any time. Many types of bullying behaviour can be facilitated through online bullying. In many cases online bullying can relate to an "offline" experience with someone known to the student. This type of bullying may involve forms of sexual exploitation including but not limited

to, sextortion and the non-consensual sharing of intimate images. The sharing or threatened sharing of images without consent is a criminal offence.

It is important to note that the age of criminal responsibility is twelve years of age. Allegations of actions such as threats of physical violence/intimidation, discriminatory hate speech and or sexual harassment will be reported to the relevant authorities when necessary.

Signs and Effects of Bullying

Bullying can severely affect students in a variety of ways, such as:

- Increased anxiety or insecurity.
- Loss of confidence and self-esteem.
- Changes in behaviour, mood swings, or reluctance to attend school.
- Poor academic performance or difficulty concentrating.
- Physical signs, such as unexplained bruises or damaged belongings.
- Withdrawal from social activities or peer relationships.
- Expressions of suicidal thoughts or behaviours.

Parents/guardians and staff are encouraged to stay alert to any changes in a student's behaviour that might indicate they are experiencing bullying. If changes in a student's behaviour are raising concerns, it is important for the school, parents/guardians to communicate with one another in order to support the child.

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	25-03-2025	• Half-day consultation • Questionnaire
Students	May 2025	• SRC • Questionnaire • Year Head Assemblies
Parents	25-03-2025 March 2025	• Parents' Council Meeting – presentation by principal
Board of Management	03-04-2025	• Presentation by principal at meeting April 2025
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	Posted on our school website	• School website • Agencies involved with the school informed where and when appropriate. • Coaches
Date policy was approved: 17-06-2025		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

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):*

St Louis High School takes a **school-wide approach** which involves school management, staff, parents and pupils to deal with the problem of bullying behaviour. Bullying behaviour affects not only those immediately involved, but it can also affect everyone in the classroom, in the school and, ultimately, in the wider community.

A positive school-wide attitude and involvement is employed in countering bullying behaviour in schools. In addition to the role of management and staff, parents/guardians, student leaders and students have a role and responsibility in helping the school to prevent and address school-based bullying behaviour and to deal with any negative impact within school of bullying behaviour that occurs elsewhere. Parents/Guardians should also recognise that a school that openly discusses bullying is acting positively and that they need to work with their school to ensure there is a coherent, school-wide approach to tackling the issue

In certain cases, however, it may be necessary for St Louis High School to seek the assistance of other local persons and formal agencies such as NEPS, HSE social workers, community workers, Gardaí, Tusla etc to assist with bullying matters.

In developing preventative strategies which this school will use to prevent all forms of bullying behaviour, we come from the context of our Catholic ethos where inclusivity permeates the school in a real way.

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:

St Louis High School takes positive steps to ensure that the culture of the school 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 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 High School's Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of students and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

A positive school culture and climate which:

- is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity.
- encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment.
- promotes respectful relationships and rejects their opposite across the school community.

Fostering a Positive School Culture

Central to the prevention of bullying at St Louis High School is the promotion of a positive and respectful school culture. Our ethos of Ut Sint Unum (*That we may be one*) permeates all that we do, and we aim to create an environment where inclusion and respect are central to all interactions. The school leadership team, staff, students, and parents work collaboratively to build an atmosphere of trust and support. Regular communication between staff, students, and parents encourages an open dialogue, ensuring any concerns related to bullying behaviour are addressed early and effectively.

Curriculum and Educational Programmes

At St Louis High School we use the curriculum as a key tool to develop students' understanding of respect, empathy, and the impact of bullying behaviour. Subjects such as *Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)* and *Civic, Social, and Political Education (CSPE), Social Education at senior cycle* incorporate lessons on building healthy relationships, the importance of inclusion, and strategies for standing up to bullying. Our engagement with DCU's Antibullying and Online Safety programme, **FUSE**, is a key tool in raising awareness and understanding of these issues. In addition, speakers are invited into the school on an annual basis to deliver workshops on antibullying and cyberbullying matters. Teachers also receive CPD in further developing understanding of these matters. School leaders have undertaken training in restorative practice (RP) to promote a culture of kindness, understanding and empathy and provide further opportunity for conflict resolution.

Building Strong Relationships and a 'Telling' Environment

Research consistently shows that a strong sense of connection between students and trusted adults is essential for bullying prevention. Therefore, St Louis High School encourages students to speak out if they experience or witness bullying behaviour. Our staff are encouraged to be approachable and responsive to concerns, ensuring that all students feel heard and supported.

