



Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of St David's National 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.

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	5 th March 2025	Half Day Closure – Staff Meeting
Students	February 2025	Questionnaires
Parents	February 2025	Questionnaires
Board of Management	February 2025	Questionnaires
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers		
Date policy was approved: 22 / 5 / 25		
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):

St David's NS uses the KiVa Anti Bullying Programme as its primary mechanism for preventing bullying. KiVa is an anti-bullying programme that has been developed in the University of Turku, Finland, with funding from the Ministry of Education and Culture. This school has been trained in the KiVa anti bullying programme by Archways, who are licenced to deliver the KiVa programme to schools in Ireland. As a KiVa school, we use several universal actions as part of a whole school, participatory approach, with a focus on preventing bullying. All school staff (including admin and auxiliary staff) have been trained in the KiVa Anti Bullying Programme and the KiVa screening process for bullying. KiVa utilises a variety of strategies to prevent bullying behaviour, listed below.

1. Staff meeting:

Each year, a staff meeting is held at the beginning of the school year to ensure that everyone working at the school knows that we are a KiVa school. At the staff meeting, we reiterate what this means in practice:

- ✓ Delivering KiVa lessons to specific classes
- ✓ Having a KiVa team to deal with cases of bullying
- ✓ Hanging posters on walls and wearing high-visibility vests

2. KiVa Kick Off event:

The KiVa kick-off event at the start of the school year is a whole school event (often during assembly) whereby the message that 'we are a KiVa school' is reiterated. It helps to create a participatory culture as students are involved through displays of art, music, poetry with an anti-bullying message.

3. Posters and High Vis vests:

KiVa posters are displayed in a prominent place in the school (for example at the entrance and on corridors) to remind students that we are a KiVa school and do not tolerate bullying. School staff wear the high-visibility vests during yard duty to have visibility of the KiVa logo during break times. The logo is recognisable to all children and reminds them that school staff are there to ensure the safety of all students; along with reducing opportunities for bullying.

4. Guide for Parents and Parents' meeting:

All parents are provided with a copy of the KiVa Parents' Guide (in electronic or printed format). The guide provides basic information about bullying and how parents can help to prevent it. The materials inform parents about how to discuss bullying at home and how to deal with situations where they find out that their child has taken part in bullying. We also offer a parents' meeting to tell parents about the programme. At this meeting, parents also hear about how we approach instances of bullying when they occur.

5. Delivery of KiVa lessons in classrooms:

We deliver KiVa lessons throughout the year to students. The lessons are a key part of the universal actions of the KiVa anti-bullying programme. Unit 1 Lessons are for students

from 1st to 3rd class and Unit 2 lessons are for students from 4th to 6th class. The aim is to increase socio-emotional skills and to promote the children's awareness of the importance of the group and bystanders in bullying and stopping bullying. The lessons strive to inspire empathy towards bullied students and provide safe ways to help and support the students who are treated badly. Within the lessons, bullying prevention is based on inspiring a shared sense of responsibility and changes in the norms of the whole group.

KiVa lessons are delivered approximately once a month and involve discussions, group assignments and videos, as well as active exercises, involving games and assignments. See below the themes of each lesson.

Unit 1

1. Let's get to know each other!
2. Emotions
3. Our class – everyone is included
4. Difference is richness
5. We say NO to bullying
6. We will not join in on bullying
7. The bullied child needs your support
8. I will not be bullied
9. Literature lesson
10. The KiVa contract

Unit 2

1. Respect is for everyone
2. In a group
3. Recognise bullying
4. Hidden forms of bullying
5. Responsibly online
6. Consequences of bullying
7. The group and bullying
8. Communicating support
9. Stick up for yourself
10. KiVa school – let's do it together!

6. KiVa Online Games:

Students play online games which allow them to practice and revise what has been learned in KiVa lessons.

7. Student and Staff Surveys:

Each year, students complete a KiVa survey online, which provides information to us about the prevalence of bullying in the school and what students feel the school is like. There is a separate survey for staff members with questions about implementing the programme. We use the survey responses to monitor the implementation of the programme and its impact.

