

Loreto Secondary School, Wexford



Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Mission Statement

Truth, freedom, justice, sincerity and joy – as relevant today in Loreto, Wexford as for Mary Ward in 1609.

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and code of behaviour guidelines issued by NEWB, Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools, the board of Management of Loreto Secondary School, Wexford has adopted the following anti-bullying policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour in conjunction with and within the framework of the school's overall Code of Behaviour.

This policy fully complies with the requirements of *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2024*.

This 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.

Abbreviations used within this policy:

BOM	Board of Management
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CSPE	Civic, Social and Political Education
DDLp	Deputy Designated Liaison Person
DES	Department of Education and Skills
DLP	Designated Liaison Person
DP	Deputy Principal
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EWO	Educational Welfare Officer
GP	General Purpose
HSE	Health Service Executive
ISPCC	Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
IT	Information Technology
LS	Learning Support
NCSE	National Council for Special Education
NEPS	National Educational Psychological Service
NEWB	National Educational Welfare Board
RSE	Relationships and Sexuality Education
SCCT	Student Care Co-ordination Team
SET	Special Education Teacher
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
SNA	Special Needs Assistant
SPHE	Social, Personal and Health Education
SST	Student Support Team
TY	Transition Year

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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	03 March 2025 11 March 2025 May 2026	Survey Consultation meeting with all school staff Invitation to feedback
Students	01 April 2025 28 April 2025 May 2026	Survey Consultation with Student Council Consultation with Student Council
Parents	07 May 2025 18 May 2026	Consultation meeting with parents/guardians Letter to families inviting feedback on policy
Board of Management	26 May 2025 25 May 2026	Circulated in advance and discussed in meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	07 May 2025 13 May 2025 18 May 2026	Consultation meeting with the school community Letter to parents and survey Letter to families
Date policy was approved: 25 May 2026 and 26 May 2025 (initial approval)		
Date policy was last reviewed: 25 May 2026		

Signed: Edward Lyons Date: 25/5/26
Edward Lyons, Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: John Mc Ginnity Date: 25/5/26
John Mc Ginnity, Principal.

Rationale

This policy aims to assist our goals at Loreto Secondary School, Wexford which are to create a respectful, safe and caring environment where the wellbeing of all members of the school community is promoted and in which the dignity of each individual is valued. This policy is based on our school mission statement: "Truth, Freedom, Justice, Sincerity and Joy- as relevant today in Loreto, Wexford as for Mary Ward in 1609".

Key Principles

The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying behaviour and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to ensuring that policy and practice in the school is guided by the four key principles of *Cineáltas*:

1. Prevention
2. Support
3. Oversight
4. Community

The Board of Management of Loreto Secondary School, Wexford, 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.

The term parent(s) will be used as defined in the Education Act 1998, which includes a foster parent, a guardian appointed under relevant guardianship of children legislation, or other person acting in loco parentis who has a child in his or her care subject to any statutory power or order of a court and, in the case of a child who has been adopted under relevant adoption legislation, or where a child has been adopted outside the State means the adopter or adopters or the surviving adopter.

People and Situations included in this Policy

The policy addresses various types of bullying behaviour, cyber-bullying, harassment and sexual harassment. While this policy addresses issues related to bullying of students (i.e. situations in which one or more students are the victim(s) of bullying behaviour), the policy applies to teaching and other school staff, parents/ guardians, and others insofar as measures under the policy relate to them. Furthermore, the policy applies to incidents of bullying behaviour which occur outside the school if the behaviour impacts upon any person's participation in our school and if the bullying behaviour continues into school.

All members of the school community are subject to this policy, particularly the following relationships:

- Student to student
- Student to any staff member (including non-teaching staff, SNAs, Sensori staff)
- Any staff member to student
- Parent to any staff member
- Any staff member to parent
- Any staff member to staff member

The policy will apply to a number of time periods/activities as follows:

- School time (including break times, in class, between classes and while on the school premises)
- On the way to and from school
- On school-based activities, school tours/trips
- Extra-curricular activities
- While in school uniform
- While acting under the school's name
- To any behaviour that adversely affects the school reputation or the education of any student in the school or adversely affects any member of 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 to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

The core definition above sets out clear criteria to help school communities to prevent, correctly identify and address bullying among students. Alleged incidents of bullying are however often complex and must be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The core elements of the definition are further described below:

➤ **Targeted behaviour**

Bullying is deliberate, unwanted behaviour that causes harm to others, and 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. Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. The harm can be physical (for example, personal injury, damage to or loss of property), social (for example, withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion) and/or emotional (for example, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety) and can have a serious and long-term negative impact on the student experiencing the bullying 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 school'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 school's code of behaviour. Posting a single harmful message/image/video online, and which is highly likely to be reposted or shared with others can therefore be seen as bullying 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 including membership of the Traveller and/or Roma communities, 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/video, and the inability of the targeted student to remove offensive online material or escape the bullying.

