

Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management of Belvedere College SJ 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 Colleges 2024*](#) whilst also aligning with the College Vision, Mission and Values.

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 are committed to ensuring that all students who attend our College 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.

2.0 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 Colleges* 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. There are many different methods of bullying behaviour, including physical, verbal, and relational forms, and it can take place online and offline.

2.1 Core elements of bullying

Targeted behaviour

Bullying is deliberate, unwanted behaviour that causes harm to others, where the student displaying bullying behaviour knows that their behaviour is or will be perceived as harmful by the child or young person experiencing the behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying but, importantly, must still be addressed under the College's Code of Behaviour.

Repeated behaviour

Bullying takes the form of a systematic pattern of behaviour which is repeated over time. Single offline incidents of intentional negative behaviour involving an imbalance of power are not considered bullying but must still be addressed under the College's Code of Behaviour.

Imbalance of power

In incidents of bullying, the student experiencing the bullying behaviour finds it hard to defend themselves as a result of the abuse of a real or perceived imbalance of power. This imbalance of power may manifest itself through differences in size, strength, age, ability, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, race, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, experience of the care system, disability or the receipt of special education. In incidents of online (or cyber) bullying, the imbalance of power may relate to online anonymity, technical proficiency and possession of information/images/videos/video, and the inability of the targeted to remove offensive online material or escape the bullying.

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

If the answer is yes to each of the questions below, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour and will be

addressed using the College Bí Cineálta Procedures:

- Is the behaviour targeted at a particular student or group of students?
- Is the behaviour intended to cause harm?
- is the behaviour repeated?

2.2. Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour

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

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.

2.3. Criminal behaviour

Bullying behaviour can be considered criminal behaviour under certain circumstances and legal consequences can apply. The age of criminal responsibility in Ireland is 12 years.

Some online behaviour may be illegal, and students need to be aware of the far-reaching consequences of posting inappropriate or harmful content. In cases of intimate imagery, the Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020, also known as *Coco's Law*, criminalises the non-consensual sharing of intimate images and also criminalises threatening to share these images.

If bullying behaviour involves physical violence or threats of violence, it *may* be considered assault.

If bullying behaviour involves discrimination or hate speech targeting a student based on their race, religion, nationality, ethnicity or sexual orientation, it may be considered a hate crime under the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989(11), and those engaging in such behaviour may face criminal charges. If bullying behaviour involved sexual harassment or sexual assault, this may also be considered criminal behaviour.

In such cases An Garda Síochána is the appropriate authority to investigate alleged criminal behaviour.

2.4. When bullying behaviour becomes a child protection concern

Section 10 of the Children First Act, 2015 places a statutory obligation on schools, as a “provider of a relevant service” to ensure as far as practicable, that each child attending the College is safe from harm while attending College or otherwise participating in College activities.

Teachers registered with the Teaching Council are Mandated Persons under the Children First Act. They have a legal obligation under the Act to report harm of children that meets or is above a defined threshold to Tusla, and also to assist Tusla if requested, in assessing a concern which is the subject of a mandated report.

The *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Colleges (Revised 2023)* provide that all College staff should report reasonable concerns to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) who may take advice and/or report the concerns to Tusla. If the staff member is a registered teacher and the concern is at or above the threshold of harm at which a mandated report must be made the concern shall be submitted as a mandated report to Tusla jointly by the DLP and the registered teacher.

Generally, bullying behaviour can be addressed without the involvement of Tusla. However, bullying behaviour may become a child protection concern when it results in significant physical or emotional harm, or where it becomes a persistent and severe problem and measures taken to address it are not effective.

2.5. How bullying behaviour occurs

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

- Physical bullying behaviour
- Verbal bullying behaviour
- Written bullying behaviour
- Extortion
- Indirect bullying behaviour
- Exclusion
- Relational
- Online bullying behaviour

2.6. Types of bullying behaviour

There are many different types of bullying behaviour. This is not an exhaustive list:

- **Disablist bullying behaviour:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of a perceived or actual disability.
- **Neurodivergent bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of a perceived or actual neurodivergence or additional educational need.
- **Exceptionally able bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their high academic ability or outstanding talents.
- **Gender identity bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual gender identity.
- **Homophobic/transphobic (LGBTQ+) bullying;** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual membership of the LGBTQ+ community.
- **Physical appearance bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their physical appearance.
- **Racist bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their race or ethnic origin.
- **Poverty bullying:** behaviour that intends to humiliate a student because of a lack of resources.
- **Religious identity bullying:** behaviour that intends to harm a student because of their religion or religious identity.
- **Sexist bullying:** behaviour that intends to harm a student based on their sex, perpetuating stereotypes that a student or a group of students are inferior because of their sex.
- **Sexual harassment:** any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on sex which affects the dignity of the student.

3.0 Responsibilities of all members of College community in relation to bullying

3.1 Responsibilities in relation to bullying

Staff:

- To have read and understood the College Bí Cineálta policy.
- To be vigilant against bullying behaviour inside and outside the classroom.
- To take all reports of bullying seriously and to report them to the appropriate authority if warranted.