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):

All staff in the school have been trained in the KiVa anti-bullying programme, including the screening process for bullying. This means that all staff members can screen for potential bullying before passing suspected cases to the KiVa team. The KiVa Team are a group of 3-4 school staff who investigate cases of bullying. The KiVa programme includes documentation for each part of the screening and investigation process, which ensures clear documentation of suspected bullying cases.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

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):

As we use the KiVa anti-bullying programme, members of the KiVa team address cases of bullying in cooperation with the class teacher. Below is a step-by-step description of the process that is followed when bullying is suspected or known to be taking place.

The KiVa programme materials include a specific form for each step of the process for documenting the cases. The forms can be completed on paper or electronically.

1. Screening: Is this bullying?

All school staff have been trained in the KiVa programme and can screen for cases of bullying. Incidents that meet the criteria of systematic bullying are directed to the KiVa team.

2. Discussion with the bullied student

One or two KiVa team members tackle each case of bullying. One KiVa team member meets with the bullied student, as a conversation between two people promotes a confidential atmosphere and connection. In the meeting, the KiVa team member finds out what happened, how long the bullying has continued, and which students have taken part in the bullying. The conversation is intended to increase the bullied student's sense of safety and let them know that adults are on their side and intend to stop the bullying. The bullied student is also asked to identify classmates who may support them.

It is agreed that there will be a follow-up discussion to ensure that the bullying has stopped. After the discussion the bullied student's class teacher is informed.

3. Individual discussions with students who have taken part in bullying

Next, two KiVa team members have separate individual discussions with the students who have taken part in the bullying. The students are called in for a discussion the same day and, if possible, during the same lesson so that they do not have the chance to speak with each other between the discussions. The individual discussions are short (5–10 minutes). The focus of this meeting is simply to highlight that bullying has happened and that it must stop. One of two approaches may be used: confronting or non-confronting.

- The confronting method is direct and lets the student know that school staff are aware of the bullying and that it must end immediately. The student must commit to changing their behaviour .
- The non confronting method involves creating a shared concern for the child who has been bullied. Students are asked what they can do to improve the bullied child's situation.
-

4. Group discussion with the students who have taken part in bullying

A group meeting takes place with all the students who have taken part in the bullying as soon as possible after the individual discussions. The aim of this brief meeting is to reinforce the decisions that the individual students have already agreed on with the KiVa team. In this group discussion:

- What each student has committed to do is reviewed
- The date and time of a follow-up discussion with the same group is agreed on

5. Discussion between the class teacher and a few classmates

Where bullying is investigated by the KiVa team, the class teacher arranges a situation where they can calmly discuss with a few select students how they can help support the bullied student. For this discussion, the class teacher either talks to students identified by the bullied student, or if none have been identified the teacher picks prosocial students with good social skills. The class teacher talks to these students about how they can support the bullied student.

6. Follow up discussion with the bullied student

The follow-up discussion is held at the time and date agreed during the initial discussion. The purpose is to ensure that the bullying has stopped. The student is also encouraged to immediately report if the bullying keeps happening.

7. Follow up discussion with the student/ students who have taken part in bullying

Finally, there is a group meeting with the students who have taken part in bullying to check if they have done what they agreed. If they have, they are praised. If the bullied student wants to attend this discussion, this is accommodated.

8. Informing parents

As recommend by the KiVa programme, cases of bullying are first tackled in discussions between the KiVa team and the students. Parents are always informed of cases of bullying

after the KiVa team has met both the bullied student and students taking part in the bullying. We have informed all parents of the procedure for cases of bullying in advance, both through the parent's event and providing them with the KiVa parents' guide.

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):

Regular check ins with pupils involved in the bullying behaviour

Increased staff awareness of the bullying incident – especially to keep an eye on highlighted pupils on yard

Continued support through the KiVa programme in class throughout the school year

Support from the KiVa team and their (or teacher) selected support people

Anti-bullying, KiVa and Bí Cinealta displays throughout the school building

Support with Wellbeing as a whole-school community approach on an ongoing basis

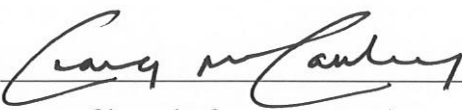
All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with students and parents. The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented. If the bullying behaviour is a child protection concern 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 on our website and in hard copy on request.

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

Signed:  Date: 22/5/25
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed:  Date: 22/5/25
(Principal)