

St Felim's National School

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June 2025

St Felim's N.S. Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of St Felim's N.S. 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.

We confirm that we will take all steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent all bullying or harassment of our students in whatever form and however motivated.

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 everybody in our school is treated with respect and care, in accordance with the Catholic Schedule.

As a Catholic school, we are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual. Everybody has a part to play in the school community.

Definition of bullying

Bullying is defined in *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying* and *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* as targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm.

The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society. The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

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

Section A: Development/review of our Bi 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.

	<i>Date consulted</i>	<i>Method of consultation</i>
<i>School Staff</i>	<i>3 April 2025 1 May 2025</i>	<i>Staff Meetings</i>
<i>Students</i>	<i>15 November 2024 25- 29 November 13 June 2025</i>	<i>Discussion with Student Council Bí Cineálta Awareness Raising Poster Competition Focus Group Pupil Mentimeter Survey</i>
<i>Parents</i>	<i>28 May 2025</i>	<i>Procedures, Draft Policy & Google for circulated to parents</i>
<i>Board of management</i>	<i>19 May 2025 18 June 2025</i>	<i>Board discussion and Feedback sessions Draft Policy Circulated</i>
<i>Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers</i>		
<i>Date policy was approved: 18 June 2025</i>		
<i>Date policy was last reviewed: This is a new policy in line with new Bí Cineálta Procedures.</i>		

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. (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta Procedures)

In developing the 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 our school in a real way.

This 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 bullying prevention is given priority and discussed regularly at our 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 dialogue with parents, thereby building a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, trust and confidence.

In continuing to develop prevention strategies, this school will listen to young people and parents, to help establish their particular context and needs. Frequent periods of reflection and further engagement by the Board of Management, staff, young people and parents, will be used to discern appropriate supports for young people in this school and to help inform future prevention strategies.

This commitment to listening, inclusion, and respectful relationships is reflected in our everyday school practices. At St. Felim's N.S., our *Bí Cineálta* policy promotes kindness and wellbeing through simple, everyday actions in school. These actions are aligned with the four key areas as set out in the *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice*: Culture and Environment, Curriculum (Teaching & Learning), Policy and Planning, Relationships and Partnerships.

Culture and Environment

- Foster a positive and inclusive school culture where all students and staff feel safe, supported, connected, and have a sense of belonging
- Build and maintain respectful, caring, and trusting relationships among students, staff, parents and the wider school community
- Set clear expectations for behaviour through the Code of Behaviour, which is taught in all classes and displayed throughout the school. Staff use consistent routines, positive reinforcement, and rewards to promote kindness, respect, and compliance with school rules, while guiding children when behaviour needs improvement
- Promote open communication between the board of management, staff, students and parents to encourage collaboration and shared responsibility in preventing and addressing bullying
- Ensure a shared understanding of the *Bí Cineálta* Policy through regular teaching and visible display throughout the school
- Educate pupils on what bullying is, why it is unacceptable, and how to respond to it. The student-friendly *Bí Cineálta* policy is displayed throughout the school to promote kindness and to reinforce shared understanding.
- Foster a safe, open environment where pupils are encouraged to talk to a trusted adult and report concerns.
- Facilitate pupil reporting through open dialogue, niggles/worry boxes, staff check in's and confidential questionnaires
- Consistently address the use of discriminatory and derogatory language
- Celebrate school awareness raising events such as. Friendship Fortnight and *Bí Cineálta* Awareness Month
- Encourage student voice and participation through our Student Council and school committees, involving students in decision-making about school policies, events, practices and wellbeing initiatives
- Notify and encourage staff to engage in ongoing professional development
- Seek support from external agencies where appropriate to support student wellbeing and inclusion
- Adopt a restorative approach when incidents occur, focusing on repairing relationships and fostering accountability rather than relying solely on punitive measures.