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.

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 behaviour.

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.

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 online. 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, sexual orientation or membership of the Traveller community, it may be considered a hate crime under the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989, and those engaging in such behaviour may face criminal charges.

If bullying behaviour involves sexual harassment or sexual assault, this may also be considered criminal behaviour.

An Garda Síochána is the appropriate authority to investigate alleged criminal behaviour and any behaviour which breaks the law may be referred to the Gardaí.

Types of Bullying Behaviour Deemed to be Inappropriate:
(this list is not exhaustive)

General behaviours which apply to all	• Physical aggression • Damage to property • Name calling • Slagging • The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person • Offensive graffiti • Extortion • Intimidation • Insulting or offensive gestures • The “look” • Invasion of personal space • Deliberate isolation or exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying behaviour • No innocent bystander • A combination of any of the types listed
Cyber	• Denigration: Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person’s reputation • Harassment: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual • Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person’s name or creating a fake account pretending to be someone else to embarrass or damage someone’s reputation • Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight • Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online • Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images • Fraping: Hacking into a person’s social media account to send untrue/abusive messages or to change details while pretending to be that person • Catfishing: Creating a false identity online with the intent of deception to build a relationship or to commit financial fraud • Exclusion: Purposefully excluding or blocking someone from an online group • Cyber stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety • Silent telephone/mobile phone call

	• Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls • Abusive text messages • Abusive email • Abusive communication or postings on social networks e.g., Facebook/Instagram/Tik Tok/Be Real/Twitter/You Tube etc. or on games consoles • Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures • Abusive posts on any form of communication technology
Identity Based Behaviours	Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).
Homophobic and Transgender	• Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation • Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation • Name calling e.g., gay, queer, lesbian ... used in a derogatory manner • Physical intimidation or attacks • Threats
Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community	• Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background • Exclusion on the basis of any of the above
Relational	This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include: • Malicious gossip • Isolation & exclusion • Ignoring • Excluding from the group • Taking someone's friends away • Turning others against a student • "Bitching" • Spreading rumours • Breaking confidence • Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear • Whispering so as to exclude another • The "look" • Use of terminology such as "nerd" in a derogatory way

	Relational bullying is not to be confused with changing friendship patterns that can occur naturally between people from time to time
Sexual	• Harassment: any form of unwanted conduct based on any of the nine grounds named in the equality legislation that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating hostile, degrading or offensive environment for the victim. The nine grounds are gender, marital status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion and membership of the Traveller community • Sexual harassment: any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment for the victim
Special Educational Needs, Disability – Learning Difficulties and Gifted	• Name calling • Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs • Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying • Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues • Mimicking a person's disability • Setting others up for ridicule

Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by the school to prevent all forms of bullying behaviour. These also 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 to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*). 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.

Bullying Prevention aligned with Key Areas of Wellbeing Promotion

Culture and Environment	Curriculum
• Whole-school inclusion activities, e.g. 1st Year Induction Camp, random acts of kindness, whole-year retreats • Encouraging student engagement on committees, e.g. Prefects' Council, Student Council. Ember Committee, Meitheal and Cara and maintaining and developing an awareness of bullying and its consequences through those committees • Using a positive approach in dealing with students, e.g. positive behaviour points, rewards • Creating a whole-school open and transparent culture and fostering good relationships between staff and students • Seating plans for each classroom • Encouraging staff involvement in events, programmes and initiatives to promote an anti-bullying culture in the school • Creation of a safe, respectful, supportive and positive environment in school ensuring all staff members model respectful behaviour • Promotion of responsible online behaviours through Anti-Bullying Week,	• Promotion of various awareness weeks over the year; Stand Up Awareness Week, Think Languages, Anti-Bullying Week, Respect and Kindness Week, Headstrong – Cycle Against Suicide • Implementation of curriculum in SPHE classes around diversity and inclusion • Providing supports for students for whom English is an additional language, e.g. EAL classes, in-class support, employing Ukrainian SNA • Providing appropriate and graded bilingual reading materials in the library to support students at different levels of English language attainment to help with inclusion • Providing library resources representing different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds to provide awareness of the diverse cultures in the school • Promotion of gender equality through curriculum, e.g. SPHE, CSPE, Politics and Society, etc. • Promotion of equality through curriculum, e.g. SPHE, CSPE, Religious Education, Politics and Society, etc.

