Le Chéile Secondary School

Le Chéile Secondary School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Le Chéile Secondary 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.

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.

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.

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	21st March 2025.	Online Survey and half day school closure for training.
Students	28th March 2025.	Online survey and 'Anti Bullying Committee" addressing Year Group assemblies.
Parents	10th March 2025.	Online survey and letter pushed out on our school app.
Board of Management	10th March 2025	Via email
Wider school community	10th March 2025	Draft on website
Date policy was approved: 12th June 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):
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 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.

Culture and Environment

Teachers greet all pupils as they enter their classrooms from school corridors.

Staff rota to welcome students as they enter the building every morning.

Active Student Council & Prefect team. Empowerment of student voice

Cairde Claddagh Ambassadors and student representatives on School Development Committees.

'Check and Connect' referral system.

Weekly Care team meetings.

Many of our classrooms have windows so students are visible from outside the classroom too

'Angel' Mentoring System in 1st and 2nd Year.

Flag display at front of the building to visually represent countries where our Le Chéile students/staff come from.

Tutor time

Seating plans for classrooms

Library space for reading

Visible displays around the school of our Animating Principal, Root Beliefs and Values

Display of students' work and student friendly Bí Cineálta policy in each classroom.

Designated area to promote wellbeing (our Wellbeing Wall) at the front of the building.

Designated areas for students during break times & for quiet reflection (Reading Cave, prayer room)

Separate toilets for 1st Years.

A plethora of extra-curricular activities on offer-"The Hub" (Friendship Club), Library, LGBTQ+, Chess Club , Dungeons and Dragons , Sports Blitz in Gym during breaks.

"One Voice , Hands Up , Listen and Wait" visual displayed in all classrooms

Member of senior management monitoring toilets at break times

School Guidance counsellors

Teaching and Learning

Various awareness days/themed weeks throughout the school calendar e.g. Friendship Week, Anti- Bullying (Cyber Bullying) Day, Stand Up Awareness Week, Internet Safety Day College For Every Student, Catholic School's Week, Culture Day, School Feast Day, Awards Day etc.

Weekly Year Group assemblies led by each Year Head

1st and 2nd Year Good News Trips

1st and 2nd Year Weekly Certificates

Whole school assemblies every month, 'Student of the Month" Awards presented

TY students take part in LIFT mentorship training & act as mentors to the 1st year students

Learning Support and Behaviour Support is provided where it is needed to develop social skills & promote inclusion

Subject rotations in 1st year to allow for better subject choice selection for Junior Cycle

Teach-Meets are run throughout the year, to share T & L strategies

Variety of programmes are run in SPHE and Wellbeing/Guidance Classes

Peer Teaching/Observation carried out throughout the Year

Our School Ethos which promotes wellbeing is at the centre of all subject plans

1st Year transition programme "Belonging Plus" throughout induction week / SPHE.

Drama – School Musical every year

AEN/ASD: AEN meetings at the start of every school year delivered by AEN Co Ordinator to all staff. Whole school AEN updated on VS Ware profiles .

Regular staff meetings

Policy and Planning

Related policies

Bi Cineálta Policy

Code of Behaviour Policy

Health& Safety Policy

Child Safeguarding

Data Protection

Educational Outings & Trips Policy

Critical Incident

iPad Acceptable use policy

Cyber bullying

SPHE Policy

RSE policy

Whole School Guidance Plan

Wellbeing Policy

Relationships and Partnerships

Links with external services e.g. NEPS, CAMHS, TUSLA, Jigsaw, Gardaí etc.

Links with BOM, PA, Students' Council, Foroige, ISSU, Local shops (Breakfast Club).

Active Student Support Team who meet weekly

Guest Speakers

Garda Visits-During our careers Fair etc

Extra-Curricular- Coaches, Artists, Fresh Film competition etc.

Fundraising throughout the Year for local charities e.g. Jigsaw, SVP etc

Feeder school visits by AEN department

Work experience for Transition Year and Leaving Cert Applied students in the local 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):

Preventative Strategies

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour, in addition to all the practices identified above under Culture and Environment, Teaching and Learning , Planning and Policy and Relationships and Partnerships.

- Supervision and monitoring policies to prevent and address bullying behaviour:

• Yard/ Corridors and in class - A schedule of staff supervision on corridors and Astro/Basketball courts is developed to monitor student behaviour and wellbeing. Any causes for concern are dealt with and reported to school management or a member of the Year Head team. Senior management also monitor bathrooms during lunchtimes.

• All staff are watchful and observe relationships between students in class, note absence patterns etc.

• Student Voice - Students are surveyed through an online form throughout the year regarding bullying behaviour as part of the Bí Cineálta process.

• The Care Team meet weekly and confidently circulate an 'IN/OUT LIST' to all staff to highlight vulnerable students who need an 'extra eye'.