Curriculum

- Explicitly teach the Code of Behaviour at an age-appropriate level in September (Term One -Junior Infants)
- Explicitly teach and establish classroom rules, routines and expectations
- Explicitly teach *Bí Cineálta* in September at an age-appropriate level and reinforce bullying prevention during *Bí Cineálta* Awareness Month and regularly throughout the year

- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Implement the Social Physical and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum, according to our school plan, including the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Teach pupils about the appropriate and responsible use of social media.
- Use social skills and resilience programmes, such as *Friends for Life* and *Fun Friends*, to promote emotional wellbeing and coping strategies.
- Take into account the additional needs of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) when implementing programmes, ensuring they are supported in developing the skills and strategies needed to navigate social situations and respond to bullying appropriately
- Celebrate Internet Safety Day annually

Policy & Planning

- Implement a clear Bí Cineálta policy, to include a student-friendly version that is easily understood by all pupils.
- Circulate the *Bí Cineálta* policy to the Board of Management, school staff, and parents to ensure a shared understanding of its implementation, including procedures for reporting, responding to, and recording bullying incidents.
- Review the Bí Cineálta policy annually in accordance with the procedures
- Place pupil wellbeing at the centre of all school policies and practices
- Align complementary school policies to support the implementation of the Bí Cineálta policy, including:
 - Code of Behaviour
 - Acceptable Use Policy
 - Child Protection Policy
 - Supervision Policy
 - Curricular policies with particular emphasis on SPHE & RSE Policy
 - Special Education Needs Policy
 - Parent School Partnership Policy
- Promote staff engagement in professional learning focused on preventing and addressing bullying and on fostering inclusion and diversity
- Encourage staff to exercise professional judgement and take proactive measures to support pupils who have, or may be at risk of, interpersonal difficulties, by anticipating potential flashpoints and putting strategies in place (e.g. seating plans for school tours or structured groupings during activities).
- School staff are committed to the principles of restorative practice.

Relationships and Partnerships

- Foster strong positive relationships between staff, pupils and parents through open communication and mutual respect
- Encourage student voice and leadership through the Student Council, which supports school initiatives, including anti-bullying efforts
- Work in partnership with parents and pupils to raise awareness about the dangers of cyberbullying and promote safe online behaviour.
- Collaborate with external agencies and professionals, such as NEPS, NCSE, Tusla, CAMHS, the HSE, and An Garda Síochána, to provide additional support where needed.
- Invite external speakers or facilitators to enhance school wellbeing and anti-bullying programmes where appropriate.

- Build links with local community groups, businesses, and organisations (e.g. sports clubs, churches) to strengthen community ties and promote a positive school culture.
- Support and encourage continuous professional learning for staff in areas such as bullying prevention, inclusion, and student wellbeing.

Preventing Cyber bullying behaviour

In keeping with our school's Catholic ethos, we aim to guide children in developing kind, responsible, and respectful behaviour in all areas of life—including the online world.

- Introduce pupils to a simple and clear understanding of what online bullying means, in a safe and age-appropriate way.
- Teach responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship through SPHE and other cross-curricular opportunities.
- Engage pupils in regular discussions about treating others with care and respect in online spaces, just as they would in person.
- Implement and regularly review SFNS's Acceptable Use Policy, reinforcing its importance in age-appropriate language.
- Promote safe internet use through events such as Internet Safety Days and workshops for pupils and parents.
- Support parents by sharing internet safety resources and offering opportunities for parent education and training.
- Continue to uphold our school policy prohibiting the use of smart devices, including mobile phones, during the school day to help safeguard pupils' wellbeing.

Preventing Homophobic/Transphobic bullying behaviour

Our Catholic school recognises the dignity of every child. We aim to promote a culture of kindness and respect, where all pupils feel safe and valued as part of our school family.

- Maintain clear school rules that promote kind language and behaviour, and discourage any form of name-calling or exclusion.
- Address incidents of unkind language with calm, age-appropriate conversations that highlight the importance of treating others with compassion and respect.
- Ensure that children know there are trusted adults in the school they can talk to if they ever feel hurt or unsure.

Preventing Racist Bullying Behaviour

In our Catholic school, we uphold the belief that every person is made in the image and likeness of God. We strive to create a school community where all children feel respected, included, and valued, regardless of their background, culture, or appearance.