Internet Safety Day, Respect and Kindness Week • Implementation of a robust no-phone policy for 1st – 4th Years and restricted phone use for 5th and 6th Years • Blocking access to social media sites on school devices • Displaying an inclusive and diverse physical environment, e.g. relevant posters, School of Sanctuary noticeboard, rainbow flags • Monthly edition of 'Diverse Voices' in the school newsletter • Promotion of and student involvement in the Inclusion Committee • Fostering a culture that celebrates diversity in the school, e.g. a designated Champion School of Sanctuary • Offering peer support and promotion of activities to raise awareness, e.g. Multi-Cultural Week • Providing supports for students for whom English is an additional language, e.g. Ukrainian SNA • Adopting a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment and all other forms of harassment • Promotion of positive role models • Challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment • Challenging stereotypes that can contribute to other forms of harassment • Weekly meeting of SCCT (Student Care Coordination Team) and SET (Special Education Team) • Dedicated guidance counsellor for each class • Dedicated report form on the school website to report bullying behaviour, monitored by a DP • Designated areas for students - LS room and locker area for vulnerable students, designated 1st Year toilets, designated locker areas for each year group	• Offering opportunities for students to engage in a wide variety of curriculum and extra-curricular activities, irrespective of their sex • Implementation of curriculum in SPHE around online safety • Promotion of digital literacy • Maintaining and developing an awareness of bullying and its consequences among the student body through SPHE/CSPE/RSE • Wellbeing indicators posted in all classrooms and addressed in all areas of Teaching and Learning • 1st year transition to school programme through SPHE/Wellbeing • Teaching students about healthy relationships through the SPHE/RSE programme
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• 'Where to go for help' laminated posters in each classroom offering supports inside and outside school • Flyer handed to each student offering supports and services for students in need at weekends, holidays, etc.	
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Relationships and Partnerships	Policy and Planning
• Liaison with community Gardai, giving talks on racism, Coco's Law, impact of cyberbullying, etc. • Linking with external services e.g. NEPS, CAMHS, Tusla, Gardai • Promotion of resources to support parents on school website, e.g. Webwise • Guest speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds to raise awareness of racism • Encouraging parents to promote values of respect at home • TY Volunteering Week, giving students a better understanding of empathy and giving back to their community • Liaison with feeder national schools to track any history of bullying behaviour and to separate any students with prior issues into different classes • Providing parents with all necessary information around bullying and reporting of bullying behaviour at information evenings and engagement with Parents' Council • Invitation to all staff to join the SST annually • Updating our Blue Shield status with the ISPCC every two years • Communicating our anti-bullying measure to parents and the wider	Development and communication of • Bí Cineálta Policy • IT Acceptable Use Policy • Special Education Teaching and Inclusion Policy • Mobile Phone Policy • Code of Behaviour Policy • Data Protection Policy • Wellbeing Programme • Child Safeguarding Policy • Staff aware that they are all mandated persons, child protection procedures handed out each year as reminder and complete Children First E-Learning Programme • Principal & Deputy Principal complete DLP/DDLP training and refreshers • Policy on Dignity in the Workplace for staff and creation of a zero-tolerance culture around bullying behaviour and sexual harassment in the workplace • Surveying students annually to monitor any unreported bullying behaviour and to identify the effectiveness of the policy • SLT provision for necessary support structures, e.g. teacher CPD, funding for school-based initiatives, guest speakers, workshops, etc.

community through the school website and app, including a bullying reporting mechanism which is monitored by a DP • Principal's Report to the BOM	• Staff CPD – workshops, webinars, training days, etc. • Bí Cineálta student-friendly policy developed and visible throughout the school, in corridors and classrooms as well as on the school website • Through the SST and following the Bí Cineálta Policy, consistent recording, investigation and follow-up of any bullying behaviour and use of restorative practice to encourage a resolution between the parties involved • Maintaining and developing an awareness of bullying behaviour and its consequences among the student body through curriculum, student leadership, external partnerships, etc. • Annual review of the Bí Cineálta Policy by the BOM with input from Student Council and Parents' Council and the wider school community (as appropriate)
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Supervision & Monitoring

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, Curriculum, Planning and Policy and Relationships and Partnerships, Loreto Secondary School, Wexford has the following supervision and monitoring policies to prevent and address bullying behaviour:

- A supervision and substitution rota in place before school, at break and at lunchtimes and in respect of areas such as toilets, coat and bag rooms, outside areas, etc. to monitor student behaviour and wellbeing. Any causes for concern are dealt with and reported to school management.
- General classroom management and monitoring of student interaction both in the classroom and moving between classes. All staff are watchful and observe relationships between students, note absence patterns and let it be known that high standards of behaviour are always expected.

- Survey of students - students are surveyed annually regarding bullying behaviour as part of the role of the school's Student Support Team.
- The Student Care Co-ordination Team offers support to students who may be going through a difficult period in their lives. This team meet weekly to review students and allocate support as necessary.
- A check and connect system where trained teachers meet students on a regular basis to ensure they are supported in school and can continue to engage with their learning as well as engaging socially with other students.
- Encouragement to engage in a range of activities at lunchtimes and after school to foster friendships outside of the classroom.
- Strategic seating plans in each class to ensure all students are seated where they feel comfortable and to reduce anxiety.
- Teacher-led group work to encourage collaboration and build teamwork and friendships.
- Monitoring of vulnerable students through the class teacher and Year Head system.
- Referral to Guidance Counsellors/Chaplain for counselling and monitoring of vulnerable students.
- Peer monitoring and mentoring through the Meitheal and Cara systems.
- Monitoring of CCTV, present in all corridors and stairwells.

Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teachers with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour are as follows:

Year Heads and/or Deputy Principals

Loreto, Wexford condemns all forms of bullying and commits itself to dealing quickly, proactively and fairly with all instances of bullying. The BOM strongly asserts the right of every member of the school community to work and exist in a safe and non-threatening environment. Bullies rely and thrive upon our silence. To combat the problem, it is important that all bullying behaviour be reported.

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, *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

Stage 1:

Where a member of the teaching staff has a concern about bullying behaviour, either as a result of a personal observation or as a result of receiving a report from a victim, a third party (the victim's parent/guardian, another parent, a staff member, a bystander, ancillary staff, SNAs, bus driver or any member of the school community), the teacher should take written notes on the report by means of Appendix A (Incident Record Form). This teacher will then report without delay to the relevant Year Head or Deputy Principal and provide him/her with a copy of Appendix A.

The Year Head or Deputy Principal will endeavour to resolve the matter as effectively as possible in consultation with the parties involved. An anti-bullying template will be made available to the Year Head or Deputy Principal for use when investigating an instance of alleged bullying behaviour (Appendix B – Alleged Bullying Behaviour Incident Form).

The Year Head/Deputy Principal will take a calm, unemotional, problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour. As far as possible, incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved. The Year Head/Deputy Principal will be guided by the definition of bullying behaviour as outlined in Chapter 2, *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*), when deciding if bullying behaviour has occurred.

Bullying is 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 Year Head/Deputy Principal will ask the following three questions to determine if the behaviour is defined as bullying behaviour.

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

If the answer to any of the questions is no, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. If the answer to each of the questions is yes, then the behaviour should be addressed using the *Bí Cineálta* procedures.

The Year Head/Deputy Principal's first actions will generally be on a no blame basis so that the perpetrator will be made aware of how hurtful her behaviour is and that it must stop. It almost always does. The Year Head/Deputy Principal will aim to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved. For the purposes of the overall pastoral care of the students involved, the Class Teacher will be informed of any reports of bullying behaviour by the Deputy Principal.

Parents are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with the school, in addressing bullying behaviour. The parents of the parties will 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 as outlined in the school's *Bí Cineálta* policy.

If it is decided by the Year Head/ Deputy Principal that bullying has not occurred, this will be explained to all parties involved and he/she will assist them in restoring their relationship, as far as is practicable.

Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour. If disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the student being disciplined, her parents and the school. This will be made clear to all students involved. Such sanctions will be imposed by the Year Head/ Deputy Principal and may include lunchtime/ after-school detention or a written punishment exercise.

Parents and students are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the Year Head/Deputy Principal in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.

Should a resolution not be possible, or if the matter is of sufficient magnitude, the Deputy Principal will bring the matter to the attention of the Student Support Team (SST). The SST will comprise of the Principal, Deputy Principals, Year Heads, a Guidance Counsellor and at least two other members of the teaching staff.

Stage 2:

Concerns about or allegations of bullying behaviour will be investigated and addressed in accordance with Section 6, *Bi Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools*.

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred relevant teachers will 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 will 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
- Students may be asked to give a written account of the incident(s) (Appendix C – Alleged Bullying Behaviour Incident Student Statement Form)

The views of the student who has experienced bullying behaviour are important in deciding as to how best to address the situation. In circumstances where a student expresses concern about their parents being informed, the school will develop an appropriate plan to support the student and for how their parents will be informed.

The school will consider communication barriers that may exist when communicating with parents, for example, literacy, digital literacy or language barriers.

In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the students involved will be contacted by the Year Head/ Deputy Principal at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. Parents will be given the opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school.

Where it has been determined that a student has engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to her how she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and she will be asked to see the situation from the perspective of the student being bullied.

If disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the student being disciplined, her parents and the school. This will be made clear to all students involved. Such sanctions will be agreed by the SST and may include lunchtime/ after-school detention or a written punishment exercise.

The Year Head/Deputy Principal must engage with the students involved in the bullying behaviour and their parents no later than 20 school days after the initial contact. A timeframe should be set for further engagement and follow-up until the bullying behaviour ceases.

During this engagement, important factors to consider include:

The nature of the bullying behaviour.

The effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying.

The relationship between the students involved.

Follow-up meetings with relevant students and/or parents may be arranged separately by the Year Head/Deputy Principal, with a view to possibly bringing the students together within 20 school days if the student who has been bullied is agreeable.

Stage 3:

In cases where the bullying behaviour has not been resolved within 20 school days after it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the Year Head/ Deputy Principal in the recording template in Appendix D - Form for referral to the Principal: confirmed and unresolved bullying behaviour.

