De La Salle College
Waterford

Bí Cineálta Policy
to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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School Name: De La Salle College, Waterford.

School Address: Newtown, Waterford.

School Roll Number: 64950O

School Details: De La Salle Waterford is a Voluntary Roman Catholic Secondary School under the trusteeship and the patronage of the Le Chéile Trust. The School is grant aided by the Department of Education & Skills and is a single sex (boys) school.

School Management: The Board of Management of De La Salle, Waterford is a statutory Board appointed pursuant to the provisions of the Education Act 1998.

Mission Statement:

Inspired by its founder, the mission of the college is to: *"De La Salle College, Waterford is an all-boys Catholic school. It is a learning community where all students are valued and educated in preparation for a meaningful life"*

Ethos:

As a Le Chéile school in the De La Salle tradition De La Salle Waterford seeks to promote the key values of a le Chéile school as espoused by the life of St. Jean-Baptiste De La Salle. Graduates of our school are characterised by a keen sense of the following:

- Intellectual Development
- Emotional and Social Development
- Moral Development
- Spiritual Development
- Concern for Others

POLICY STATEMENT

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

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

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

The Board of Management acknowledges that bullying behaviour interferes with the rights of the child as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We all, as a school community, have a responsibility to work together to prevent and address bullying behaviour and to deal with the negative impact of bullying behaviour.

We are committed to ensuring that all students who attend our school are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our students is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our students, and we are fully committed to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

We confirm that we will, in accordance with our obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the harassment of students or staff on any of the nine grounds specified: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

Catholic schools have a distinctive understanding of the human person, recognising that every person is created in God's image and likeness and has inherent dignity as a child of God. This is the basis for ensuring that each person in our school is treated with respect and care. As a Catholic school, we are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual. No human person is to be diminished or devalued, and all have an indispensable part to play in the school community, regardless of difference.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined in *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying* and *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* as: **Targeted behaviour, online or offline, that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society.**

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 for the Promotion of Positive Behaviour.

The core definition establishes clear criteria to assist school communities in preventing, identifying and addressing bullying among students. While alleged incidents of bullying can be complex, each situation must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Key Elements of the Definition:

1. Targeted Behaviour

Bullying is deliberate, unwanted behaviour that causes harm to others, and where the student displaying bullying behaviour knows that their behaviour is or will be perceived as harmful by the child or young person experiencing the behaviour. Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. The harm can be physical (for example, personal injury, damage to or loss of property), social (for example. withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion) and/or emotional (for example, low self esteem, depression, anxiety) and can have a serious and long term negative impact on the student experiencing the bullying behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying but, importantly, must still be addressed under the school's Code for the Promotion of Positive behaviour.

2. Repeated Behaviour

Bullying takes the form of a systematic pattern of behaviour which is repeated over time. Single offline incidents of intentional negative behaviour involving an imbalance of power are not considered bullying but must still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour. Posting a single harmful message/image/video online, and which is highly likely to be reposted or shared with others can therefore be seen as bullying behaviour.

3. Imbalance of Power

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

Behaviour that is <u>not</u> Bullying

A single instance of negative behaviour, while harmful, does not constitute bullying. However, hurtful online content may still be considered bullying if it is likely to be widely shared.

Disagreements or fallouts between students — or simply not wanting to remain friends — are not bullying unless they involve deliberate, repeated attempts to distress or exclude others.

Some students with additional needs may exhibit behaviours that cause harm unintentionally due to communication difficulties. These are not considered bullying, though still need support and redirection.

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	17/01/2025 – 24/01/2025 25/03/2025 08/05/2025 – 12/05/2025	Perspectives and Experiences Questionnaire - Google Form Half day school closure - Focus Groups Review and Feedback on Draft Policy - Google Form
Students	17/01/2025 – 24/01/2025 08/05/2025 – 12/05/2025	Thoughts and Experiences Questionnaire - Google Form (All Students) Review and Feedback on Draft Policy – Student Focus Groups
Parents	17/01/2025 – 24/01/2025 08/05/2025 – 12/05/2025	Perspectives and Experiences Questionnaire - Google Form (All Parents) Review and Feedback on Draft Policy - Google Form (Parents Council)
Board of Management	17/01/2025 – 24/01/2025 08/05/2025 – 12/05/2025	Perspectives and Experiences Questionnaire - Google Form Review and Feedback on Draft Policy - Google Form
Wider school community as appropriate – Lasallian Brothers	08/05/2025 – 12/05/2025	Review and Feedback on Draft Policy - Google Form
Date policy was approved:		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