- The concept of a *trusted adult* is promoted throughout the school, where students know they can approach any member of staff if they feel threatened or witness bullying behaviour.
- Year Heads will maintain regular, informal contact with students to develop strong personal relationships and monitor student wellbeing.

- Our senior Student Representative Council is encouraged to be approachable to all students, with members assigned to each year groups as liaisons. They are advised to develop strong relationships with students and to report to Year Heads and senior management if there are bullying concerns raised. A culture of supporting student voice in this regard is nurtured.

Effective leadership

- The role of all those in leadership roles within the school, both professional and student leadership is of great importance in stimulating a school-wide approach to preventing and tackling bullying.

- The principal, senior management team, year heads, middle management leaders, teachers, SNAs, ancillary staff and Student Council leaders should strive to engender an ethos under which bullying is unacceptable. All who are identified as leaders within the school community can ensure that practical steps are taken to challenge and respond to bullying. School leaders should also involve both staff, pupils and elected student leaders (SRC and Class SRC reps) in developing and implementing a vision of the school where diversity is accepted and celebrated.

- We adopt a school-wide approach, and a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact.
- We focus on education and prevention strategies, including awareness raising measures.

Preventative Strategies

Whole-School Approach

Our school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance, respect, inclusivity and understanding among all its members, both in school and out of school. The education and prevention strategies, including those specifically focussed on cyber and identity-based bullying, used by the school are as follows:

- The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment and it is our intention to prevent rather than control bullying.
- Classes take place in an atmosphere of respect and teachers are aware of maintaining vigilance for any sign of a change to this respectful atmosphere.
- The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, mutual respect, self-discipline, responsibility, courtesy and gratitude within the school community.
- Students are made aware of Bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour through programmes such as SPHE, Social Education, assemblies, FUSE programme and workshops.
- As part of the national SPHE curriculum we target issues relating to identity-based bullying.
- The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming students' attitudes and values. As self-esteem is the single most influential factor in determining behaviour, teachers provide students with opportunities to develop a positive sense of worth.
- Guidance counselling services are available.

- Peer mentoring is employed with 5th Yrs supporting 1st years to assist with their transitioning period into Post-Primary schooling.

Additional preventative strategies:

- Pastoral Care with Class Teachers
- Student Council meetings with appointed middle leadership liaison person
- Student Induction Programme
- Weekly Year Group Assemblies
- Cairdeas agus Sláinte Week (wellbeing week)
- Súil Eile Week
- Arts Festival
- Science Week
- Maths Week
- BT Young Scientist
- Extra-curricular sports
- Extra-curricular arts and music
- Debating
- Lunch Time activities/clubs
- Afterschool clubs – Science/ Coding/ Music/ Cookery etc.
- SNA support at lunchtime
- Quiet space
- GeoDome – Gardening
- Library
- Transition Year Social Work Experience
- Language Connect Day
- Stand-Up Week
- Careers Day
- Mentoring Programme
- Study Skills Programme
- Student Council Representatives for each year group
- 2025 German Trip (5th & 6th Yrs)
- 2025 TY Trip to London
- TY Trip to Petersburg, Co Mayo

- Sports Day
- Christmas Carol Service
- Variety Show
- Induction Programme
- Guest Speakers
- Competitions
- World Book Day
- Gaisce
- Music class trips to National Concert Hall & Art trips to National Gallery, Newgrange,
- Incoming first year open afternoon – Get to know you
- Pizza parties to recognise and celebrate success
- Safer Internet Day
- TY Ceiliúradh
- 6th Yr Graduation
- Whole-School Assemblies
- Annual Retreats
- CUBBIE (sensory unit)
- Involvement with activities such as incubator project;
- Guards of Honour to celebrate and mark significant events and achievements within the school community.
- Restorative Practice

Parental/Guardian Support

Our school recognises the right of parents/guardians to share in the task of equipping the students with a range of life skills for navigating relationships and a moral compass which signals to them what is acceptable behaviour and what is not.

St Louis High School acknowledges the need to promote cooperation and communication between school and home to consolidate, build and support relationships within the school community and to keep parents/guardians informed and where necessary involved in procedures.

Staff Support

Opportunities are provided to staff for professional learning in relation to anti-bullying.

The school is registered with the Fuse Antibullying and Online Safety Programme in DCU. This

provides access to professional development and fourteen anti-bullying ready-made class resources for teachers to use in their classrooms.

The school is involved in Anti-bullying national research through DCU to support developments in this area.