The Year Head/Deputy Principal will then refer the matter to the Principal by use of this form (Appendix D). These forms will then be filed in a designated, confidential folder in the Deputy Principal's office and kept for at least seven years. All records will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988 and the Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003.

If the bullying behaviour has not stopped, the Year Head/Deputy Principal should review the strategies used to address the bullying and consult with the students involved and their parents to determine next steps.

The Principal is empowered to formally question students, to take written statements, to notify parents and to impose appropriate sanctions upon perpetrators. Following further investigation and due process, which can involve the assistance of a Guidance Counsellor, the Principal may impose a term of suspension on any guilty student, in accordance with Board of Management procedures.

The School reserves the right to investigate allegations of bullying (and to take disciplinary action where necessary) where bullying is perpetrated by a member of the school community and it impinges on the work or well-being of a student in the school. The 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 is required to support the student(s) involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, the school will deal with it under the *Bí Cineálta* policy (Section 6.2)

The School reserves the right, in accordance with Section 6, *Bi Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools*, to seek the assistance of agencies such as NEPS, the HSE, and the Gardaí, where it deems such assistance is necessary to dealing effectively with bullying behaviour. In any case, where the school deems bullying behaviour to be potentially abusive (Section 2, *Bi Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools*) it will consult with the HSE's Children and Family Services to assist it in drawing up an appropriate response or to obtain advice or to make a formal child protection report to the HSE or the Gardaí (as appropriate) in accordance with the *DES Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary (revised 2023)*.

Any further instances of bullying behaviour by the same guilty student will be referred by the Principal to the Board of Management for final decision.

Complaint Process

If a parent is not happy 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 Schools*, 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.

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. This may, for example, occur in the context of individual guidance counselling appointments. 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 may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.*

Support

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):

The approach to addressing bullying behaviour needs to be fair and consistent. Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour will be supported.

The student experiencing bullying behaviour will be engaged with without delay so that they feel listened to, supported and reassured. It is important that the student's agency or sense of power is not decreased by adults deciding what will happen next without listening to the student and involving them in deciding on the actions that will be taken to support them.

Pupils may need counselling and/or opportunities to participate in school-based activities they enjoy, designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed.

- In this regard the Class teacher, Year Head and/or Deputy Principal will closely monitor the student to ensure they are actively supported.
- The Guidance Department will offer support and they may be encouraged to engage in check and connect with an appropriately trained teacher.
- Where a student is impacted by bullying behaviour that has occurred outside of the care and responsibility of the school, the school will support the student as appropriate and engage with them and their parents to determine what supports can be put in place.

The student displaying bullying behaviour will be supported to better manage relational difficulties and ensure that their needs are met.

- Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.
- The Class teacher, Year Head and/or Deputy Principal will monitor the student closely to support them in this regard.

The school in certain circumstances may also seek the support and advice of TUSLA, EWO, NEPS, NCSE, second level school support services, HSE and any other agency deemed appropriate to support the school in dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.

Recording of bullying behaviour

Those involved in investigating and resolving bullying behaviour will note and report developments as follows and, in doing so, they will comply with relevant data protection legislation. It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

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*.

All bullying behaviour will be recorded. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

- Record the engagement with all parties involved.
- Document the following details:
 - Type and form of bullying behaviour.
 - Where and when it took place.
 - The date of the initial engagement with the students involved and their parents.
- The record will include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour.
- The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented.

- The review will be documented with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of the students and their parents in relation to this
- The date that the bullying behaviour has been determined to have ceased will be recorded.
- Any engagement with external services/supports will also be noted.
- Records will be kept according to the school's record-keeping policy and in line with data protection rules.
- A copy of the records will be kept in the student's file and in the confidential folder in the Deputy Principal's office.

Links with other policies:

- IT Acceptable Use Policy
- Special Education Teaching and Inclusion Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Code of Behaviour Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- RSE Policy
- Attendance Policy

Oversight

The Principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each Board of Management meeting using Appendix E - Guide to Providing Bullying Behaviour Update. 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 been reported since the last meeting, 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
- any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant.
- 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 needs urgent review in advance of the annual review.

This update will not contain personal or identifying information. (See Chapter 7 of the *Bí Cineálta* procedures).

The minutes of the Board of Management meeting will document the number of new incidents of bullying behaviour; the number currently ongoing and the total number of incidents of bullying behaviour since the beginning of the school year.

The minutes will also note where the Board of Management has considered the bullying behaviour verbal update and document when the Board of Management has decided that an urgent review of the policy is required.

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 (Appendix F - Review of the *Bí Cineálta* Policy/ Appendix G - Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the school's *Bí Cineálta* Policy).

