



Crehana National School

Bí Cineálta (Anti-Bullying) Policy

2025-27

(Roll No. 11969N)

Bí Cineálta (Anti-Bullying) Policy

Ratified by the Board of Management: September 2025

Next Review: September 2027 (or sooner if required)

Designated Liaison Person (DLP): Ms. Sinéad O'Reilly, Principal

Deputy DLP (DDL): Mrs. Claire Foster

1. Rationale & Legal/Policy Basis

This stand-alone policy is written in line with the Department of Education's Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour (published 19 June 2024; in effect from 1 September 2025), Circular 0055/2024, and the Department's Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying. As a Catholic primary school under the patronage of the Bishop of Waterford & Lismore, Crehana N.S. implements these procedures within our Catholic ethos and with reference to diocesan safeguarding guidance.

2. Scope & Application

This policy applies to all pupils during the school day and at all school-related activities. It sets out prevention and response measures for bullying behaviour, including cyberbullying, identity-based bullying (e.g., homophobic and transphobic bullying), racist bullying, sexist bullying, and sexual harassment.

3. Definitions (Plain Language)

Bullying behaviour is repeated, intentional behaviour (or a single egregious incident) that causes harm, involves a misuse of power, and is carried out by an individual or group against another person or group. It can be face-to-face, written, verbal, physical, social/relational, or online (digital).

- Cyberbullying: bullying that takes place using digital technologies, including messaging, social media, gaming or image-sharing.
- Identity-based bullying: targeting a person's actual or perceived identity (e.g., sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, disability, membership of the Traveller community).
- Sexual harassment: unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, including sending or sharing sexualised content online.

Where behaviour may constitute a child protection concern (including sexual harassment/assault or hate crime), the school follows Children First and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, and, where appropriate, liaises with An Garda Síochána and Tusla.

4. Whole-School Preventative Culture

- Teach and model kindness explicitly (Bí Cineálta), linking to our Catholic ethos and SPHE/RSE and Wellbeing learning.
- Integrate age-appropriate digital citizenship and online-safety learning (e.g., Webwise) with our Acceptable Use Policy.
- Promote respect for diversity (LGBTQ+ inclusion, anti-racism, inter-cultural education) and challenge stereotypes.
- Establish clear classroom, corridor and yard routines; active supervision and visible staff presence in identified 'hot spots'.
- Enable student voice (class councils, suggestions boxes, surveys) and ensure pupils can identify and access a 'trusted adult'.
- Staff CPD: annual refresher on Bí Cineálta procedures; induction for all new staff including SNAs and ancillary staff.
- Parent partnership: publish policy on the website/Aladdin, provide annual information, and share practical guidance on reporting.

5. Roles & Oversight

- Board of Management: adopts, publishes and annually reviews this policy; receives a termly anonymised update on bullying behaviour trends and actions taken.

- Principal: leads implementation; ensures recording, data protection, staff CPD, and regular communication with the school community.
- DLP/DDLP: ensures that any bullying incident that may reasonably constitute a child protection concern is managed under the child protection procedures.
- All Staff: prevent, notice, intervene early, and follow the response steps below; model respectful behaviour.
- Parents/Guardians: encourage reporting; support the school response; reinforce respectful behaviour at home.
- Pupils: be kind; include others; report concerns for self or others to a trusted adult.

6. Reporting Concerns

- Pupils can report to any trusted adult in school, via class teacher, office, or a discreet written note/message.
- Parents/guardians report to the class teacher or Principal promptly (in person, phone or email).
- Anonymous information will be followed up as far as possible.
- The school will be sensitive to the needs of pupils who may find reporting difficult.

7. Responding to Alleged Bullying (Step-by-Step)

Crehana N.S. follows the Bí Cineálta response flow as reflected in the Department's Appendix C (Guide to Addressing Bullying Behaviour):

Step 1 – Initial Response: Listen, reassure, take brief notes; ensure immediate safety; consider child protection threshold.