School leaders undertook training in Restorative Practice (RP).

Student Support

- The Student Representative Council meets weekly.
- The Student Representative Council receives leadership training and mentoring within the school community and through Le Chéile and the Louis Network.
- Student leadership including our Student Council and Mentors are regularly consulted on anti-bullying measures.
- The Digital Acceptable User Policy is signed by all students on entry to the school.
- All pertinent policies are published on the school's website.
- Students are encouraged to identify "one safe adult" in the building that they feel they could approach if they needed additional support.
- Year Heads provide support to their respective year groups at the start of the academic year with a specific focus on the promotion of healthy and respectful interpersonal relationships.
- Peer mentoring involving 5th Yrs mentors and 1st Years is employed.
- The school specifically considers the needs of AEN students in the development of skills and strategies to enable all students to interact appropriately.
- The school has many extra-curricular activities and clubs to enable students to find like minds whether in their year group or not.
- The school provides a quiet space for students.
- The school provides CUBBIE (sensory unit) for students.
- A SRC suggestion box for students to voice concerns is available. Issues raised are passed on to the relevant professional 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):

Staff responsibilities during school day supervision

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):

- To be on time for supervision.
- To actively patrol their designated area for the specified time.
- If absent from supervision due to a school trip, to ensure that the supervision organiser is made aware of this so that appropriate and timely supervision can be put in place.
- To actively monitor the classrooms and corridor areas.
- To observe closely, interacting with students, encouraging community and inclusiveness and querying those that appear isolated.
- To deal with any issues that may arise during supervision and record, if necessary, on VSWare comments and to consult with the relevant Year Head. If a problem persists, the supervisor should inform the relevant Year Head or Class Teacher, or in their absence a member of the senior management team.
- In the event of an emergency evacuation, the supervisor should ensure that all students exit the building via the correct route.
- Supervisors must spend the time monitoring their designated area, other schoolwork e.g. correcting copies, preparing for classes, meeting with students, organising events, being on phones etc. **must not take place** during supervision duties as this is not acceptable from a Health and Safety or Bí Cineálta perspective.
- Supervisors and Subject Teachers should brief the Class Teacher/Year Head in relation to anything unusual they notice e.g. a student who may not appear to be getting on with their peers, cases of isolation etc.
- Teachers/supervisors should check-in on students following an incident regularly.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

All staff members have the responsibility for reporting bullying behaviour or to intervene if witness to 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. Restorative practice, where and when appropriate will be used to support the healing process.

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
- progress through the process in a consultative and supportive manner
- ensure to take written accounts and keep records
- if students are physically/verbally/emotionally bullying someone, their parents/guardians will be contacted.
- If it is deemed best/appropriate for the safety and welfare of students involved that a student/ students may need to be sent home immediately from school in order to manage and contain the situation in school, parents/guardians will be informed.

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

- Principal/Deputy Principal
- Year Heads
- Guidance Counsellors
- Class/Subject teachers

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):

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

Bullying is defined in Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying and Bí Cineáltas: 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 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?**

