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# St. Fergus National School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour 2025

## Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of St. Fergus' NS 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 well-being 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 *Bí Cineáltas (page 17): 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 of bullying and the various forms of bullying is provided in Chapter 2 of the *Bí Cineálta* procedures.

During the School Year 2024-2025 St. Fergus' NS, as directed by the Department of Education has drawn up this *Bí Cineálta* policy that sets out how the school community prevents and addresses bullying behaviour.

Inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour, (as deemed by the Staff of St. Fergus' NS, through use of this policy and recording documents) and strategies and steps to deal with these are provided for within St. Fergus' National School's Code of Behaviour (reviewed 2023).

This document will discuss the following areas:

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## 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	27 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2024	ISM Meeting
	11 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2024	Initial email with draft policy & procedures
	17 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2024	Responses to survey - hi-vis & lights in corridors
	16 <sup>th</sup> January 2025	Initial Draft of Policy briefly discussed. Pages 1-15 to be read in detail for next meeting 6 <sup>th</sup> March 2025
	30 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	Staff Training Day (1/2 Day)
Students	27 <sup>th</sup> Nov - 11 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2024	Pupil surveys re Keeping Our School Safe
	From 12 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2024	Pupil Suggestion Box
	April 2025	Election of 1 <sup>st</sup> Student Council in St. Fergus' NS- 10 <sup>th</sup> April 2025
Parents	4 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2024	Phone Free Initial Survey
	11 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2024	Draft emailed to PC Chairperson
	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2025	Parental Feedback Survey on Anti - Bullying and Bí Cineálta <a href="#">Parental Survey April 2025</a>
Board of Management	11 <sup>th</sup> Dec 2024	Initial email with draft policy & procedures
	21 <sup>st</sup> January 2025	Responsibilities of BOM highlighted and discussed/agreed
	27 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	Policy ratified by BOM
	23 <sup>rd</sup> September	Policy ratified again by BOM to include RP and Patron's input sections
Wider school community	Through the school year	Tommy the Art Man GAA Coaches Soccer - Klasskickz Heritage in School leaders
Date policy was approved: 23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

## Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

When drawing up this Bí Cineálta Policy, the community of St. Fergus NS, considered the four key areas that are dealt with in The Wellbeing Framework for Practice and uses them as for a holistic, whole-school approach to wellbeing promotion. These four areas are always considered when we think about developing measures to prevent bullying behaviour.

### 1. Culture and Environment

St. Fergus NS promotes a positive inclusive culture and environment in the School through the following:

- St. Fergus' National School's commitment to eradicating bullying behaviour can be seen from the fact that part of one of our AP2 posts is to act as Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator as part of the Wellbeing post. Currently Ms Katrina Fitzgerald holds this post (since February 2024).
- Use of School colours (sky blue), crest and team colours (black and white) on any publication, letter, policy/plan used by the School.
- Crested School Flag flying from our flagpole beside our flags for achievements such as Green Schools and/or county/national flags.
- Morning Assembly and Prayers together as a School where events of the day and celebrations of the day are acknowledged. Individual and group successes are celebrated together e.g. Local soccer team victories
- "Diversity/Inclusion/Inter culture Week" with activities such as cultural dress up, learning phrases in languages of our pupils.
- "Friendship/Anti Bullying Week" - with activities such as Peer Grouping (older pupils with younger pupils), acts of kindness, posters, make a card for your new friend. Pupils and parents are made aware that bullying behaviour is unacceptable in St. Fergus' NS and that we take a consistent approach to addressing it when it occurs. Mentoring which involves pairing between older and younger pupils is conducted in order to foster a sense of community.
- Wellbeing Committee representing all classes and staff, run activities such as "Wellbeing Walks", mindfulness activities.
- We recognise students who display kindness, inclusivity, and respect with certificates at assemblies or with a nomination for the "Golden Book". Pupils who are acknowledged in the Golden Book get a message sent to their parents on Aladdin. Pupils birthdays are celebrated and the whole school encourages and celebrates delivery of class "Party Pieces" each week.
- Sports focuses on participation, teamwork and inclusion rather than solely on the competitive element. Sports Day and Active Week are non-competitive and based on participation and fun.
- School, Parish, County and National Days of success and unity are celebrated in St. Fergus, through dress-up, displays and activities e.g. G.AA./Glin Rovers success through visiting teams, county success e.g. visit of the Liam McCarthy Cup, Green Day/Seachtain na Gaeilge

- Staff and pupil skills and talents are celebrated and included in School activities e.g. traditional musicians play for Masses and Sacraments, at carol services etc.
- An active, healthy, environmentally friendly school is promoted through Active, Wellbeing and Green School Committees.
- Families are invited to events such as Grandparents Day, Prayer Services, School Masses, Graduation Ceremony etc.
- Whole School collaborations such as the Nativity and Carol Service and celebrated within the School and in the wider community.
- Visual representations of the "Whole School Community" and our kindness to each other and those less fortunate than ourselves, are displayed and celebrated, such as photographs in the newspaper of the Team Hope Shoebox Appeal collection, Bí Cineálta Flag, Green Flag, Active Flag etc.
- Initiatives and clubs such as Wellbeing Committee and Bookclub include all who wish to join and are not based around achievement or votes by peers.
- Regularly reviewing where we are, with best practice in mind

### A Telling Environment

St. Fergus' NS Community encourages a telling environment in the following ways:

- We ensure that pupils, parents, staff and the wider school community are aware of the definition of bullying as per the Bí Cineálta document i.e.

***"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".***

- Through the teaching of specific programmes which explicitly teach pupils how to report bullying and to whom i.e. Stay Safe is taught completely every second year.
- Through visual representations and reminders to pupils regarding reporting of bullying behaviour e.g. posters, displays the Cineáltas Flag.
- Staff training on Bí Cineálta, Children First Guidelines and in the area of active listening (Restorative Practise)
- Displaying our Child Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy, on our website, on the Aladdin Schools Homepage for St. Fergus' NS, around the school, in classrooms and Staff Room, Offices and in each child's Homework Journal.
- Facilitation of anonymous reporting through questionnaires and surveys in the Breakthrough the Cloud of Bullying Programme.
- Buddy systems (older pupils with younger pupils) for play and initiatives like Friendship Week provide pupils with an additional layer of support and ability and opportunity to tell what they see/hear/know.
- Normalising and celebrating reporting through sharing (age appropriate) examples and stories e.g. from Stay Safe and R.S.E. Programmes. Celebrating students who contribute to a safer school environment (through certificates, phone calls home, addition to The Golden Book) while also maintaining

confidentiality.

- Regular "check ins" with pupils through use of circle activities and the Circle Time by Jenny Mosley books/programme.
- Staff availability - making pupils aware that all staff can be trusted and are available to talk to them if they have concerns/worries or something to report
- Collaboration with parents in the form of NPC talks on the topic of Bullying Behaviour, Stay Safe, Bí Cineálta.
- Making our Bí Cineálta Policy accessible to all by having it on our website, disseminating a copy to all parents through Aladdin Schools (with a link to Google Translate) and having a hard copy to hand on file in the Office.
- Ensuring that all reported cases of bullying behaviour are dealt with fairly and consistently by all adults in the school. This is done through the development a clear, consistent response protocol that all staff follow when bullying is reported as per this policy.
- Teaching and explaining to pupils the importance of supporting peers by reporting what they witnessed/heard, safe in the knowledge that it will be dealt with discretely and sensitively.
- Parents will receive training and education on our Bí Cineálta Policy and procedures around bullying behaviour through NPC and from the School itself.
- Regularly reviewing where we are, with best practice in mind always (covered in Section C page 23

### **A Trusted Adult**

As a Staff, we in St. Fergus' NS support pupils to think of us as trusted adults in order to encourage them to report bullying behaviour so that it can be dealt with as early as possible. By implementing whole school strategies and fostering open, empathetic relationships, we can encourage students to view all staff members as trusted allies in our efforts to deal with bullying behaviour. We do this in the following ways;

- Teachers and staff make a habit of greeting students warmly each morning, creating a welcoming atmosphere. This continues with the morning prayers in the Líne.
- Staff show a genuine interest in pupils and engage students in conversations about their interests, achievements, and concerns.
- We consistently model empathy, kindness, and respect in all of our interactions with students, colleagues, parents and the wider community.
- By explicitly teaching programmes such as Stay Safe, Walk Tall, RSE, pupils learn the roles that a trusted adult has in helping to protect them and to keep them safe. Pupils also learn to think about identifying exactly who their trusted adults are.
- Staff are also trained to be trustworthy through the Bí Cineáltas Programme, Children First/Mandated Persons training and School Policies on Confidentiality, RSE, Code of Behaviour, St. Fergus' NS Bí Cineáltas Policy and The Teaching

Council Guidelines on Code of Conduct. We learn to be active, engaged listeners who respond non-judgementally and appropriately, while not promising children or adults that we will keep reports to ourselves.