In addition to our strategies to address general bullying behaviours, these prevention strategies include strategies aimed at preventing online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate:

School Culture and Environment

De La Salle College Waterford is committed to fostering a positive and inclusive school culture and environment where all members of the school community feel safe, valued, connected and supported. Grounded in our Lasallian ethos and the principles of respect, integrity, and care, we actively cultivate a learning environment in which bullying is not tolerated and wellbeing is promoted for all.

We recognise that a respectful and inclusive culture is the most effective foundation for the prevention of bullying behaviour. Our school climate is underpinned by our core values, which are reflected throughout our daily interactions, teaching and learning practices, and the physical and emotional spaces we share.

Key Features of Our School Culture and Environment

- **Visible Ethos and Values**: Our Lasallian identity is reinforced through positive affirmations, artwork, murals, and shared symbols of inclusion such as flags and student displays. These efforts promote belonging and support the visibility of diverse identities across our student body.
- **Celebration of Diversity**: Through initiatives such as Inclusivity Week, Culture Day and the Yellow Flag Programme, we actively celebrate cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity, ensuring that all students feel seen and respected.
- **Safe and Supportive Physical Spaces**: We maintain a well-supervised school environment, including targeted monitoring of communal areas such as stairwells, toilets, locker rooms, and outdoor spaces. Visibility is improved through staff presence to support student safety and prevent isolated incidents.
- **Student Empowerment and Leadership**: Students are supported to become leaders in promoting kindness and inclusion. Leadership roles such as Lasallian Leaders, the Student Council and the TY Buddy System offer opportunities for peer mentoring and voice. Students co-create messaging and visual campaigns, reinforcing the idea that inclusion is a shared responsibility.
- **Open Communication and Relationships**: Relationships across the school community are built on trust, empathy and care. We promote a strong partnership between students, staff and parents through open-door policies, and consultation processes. Respectful relationships are modelled by staff and embedded in classroom practice.

- **A Telling Environment**: We cultivate a 'telling environment' in which all students feel empowered to report concerns. This is achieved through the promotion of trusted adults, anonymous reporting tools(Report Bullying on school website), the school journal, and regular reinforcement in SPHE and assemblies.
- **Student Ownership and Belonging**: We encourage students to take ownership of their school environment by showcasing their work, involving them in initiatives, and promoting collaborative learning. Research supports the role of student artwork and personalised spaces in strengthening connection to the school community.
- **Whole-School Awareness**: Through school-wide initiatives including themed weeks, speaker events, and student-led campaigns, we ensure regular and visible promotion of empathy, kindness and positive behaviour.
- **Parent Partnership**: We support and value the role of parents as partners in fostering a culture of respect and empathy. Parent coffee mornings, digital communication, and involvement in review processes help strengthen this partnership.

By embedding these practices throughout all aspects of school life, we aim to create a culture in which every member of the De La Salle College community feels safe, welcomed and respected. This proactive, whole-school approach ensures that bullying behaviour is not only addressed but actively prevented, supporting the full implementation of the *Bí Cineálta Procedures*.

Curriculum and Learning

At De La Salle College Waterford, our curriculum is a key driver in promoting a culture of kindness, inclusion and respect, and in preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. Our teaching and learning approach actively nurtures student voice, empathy and understanding, and is delivered within a whole-school, cross-curricular framework.

We aim to empower students through educational experiences that promote personal development, social responsibility and resilience. Bullying prevention is embedded in our curriculum through structured learning opportunities and is supported by our Code for the Promotion of Positive Behaviour and SPHE/RSE policies.

Key Curriculum Approaches and Strategies

- **SPHE and RSE Integration**: Anti-bullying education is explicitly addressed through the Junior Cycle SPHE curriculum in 1st, 2nd and 3rd Year. This includes modules on types of bullying, the role of the bystander, healthy relationships, cyber safety, and identity-based bullying (e.g. homophobic, transphobic, racist,

and sexist bullying). The Senior Cycle curriculum also includes modules promoting respect and consent education.