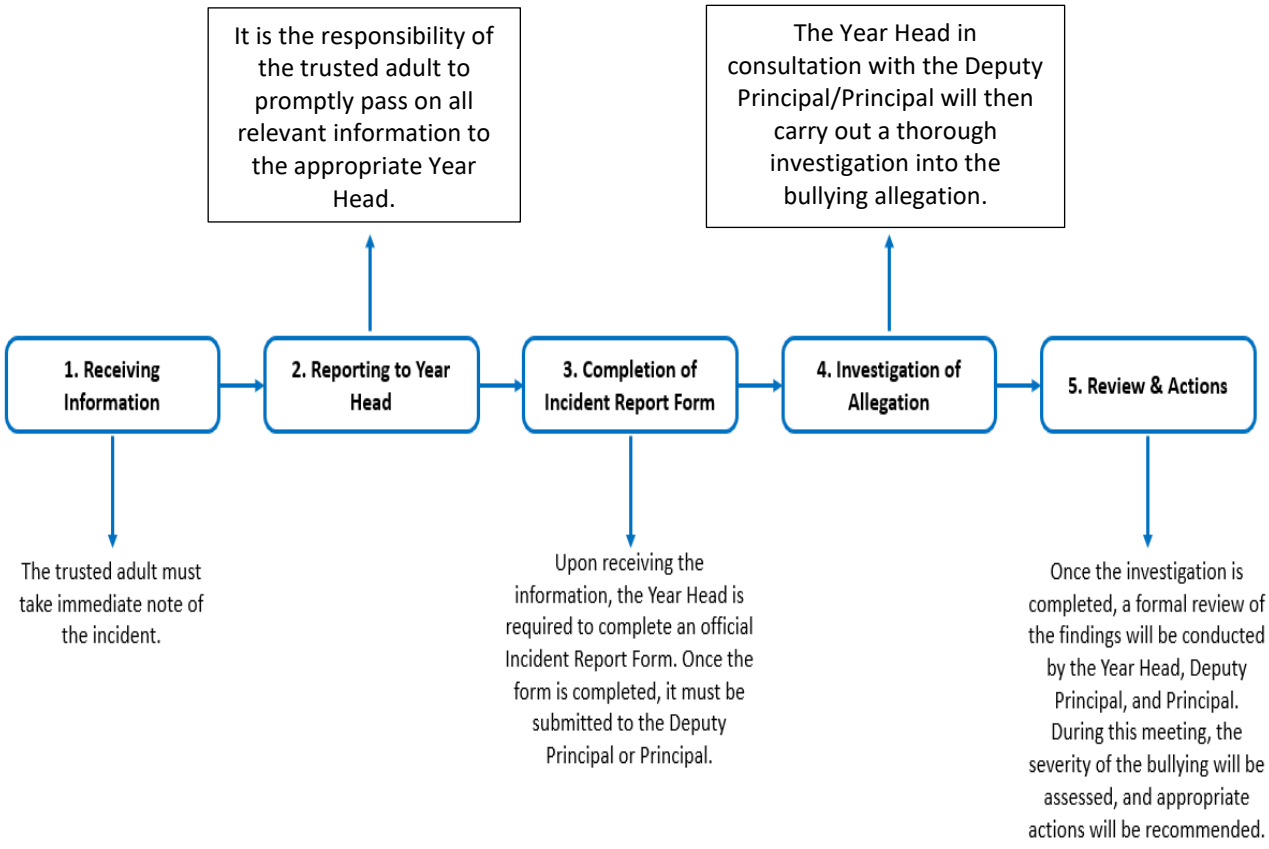
Note: One-off incidents may be considered bullying in certain circumstances. A single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and thus becomes a repeated behaviour.

Supporting all involved

Bullying is not accepted or tolerated in St Louis High School. Students are a powerful channel of change and learning not to accept bullying and how to deal with bullying, if it occurs, is a life skill. Students have a duty to make school and class a safe, welcoming and happy place, which is inclusive of all.

***The person engaging in bullying behaviour**:*

It is generally accepted that bullying is a learned behaviour. It is also recognised that many bullies suffer from a lack of confidence and have low self-esteem. It is not uncommon to find that students who engage in bullying behaviour have been bullied themselves. The school will work with students who have displayed bullying behaviour to help them understand the consequences of their actions.



Support strategies, including counselling and mentoring, will be offered, and behavioural targets will be set and reviewed regularly. Linking in with outside agencies and referrals will be discussed with parents/guardians.

***The person experiencing/enduring bullying behaviour**:*
Students are most at risk of becoming victims if they react in a vulnerable and distressed manner. The seriousness and duration of the bullying behaviour is directly related to the victim's continuing response to the verbal, physical or psychological aggression. It is imperative that any incident of bullying is reported as soon as possible so that it may be addressed quickly. Victims will be offered emotional support through the school's pastoral care system. This may include access to the school counsellor and referrals to external agencies, such as the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), if necessary. The school will continue to monitor the victim's wellbeing post-intervention. Linking in with outside agencies and referrals will be discussed with parents/guardians.

How to react if you think you are being bullied?

The following advice is shared with all students during wellbeing classes and is reinforced during general SPHE classes and specifically during our Fuse anti-bullying engagement:

- Inform your parent/guardian or a trusted adult.

- Do not retaliate. This feeds into bullying/cyberbullying and could make other people think you are part of the problem.
- Block the bully from all of your social media accounts. Change your password and contact details.
- Save the evidence (screen shot). Keep a record of every message but do not reply to any bullying messages.
- Show or give the record of the bullying messages to your parent/guardian.
- If the cyberbullying persists or gets worse, your parent/guardian can:
- File a complaint with the website, ISP, or mobile phone company. There is generally a link on the website's homepage for reporting concerns.
- Contact the Gardaí if the cyberbullying includes any threats.