- Through application of School Policies we create a fair, non-judgemental, calm and predictable response to situations which may occur in School. This helps to foster a culture where students feel they can share concerns, worries and incidents without fear of judgement or punishment.
- Staff have a very visible presence in the School building and on Yard. Staff (not just a pupil's own teacher/SNA) actively engage with students in informal settings, such as the playground or during lunch, to foster a sense of availability.
- Regular review of our practice and policies to assess success. This is done by reflecting on Recorded Reports, feedback from pupils, parents, staff and Board of Management and also through discussion with all stakeholders listed above.

### Creating Safe Physical Spaces in the School and Supervision

Creating safe physical spaces in the school is essential for fostering an environment where students feel secure, respected, and included. Supervision of pupils in St. Fergus' NS, takes all reasonable measures to ensure the safety of students and to supervise them when attending school or attending school activities. The steps involved in this for our School are as follows:

- Pupil voice around safe spaces is listened to and taken into account through surveys <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/V836QL2> and class discussion.
- Staff monitor and review "safe" and "unsafe" zones of the grounds through studying of incident records and reports. These reports are written up by the teacher on yard duty following any serious incident and filed in the DP's Room in a filing cabinet.
- Open, visible spaces for play are created by eliminating play in areas with blind spots e.g. around shelters, playground, behind modular buildings
- CCTV is in place to monitor the 3 areas of play during break times.
- Murals on shelters display the School's commitment to respect, inclusion and kindness.
- Older students act as mentors in the Junior Yard, helping younger students feel safe and included.
- Both structured and unstructured activities are provided during break times to allow all pupils to engage meaningfully with their break times and with each other.
- Benches have been placed in middle and senior yards to allow students who do not play structured activities, such as football/basketball, to sit in safety and comfort together.

- All staff are familiar with and employ the following St. Fergus' NS Policies;
  - [St. Fergus' NS Supervision Policy 2024](#)
  - [St. Fergus' NS Code of Behaviour 2023](#)
  - [SNA Policy 2024](#)
- Staff to engage with students during supervision rather than merely observing. Proactive interaction can deter bullying.
- Staff have received training in how to handle minor conflicts on the spot using restorative language and techniques. They have also received training around positive behaviour management and spotting potential triggers/signs before an incident occurs. E.g. NCSE Training December 2024
- Supervision duties are conducted to a rota to avoid complacency and ensure all staff are familiar with students and problem areas.
- Staff conduct periodic walk-throughs to identify new risks or improvements needed.
- Teachers are the last person to leave classrooms at the start of break times and collect pupils from the Líne after breaktimes and first thing in the morning. This ensures that no child is left on their own in the room.
- Only one pupil from each class can access toilets during class time and when on yard at breaks, pupils must seek permission from the teacher on duty to access the toilets before re-entering the School building. This is to ensure that pupils are not left in corridors or classrooms unsupervised.
- Staff regularly review bullying and behaviour logs to assess the effectiveness of interventions and make necessary adjustments.
- Staff regularly discuss safety measures and observations in staff meetings, creating a collaborative approach.
- Policies are reviewed annually or sooner if deemed necessary.

## 2. Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

Planning for and the teaching of pupils in St. Fergus' NS is collaborative and respectful. We provide opportunities for pupils to develop a sense of self-worth both through curricular and extra-curricular programmes. We place emphasis on students' social and emotional learning always and aim to foster a sense of students' well-being and self-confidence as well as a sense of belonging. This aims to develop a sense of personal responsibility for their own behaviour and actions in our students. We implement the Primary School Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.) in full as per the New Curriculum Framework

### Weekly Allocations

-Stage 1 (Junior and Senior Infants): Wellbeing 2 hours 30 minutes

-Stage 2 (First and Second Class): Wellbeing 3 hours

-Stages 3 and 4 (Third to Sixth Class): Wellbeing 3 hours

Through its vision and principles, the curriculum encourages appreciation of children's unique capabilities, interests, culture, language, and background. Primary can use this knowledge and appropriate resources to create a respectful school climate and build their curriculum and interactions to pro actively promote inclusive principles. (page 32 of the Primary Curriculum Framework)

Teachers in St. Fergus' NS employ the principles of learning, teaching, and assessment as laid out in the Framework (page 8) to ensure high quality teaching and learning of S.P.H.E.

We endeavour to equip our students with the "essential knowledge, skills, concepts and dispositions, attitudes and values to enable them to adapt to and deal with a range of challenges and contexts in support of broader learning outcomes" (page 8 of the Framework document)

The following seven key competencies are inextricably linked and are relevant from stages 1 to 4 (Junior Infants to Sixth Class)



Figure 2: Key competencies

- In St. Fergus' NS we teach the S.P.H.E. Curriculum in all classes over a two year cycle. C.f. below for School Year 2024-2025. The remainder of the curriculum will be covered in the academic year 205-2026.

<b><u>Month</u></b>	<b><u>Strand</u></b>	<b><u>Strand Unit</u></b>
<b>September/October</b>	Myself	Self Identity
<b>November/December</b>	Myself	Safety and Protection
<b>January/February</b>	Myself and Others	Relating to Others
<b>March/April</b>	Myself	Growing and Changing
<b>May/ June</b>	Myself and the Wider World	Media Education

- We incorporate lessons on empathy, respect, and diversity within the SPHE framework to educate students about the impact of bullying and the importance of positive relationships both in and outside of School. Staff use the following recognised programmes and resources to implement the S.P.H.E. Curriculum in St. Fergus' NS;

- <https://www.curriculumonline.ie/primary/curriculum-areas/social-personal-and-health-education/>

-DofE Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice

<https://assets.gov.ie/24725/07cc07626f6a426eb6eab4c523fb2ee2.pdf>

-DofE Catalogue of Wellbeing Resources for Primary Schools

<https://www.into.ie/app/uploads/2019/07/Catalogue-of-Wellbeing-Resources-for-Primary-Schools.pdf>

-DofE and HSE Resources for Promoting Well-Being in Primary Schools

<https://assets.gov.ie/41241/b59549d33653430ba47312e5357311d1.pdf>

-Cineáltas: Action Plan for Bullying <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/52aaf-cinealtas-action-plan-on-bullying/>

-Bí Cineálta - Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour in Schools

<https://assets.gov.ie/296487/d0ea26bc-5b6c-45f3-b0fd-2f3e2d3c1f07.pdf>

-DofE Bí Cineálta Resources for Primary Schools (regarding Bullying Behaviour)

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/a4148-resources-for-primary-schools/>

-Making the Links: A Planning Aid for SPHE

[https://www.pdst.ie/sites/default/files/Making%20the%20Links%20%28revised%202017%29.compressed\\_1.pdf](https://www.pdst.ie/sites/default/files/Making%20the%20Links%20%28revised%202017%29.compressed_1.pdf)

-Oide, Wellbeing Resources <https://oide.ie/primary/home/wellbeing/>

-Oide, Wellbeing Resources - Bí Cineálta <https://oide.ie/primary/home/wellbeing/bi-cinealta/resources/>