- To assist in prevention and intervention strategies.
- To empower students to deal with conflict in constructive ways.

Students:

- To never bully others.
- To show consideration, respect and support towards others.
- To be sensitive to the wellbeing of everybody.
- To report if they are being bullied or if they see someone else being bullied.

Parents:

- To support the College in the implementation of the policy and other related College policies such as the Code of Behaviour and IT Acceptable Use Policy.
- To speak to the Form Tutor or Year Head if their son is being bullied or if they suspect that this is happening.
- To notify the College if they think that their son is displaying bullying behaviour and to work with the College in addressing this problem.
- To ensure that if their son is online that he is using social media in a safe and responsible manner.
- To never directly approach another student, or the parent of another student, at the College to intervene in behavioural issues.

4.0 Education and prevention strategies

The Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice provides the following four key areas that are essential for a holistic, whole-school approach to wellbeing promotion: Culture and Environment; Curriculum (Teaching and Learning); Policy and Planning; and Relationships and Partnerships.

These four areas have been considered by the College when developing measures to prevent bullying behaviour.

4.1. Culture and Environment

A positive and inclusive school culture and environment is essential to prevent and address bullying behaviour. The College environment should be a space where students and school staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported. Relationships between all members of the school community should be based on respect, care, integrity and trust.

The College community supports a 'telling' environment through

- Raising-awareness on all aspects of bullying.
- Whole school surveys, whole school awareness measures and live reporting link in the College newsletter.
- Promoting student engagement with "a trusted adult" underpinned by our Pastoral Support Team.
- A commitment to the creation of safe physical spaces through regular audits of classrooms, corridors and College facilities and the elimination of any hot spots through sub master key system and staff duty roster.
- Murals, artwork and signage around the College promotes our key values of community, integrity and being people for others.

4.2 Curriculum

(Teaching and Learning) Teaching and learning that is collaborative and respectful is promoted and helps to create awareness in the following ways:

- The curricular subjects offered by the College to students provide opportunities to foster inclusion and respect for diversity.
- Implementing a Digital Media Literacy curriculum which teaches students about responsible

online behaviour and digital citizenship.

- The Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is fully implemented helping students to feel empowered to create, nurture and maintain respectful and healthy relationships with themselves and others.

4.3 Policy and Planning

The wellbeing of the College community is at the heart of all policies and plans through the Vision, Mission and Values. The following are areas that specifically relate to policy and planning:

- All Policies relevant to Wellbeing & Anti-Bullying are in place such as Yard and Supervision Policy, Acceptable User Policy, Additional Needs Policy and the Code of Behaviour etc.
- The College Bí Cineálta Policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) through the Parents' Association, annual year group parent evenings, incoming parents' night. It is also available on the College website and in the student journal.
- Staff engagement in relevant CPD such as Child Protection and Behaviour for Learning each academic year support creates awareness in relation to the identification and prevention of bullying behaviour.
- Raising-awareness on all aspects of bullying, including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider College community through talks for parents and pupils on Stay Safe, internet safety, cyberbullying and through RSE, CSPE and SPHE schemes of work and policies.
- Supervision; The College takes all reasonable measures to ensure the safety of our students and to supervise students when students are attending school or attending College activities.

4.4 Relationships and Partnerships

Strong interpersonal connections are a vital part of effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. The following list demonstrates the strategies utilised to strengthen such partnerships within the College community:

- Peer support through Peer Mentoring, Rhetoric Prefects and lunchtime clubs and activities.
- Active participation of students in the celebration of diversity and inclusion such as Stand-Up Week, Culture Week, Flag Day and Wear Red Day.
- Partnering with the Parents' Association on awareness events
- The meaningful involvement of the board of management, staff, students and their parents in the development, implementation and review of their school's Bí Cineálta policy and the student friendly version.

5.0 Dealing with Bullying Behaviour

5.1 The staff with responsibility for dealing with bullying are as follows:

- Leadership Team - Headmaster and Deputy Principals.
- Year Heads (YH's)
- Form Tutors and/or members of the Student Support Team (SST)

5.2 Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

1. Students who have reported a bullying incident will be asked to document the incident(s).
2. If a group of students is involved, each student will be engaged individually at first. Students will be asked to write an account of the incident(s). Thereafter, all students involved should be met as a group.
3. All cases will be treated seriously, investigated with care, and with all possible confidentiality.
4. Sensitivity and respect will be shown to both the person making the complaint, and to the subject(s) of the complaint.

5. The facts will be established i.e. time, date, place of the incident, and details of the incident itself.
6. The College Bí Cineálta recording forms will be completed by the Year Head following the investigation.