The Rights of Students with respect to bullying

- The right not to be bullied.
- The right to report if bullied.
- The right of a student to report that the student feels another/others is/are being bullied.
- The right to be listened to in a sensitive and discreet way.
- The right to expect a response.
- The right to know about, understand and have access to a clear, defined procedure for dealing with bullying.
- The right of both the alleged person who is engaging in bullying behaviour and the person who is experiencing bullying behaviour to be heard.

The Responsibilities of Students who witness incidents of bullying

Students should realise that they have a responsibility for the safety and welfare of fellow students. If any student is aware that bullying is taking place the student/they have a responsibility to tell someone who is in a position to help e.g. Year Head, Class Teacher, staff member, Parents/guardians, SRC Reps or fellow students. Every student has the right to feel secure and safe for having the initiative to report, even if what the student reports turns out not to be bullying, the student has acted correctly.

School Involvement

A classroom atmosphere of discipline, based on mutual respect, courtesy and cooperation is created by teachers in all classes. Teachers are also aware of the importance of vigilance and monitoring, not only in class, but also going to or from classrooms and during breaks. Teachers have collective responsibility for ensuring our environment is a safe place for our students. In addition, school-based initiatives will reinforce positive behaviour and certain programmes such as SPHE and pastoral care reinforce appropriate behaviour.

Conclusion

At the centre of our whole-school response to bullying is the creation of a positive school culture which focuses on respect for the individual. We all have a responsibility for the safety and welfare of each other. It is important that we have a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and those involved in bullying behaviour if this occurs. Our school policy on anti-bullying is an influential measure in countering inappropriate or bullying behaviour as all partners in education i.e. students, teachers and parents/guardians have cooperated in its formulation.

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: Síobhán Corry Date: 17-06-2025

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: Clíona McDonough Date: 17-06-2025

(Principal)

Appendix 1: Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour

1. Name of Student being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of student(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es)*

Student Concerned	
Other Student	
Parent	
Teacher	
SNA	
Other	

4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es)*

Courtyard	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
Pitches	
Other	

5. Name of Person(s) who reported the bullying concern

6. Type of Bullying behaviour (tick relevant box(es)*

Physical Aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Other (specify)	

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

LGBTQ+phobic	Disability/SEN Related	Racist	Membership of Traveller Community	Other (Specify)

8. Brief description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken

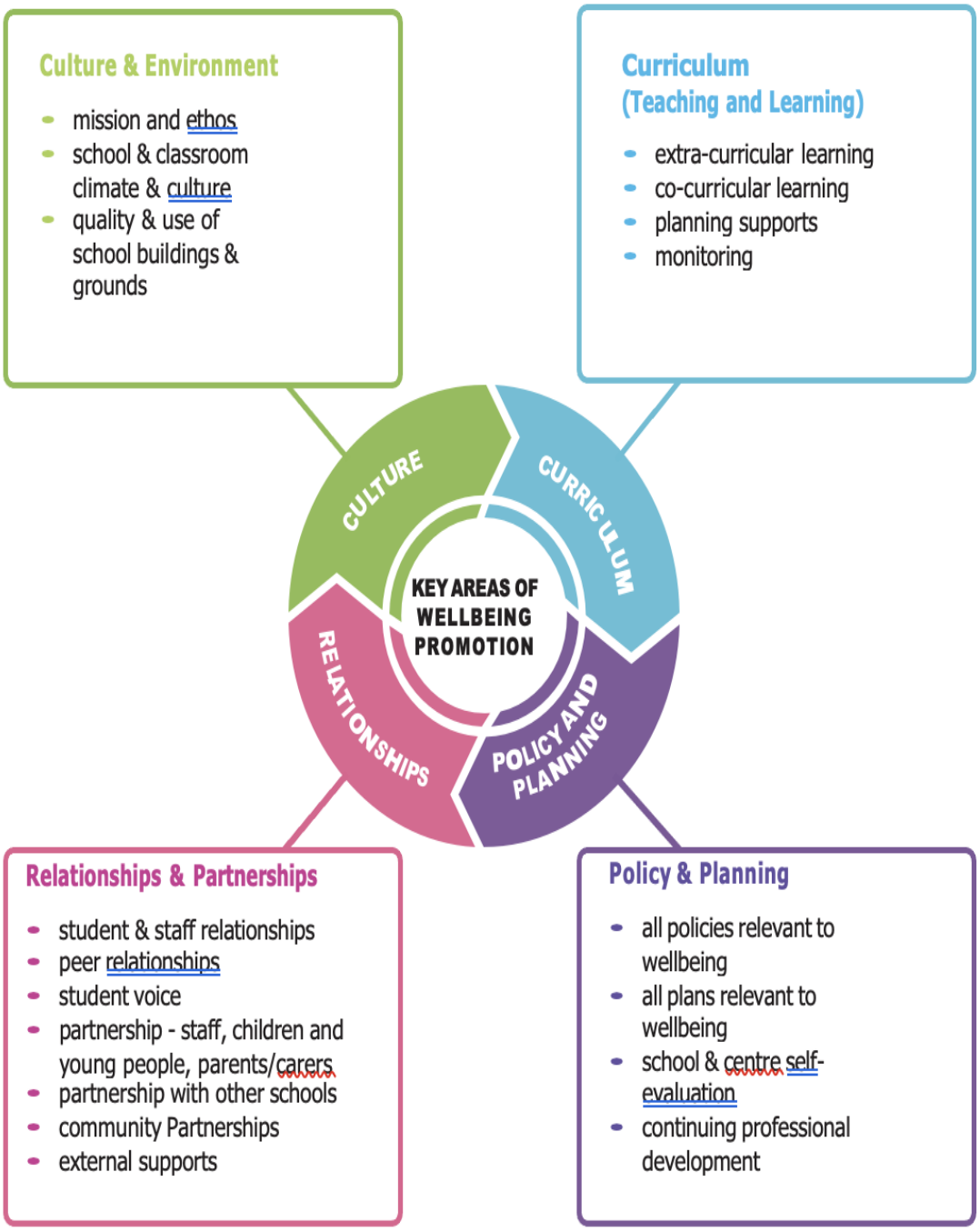
Signed _____ **(Relevant Teacher)** **Date** _____