-Stay Safe (every second year) <https://www.staysafe.ie/>

- Walk Tall <https://www.pdst.ie/walktall>
- Relationships and Sexuality Education <https://www.pdst.ie/primary/health-wellbeing/RSE>
- Webwise (including My Selfie Resources) <https://www.webwise.ie/>
- HTML Heroes <https://heroes.webwise.ie/>
- Zeeko.ie <https://zeeko.ie/>
- Scoil.net <https://www.scoilnet.ie/>
- Fuse <https://antibullyingcentre.ie/fuse/>
- Friends for Life <https://friendsresilience.org/>
- Fun Friends <https://friendsresilience.org/funfriends>
- Zippy's Friends <https://www.partnershipforchildren.org.uk/what-we-do/programmes-for-schools/zippys-friends/>
- PDST Anti-Bullying Support Material <https://www.pdst.ie/sites/default/files/Anti-Bullying%20Support%20Materials.pdf>
- All Together Now -An Educational Awareness Programme On Homophobic And Transphobic Bullying  
[https://www.pdst.ie/sites/default/files/All%20Together%20Now%20Educational%20Resource%20LGBT\\_0.pdf](https://www.pdst.ie/sites/default/files/All%20Together%20Now%20Educational%20Resource%20LGBT_0.pdf)
- Respect Document from the INTO  
<https://www.pdst.ie/sites/default/files/RESPECT%20guidelines.pdf>

Methodologies used in the teaching of S.P.H.E. in St. Fergus' NS include a mixture of direct and indirect teaching. Active learning is the most effective methodology for the teaching of SPHE as it contributes significantly to fostering self-confidence, self-discipline and self-control in the learner. Play and playfulness are also important elements of children's learning experiences and of curriculum enactment in general. Play and playful approaches in ( our ) school generally happen in three different ways:

1. play that is completely led by children;
2. playful activities that are planned for and led by the teacher; and
3. times when the teacher and the children share play activity, developing the play together.

The curriculum encourages and supports integration in a number of ways. We, in St. Fergus' will incorporate this into our teaching by:

- approaching learning through curriculum areas
- embedding key competencies in Learning Outcomes across all curriculum areas and subjects
- providing opportunities, through Learning Outcomes, for teachers and children to draw on multiple sources of knowledge and skills as they pursue learning.

Methodologies and Strategies which we use for the teaching of S.P.H.E. and implementing our Bí Cineálta Policy will include;

- ✓ drama activities -pair work, small group or whole class
- ✓ co-operative games - Games give children the opportunity to practise a range of skills, to be a member of a team, to raise their self-esteem, and to be effective group members. They learn to talk openly about fair shares, turns for everyone, vulnerability, risk-taking and common needs.
- ✓ pictures, photographs and visual images: techniques may include , reading a photograph, using pictures as a stimulus for discussion or in determining previously acquired knowledge about an issue, ranking pictures, exploring perspectives and bias, using captions creating speech/thought bubbles, classifying and setting, exploring a television advertisement.
- ✓ Discussion is an element of almost all activities, but particularly useful strategies for promoting discussion and dialogue with children are open-ended statements, brainstorming, circle work, agree or disagree creating pictures and posters, debates, quizzes or soapbox, interviews, stories, poems, exploring a piece of music.
- ✓ Written activities - which may include, surveys
  - questionnaires
  - lists and check-lists
  - projects
  - worksheets.
- ✓ the media and information and communication technologies. It is essential that pupils are given it is essential that they are given opportunities in SPHE to
  - access and retrieve information
  - explore some techniques used in the media and the various technologies for communication available to them
  - learn to make decisions and become more discerning in their use of the technology and the media
  - develop self-confidence in using a wide range of technology
  - enhance their relationship skills as they discover new ways of communicating and explore and learn together.
- ✓ looking at children's work - which includes
  - Children's work
  - Teacher observation
  - Teacher designed tasks and tests
  - Portfolios and projects

### 3. Policy and Planning

Our Bí Cineálta Policy will be informed and implemented in conjunction with all other St. Fergus' NS Policies. It will have a very definite and specific relationship with the following

- [St. Fergus' NS Code of Behaviour](#)
- [St. Fergus' NS Internet Acceptable Use Policy](#)
- [St. Fergus' NS Supervision Policy](#)
- [St. Fergus' NS Child Safety Statement and Risk Assessment](#)
- [St. Fergus' NS Inclusion Policy](#)
- [St. Fergus' NS Additional Support Policy](#)

Review of the above policies may have an impact on The Bí Cineálta Policy and vis-a-versa. This should be kept in mind when reviewing any of the above as well as the Bí Cineálta.

The Staff of St. Fergus' NS take a collaborative and structured approach to policies and planning in the School. This includes whole school plans and individual staff planning, for teaching and learning in our classes and in our School. This is done in a number of ways;

- Staff implement the primary school curriculum as directed by the Department of Education through its online site <https://www.curriculumonline.ie/> and through circulars, updates and initiatives. Staff base their long term, short term and monthly reviews on these curricula. We especially refer to the following documents ;
  - [Guidance for the Preparation of Teaching and Learning](#)
- There is collaboration between all vested stakeholders in this and all other policies. This includes, Board of Management, Senior Management and In-School Management Teams, Staff, Parents and pupils to allow all voices to be heard in the planning and policy element.
- Teachers plan their lesson in SPHE and specifically the teaching around bullying behaviour in their Fortnightly Schemes and their Monthly reviews. These Monthly Reviews (CM) are uploaded to the School GDrive and read monthly by the Principal, who gives feedback and monitors the inclusion of SPHE and anti bullying lessons. These are kept for 12 months (or longer) to allow for review by Staff and viewing by a Cigire. We follow a set Fortnightly Template for the School.
- Monitoring of the teaching and learning around the area of Bullying Behaviour is maintained through its inclusion on the agendas at Board of Management, Whole Staff, Senior Management and In-School Management Meetings through the year. This allows for discussion around the planning for the areas of Bullying Behaviour, the implementation of our Bí Cineálta and related policies, Feedback on how we are doing in this area as a school and possible changes/amendments that we may need to make.

- AP2 Post holder, Ms Fitzgerald creates a Wellbeing Calendar for the Whole School, for the academic year which includes a theme for each month. Wellbeing Week/Inclusion Week/Inter-cultural Week are all planned in advance with timetables circulated to staff to allow for successful planning and implementation.
- Staff plan at the start of each School year and are reminded at the opening Staff Meeting of each term of the areas of SPHE to be covered that term (c.f. St. Fergus' NS SPHE Plan).
- The Stay Safe Programme is implemented in its entirety, every second year in St. Fergus' NS. Parents are informed in advance and are expected to sign the weekly activity sheets which are sent home for homework and discussion. Teachers sign a document to state that they have taught the Stay Safe Programme for their class grouping that year. During the teaching of Stay Safe lessons, two teachers are always present in the classroom, which is facilitated by all lessons being taught at the same time, on the same day, each week. SETs work with class teachers in groups to plan and teach these lessons.

#### **4. Relationships and Partnerships**

We believe that the building of strong interpersonal connections is a vital part of preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. We endeavour always, through the activities provided in School to promote empathy, understanding and respect. Connections are built through formal and informal ways in our School, including;

- Green School's Committee (made up of students and staff)
- Active Committee (made up of students and staff)
- Wellbeing Committee (made up of students and staff)
- Peer mentoring - within class groupings and also between senior and junior class pupils
- St. Fergus' N.S. is made up of interested, involved, supportive volunteers who give willingly and enthusiastically of their time to build a School of positive relationships.
- An active Parents' Council. Parents Council engage in fundraising initiatives for the School which foster good home/school/parish links. Of equal importance PC, support school based initiatives and special days by hosting and serving refreshments at events such as Holy Communion Party, Graduation Party, School Walk
- Guest speakers are invited to the School for both pupils (during the day) and in the evening, either in person or through Zoom e.g. Stay Safe Webinar for St. Fergus, October 2024, Anti - Bullying Talks, RSE Talks
- School Assemblies. These happen weekly (on a Friday) and include activities such as "Student of the Week", "Kindness Certificate (changing to Bí Cineálta Certificate), Class Party Pieces, Birthday celebrations and The Golden Book.
- Visits from Tommy the Art Man and other guest speakers to the school regularly through the School Year e.g. Heritage Ireland.
- Celebrating Community achievements in School e.g. Glin Rovers visiting when they won the Desmond Cup, flying the Glin Rovers Flag from our flagpole.
- Through implementation of initiatives such as Wellbeing Week, Friendship Week, Intercultural Week, Book Week, Seachtain na Ghaeilge, Maths Week and Science Wee (list not exhaustive) to encourage peer work, peer support, kindness, acceptance and understand.