Step 2 – Fact-Finding: Speak with pupils involved and relevant witnesses; gather evidence including screenshots where relevant; keep records.

Step 3 – Determination & Plan: Determine whether the behaviour meets the definition of bullying; agree supports, sanctions (where appropriate), and a written plan for everyone involved.

Step 4 – Implement Supports: Provide restorative opportunities; teach replacement behaviours; signpost to pastoral and external supports as needed.

Step 5 – Follow-Up & Review: Monitor for recurrence; adjust supports; close the case when resolved; escalate if behaviours persist.

Serious incidents (e.g., sexual harassment/assault, hate incidents or threats) may trigger child protection and/or criminal reporting and will be escalated immediately.

8. Recording & Data

- Use the Department's Bí Cineálta recording templates to log concerns, actions and outcomes; keep secure, confidential records.
- Provide the Board with regular anonymised updates on patterns and actions (no personal identifiers).
- Maintain records for inspection as required by the Department/Inspectorate and in line with data protection obligations.

9. Supports & Curriculum Links

- SPHE/RSE, Learn Together/Religious Education, Wellbeing initiatives (e.g., mindfulness, restorative practice).
- Webwise/HTML Heroes; PDST/Oide wellbeing resources; NEPS guidance where relevant.
- Pastoral care consistent with our Catholic ethos, in partnership with parents and appropriate external services.

10. Specific Areas of Focus

- Online/cyberbullying: teach privacy, consent, critical thinking; encourage safe reporting; preserve evidence (screenshots).
- Homophobic/transphobic bullying: promote respect and inclusion; challenge slurs; ensure safe spaces and supportive adults.
- Racist bullying: explicitly teach anti-racist values; respond promptly to any racist incident; record and report as required.
- Sexual harassment: clear zero-tolerance; teach consent and respectful boundaries; involve parents; escalate where necessary under child protection/legal frameworks.

11. Sanctions & Restorative Approaches

Sanctions (in line with the Code of Behaviour) may include loss of privileges, reflective tasks, restitution and, in serious or persistent cases, suspension. We aim to combine accountability with support through restorative conversations, mediation, social skills coaching and targeted interventions.

12. Communication & Publication

- Publish this policy on the school website and via Aladdin; display a student-friendly summary in classrooms and corridors.
- Include Bí Cineálta reminders in assemblies and newsletters; run an annual awareness week and regular classroom lessons.

13. Related Policies

Code of Behaviour; Child Safeguarding Statement & Risk Assessment; SPHE/RSE Policy; Acceptable Use Policy; Admissions; SEN Policy; Attendance; Data Protection.

14. Review & Evaluation

- Annual Board review using the Department's Appendix E/F templates; note strengths, areas for development and actions.
- Seek pupil/parent/staff feedback; use incident data to inform prevention priorities; report key messages to the school community.

Appendix: Student-Friendly Summary (Display Version)

Be Kind • Be Safe • Tell Someone

- We include everyone and use kind words and actions.
- If someone is unkind again and again, or online, tell a trusted adult.
- You can always talk to your teacher, the Principal or any adult in school.
- Bullying is never okay. We will help and we will keep you safe.

References (for school file/website footnote)

- Department of Education: Bí Cineálta Procedures (published 19 June 2024; in force 1 Sept 2025) & Circular 0055/2024.
- Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying (Department of Education, 2022; updated 2025).
- Oide Bí Cineálta resources and policy templates (Appendix A–G).
- Diocese of Waterford & Lismore – Safeguarding guidance and education office resources (ethos alignment).

Appendix A

School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Crehana 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 such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the 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 each person 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. No human person is to be devalued, and all have an indispensable part to play in the school community, regardless of difference.

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

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

In developing 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.

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 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 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 engagement by the school, young people and parents, will be used to discern appropriate supports for young people in this school and to help inform future prevention strategies.