Appendix A: Incident Record Form (for completion by member of teaching staff)

Name of person making report to member of teaching staff:

Downloaded from <http://ajphaphysocpharm.sagepub.com/> at 11:01 11 November 2014

Details of Incident: Only details which are pertinent to the incident/case should be recorded. Where suspicions or allegations of bullying behaviour are made, this should be clearly indicated.

[illegible]

Date of incident:

Time of incident:

Signed by member of teaching staff:

Date of referral to Year Head/ Deputy Principal:

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred.

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour the Year Head/Deputy Principal should 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 in certain circumstances. A single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and thus becomes a repeated behaviour.

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.

A copy of this form must be placed in the confidential folder in the Deputy Principal's office.

Appendix B: Alleged Bullying Behaviour Incident Record Form (for completion by Year Head/Deputy Principal)

Name(s) and class(es) of student(s):

Details of Incident: Only details which are pertinent to the incident/case should be recorded. Where suspicions or allegations of bullying behaviour are made, this should be clearly indicated.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper appears to be a standard notebook page.

Date of incident:

Time of incident:

Action Taken by Year Head/Deputy Principal:

A copy of this form must be placed in the confidential folder in the Deputy Principal's office.

Appendix C: Alleged Bullying Behaviour Incident Student Statement Form

DATE: _____

STUDENT: _____

DETAILS: Include time, place, names of alleged perpetrators, names of bystanders.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper appears to be a standard notebook page.

A copy of this form must be placed in the confidential folder in the Deputy Principal's office.

Appendix D: Form for referral to the Principal: confirmed and unresolved bullying behaviour

1. Name of student experiencing bullying behaviour and class group

Name: _____

Class: _____

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

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

Student concerned	☐
Other student	☐
Parent	☐
Teacher	☐
Other (specify)	☐

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

School grounds	☐
Classroom	☐
Corridor	☐
Toilets	☐
GP area	☐
School bus	☐
Other (specify)	☐

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

--

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es))

Physical aggression	☐	Isolation/Exclusion	☐
Cyberbullying	☐	Malicious gossip	☐
Damage to property	☐	Verbal/name calling	☐
Intimidation	☐	Written	☐

Extortion		Relational	
Other (specify)			

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

Gender identity	
Homophobic/Transphobic (LGBTQ+)	
Disablist	
Exceptionally able	
Racist	
Physical appearance	
Poverty	
Religious identity	
Other (specify)	

8. Brief description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken to date

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Date submitted to Principal: _____

10. Details of action taken to date by Principal

11. Details of sanctions imposed, if any, and recommended future action

Signed by Principal: _____

Date: _____

12. Date and details of referral by the Principal to the Board of Management, including the outcome of any Board decision

--

Signed by Principal: _____

Date: _____

A copy of this form must be placed in the confidential folder in the Deputy Principal's office.

Appendix E: Guide to Providing Bullying Behaviour Update

Guide to providing Bullying Behaviour Update for Board of Management meeting of Loreto Secondary School, Wexford

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 F: 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.

Original adaptation: 26 May 2025; This review: 25 May 2026 (annual review)

2. Where in the school is the student-friendly Bí Cineálta policy displayed?

Throughout the building, foyer area, in corridors and classrooms. It is also constantly on our interactive screens.

3. What date did the Board publish the Bí Cineálta policy and the student-friendly policy on the school website? **28 May 2025**
4. How has the student friendly policy been communicated to students?

Through Assemblies, the Student Council, the school journal and through SPHE classes. All SPHE teachers were required to speak explicitly about the Bí Cineálta policy in two lessons during the year.

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

Through letters to families and Information Meetings with the different parent groups. It is also in the student journal. It is also on our website.

6. Have all school staff been made aware of the, school's *Bí Cineálta* policy and the *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post- Primary Schools*? **Yes**
7. Does the *Bí Cineálta* policy document the strategies that the school uses to prevent bullying behaviour? **Yes**
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**
9. Has the Board discussed how the school is addressing all reports of bullying behaviour? **Yes**
10. Is the Board satisfied that all incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed in accordance with the school's *Bí Cineálta* Policy? **Yes**
11. Have the prevention strategies in the *Bí Cineálta* policy been implemented? **Yes**
12. Has the Board discussed the effectiveness of the strategies used to prevent bullying behaviour? **Yes**
13. How have (a) parents, (b) students and (c) school staff been consulted with as part of the review of the *Bí Cineálta* Policy?

Parents were invited to submit their feedback through a letter to families. This item was also on the agenda and discussed at the Parents' Council meeting of 11 May 2026.

Students were asked via the Students' Council meeting to give their feedback.

School staff were asked to review the policy and submit any feedback to the Principal.

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:

From the Students' Council, students noted that some of the student-friendly posters were considered 'too small'.

We will include the QR code to the 'Bullying Report Form' in the student journal for next year.

Feedback from Parents' Council was incorporated into original document and no new feedback was forthcoming.

Feedback from staff was received from the Guidance Department with a suggestion of changed wording in the section on 'requests to take no action'.