- Help children understand, in simple terms, that racism means treating someone unfairly because of their skin colour, background, or culture—and that this is hurtful and wrong.
- Use real-life examples to help children recognise what unfair treatment might look like and how it can make others feel.
- Teach age-appropriate lessons that focus on kindness, fairness, empathy, and respect for all people, linking these values to our Gospel message of love and justice for all.
- Celebrate the diversity within our school by helping children appreciate different cultures, languages, and family backgrounds.

- Display artwork and resources that reflect the rich variety of human experiences and cultures represented in our world.
- Teach children, in gentle and empowering ways, how to respond if they witness or experience unkind or unfair behaviour, encouraging them to speak up and seek help from trusted adults.

Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour & Sexual Harassment

As a Catholic school, we are committed to promoting a culture of respect, fairness, and equal dignity for all children. We encourage every pupil to use their unique gifts and talents and to treat one another with kindness and honour.

- Staff aim to model respectful behaviour and fairness in all their interactions, treating boys and girls equally and with care.
- All pupils are given equal opportunities to participate in learning, play, leadership, and school responsibilities, regardless of gender.
- We celebrate the gifts and contributions of every child, encouraging them to support and appreciate one another.
- Through age-appropriate SPHE lessons, we teach about healthy friendships, kindness, and mutual respect, helping children understand how to treat one another with compassion and integrity.
- Implement the Code of Behaviour as appropriate
- Engage with external supports

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)

Ensuring Safe Physical Spaces in St Felim's:

- *Yard Supervision Rota:* A clear rota ensures adequate adult supervision in all yard zones during playtime and lunchtime, as well as during morning and afternoon drop-off and collection. Staff are strategically positioned to observe and interact with pupils. Each class is assigned a designated area on the yard to support age-appropriate interactions and effective supervision. Teachers are placed, where possible, in the same yard zones as their class groups. Areas with hidden corners are out of bounds to ensure open visibility.
- *Staff Visibility and Approachability:* All staff wear high-vis jackets to ensure they are easily identifiable and approachable on yard.
- *Play Activities:* Each class has a designated play area. These include zones for ball games and quieter areas where ball games are not permitted. Pupils have access to suitable play equipment.
- *Toilet Supervision:* Pupils sign in and out of shared toilet areas. They are encouraged to use the bathroom before breaks. Toilets are checked periodically to discourage inappropriate behaviour while maintaining pupil privacy.
- *Supervision of Common Areas:* Teachers and SNAs supervise corridors and shared spaces during breaks and transitions.
- *Break-Time Transitions:* There are clear procedures for entering and exiting the classroom. Pupils line up in class groups after break and are escorted back to class by their teacher to ensure calm, orderly transitions.
- *Supervised Trips:* Pupils are accompanied by at least one staff member on all school trips and outings.

- *Encouraging Positive Playground Behaviour:* Respectful and kind behaviour is promoted during school assemblies and reinforced through classroom discussions. Staff actively model and encourage these behaviours during yard supervision.

A trusted adult in St Felim's:

- Pupils are taught what a trusted adult means – someone who listens, cares and helps keep them safe.
- Classroom activities are used to help children reflect on what trust means and learn how to recognise and talk to a trusted adult in their lives, both at school and at home.
- All staff members, including SNAs, teachers, and ancillary staff, are introduced to pupils as kind and supportive adults they can approach if something is bothering them.

A telling environment:

- Pupils are encouraged to report inappropriate or bullying behaviour and are taught that speaking up is responsible and brave—not “telling tales.”
- *Confidential Reporting Options:* Multiple reporting channels are taught and available to pupils:
- Reports of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with by staff immediately after break
- There are worry/niggle boxes in R1, 2, R3, R4, R5 and R6.
- Pupils are encouraged to talk to their trusted adult if necessary.
- Confidential questionnaires are carried out and followed up on each term in the senior classes.
- A reporting box will be introduced at the exit doors from the school in September. This box will be monitored by the Principal and Deputy Principal.
- Pupils are supported and reassured after making reports of inappropriate or bullying behaviour. Staff take time to listen and respond with reassurance. All reports are taken seriously, regardless of the level of evidence. Pupils are reassured they will not get in trouble for speaking out.
- Pupils will take part in regular class discussions, circle time, and SPHE lessons to enable them to raise concerns, ask questions, and engage in conversations about respectful behaviour and bullying.
- *Empowerment Strategies:* Pupils are educated on how to respond appropriately ‘in the moment’.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

The Principal; Mrs. Eilís Keegan, Deputy Principal; Mrs. Patrice Clarke together in collaboration with class teachers.