#### **✓ Preventing Cyberbullying**

St. Fergus' NS proactively addresses the challenges faced by young people online, through promoting digital literacy, digital citizenship and by fostering safe online environments and behaviour.

We do this in the following ways (It should be noted that due to the increasing pace through which digital online activities and social media is coming on stream, these methodologies are not an exhaustive list);

- We inform parents of their responsibility in the area of the digital age of consent. Currently (Nov 2024), the digital age of consent in Ireland i.e. the minimum age a user must be before a social media or internet company can collect, process and store data, is sixteen. Students between the ages of 13 and 16 must have parental permission to sign up to social media services where companies use the legal basis of

consent to collect, process and store users' data. Technically, this means that children under the age of 13 should not have any social media accounts.

-We fully implement the S.P.H.E. and all of its strands and strand units to incorporate cyberbullying prevention. (c.f. programmes listed in Curriculum (Teaching and Learning section)).

-We will also use the following to implement the Digital Media Literacy Curriculum through the following;

- \* [Digital Learning Framework for Primary Schools.pdf](#)
- \* [DIGITAL STRATEGY For SCHOOLS to 2027.pdf](#)
- \* [Code of Behaviour-Anti Bullying 2023.docx](#)
- \* [St. Fergus' NS Internet Acceptable Usage Policy](#)
- \* [Child Safeguarding Statement Review 2024-2025.doc](#)

-Digital Literacy Programs and participation in Internet Safety Day: We integrate lessons on safe and respectful online behaviour into the curriculum, focusing on topics such as privacy, consequences of harmful online actions, and empathy in digital interactions. C.f. St Fergus NS [Digital Plan 24-25.docx](#)

The main methodology, particularly in the Junior Classes, of teaching prevention of the following types of bullying in St. Fergus' NS will be through the medium of story. Discussion on the topic and theme of the stories will allow for preventative strategies to be talked about and also the importance of accepting all people regardless of sexual orientation, race, nationality, creed of belief system. Books for prevention of each type of Bullying is listed at the end of that section.

In Senior Classes pupils will be taught using specific programmes mentioned below to combat these types of bullying behaviour.

#### ✓ Preventing Homophobic/Transphobic Bullying

- Challenging gender stereotypes when they arise in books, news stories and everyday life.
- Positive Representation we include LGBTQ+ perspectives in literature, history, and social studies lessons to normalise diversity. (c.f. books listed in this section)
- Zero-Tolerance: Through enforcement of School Rules and the Code of Behaviour, we make it very clear that discriminatory language or actions will not be tolerated in St. Fergus' NS.

- Clive and his Bags by Jessica Spanyol

*Clive loves his collection of bags, and each one suggests a different adventure. A gentle, affectionate book celebrating diversity and challenging gender stereotypes.*

- Who Are You? By Brooke Pessin-Whedbee

*This book is an introduction to gender for ages 3+, with straightforward language for talking about how we experience gender: our body, our expression, and our gender identity*

**-Shine by Sarah Asuquo**

*After being mocked in school, Kai discovers that what makes him different is what makes him special. Kai realises that he can use his unique qualities to shine, learning 'you can shine your special light, just the way you are*

**- It 's Okay to be Different by Todd Parr**

*This colourful book illustrates differences between people to increase confidence and celebrate diversity.*

**- A Pea Called Mildred by Margot Sunderland**

*This illustrated storybook encourages children to follow their dreams by guiding them through the story of Mildred the Pea. People tell Mildred the Pea that she is just another ordinary pea, and her dreams are pointless. However, Mildred continues to pursue her hopes and dreams with the help of someone kind she meets along the way*

**-THE GREAT BIG BOOK OF FAMILIES by Mary Hoffman & Ros Asquith**

*What is a family? Once, it was said to be a father, mother, boy, girl, cat and dog living in a house with a garden. But as times have changed, families have changed too, and now there are almost as many kinds of families as colours of the rainbow. From a mum and dad or single parent to two mums or two dads, from a mixed-race family to children with different mums and dads, to families with a disabled member. This is a fresh, optimistic look through children 's eyes at today 's wide variety of family life: from homes, food, ways of celebrating, schools and holidays to getting around, jobs and housework, from extended families, languages and hobbies to pets and family trees.*

**-AND TANGO MAKES THREE by Justin Richardson**

*The heartwarming true story of two penguins who create a nontraditional family is now available in a sturdy board book edition. At the penguin house at the Central Park Zoo, two penguins named Roy and Silo were a little bit different from the others. But their desire for a family was the same. And with the help of a kindly zookeeper, Roy and Silo got the chance to welcome a baby penguin of their very own.*

✓ **Preventing Racist Bullying Behaviour**

- Celebrating different cultures in our School Community, allowing pupils to "see themselves" in their environment e.g. posters, library books, use of languages other than English (e.g. Chinese, Polish, Portuguese), including traveller, Roma and ethnic minority students.
- Peer mentoring and support to build empathy
- Allowing students to "see themselves" in guest speakers who visit the School - "If you see it, you can be it!"
- Celebrate Diversity: We regularly recognise and celebrate significant cultural events (e.g., Black History Month, Diwali, Chinese New Year) to instil pride and educate the school community.
- Zero-Tolerance Policy: We clearly communicate and enforce School Policies (e.g. Code of Behaviour) against racist language or behaviour, with consequences that emphasise accountability, restoration of relationships and education.

**-AMAZING GRACE by Mary Hoffman & Caroline Binch**

*Grace loves to act out stories. Sometimes she plays the leading part, sometimes she is 'a cast of thousands.' When her school decides to perform Peter Pan, Grace is longing to play Peter, but her classmates say that Peter was a boy, and besides, he wasn 't black... But Grace 's Ma and Nana tell her she can be anything she wants if she puts her mind to it.*

- GHOST BOYS by Jewell Parker Rhodes

*Ghost Boys is a powerful story about conscious and unconscious racism. A twelve-year-old boy Jerome is shot by a police officer who mistakes his toy gun for a real threat. As a ghost, he observes the devastation that's been unleashed on his family and community in the wake of what they see as an unjust and brutal killing. Jerome meets another ghost: Emmett Till, a boy from a very different time but similar circumstances. Emmett helps Jerome process what has happened, on a journey towards recognising how historical racism may have led to the events that ended his life. Jerome also meets Sarah, the daughter of the police officer, who grapples with her father's actions. The author deftly weaves historical and socio-political layers into a gripping and poignant story about how children and families face the complexities of today's world*

-THE BOY AT THE BACK OF THE CLASS by Onjali Q Raúf

*Told with heart and humour, The Boy at the Back of the Class is a child's perspective on the refugee crisis, highlighting the importance of friendship and kindness in a world that doesn't always make sense. There used to be an empty chair at the back of my class, but now a new boy called Ahmet is sitting in it. He's nine years old (just like me), but he's very strange. He never talks and never smiles and doesn't like sweets - not even lemon sherbets, which are my favourite! But then I learned the truth: Ahmet really isn't very strange at all. He's a refugee who's run away from a War. A real one. With bombs and fires and bullies that hurt people. And the more I find out about him, the more I want to help. That's where my best friends Josie, Michael and Tom come in. Because you see, together we've come up with a plan. .*

- COLOUR OF PEOPLE by Mauricio Negro (picture book)