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

We will create larger posters and place them around the school. Continue to mention Bi Cinealta at Assemblies and with class groups.

Minor revisions to wording based on feedback from Guidance Counsellor.

The Student Council will also run an awareness raising campaign in the next school year.

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

No.

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

Yes

18. Has a parent informed the school that a student has left the school due to reported bullying behaviour?

No

19. Has the Office of the Ombudsman for Children initiated or completed an investigation into how the school has addressed an incident of bullying behaviour?

No

Signed:

Edward Lyons

Edward Lyons, Chairperson, Board of Management

John Mc Ginnity

John Mc Ginnity, Principal

Date:

25/5/26

Appendix G: Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management of Loreto Secondary School, Wexford 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 25 May 2026.

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: Edward Lyons,

Edward Lyons, Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: John Mc Ginnity

John Mc Ginnity, Principal.

Date: 25/5/26

Date of next review: May 2027

Appendix H: Advice for students on bullying behaviour

Cyber-bullying is not an issue with technology; it's a behavioural issue!

Bearing in mind the serious nature of cyber-bullying, it is important that all students engage in responsible behaviour when online. You should constantly question the impact your online behaviour has on others. You should also be aware of how to protect yourself from cyber-bullies. **Targeted online abuse will not stop until you do something about it.**

The following advice is offered:

1. Keep passwords private.
2. Choose online friends carefully.
3. Monitor the amount of personal information you post about yourself online. There are several risks associated with sharing personal information online. Some of these risks include:
 - Identity theft
 - Cyberbullying
 - Unwanted contact from strangers
 - Phishing scams
4. Tell a parent/guardian and/or a teacher.
5. Save messages and/or take a screenshot of an abusive message on your phone or computer or download the abusive material and keep it 'as evidence'. Make sure the screenshots have as much identifiable information as possible. A single screenshot does not have to show all of this information, but you may need to take several screenshots to show a trail of abuse. Try to make sure the screenshots show the following information:
 - The name/username of the alleged bully
 - The profile picture/icon of their account
 - The abusive content itself
 - Where the abusive content came from (i.e. obvious signs it came from Snapchat, Facebook, TikTok, etc.)
 - Evidence that the bully deleted abusive content
 - Any reply you gave, particularly if you told the bully to stop
6. Report and block the alleged bully immediately. Do not wait for them to target you with more abusive content.
7. Do not reply to abusive messages/ posts. Replying can lead to an escalation in cyber-bullying and lets the alleged bully know that he/she is getting to you.
8. If the alleged bully is a 'friend' on social media; remove them.
9. Responsible websites and mobile phone operators provide ways for their users to report things such as pornography, bullying content, or other offensive material. Report the issue to the mobile phone or website-company (if it is through call/ text). Most platforms offer a way to report content or users that violate their terms of service. You can

usually find this by searching for 'Report' or 'Report abuse' on the content or the user's profile, You can also report cyberbullying or online harassment by contacting the platform's customer care or reporting abuse facility.

8. If the cyber- bullying is impacting on your school-life or relationships within school, it is very important that you tell a teacher.

9. For more advice and tips, see the following websites: <http://www.thinkb4uclick.ie> and www.webwise.ie.

10. Also refer to the following international websites: www.cyberbullying.org and www.stoptextbully.com .

11. If you are experiencing bullying behaviour or you have witnessed bullying behaviour in person or online, you must tell a trusted adult, e.g. a teacher. Most cases of bullying stop when a trusted adult is involved. Telling a trusted adult is responsible behaviour: it is NOT 'telling tales'.

12. If you are experiencing bullying behaviour, try to display confident body language and assertively tell the bully to stop.

13. It is a good idea to keep a written record/ diary of the bullying behaviour. Record details such as who, when, where, how often, what was said and if there were any witnesses. Produce this evidence to your teacher/ class teacher which may assist him/ her when investigating a case of alleged bullying behaviour.