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:

Reporting Bullying Behaviour

Any pupil, parent or guardian is encouraged to report concerns about bullying to any staff member in the school.

All reports of bullying, including anonymous disclosures, will be investigated in a respectful and timely manner by the relevant teacher.

All staff—teaching and non-teaching, including secretaries, snas, bus escorts, caretakers, and cleaning staff—have a responsibility to report any bullying behaviour they witness or become aware of to the relevant teacher.

Bullying behaviour that occurs outside of school

As per the Bí Cineálta Procedures, a school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school.

However, where bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved.

Examples of prohibited bullying behaviours that can occur outside of school (non-exhausted list):

- Bullying behaviour that occurs in the area immediately outside the school, the local shops and the wider local area.
- Bullying behaviour that occurs on the journey to and from school.
- Bullying behaviour that occurs in organised clubs and groups outside of school such as sports clubs.
- Online bullying (cyberbullying) behaviour, along with other types of bullying behaviour can cause significant harm and have a lasting impact on students who experience this behaviour. Access to technology means that online bullying behaviour can happen any time and that the student's home is no longer a safe place. The nature of these technologies means that digital content can be shared and seen by a very wide audience almost instantly and the content is almost impossible to delete permanently.

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 have a right to act and may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour

A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards another student is not bullying behaviour.

Disagreement between students, or instances where students don't want to be friends or to remain friends, is not considered bullying behaviour unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others including deliberate manipulation of friendship groups.

Some students with special educational needs may have social communication difficulties which may 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 an automatic response which they can't control.

Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying. These behaviours, while not

defined as bullying can be distressing. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour we will consider the following questions:

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

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

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

If the answer to any of these questions is No, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

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

- If a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first
- Thereafter, all students involved should be met as a group
- At the group meeting, each student should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views
- Each student should be supported as appropriate, following the group meeting
- It may be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident(s)

When conducting an investigation, teachers should:

- 1 Approach all reports in a calm, consistent, and fair manner.
- 2 Focus on establishing facts without apportioning blame at the outset.
- 3 Maintain a solution-focused mindset, aiming to resolve and repair relationships.
- 4 Provide a safe and respectful space for pupils to speak openly.
- 5 Reassure pupils that all reports will be taken seriously and handled sensitively.
- 6 Ensure both the pupil affected and the pupil engaged in the alleged behaviour are supported.
- 7 Keep written records in line with the school's Bí Cineálta Policy and Data Protection guidelines.

Where bullying behaviour has been confirmed in line with these procedures:

1. The parents of the students involved must be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to consult with them on the actions to be taken to address the behaviour
2. It is important to listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
3. A record (Appendix B) should be kept of the engagement with all involved
4. This record (Appendix B) should document
 - the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known (see Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the Bi Cineálta procedures),

- where and when it took place and
 - the date of the initial engagement with the students involved and their parents
5. The record (Appendix B) should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour

Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred

The teacher must engage with the students involved and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement.

Important factors to consider as part of this engagement are

- the nature of the bullying behaviour,
- the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and
- the relationship between the students involved

The teacher should document the review with students and their parents (*using Appendix B*) to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and their parents in relation to this.

<i>If it is determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased:</i>	<i>If it is determined that the bullying behaviour has <u>not</u> ceased</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The date the bullying behaviour has ceased should 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. These supports should be noted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents. • A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased. • If it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school consideration should be given to using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour. • If disciplinary sanctions are considered, it must be made clear to all (pupils & Parents/Guardians) that this is a private matter (under GDPR) between the student being disciplined, his/her parents/guardians and the school.