*This poignant, wordless picturebook from Mauricio Negro takes a playful, yet thought-provoking look at ethnicity and colour. Reminiscent of Arga Gra's poem 'And you call me coloured', Colour of People reminds us that, regardless of colour or ethnicity, we all fall ill, get hungry, feel pain, and experience happiness. The central message of the book focuses on a basic truth about the human condition: we are all different, yet we are all the same. This message is particularly evident in the final illustrations of the book*

✓ Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour

- Students are treated respectfully and equally irrespective of gender in all things.
- We allow both gender students the same opportunities e.g. sporting, music, hairstyles etc and ask the same jobs and tasks of both boys and girls e.g. moving furniture, minding younger classes
- Staff model respectful behaviour and staff of both genders perform all roles in the school e.g. Infant teachers, sporting coaches, music classes
- Gender Equality Education: We integrate lessons on gender roles, stereotypes, and equality into our SPHE classes, as led by the SPHE Curriculum [SPHE Curriculum](#)

-TOUGH GUYS HAVE FEELINGS TOO by Keith Negley

*Did you know that wrestlers have feelings? Knights do too. Even superheroes feel sad sometimes. In fact everyone has feelings - even dads who love their children! Children will love to recognise the feelings in Keith Negley's bold illustrations which accompany a fun-to-read aloud narrative. Adults can enjoy and engage with children in a light-hearted discussion about emotions and how they affect us all.*

-THE SISSY DUCKLING by Harvey Fierstein

*From Tony Award-winning actor and playwright Harvey Fierstein, a funny and touching story of a duckling who embraces his identity. Elmer is not like the other boy ducklings. While they like to build forts, he loves to bake cakes. While they like to play baseball, he wants to put on the halftime show.*

*Elmer is a great big sissy. But when his father is wounded by a hunter's shot, Elmer proves that the biggest sissy can also be the greatest hero. Acclaimed actor and playwright Harvey Fierstein has crafted a heartwarming story, based on his award-winning HBO animated special, about learning to embrace the special qualities we all possess*

- **BILL'S NEW FROCK** by Anne Fine.

*Bill Simpson wakes up to find he's a girl, and worse, his mother makes him wear a frilly pink dress to school. How on earth is he going to survive a whole day like this? Everything just seems to be different for girls . . .*

- **THE PAPER BAG PRINCESS** by Robert Munsch

*When the fiercest dragon in the whole world smashes Princess Elizabeth's castle, burns all her clothes, and captures her fiancé, Prince Ronald, Elizabeth takes matters into her own hands. With her wits alone and nothing but a paper bag to wear, the princess challenges the dragon to show his strength in the hopes of saving the prince. But is it worth all that trouble? Readers the world-over have fallen in love with this classic story of girl power. Now a newly designed Classic Munsch edition will introduce the tale to a new generation of young feminists.*

- **THE BOY IN THE DRESS** by David Walliams

*Dennis was different. Why was he different, you ask? Well, a small clue might be in the title of this book. Charming, surprising and hilarious - The Boy in the Dress is everything you would expect from the co-creator of Little Britain. David Walliams's beautiful first novel will touch the hearts (and funny bones) of children and adults alike.*

- **10,000 DRESSES** by Marcus Ewart

*In her dreams, Bailey is a young girl. Every night she dreams about magical dresses. Unfortunately, when Bailey wakes up, nobody wants to hear about her beautiful dreams. This is because Bailey is a boy and shouldn't be thinking about dresses at all. Then Bailey meets an older girl who is touched and inspired by Bailey's dreams and courage. Eventually they start making dresses together that represent Bailey's dreams coming to life.*

#### ✓ **Preventing Sexual Harassment**

- St. Fergus' NS has a clear zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment. We do not tolerate sexual harassment of any kind and it is never to be dismissed as simple "banter/teasing" or under the auspicious of "boys will be boys" or "girls will be girls".
- We challenge gender stereotypes where they arise and promote positive role models in this regard.
- Consent Education: We include age-appropriate discussions on consent and respectful relationships in the SPHE curriculum.
- Adults on Staff and visiting teachers/guest speakers promote positive role models in the school, outside of school and in their online presence, with regards to their activities and interactions.
- We celebrate diversity and acceptance of all people/pupils and reinforce the values of respect and encouragement.

- **Little Red** by Bethann Woolvin

*This dark retelling of Little Red Riding Hood follows a familiar story but gives the reader insight into Little Red's point of view. She has a plan, not falling for the Wolf's tricks or disguises. Setting itself apart from the traditional tales, the narration repeats 'not this little girl' as Little Red rolls her eyes, outwits the Wolf and saves herself. With bright splashes of red on black and white illustrations, this bold story reminds little girls that they can be smart, brave, and fearless.*

**-Fantastically Great Women Who Changed The World by Kate Pankhurst**

*With each spread dedicated to a 'Fantastically Great' woman and her achievements, this accessible non-fiction book takes young readers through the lives of 13 notable women, from Jane Austen to Anne Frank. The 'did you know?' facts, detailed illustrations and speech bubbles mean that the book doesn't need to be read chronologically. Instead, it can be explored and returned to as the reader grows and understands more. While women are often overlooked in history, this book reminds us that they have made impact everywhere, whether in sport, art or social change.*

**-Pink Is For Boys by Eda Kaban & Robb Pearlman**

*This board book is all about the colours in the world around us: in the grass we run on, the ice lollies that melt in summer, and the teddy bears we cuddle. Each colour begins with a line explaining that it is for girls and boys. This challenges the idea that some colours are for specific genders and reminds children that every colour is for them. They can wear or play or create with any colour they choose. With simple text and lively illustrations, this is an accessible, energetic twist on the traditional books for learning colours.*

**-Ada Twist, Scientist by Andrea Beaty & David Roberts**

*Ada Twist is a curious, determined little girl, focused on her questions and preoccupied with her experiments, which sometimes causes chaos around her. As we follow Ada's story, the narration rhymes and repeats familiar phrases. The reader is encouraged to chant 'Ada Marie, Ada Marie' along with Ada's exasperated parents. The illustrations are emotive: busy and cluttered when Ada's mind is buzzing and small and sparse when she feels deflated. Despite her determination, her experiments and her chaos, Ada is never asked to be any different. Instead, her parents change their world, recognising in bold, fast-thinking Ada all 'the traits of a great scientist.'*

**-The Lipstick by Laura Dockrill & Maria Karipidou**

**The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour:**

The primary aim in addressing reports of bullying behaviour should be to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved. Apportioning blame or punishment is not an aim of the process.

All staff, Board of Management, parents and pupils in a school have responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour. Class teachers are responsible for addressing bullying behaviour which concerns pupils in their classes. This is conducted under the direction, support and advice of;

- The School Principal: Mrs Deirdre Kennelly
- The Deputy Principal: Mrs Sinéad Mulroe
- AP2 Post Holder and Wellbeing Co-ordinator: Mrs Katrina Fitzgerald

St. Fergus' NS has the following policies which deal directly with the supervision and monitoring in School and during School Activities. These are in place to address bullying behaviour.

- [Child Safeguarding Statement Oct 2024.docx](#)
- [Code of Behaviour–Anti Bullying 2024.docx](#)
- [Supervision Policy 2024.docx](#)
- [SNA Policy 2024.pdf](#)

**When addressing bullying behaviour teachers will;**

- > ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured
- > seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- > conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- > consider the age and ability of the students 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

### Identifying if Bullying Behaviour Has Occurred

The initial step for the teacher on receiving a report of alleged bullying behaviour is to determine if bullying behaviour has occurred. Bullying is defined in "Bí 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

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour teachers will 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 Policy**

**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

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred 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 may be met as a group
- > at the group meeting, each student may be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views
- > at these meetings held by the classteachers with pupils, an appropriate adult will be present. The role of this appropriate adult is solely to act a recorder for the meeting. They will not be an active participant nor shall they engage in any discussion with pupils or adult. In as far as possible this appropriate adult will place

themselves discretely out of view or distraction of those actively engaging in the meeting.