Appendix I: Advice for parents on bullying behaviour

1. Talk about bullying at home and seek to ensure that your child understands that it is wrong to engage in bullying behaviour, or to be seen to support the bullying behaviour of another person.
2. Prepare your child for a time when they might be the target for bullying behaviour. As part of this, explore some of the reasons why someone may engage in bullying behaviour of others.
3. Highlight that silence is the best friend of bullying behaviour and, therefore, the importance that is attached to letting someone know.
4. Teach your child the skills of assertiveness by modelling it at home. A willingness to listen before judging, rather than being reactive, coupled with learning to use the word “I” is one of the secrets of assertive communication. For example, “I want you to stop doing that”. The assertive child will be able to: stand tall; maintain eye contact; and express him/ herself clearly and calmly.
5. Build empathy in your child, it has a key role to play in the prevention of bullying.
6. Remembering that no one is born with negative thoughts of themselves, work to raise your child’s self-esteem. Recognise, praise and reward your child’s effort as well as their successes. Give them responsibility; ask for their help and for their opinions. Take care that an emotional response to a situation doesn’t lead to saying something to or about your child that criticises or belittles them.
7. A child’s resilience and their sense of self-worth are closely aligned. Fostering resilience in your child will help them to deal well with negative situations.
8. Supporting your child in the development of strong friendships will also make them less vulnerable to bullying behaviour.
9. Encourage your child to participate in activities that have the capacity to provide opportunities for: personal achievement; confidence building; and the promotion of self-esteem and self-discipline.
10. Help your child to master the skills of mediation and conflict resolution.
11. Encourage your child to be a defender, to help someone when they are down and unable to help themselves.
12. Finally, one of the most important things that any parent can do in terms of countering bullying behaviour, is to become acquainted with the signs and symptoms that can emerge in children or young people if they are experiencing bullying behaviour or if they are engaging in bullying behaviour. This will support identification of a problem and, therefore, early intervention. Signs that may indicate that your child is experiencing bullying behaviour include but are not limited to the following:
 - Anxiety about travelling to and from school; for example, physical illnesses, anxiety or distress, requesting parents to drive or collect them, changing travel routes, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school
 - Not wanting to go to school or refusing to attend
 - A change in how they perform in school, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school
 - Pattern of physical illnesses, e.g. headaches, stomach aches
 - Unexplained changes in either mood or behaviour which may be particularly noticed before returning to school after weekends or after school holidays

- Visible signs of anxiety or distress, e.g. stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, etc.
- Spontaneous out-of-character comments about wither students or teachers
- Possessions missing or damaged
- Increased requests for money or stealing money
- Unexplained bruising or cuts
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling them
- Negative reactions, such as getting upset, when online, coming offline or viewing text messages

The above signs do not necessarily mean that a student is experiencing bullying behaviour. However, if these signs occur over a period of time or if a number occur together, it may be an indication that the child is experiencing bullying behaviour.

13. Parents can play a huge role in preventing cyber-bullying. It is important that parents emphasise the importance of online responsibilities to their child, as it is in this area that the child's knowledge may be less extensive. Appropriate online behaviour is the same as appropriate behaviour in the 'real world'. It is also very important that parents let their daughter know that she can go to them for support if she is experiencing bullying behaviour.

14. Teach your daughter to be respectful and responsible online. Children should be made aware of the consequences of cyber-bullying for all involved and to stop and think before they post online or send texts that may be deemed abusive or threatening. Explain that the things they do on their social media devices can have long-term consequences: both legal and psychological.

15. Parents should look out for opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills in this area e.g. attend school talks, avail of parenting courses.

16. Be aware of your daughter's Internet and mobile phone use so that you will recognise if she is the subject of, or involved in cyber-bullying.

17. If you choose a smartphone, there are also several third-party parental control apps available on the App and Android Stores that offer additional features and protection. These include content filtering and web monitoring, app blocking and usage monitoring, location tracking and geofencing, social media monitoring and alerts, and call and text monitoring. Some apps available on the App and Android Stores include Qustodio, Norton Family, Bark, FamiSafe and Mobicip. Parents should also install Google Family Link, SafeSearch and YouTube's parental controls. It's important to note that while these features and apps can be helpful in protecting children, they are not a substitute for open communication and supervision. It's crucial for parents to have ongoing conversations with their children about online safety and responsible device usage.

18. Familiarise yourself with online chat lingo.

19. Curtail use of phones at bedtime. By removing the phone at bedtime, adults can help remove the risk of an impulsive decision or victimisation.

20. You should be aware of your child's screentime and foster healthy habits when it comes to their device. iOS and Android include several built-in features and settings to help protect children, including Screen Time and Content & Privacy Restrictions, which enable parents to manage their children's device usage, set time limits, block inappropriate content, and control which apps and features are accessible.

21. As a parent you should make yourself aware of all the social media channels your child is on. At any one time, you are just six clicks away from unsuitable content, which is a real problem when safeguarding younger users. One safeguard is that you follow your child on their social media platforms to remain informed of their activity. Each social media channel will also have their own parental controls and its always a good idea to set their accounts to private.

22. If your daughter is a victim of cyber-bullying, it is important to remind her that it is not her fault. So many students internalise what is being said about them and this can lead to long term problems. Encourage her to talk to you.

23. The following websites will also give parents tips for general Internet safety. www.webwise.ie and www.safeireland.ie.

24. Although it is understandable that you may be reluctant to invade your daughter's private space, you should remember that this issue needs to take second place to the need to protect your daughter. Research indicates that parental guidance of Internet use increases the probability that adolescents will react to support victims of cyber- bullying. Internet filters can be used to limit access to websites that aren't suitable for children and teenagers. While these filters will offer protection when your child is accessing the internet over the network they have subscribed to, if you have a different home broadband provider, or they use WiFi, make sure that you have filters applied from them too.