- **FUSE Anti-Bullying Programme**: We implement the FUSE programme in partnership with DCU Anti-Bullying Centre, which enhances student understanding of the effects of bullying behaviour and empowers them with the tools to respond appropriately. Resources include interactive lessons, videos and reflection journals.

- **Cross-Curricular Opportunities**: Themes of inclusion, empathy and respect are reinforced across subjects such as CSPE (rights and responsibilities), RE (moral and spiritual development), English (exploration of bullying through literature), and PE (cooperation and teamwork). Subject teachers are encouraged to use opportunities to explore causes and consequences of bullying behaviour in context.
- **Project Work and Student Voice**: TY and JCSP students complete project-based learning linked to anti-bullying and inclusion (e.g. poster campaigns, surveys, digital storytelling). Students co-design displays and contribute to school campaigns such as Anti-Bullying Week, Inclusivity Week, and Culture Day.
- **Digital Citizenship and Online Safety**: Students are taught to navigate online environments safely and responsibly. Topics such as respectful online communication, managing screen time, and recognising online harassment are addressed in SPHE and IT modules. The school's Acceptable Use Policy and Social Media Guidelines are embedded into class discussions and school assemblies.
- **EAL and Additional Needs Supports**: Inclusive teaching practices are implemented to ensure all students, including those with English as an Additional Language and students with additional educational needs, can engage fully with anti-bullying education. Staff are supported with differentiated resources and CPD to ensure inclusive access.
- **Assessment and Reflection**: Reflection tasks, group discussions and focus groups are used to help students process learning and share their perspectives. This student feedback informs future curriculum planning and school policy development.

By embedding anti-bullying learning throughout our curriculum, we aim to foster critical thinking, ethical decision-making and emotional intelligence in our students. These lifelong skills help create a respectful school community where every student is supported, valued and educated in preparation for a meaningful life.

Relationships and Partnerships

At De La Salle College Waterford, we recognise that strong, respectful relationships and meaningful partnerships are essential to promoting a safe, inclusive and caring school environment. These relationships are central to student wellbeing and are a key driver in preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

Key Strategies and Structures

- **Caring Student-Staff Relationships**
  Students experience consistent care, fairness, and support from staff members who are committed to their wellbeing. Staff model respectful communication and foster a culture of high expectations, restorative practices, and positive behaviour management.
- **Class Tutor and Year Head System**
  Class Tutors provide a daily informal point of connection for students, offering pastoral support and maintaining a sense of belonging. Year Heads take an active role in building community and addressing wellbeing concerns, including bullying behaviour.
- **Student Voice and Peer Support**
  Student engagement is promoted through the Student Council, Lasallian Leaders, and the TY Buddy System. These structures provide students with a platform to share concerns, lead initiatives, and support their peers. Peer support programmes enhance connection across year groups and foster responsibility and empathy.
- **Parent Partnership and Communication**
  Parents are valued as active partners in the promotion of student wellbeing and are regularly consulted through surveys, policy reviews, and the Parents Council. The school communicates proactively with parents through meetings, email, and the school journal, and provides support in understanding bullying, including digital safety and respectful relationships.
- **Interagency Collaboration**
  When appropriate, the school works in partnership with external agencies such as the HSE, CAMHS, Tusla, NEPS, Garda Youth Diversion Programme and local services to support students and families in addressing bullying behaviour and promoting wellbeing.
- **Student Support Team (SST)**
  The SST plays a vital role in the early identification of students at risk of bullying or social isolation. Comprising the Guidance Counsellors, Chaplain/Home-School Liaison, AEN Coordinator, Behaviour Support Teacher and Check & Connect mentors, the team coordinates support strategies and interventions as needed.

- **Staff Development**
  Staff wellbeing and training are important. Regular CPD, including on the Bí Cineálta Procedures, restorative practice and managing student behaviour, is highlighted. Staff are supported through an open-door policy, mentoring, and the Work Positive Committee.