5.3. Where bullying behaviour has occurred

When it has been ascertained that bullying behaviour has taken place the following steps will be taken:

1. Parents will be informed of the incident(s) as soon as reasonably possible.
2. They will be informed of the actions to be taken to address the behaviour as outlined in the College's Bí Cineálta Policy.
3. Disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion will be taken in line with the College Code of Behaviour.
4. The Year Head will put in place a support plan for those involved in the incidents utilising the existing College Pastoral Support Team.
5. Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour will be supported by the designated staff who deal with bullying.
6. The student who has experienced bullying behaviour will be supported so that they feel listened to, supported and reassured.
7. Designated College staff will identify the support needed for the student who has displayed bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties and ensure that their needs are met.
8. After 20 days the case will be reviewed by the relevant Year Head and Link Deputy Principal.
9. All key dates must be documented within the College Bi Cineálta recording procedures.

5.4 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. All members of staff must report such disclosures to the YH and/or Link Deputy to decide the best approach in this situation.

Parents may also make the College aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the College take no action. Parents must put this request in writing to the College however, while acknowledging the parent's request, Colleges may decide that it is appropriate to address bullying behaviour using its Bí Cineálta policy.

5.5 Determining if bullying behaviour has ceased

The College will engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 College days after the initial discussion to review progress following the initial intervention.

If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the College will review the strategies used in consultation with the students and parents and agree to meet again over an agreed timeframe until the bullying behaviour has ceased.

Where it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the College will consider using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the College's Code of Behaviour. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the College.

6.0 Recording Bullying Behaviour

All incidents of bullying behaviour will be recorded as per the College Bí Cineálta recording procedures.

These records will be retained in accordance with the College's Data Protection Policy and data retention schedule.

7.0 Complaint Process

If a parent is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by the College, in accordance with these procedures, they should be referred to the College's complains procedure as outlined by the Department of Education <https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/parental-complaints/>

In the event that a student and/or parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, a student and/or parent may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the College's actions have had a negative effect on the student. The office of the Ombudsman for Children can be contacted at ococomplaint@oco.ie

8.0 Oversight

8.1 Bullying behaviour update to Board of Management

At each meeting of the Board of Management the Headmaster will be present and update on the number of incidents of bullying behaviour and the measures taken to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

The update will include the following:

- 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 College 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
- the strategies used to address the bullying
- 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 College that a student has left the College because of reported bullying behaviour
- if any additional support is needed from the Board of Management
- if the College's Bí Cineálta policy requires urgent review in advance of the annual review

Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the College's Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management of Belvedere College SJ confirms that the Board of Management's annual review of the College's Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour and its implementation was completed at the Board of Management meeting of 23rd June 2025.

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*.



Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 23rd June 2025



Headmaster

Date: 23rd June 2025

Appendix A - BOM Annual Review Document

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual (calendar) review of the College's Bí Cineálta policy and its implementation in consultation with the College 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*?

28/04/2025

2. Where in the College is the student–friendly Bí Cineálta policy displayed?

- Classrooms
- Corridors
- Entrance to the College
- College Website
- Biweekly College Newsletter

3. What date did the Board publish the Bí Cineálta policy and the student– friendly policy on the College website?

30/06/2025

4. How has the student–friendly policy been communicated to students?

- Student Journal
- Assemblies
- College Newsletter
- Classroom and corridor displays

5. How has the Bí Cineálta policy and student–friendly policy been communicated to parents

- Parent Handbook
- Website
- Bi-weekly parent and student newsletter

6. Have all College staff been made aware of the, College's Bí Cineálta policy and the *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*?

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

Yes	☒	No	☐
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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	☐
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9. Has the Board discussed how the College is addressing all reports of bullying behaviour.

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

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

Yes	☒	No	☐
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12. Has the Board discussed the effectiveness of the strategies used to prevent bullying behaviour?

Yes	☒	No	☐
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13. How have (a) parents, (b) students and (c) College staff been consulted with as part of the review of the Bí Cineálta Policy?

- They have been consulted as part of the drafting of the policy and records kept.
- Policy to be reviewed during 2025/26 academic year.

14. Outline any aspects of the College's Bí Cineálta policy and/or its implementation that have been identified as requiring further improvement as part of this review:

- Accessing the policy. As a result the policy is available on website, student journal and links on the Bi-weekly parent and student newsletter

15. Where areas for improvement have been identified, outline how these will be addressed and whether an action plan with timeframes has been developed?

- Accessing the policy. As a result the policy is available on website, student journal and links on the Bi-weekly parent and student newsletter

16. Does the student-friendly policy need to be updated as a result of this review and if so why?

No

17. Does the College refer parents to the complaints procedures if they have a complaint about how the College has addressed bullying behaviour?

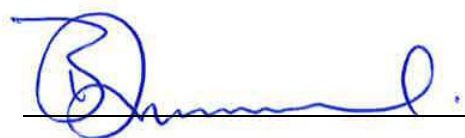
Yes	☒	No	☐
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18. Has a parent informed the College that a student has left the College due to reported bullying behaviour?

Yes	☐	No	☒
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19. Has the Office of the Ombudsman for Children initiated or completed an investigation into how the College has addressed an incident of bullying behaviour?

Yes	☐	No	☒
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Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 23rd June 2025



Headmaster

Date: 23rd June 2025