Criminal Behaviour

Bullying behaviour may be considered criminal under certain circumstances. The age of criminal responsibility in Ireland is 12 years. Some online behaviours may be illegal, such as those covered under Coco's Law (Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020), which criminalises the non-consensual sharing or threat of sharing intimate images.

Bullying involving physical violence, threats, discrimination, hate speech, sexual harassment or assault may also fall under laws such as the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989. These may result in criminal charges, and An Garda Síochána is the authority to investigate such behaviours.

Complaint Procedure

If a parent(s) is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in

accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary School they should be referred to the school's complaints procedures.

If a parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions have had a negative effect on the student.

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)

At St Felim's, we are committed to providing compassionate, age-appropriate, and individualised support to all pupils affected by bullying—whether they have experienced it directly, witnessed it, or engaged in bullying behaviour. Our approach is flexible and responsive to each child's unique needs and circumstances. Within the resources available to the school, we offer a range of targeted supports designed to promote recovery, build resilience, foster emotional well-being, and strengthen a sense of safety and belonging. All interventions aim to contribute to a positive, respectful school environment where every child can thrive.

1. Supporting Children Who Experience or Witness Bullying Behaviour

Emotional and Practical Support

- **One-to-One Support Conversations:** Staff meet privately with the pupil to listen, reassure, and develop a tailored support plan. Pupils are encouraged to identify their "One Good Adult" in school for ongoing support.
- **Empowerment Strategies:** Activities that build self-esteem, resilience, recognise strengths, and encourage participation in positive school life.

Preventive and Educational Interventions

- **Role Play and Scenario-Based Learning:** Pupils engage in age-appropriate role play activities to practise safe, assertive responses in difficult or uncomfortable situations.
- **Discreet Teaching Opportunities:** Targeted lessons on kindness, empathy, resilience, inclusion, and recognising bullying behaviour are embedded into the curriculum as needed.
- **Education on the Role of the Bystander:** Circle time and group discussions foster empathy, teach pupils how to respond as witnesses to bullying behaviour, and create safe spaces for expression and reflection.
- **Circle Time:** Regular class sessions help to build trust, promote respectful communication, and strengthen peer relationships.

Whole-School Coordination

- **Staff Communication:** When concerns arise, relevant information is shared with appropriate staff members to ensure coordinated support and consistent vigilance across school settings.

Restorative and Relationship-Focused Approaches

- **Restorative Conversations and Mediation:** Where appropriate and with pupil consent, restorative practices are used to address harm, rebuild trust, and repair relationships in a safe and supported environment.

Family and Community Involvement

- **Parental Engagement:** Families are kept informed and involved as partners in supporting their child's recovery and well-being
- **External Support Services:** Where appropriate support or referrals may be made to outside agencies.

2. Supporting Pupils Who Engage in Bullying Behaviour

Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour are supported to reflect, take responsibility, and make positive changes. Our approach focuses on understanding underlying causes, teaching new skills, and restoring relationships.

Individualised Support and Behavioural Guidance

- **One-to-One Support Conversations:** Staff engage with pupils to explore motivations, triggers, and the impact of their behaviour.
- **Reflection and Goal Setting:** Pupils are supported to reflect on their behaviour and set clear, achievable goals for improvement and positive change.
- **Behaviour Observation:** Staff track patterns and progress through observation and record-keeping.
- **Individual Behaviour Support Plan:** Where needed, a tailored plan is developed with goals, strategies, and rewards to promote change.

Social and Emotional Development

- **SPHE Curriculum (e.g., Stay Safe / Walk Tall):** Explicit teaching of lessons that focus on empathy, respectful relationships, managing emotions, and problem-solving.
- **Friendship and Social Skills Groups:** Small-group sessions led by the SEN team or support staff to improve peer interactions.
Check-In Check-Out System: Regular check-ins with a trusted adult provide connection, encouragement, and accountability.
- **Circle Time:** Encourages respectful dialogue and supports a positive classroom environment.