- each student will be supported as appropriate, following the group meeting (c.f. section regarding supports).
- students involved may be asked to write down their account of the incident(s)
- views of the children involved in the behaviour will be listened to and their thoughts on how to best address the behaviour recorded.

**Where the teacher has reached the conclusion that bullying behaviour has occurred** (based on the definition of bullying behaviour in Bí Cineálta);

- School staff should know what to do when bullying behaviour is reported to them or when they witness bullying behaviour.
- The school's Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour and the student-friendly policy of St. Fergus' NS clearly explain what actions will be taken when bullying behaviour is reported. The steps are as follows;
- the parents of all the students involved will be contacted at this to inform them of the matter and to consult with them on the actions to be taken to address the behaviour. This contact will be made by the class teacher by means of a telephone call or an invitation to parents to meet the teacher.
- at this meeting, parents will be informed of the report of bullying behaviour against or from their son/daughter, the type of bullying behaviour and that the teacher has found the report to be substantiated (based on the definition of bullying behaviour in Bí Cineálta).
- parents will be supplied with a copy of the St. Fergus' NS Bí Cineálta Policy.
- a record should be kept of the engagement with all involved
- this record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students involved and their parents. This record and all records of this incident will be made in the St. Fergus' NS Bullying Behaviour Reporting Template found at this link

[https://stfergusnsmy.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/principal\\_stfergusns\\_ie/ESi5PO-Qp0tEscZSvQu8vOsBogkCv0r9a1kVNmyT3fIKbA?e=QftxQH](https://stfergusnsmy.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/principal_stfergusns_ie/ESi5PO-Qp0tEscZSvQu8vOsBogkCv0r9a1kVNmyT3fIKbA?e=QftxQH)

- the record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address and supports which will be put in place to address the bullying behaviour (c.f. following section)
- Restorative practice and mediation strategies will be employed by staff at this stage. (Training has been requested for Staff from Oide. )

**Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred**

- > the teacher must engage with the students involved and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement
- > important factors to consider as part of this engagement are
  - the nature of the bullying behaviour
  - the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and
  - the relationship between the students involved
- > the teacher will document the review with students and their parents (in template above) to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and their parents in relation to this
- > the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased should also be recorded
- > any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted
- > ongoing supervision and support may be needed for the students involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased
- > if the bullying behaviour has not ceased the teacher will review the strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents. A timeframe will be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased
- > if it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school consideration will be given to using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this will be a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school
- > if a parent(s) is not satisfied 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 will 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

**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, schools are required to support the students involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, St. Fergus' NS will deal with it in accordance with our Bí Cineálta policy.

Where the student displaying the bullying behaviour is not a student in the school, but the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour is a student in the school, the school will support the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as appropriate and engage with them and their parents to determine what steps can be taken. An appropriate support plan for this student will be put in place involving, pupil, teacher and home.

### **Requests to take no action**

A student may express concern about their parents being informed and request that no action be taken. While this cannot be facilitated, it is important that the member of teacher shows empathy to the student, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the student at the appropriate level. The school will support the student by talking to them around the process, explaining how and why their parents are being informed and by helping the child around the language that will be used with their parents. Pupils will be reminded that the purpose of informing parents is because they are the primary carers and educators of their own children and not to ensure punishment or cause tension. It is to aid the restoration of relationships between parties.

Parents who make St. Fergus' NS aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action must put this request in writing to the School. If there are literacy, digital literacy or language barriers they will be facilitated to do so by signing a school template to this effect. (c.f. appendix)

While acknowledging the parent's request the teacher, anti-bullying coordinator or principal may decide that, based on the circumstances/context, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour

### **Criminal behaviour**

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

Some online behaviour may be illegal. 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.

In the above circumstances An Garda Síochána is the appropriate authority to investigate alleged criminal behaviour and the teacher, principal or Anti-Bullying Coordinator may refer the matter to them. The above list is not exhaustive.

**When bullying behaviour becomes a child protection concern**

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

All teachers, in St. Fergus' NS are registered with the Teaching Council and therefore are Mandated Persons under the Children First Act. Child Protection Concerns in St. Fergus' NS are referred to ;

1. DLP - Mrs Deirdre Kennelly
2. DDLP - Mrs Sinéad Mulroe

Teachers have a legal obligation under the Act to report harm of children that meets or is above a defined threshold to Tusla, and also to assist Tusla if requested, in assessing a concern which is the subject of a mandated report. If the concern does not reach the threshold for mandated reporting, but a teacher feels that it is a reasonable concern about the welfare or protection of a child, a report will be made to Tusla under the Children First National Guidance.

The Children First Act defines harm as assault, ill-treatment, neglect or sexual abuse and covers single and multiple instances.

The threshold of harm is reached where the mandated person believes that a child's health, development or welfare have been, or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected.

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

In determining when bullying behaviour should be reported to Tusla the following factors will be considered by the School:

- > the impact on the child/children
- > protective/appropriate action taken by the parents
- > protective/appropriate action taken by the school
- > engagement of child/family with support services such as NEPS

If there is doubt about whether bullying behaviour is a child protection concern St. Fergus' DLP will contact Tusla's social work department for advice. This will enable the social worker to explore the situation with school staff and provide advice on the best course of action.

### Determining if bullying behaviour has ceased

- The teacher must engage with the students and parents involved **no more than 20 school days** after the initial discussion to review progress following the initial intervention. This engagement will be by phone or meeting, instigated by the teacher, by whichever method was agreed at the initial engagement.
- During this engagement the following will be considered as part of the review
  - the nature of the bullying behaviour
  - the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour i.e. has the bullying behaviour ceased and
  - the relationship between the students involved
- If the bullying behaviour has ceased, ongoing supervision and support may be required for both the student who has experienced the bullying behaviour as well as the student who has displayed the behaviour. It can take time for relationships to settle and for supports to take effect. In some cases, relationships may never be restored to how they were before the bullying behaviour occurred.
- If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the teacher will review the strategies used in consultation with the students and parents and agree to meet again over an agreed timeframe until the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- Where it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school will consider using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school.

### Recording bullying behaviour

All incidents of bullying behaviour in St. Fergus' NS will be recorded. The record will be completed in the St. Fergus' NS Bullying Behaviour Reporting Template (c.f. appendix).

Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted.

These records will be retained in the Documents Section of the children's Aladdin Profile and in line with data protection regulations.

Where a Student Support File exists for a student, we will place a copy of the record on the student's support file. This will assist the school's student support team, in providing a consistent and holistic response to support the wellbeing of the students involved. Where a Student Support Plan exists, the plan will be updated to incorporate response strategies and associated supports.

The school will use the following approaches and organisations to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour

- Educational Programmes as mentioned previously in this policy (c.f. pages 9 & 10). The focus of these programmes at this stage will be responding to when bullying behaviour occurs as opposed to prevention previously.
- NEPS- School Psychologist Deirdre Folan is available to help support St. Fergus' NS in responding to incidents of bullying behaviour. This service is provided to support the wellbeing, academic, social and emotional development of all students. The NEPS model of service is consultative. NEPS psychologists often advise schools on best practice to prevent and address bullying when issues arise in schools and/or provide training in preventative initiatives, such as developing social and emotion skills, social skills, executive function skills, promoting resilience and skills in relationship repair between peers as appropriate.
- Oide - is the Department of Education's support service for schools, and it supports professional learning for primary and post-primary school leaders and teachers in recognised schools and centres for education. It provides continuing professional learning support to schools to support implementation of B<sup>í</sup> Cineálta procedures. More information on the supports provided by Oide is included in the Resources Guide which accompanies B<sup>í</sup> Cineálta.
- Webwise - is the online safety initiative of the Department of Education and is co-funded by the European Commission. Webwise promotes safer, better internet use through awareness raising and education initiatives targeting teachers, students and parents. Webwise develops and disseminates resources that help teachers integrate digital citizenship and online safety into teaching and learning in their schools. Webwise also provides information, advice, and tools to parents to support their engagement in their children's online lives. Webwise develops youth-oriented awareness raising resources and training programmes that promote digital citizenship and address topics such as online wellbeing and cyberbullying.
- National Parents Council - (NPC) is the representative organisation for parents of children in early years, primary and post-primary education. It received statutory recognition in the Education Act 1998. The NPC works to ensure that all parents are supported and empowered to become effective partners in their children's education. NPC seeks to achieve true partnership and deliver better outcomes for all students. The NPC delivers online and in-person courses to support parents of both primary and post-primary students to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

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- Dublin City University (DCU) Anti-Bullying Centre - The DCU Anti-Bullying Centre is a university-designated research centre located in DCU's Institute of Education. The centre is known globally for its research in bullying and online safety. The Anti-Bullying Centre offers a range of modules as part of its FUSE programme for the entire school community that can be used to help to promote a positive school culture and assist in preventing and addressing bullying behaviours.
- Tusla - Schools can contact Tusla directly for advice in cases where it is considered that bullying behaviour is a child protection concern.
- Zeeko - <https://zeeko.ie/> provides schools and companies across the country with Ireland's Leading Internet Safety Seminars.
- This list will grow and adapt as resources become available and known to the School.