- 'The Hub' is run every lunchtime to promote friendships & encourage positive relationships between students. Our Senior Prefect Team help to facilitate this.
- Anti bullying ambassadors are elected every year and they promote engagement with events like Safer Internet Day etc.
- 2nd year 'Angels' mentor the 1st year students to promote healthy relationships between students

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Principal, Deputy Principals, Year Heads, Tutors, School Guidance Counsellors, Care Team. Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

All reports of bullying will be noted by any teacher in the school. Reports of bullying can be made to the class tutor, year head, deputy principal or principal. When a teacher receives a report of bullying, a record of the incidence will be completed.

Serious cases of bullying will be referred immediately to the Principal, who is then the relevant teacher. A Serious Incident Protocol will apply in any case where there is cause for concern about the safety of an individual or group. This can trigger Child Protection Procedures.

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 (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

The primary aim in addressing reports of bullying behaviour should be to stop the bullying behaviour & to restore as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the teacher should consider the following: what. Where, when & why?
If a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first. Every student should be asked for a written account of what happened. The records should document the form & type of bullying behaviour (if known) & the date of the initial engagement with students and parents.

The definition of bullying provided earlier sets out clear criteria to help identify bullying behaviour. 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 & this becomes a repeated behaviour.

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 this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, the school will support the students(s) involved.

Incidents can occur where behaviour is unacceptable & hurtful, but the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies that deal with inappropriate behaviour are dealt with in line with the schools Code of Behaviour.

Supporting Students affected by Bullying

Pupils involved in bullying need assistance on a regular basis. Perpetrators may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others. Victims may need counselling and opportunities to develop their friendship and social skills. The school chaplain and guidance counsellors may be involved. In some situations, it may be necessary to get in touch with Gardai, Health Board or other external agencies. Parents may request contact numbers of same.

Parents are an integral part of our school community & play an important role in partnership with schools in addressing bullying behaviour. Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter & to consult with them on the actions needed to be taken to address the bullying behaviour. Approaches such as restorative practice & mediation may be used to address bullying behaviour when the teachers involved have been trained & the students involved have agreed to their use.

Parents & students may make schools aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred & specifically request that the school take no action. Parents should put this request in writing to the school. However, while acknowledging this kind of request, schools may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

Investigation Bullying Allegations

The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

➢ A student may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school and details will be recorded by the relevant teacher (Year Head) on a bullying/cyberbullying behaviour record form.

➢ A parent may bring a bullying concern to the relevant Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal.

➢ Students are encouraged to view the reporting of bullying as responsible behaviour.

➢ All reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. The relevant teacher in this school is the Year Head. The aim is to resolve the issue and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

➢ Non-teaching staff will report any incidents of bullying to the Year Head.

➢ Parents and students are required to cooperate with the any investigation and to assist the school in resolving the issue and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

➢ The matter will be dealt with outside the classroom to ensure the privacy of any party involved

➢ The relevant teacher(s) will speak separately to the pupils involved, directly or indirectly to get both sides of the story. Interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and due regard to the rights of all students concerned.

➢ The relevant teacher(s) will investigate the incident by seeking answers to questions of what, when, who and why. Factual notes will be kept at each stage of the investigation.

➢ If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter they may be met as a group (if appropriate). At the group meeting, each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.

➢ Restorative Practice approaches may be used where appropriate.

➢ If it is concluded that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken in line with this policy and the School's Code of Behaviour. Parents will be given an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce and support the actions being taken by the school.

➢ Where the relevant teacher has determined that a student has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the student being bullied.

➢ It will also be made clear to all involved (each set of students and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is private matter between the student being disciplined, his/her parents and the school.

➢ Follow-up meetings may be arranged separately with the relevant parties involved with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the student who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.

➢ The Year Head monitors and meets regularly with the pupil who is experiencing bullying. Should the Year Head consider that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days (or sooner) after he/she has determined that bullying occurred, it must be recorded by the Year Head in the bullying/cyberbullying record form (Appendix 1.) This depends upon:

➢ whether the bullying has ceased,

➢ whether issues between the parties has been resolved,

➢ whether relationships have been restored

➢ Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal.

➢ Year Head updates at Care Team meetings.

➢ Where a serious incident of bullying has been established, the relevant teacher will present the Principal with a written record of the discussions with those involved.

If the bullying behaviour has not ceased within the 20 school days after the initial discussion, the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students & parents & 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 school will consider using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the schools Code of Behaviour.

If the review with students & parents determines that the bullying behaviour has ceased , the date of this determination will be noted. Any engagement with external services/supports will also be noted.

➢ Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent will be referred to the school's complaints procedures.

➢ In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

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):
- Prevention strategies detailed above are currently in place. Where appropriate, the following approaches may be utilized; -Restorative practice/mediation -Inclusion in Care Team -Guidance counselling -Engagement in Schoology courses in relation to Empathy etc. -Consideration of classroom seating plans -Provision of 'safe spaces' in the school -Mentoring/Check & Connect -Referral to external agencies *This list is not exhaustive.

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. 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*.

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 in the school journal.

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.

Date of adoption by Board of Management: 12th June 2025

Date of Review: _____

Signed: _____. Signed: _____

Principal Chairperson, Board of Management

Appendix 1 Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____Class_____

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

_____
_____
_____

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

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

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

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
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:

Homophobic	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 _____

*** Note:** The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.