Restorative Approaches and Accountability

- **Restorative Conversations:** Pupils are encouraged to understand the impact of their actions, make amends, and rebuild relationships through structured restorative conversations.
- **Behavioural Accountability:** Where appropriate, consequences are applied in line with the school's Code of Behaviour, ensuring a balance between accountability and growth.

Family and External Supports

- **Parent/Guardian Involvement:** Families are included as key partners in helping the pupil understand and improve behaviour.
- **External or Specialist Support:** Referrals may be made to external professionals or support agencies as appropriate depending on the pupil's needs.

External Supports

A range of national supports and resources are available to assist schools, pupils, and families in preventing and responding to bullying behaviour:

- **NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service)** – Provides advice on best practice for preventing and addressing bullying in schools, as well as training in preventative initiatives. (*p.46*)
- **Oide** – Offers teacher professional learning (TPL) opportunities focused on promoting positive behaviour and bullying prevention. (*p.47*)

- **Webwise** – Delivers online safety education and awareness-raising initiatives for pupils, parents, and school staff. (p.47)
- **National Parents Council (NPC)** – Provides both online and in-person courses to support parents in understanding, preventing, and responding to bullying. (p.48)
- **DCU Anti-Bullying Centre – FUSE Programme** – A school-based programme aimed at promoting a positive school culture and equipping students to prevent and respond to bullying behaviours. (p.48)
- **Tusla (Child and Family Agency)** – In cases where bullying behaviour raises child protection concerns, Tusla may be engaged to provide appropriate intervention and support. (p.48)

Record Keeping

All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with students and parents. The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented. (Appendix B) Records of bullying behaviour will be kept on the pupil's file.

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. (P. 20 of Procedures)*

Section D: Oversight

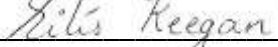
The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting. This update will include the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting, the number of ongoing incidents and the total number of incidents since the beginning of the school year. Where incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred, the principal will also provide a verbal update which will include where relevant, information relating to trends and patterns identified, strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant. This update does not contain personal or identifying information. See Chapter 7 of the *Bí Cineálta* procedures.

This policy is available to our school community on the school's website and in hard copy on request. A student friendly version of this policy is displayed in the school and is also available on our website and in hard copy on request.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed, following input from our school community, each calendar year or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this policy refers.

Signed: 
(Chairperson of board of management)

Date: 18 June 2025

Signed: 
(Principal)

Date: 18 June 2025

Appendices:

Appendix A: Student Friendly-Bí Cineálta Policy

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Our School Promise

We want everyone at our school to feel safe and happy.



What is online bullying?

A mean message posted online can be bullying, even if it happens just once, because lots of people might see it or share it again and again.

We say NO to ...

Name Calling -Mean Jokes-
Unkind Words-Exclusion-
Gossiping

What is bullying?

Bullying is targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm.

Bullying is when someone is mean or hurtful on purpose over and over again.

We're here to help!

If you think you are being bullied or someone else is being bullied

- Tell a teacher
- Tell a trusted adult
- Use the niggles/worry boxes

If you ask for help we will:

- Talk to you
- Ask you what you want
- Make a plan together
- Talk to other students
- Make everyone feel safe

St Felim's National School

Bí Cineálta!

Be Kind Stay Safe • Speak Up



Appendix B:

St. Felim's Primary School Bullying Behaviour Recording Form

Student name:			Class:	
Date of Report:				
Reported by: <i>How was the report was made:</i>				
Allegation against:				
Brief summary of incident/incidents: <i>Include date/time/location of incident</i> <i>Has this happened before?</i> <i>How many times?</i> <i>When?</i> <i>Where?</i> <i>Impact?</i>				
<u>Outcome of Investigation</u>				
Is the behaviour?	Targeted	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Repeated	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Intended to cause harm	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
<u>If all 3 are yes, please continue. If not, refer to Code of Behaviour</u>				
<u>Form of Bullying (as per section 2.5 of procedures) Please tick all that apply</u>				
Direct Bullying behaviour	Indirect Bullying Behaviour		Online Bullying	
Physical aggression <input type="checkbox"/> Damage to property <input type="checkbox"/> Verbal (<i>name calling</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> Written <input type="checkbox"/> Extortion <input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>give details</i>) <input type="checkbox"/>	Exclusion: <input type="checkbox"/> Relational (<i>include details</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Malicious gossip <input type="checkbox"/> ▪ Spreading rumours <input type="checkbox"/> ▪ Non-verbal gesturing <input type="checkbox"/> ▪ Giving student the silent treatment <input type="checkbox"/> ▪ Manipulation of friendship groups <input type="checkbox"/> ▪ Intimidation & Isolation <input type="checkbox"/> ▪ Other (<i>give details</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> 		Sharing abusive messages or images online or via digital communication. <input type="checkbox"/> Sharing private information/images without consent <input type="checkbox"/> Using fake profiles to target others online <input type="checkbox"/> Deliberate online exclusion <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Other (<i>give details</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> 	
Where bullying is regarded as identity-based bullying please indicate the type as per section 2.7 of procedures:				
Physical appearance <input type="checkbox"/> Poverty <input type="checkbox"/> Racist <input type="checkbox"/> Disablist /SEN related <input type="checkbox"/>	Disablist /SEN related <input type="checkbox"/> Religious Identity <input type="checkbox"/> Homophobic <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Harassment <input type="checkbox"/>		Sexist bullying <input type="checkbox"/> Gender Identity <input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>give details</i>) <input type="checkbox"/>	

Child and Parent Perspectives		
Date of Initial Engagement with child:		
Date of initial engagement with parents:		
Parents' views on action to address the behaviour <i>(In relation to their own child)</i>		
Child's views on what school can do to help them		
Document School Actions/Interventions/Supports		
Agreed Review Date		
The following section should be completed at the agreed review date		
Has the bullying behaviour ceased? <i>(if yes document the date the bullying behaviour ceased)</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Date: _____	No <input type="checkbox"/> <i>(if no, agree next steps and date of follow up meeting, record below)</i>
Child's views on outcome:		
Parent's views on outcome		
Any further action required?		
Detail any Engagement with External Services		
If a SSF exists has a copy of this record been placed in the child's support file?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
If a SSP exists has it been updated to incorporate response strategies?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Date of follow up meeting if required:		
Recorded by:		
Date:		

Appendix C:

Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate.

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.
- Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media. Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision and supervision on school trips and visits.
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying “hot spots” and “hot times” for bullying in the school.
 - (i) Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
 - (ii) Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.
- Support the work of the student council.

Bí Cineálta: Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2023) – Support Materials

Guide to Providing Bullying Behaviour Update

Guide to providing Bullying Behaviour Update for board of management meeting of **St Felim's N.S.**

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 board of management:

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 E: 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.

Bí Cineálta Policy Review

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. _____ / _____ / _____

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 <i>Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ? | Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> | No
<input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Does the Bí Cineálta policy document the strategies that the school uses to prevent bullying behaviour? | Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> | No
<input type="checkbox"/> |
| 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
<input type="checkbox"/> | No
<input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Has the Board discussed how the school is addressing all reports of bullying behaviour? | Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> | No
<input type="checkbox"/> |

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 10. Is the Board satisfied that all incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed in accordance with the school's Bí Cineálta Policy? | Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> | No
<input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Have the prevention strategies in the Bí Cineálta policy been implemented? | Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> | No
<input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. Has the Board discussed the effectiveness of the strategies used to prevent bullying behaviour? | Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> | No
<input type="checkbox"/> |

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
<input type="checkbox"/> | No
<input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18. Has a parent informed the school that a student has left the school due to reported bullying behaviour? | Yes
<input type="checkbox"/> | No
<input type="checkbox"/> |
| 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
<input type="checkbox"/> | No
<input type="checkbox"/> |

Signed:

Date:

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed:

Date:

(Principal)

Date of next review: _____

Appendix F

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 Address Bullying Behaviour and its implementation was completed at the board of management meeting of _____ [date].

This review was conducted in accordance 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: _____

(Chairperson of board of management)

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____