## Section D: Oversight (Chapter 7 of Bí Cineálta Procedures)

The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting. The purpose of the update is to inform discussion at board level on the effectiveness of the measures that the school is taking to prevent and address bullying behaviour and the effectiveness of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy. This update will be recorded on the template provided with the Bí Cineálta Procedures (c.f. appendix) and 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 update must include a verbal report which should include the following information where relevant:

- > the trends and patterns identified such as the form of bullying behaviour, type of bullying behaviour if known, location of bullying behaviour, when it occurred
- > the strategies used to address the bullying 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.

It is important that the minutes of the Board of Management meeting documents 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 as reported by the principal. The minutes should also note where the board has considered the bullying behaviour verbal update and document when the board has decided that an urgent review of the school's Bi Cineálta policy is required.

## **April 2025 - Integration of Restorative Practice in St. Fergus' NS (from 2025/2026)**

In keeping with our commitment to promoting kindness, respect, empathy and inclusion under the BÉ Cineálta framework, St. Fergus' National School will formally begin implementing Restorative Practice (RP) across the school community from the 2025-2026 academic year.

### **Definition of Restorative Practice**

Restorative Practice is a whole-school approach to building, maintaining, and repairing relationships. It focuses on promoting empathy, respect, communication, and accountability among all members of the school community.

At its core, Restorative Practice encourages people to reflect on how their actions affect others, to understand the impact of their behaviour, and to work together to find ways to put things right when harm has been caused.

Rather than focusing solely on punishment, Restorative Practice asks:

- What happened?
- Who has been affected and how?
- What can be done to make things right?

This approach helps to strengthen relationships, create a culture of respect and inclusion, and ensures that everyone has a voice. It supports pupils in developing important life skills such as active listening, problem-solving, empathy and emotional regulation—skills that are essential in preventing bullying and promoting kindness throughout the school community.

Restorative Practice aligns directly with the key principles of Cineáltas—prevention, support, oversight and community—and complements the comprehensive work already being done in St. Fergus' NS to foster a positive school culture. It provides a structured yet flexible approach to nurturing relationships, resolving conflict, and restoring trust when harm occurs.

Restorative Practice will form a central part of both the preventative and responsive aspects of our BÉ Cineálta work.

### **Preventative Role:**

- RP will be used in day-to-day interactions between pupils and staff to build empathy, active listening, and mutual respect.
- Pupils will be taught the language and structure of restorative conversations through curriculum integration, SPHE lessons, and Wellbeing Committee activities.
- Circle time, class meetings, and peer-led dialogue will be structured using RP principles to strengthen classroom and yard relationships and promote student voice.

### **Responsive Role:**

- In cases where harm or conflict has occurred—including bullying behaviour—restorative processes will allow all voices to be heard in a safe, supportive space.

### St. Fergus' NS Bí Cineálta Policy 2025-2026

- Facilitated restorative conversations will focus on:
  - Understanding the impact of the behaviour.
  - Repairing relationships where possible.
  - Supporting all parties in moving forward constructively.

This approach encourages accountability and inclusion, and helps ensure that relationships are not just repaired but strengthened, contributing to long-term culture change.

St. Fergus' NS sees the introduction of Restorative Practice as a natural progression in our Whole-School Wellbeing Framework, already grounded in:

- Our explicit SPHE and Wellbeing teaching.
- A 'telling environment' that encourages students to speak up safely.
- Strong existing practices in creating inclusive, supervised, and trusted spaces.

We look forward to working closely with pupils, staff, and parents in the rollout of Restorative Practice. Ongoing training and engagement with the guidance and support of organisations such as ConnectRP (<https://www.connectrp.ie/about>) and Monica Monahan will ensure that our staff and students are well-equipped to embed this model meaningfully and sustainably.

This initiative represents not a separate intervention but an enhancement of the culture of kindness, inclusion and wellbeing that is the foundation of our school ethos and our Bí Cineálta commitments.

### Three Year Plan for RP in St. Fergus' NS

Year	Focus	Actions
1. 2025-2026	Restorative Me (Self)	Preventative Approach-relationship building Understanding shame and anger (Emotional Quotient - EQ) RP language and questions (operational culture) Parents - buy in
2. 2026-2027	Circles (Group)	Preventative Approach - relationship building/pedagogy Process to responding to impact of bullying behaviour - collective accountability) Student Curriculum Programmes - awareness
3. 2027-2028	Restorative Meetings (Facilitation)	Facilitating a "no blame approach" RP Student Mentors Parents -goodwill in good times.

**Ratification, Implementation and Review**

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 through the school and is also available on our website and in hard copy on request.

This policy was initially discussed by the Board of Management at it's meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January 2025.

It was ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on \_\_\_\_\_.

It will be reviewed annually, using the Review of Bí Cineálta Policy review template accompanying the procedures (pages 64 - 65). It will be reviewed sooner if deemed necessary or in response to new procedures being devised or if the BOM decides an urgent review is necessary due to an incident. Any review must incorporate the entire school community.

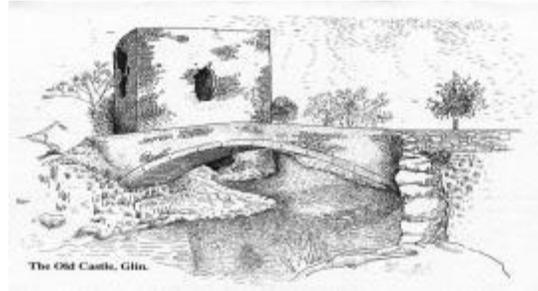
Upon completion of the annual review the Board of Management will send notification to the parents of St. Fergus' NS using the template provided in Bí Cineálta. This notification will be sent via Aladdin Connect.

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: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal)

APPENDICES



**St. Fergus' NS Bullying Behaviour Update for Board of Management**

Date of Meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of last Meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

Oversight provided by : \_\_\_\_\_

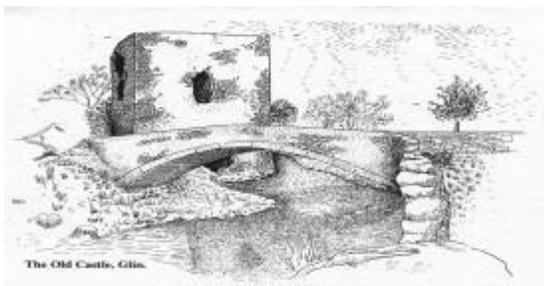
Total number of new incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the last Board of Management meeting.	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour currently ongoing.	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the beginning of this school year.	

Was a verbal report on bullying incidents in St. Fergus' NS, since the last meeting given? \_\_\_\_\_

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

PRINCIPAL



## St. Fergus' NS Record of Bullying Behaviour 2024-2025

### Is it Bullying?

If the answer to each of these questions is **Yes**, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour.