Date submitted
to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

Appendix 2: List of Supports

Jigsaw www.jigsaw.ie free and confidential mental health service
Pieta House www.pieta.ie one to one counselling for young people at risk of self harm and suicide
Barnardos www.barnardos.ie Work with vulnerable children and families
Samaritans: Free Phone 116 123
CAHMS Child and Adolescent Mental Health: referral through GP Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
Crosscare Teen Counselling: www.crosscare.ie
Aware: www.aware.ie support for those who experience anxiety, depression or mood disorder.

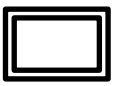
APPENDIX 3


Culture & Environment
mission and ethos
school & classroom climate & culture
quality & use of school buildings & grounds
Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)
extra-curricular learning
co-curricular learning
planning supports
monitoring
CULTURE
CURRICULUM
KEY AREAS OF WELLBEING PROMOTION
RELATIONSHIPS
POLICY AND PLANNING
Relationships & Partnerships
student & staff relationships
peer relationships
student voice
partnership - staff, children and young people, parents/carers
partnership with other schools
community Partnerships
external supports
Policy & Planning
all policies relevant to wellbeing
all plans relevant to wellbeing
school & centre self-evaluation
continuing professional development

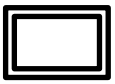
Appendix 4: Board of Management Anti-bullying Update
St Louis High School

Date:

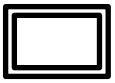
- The number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting



- the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that are currently ongoing



- the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the beginning of the school year



Verbal Report

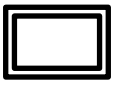
- Are there trends and/or patterns identified such as the form of bullying behaviour, type of bullying behaviour if known, location of bullying behaviour, when it occurred?

_____
_____

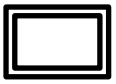
- What are the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour

_____
_____

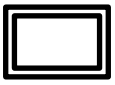
- Were there any serious incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred which have had a serious adverse impact on a student



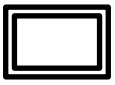
- Has a parent/guardian informed the school that a student has left the school because of reported bullying behaviour



- Is any additional support is needed from the board of management?



- Does the school's Bí Cineálta policy requires urgent review in advance of the annual review?



Appendix 5: 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.

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*? *Insert date when the Bí Cineálta policy was last adopted by the school.* ___/_____/20___

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?____/_____/20___

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*?
   Yes No

7. Does the Bí Cineálta policy document the strategies that the school uses to prevent bullying behaviour? Yes 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 No

9. Has the Board discussed how the school is addressing all reports of bullying behaviour?
   Yes No

10. Is the Board satisfied that all incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed in accordance with the school's Bí Cineálta Policy? Yes No

11. Have the prevention strategies in the Bí Cineálta policy been implemented?
Yes No

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

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? Yes No

18. Has a parent informed the school that a student has left the school due to reported bullying behaviour? Yes No

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