<b>Targeted</b> Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?	
<b>Harm</b> Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?	
<b>Repeated</b> Is the behaviour repeated?	

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of pupil experiencing bullying behaviour:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Class:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Names and class of pupils engaged in bullying behaviour:**

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**Source of bullying concern/report (please tick):**

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil/pupils	
Teacher	
Other Staff member	
Parent	

**Names of people who reported bullying concern:**

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**Date reported:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location where bullying behaviour took place (please tick):**

Classroom	
Playground	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other (Please specify)	

**Form and type of bullying behaviour (please tick all relevant) :**

Physical		Exclusion	
Verbal		Relational	
Written		Disablist bullying	
Cyberbullying		Exceptionally able bullying	
Extortion		Homophobic/transphobic	
Racist bullying		Physical appearance bullying	
Gender identity bullying:		Poverty bullying:	
Religious identity bullying		Sexist bullying	
Sexual harassment		Other	

**Brief description of bullying behaviour reported:**



**Report of views of pupil experiencing the bullying behaviour:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

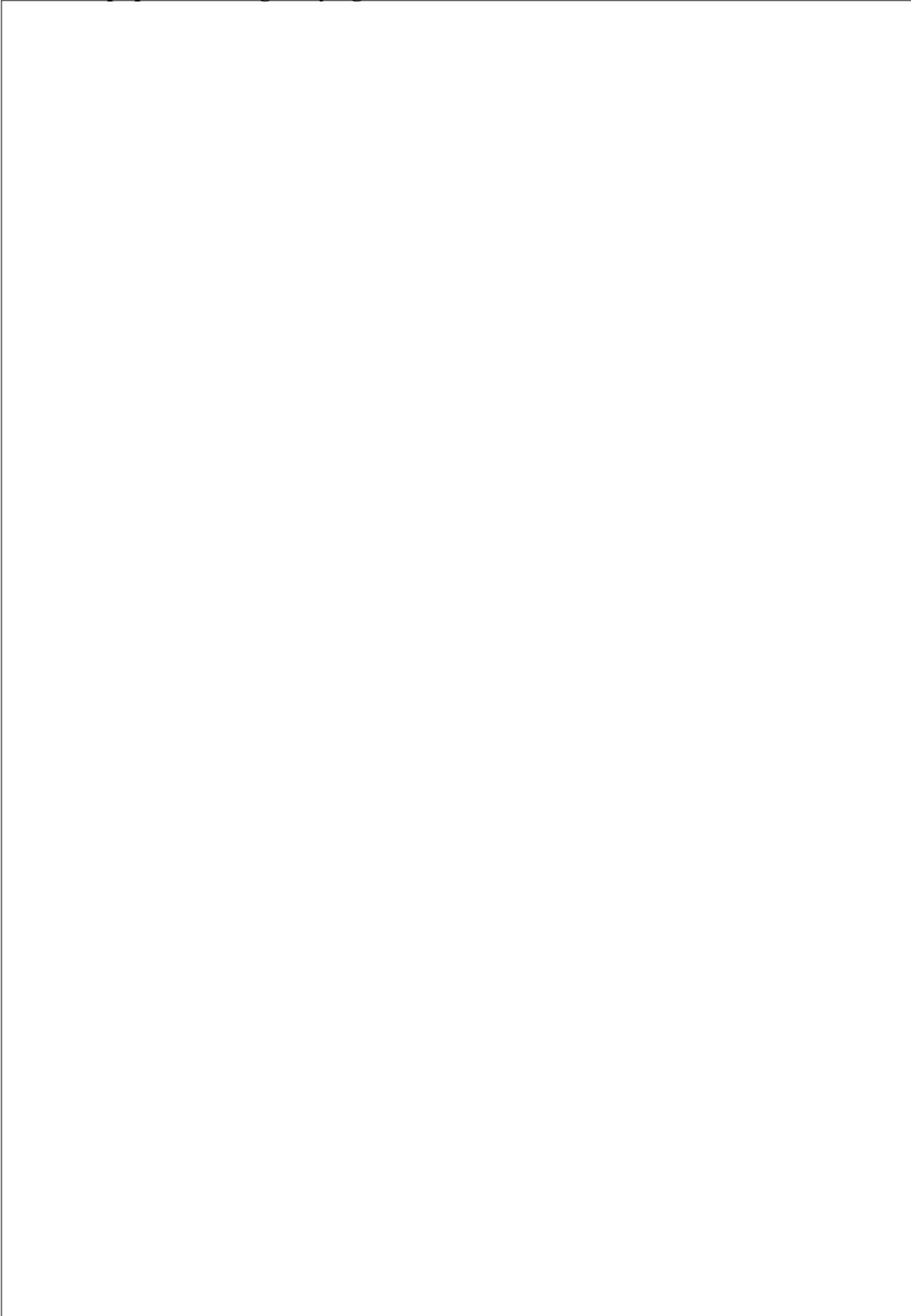
**Views of witnesses:**

**Name:**

**Date:**

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**Views of pupil exhibiting bullying behaviour :**



**Views of student and their parent regarding the action to be taken to address the bullying behaviour in relation to their own child only:**

**Names of parents:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of contact with parent:**

**Review with parents-completion date:** \_\_\_\_\_ (no more than 20 dates after initial contact)

**Is it the parent's view that bullying behaviour has ceased:** \_\_\_\_\_

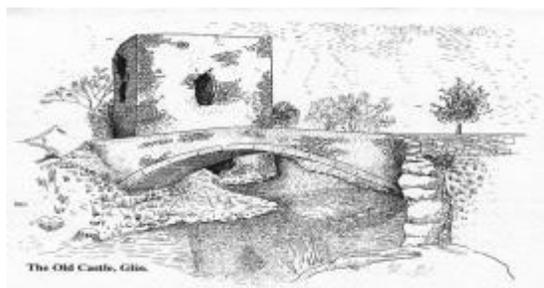
Is it the child's view that bullying behaviour has ceased: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Teacher Actions:</b>	<b>Tick when completed</b>
<b>1.Determine if bullying has occurred. (3 questions)</b> 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?	
<b>2 Record and Address</b>	
2.1. Speak to all pupils involved (Record)	
2.2. Speak to parents of both parties at an early stage. (Keep record and Log on Aladdin)	
Update School Support Plan (if relevant)	
2.3. Complete agreed actions as per policy -Monitor and Evaluate	
<b>3.Review</b>	
3.1 Contact parents of all parties no more than <b>20</b> school days after initial engagement. (log on Aladdin) Review with pupils involved.	
3.2. Determine if bullying <b>has ceased</b> -continue to monitor.	
3.3 If bullying has <b>not ceased</b> , review strategies and seek eternal support, if appropriate, ad review with an agreed time-frame.	
Is this bullying behaviour a <b>child protection concern?</b> Speak to DLP or DPLP	Yes/No
Does this bullying behaviour <b>need to be reported as a criminal offence?</b> If yes contact principal.	Yes/No
If bullying has ceased please sign and return all relevant document to office	
Principal must include all bullying behaviour in their update to the board.	

**Signed by teacher:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed by principal:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix - Letter for Parent/Guardian Disclosure of Bullying Incident



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Disclosure of Bullying Incident

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I/We, the undersigned, am/are the parent(s)/guardian(s) of \_\_\_\_\_, a student in \_\_\_\_\_ class at St. Fergus' NS. I write following our discussion with \_\_\_\_\_ (Staff Member's name) on \_\_\_\_\_ (date) in relation to an incident of bullying behaviour.

At this time, I/we are requesting that the school does not take immediate action in response to this disclosure.

I acknowledge that the school, in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures and the Bí Cineálta Policy, may decide it is necessary to follow up on this disclosure based on the context and implications of the reported behavior. I understand and support the school's responsibility to ensure a safe and respectful environment for all students.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Should you require any further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions for Use:

1. Parents/guardians must fill in the relevant details (child's name, year/class, etc.).
2. Once signed, the letter must be returned to the school for record purposes.
3. If parents/guardians have any questions or need further support, they are encouraged to reach out to the school staff directly.