- **Community and Alumni Engagement**
  We maintain strong connections with past pupils, local businesses, sports clubs and community organisations who contribute to the school's ethos and offer opportunities for student involvement, mentorship and advocacy.

By nurturing positive relationships and building strong partnerships within and beyond the school, we strengthen the foundation of a respectful, empathetic and inclusive learning environment—one in which every student is supported to thrive and every member of the community shares responsibility for preventing bullying behaviour.

Policy and Planning

The Board of Management of De La Salle College Waterford affirms its commitment to the continuous review, integration and implementation of school policies and procedures that support a positive school climate and the prevention of bullying behaviour. Our planning processes are aligned with the four key wellbeing promotion areas identified in the *Bí Cineálta* procedures, with policy acting as a living document that reflects our values and guides daily practice.

The development, implementation and evaluation of this policy are carried out in partnership with the wider school community, including students, staff, parents, the Board of Management, and Lasallian Brothers.

Policy Integration and Alignment

The Bí Cineálta Policy operates within a wider framework of school policies that are designed to promote student safety, inclusion and wellbeing. This includes, but is not limited to:

- **Code for the Promotion of Positive Behaviour** – Our core behavioural framework which reinforces restorative practice, respectful relationships, and a proactive approach to student support.
- **SPHE, RSE, and Wellbeing Policies** – These shape our curriculum and provide direct instruction on empathy, relationships, digital safety, identity and inclusion.
- **Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment** – Ensures all suspected bullying incidents are assessed through a child protection lens where appropriate.

- **Social Media Guidelines and Acceptable Use Policy** – Guides student behaviour in digital spaces and supports the prevention of cyberbullying.
- **Pastoral Care Policy, Whole School Inclusion Policy, SET and Inclusion Policy** – These ensure that all students, including those with additional educational needs or from minority groups, are supported to access a safe and inclusive school experience.
- **Supervision Policy** – Ensures appropriate staff presence and monitoring of high-risk areas during the school day.
- **Critical Incident Policy, Health and Safety Policy, and Wellbeing Policy** – Together ensure our response to issues of student harm, including bullying, is coordinated and consistent.

All policies are reviewed regularly and are available to the school community via the school website and on request.

Planning, Review and Evaluation

- The Bí Cineálta Policy is reviewed annually in accordance with the *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.
- Reviews are informed by engagement with the entire school community through surveys, focus groups and policy feedback forms.
- The Student-Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy is reviewed annually to ensure accessibility and relevance. It is prominently displayed in student spaces and shared during induction.
- Findings from the annual review (Appendix E) are recorded and shared with the Board of Management.
- The Principal reports at each Board of Management meeting on bullying behaviour, ongoing cases, and the preventative strategies (as outlined in Appendix D of the *Bí Cineálta Procedures*).

Student and Parent Involvement in Planning

- Students contribute through the Student Surveys and policy review focus groups.
- Parents are consulted via surveys and the Parents' Council and are encouraged to engage with the school's complaints procedures when concerns arise.

Supervision

The Board of Management of De La Salle College Waterford confirms that a comprehensive system of supervision and monitoring is in place to both prevent and respond to bullying behaviour and to support early identification and intervention. Effective supervision is a cornerstone of our preventative strategy and reflects our whole-school commitment to student safety, wellbeing, and inclusion.

All staff have a shared responsibility to remain vigilant to the dynamics of student interaction and to take appropriate action if bullying behaviour is suspected or observed.

Supervision Framework

Supervision is organised strategically to ensure high visibility, early intervention, and the active promotion of positive student behaviour. The following areas and times are supervised by designated staff members on a scheduled rota:

- **Before School**: Supervision begins when students enter the school grounds to ensure a calm and positive start to the day.
- **Morning and Lunch Breaks**: All student gathering areas are actively supervised during breaks to reduce opportunities for negative behaviour and support positive peer interactions. Students must remain on the school grounds during these times to ensure safety and accountability.
- **Designated Supervision Zones Include**:
    - Toilets
    - Stairwells and corridors
    - Classrooms (by teachers during class time)
    - Locker areas, including the 1st Year Locker Room
    - School yard, basketball courts, pitch, carparks and ball alley area.
    - Canteen and indoor communal areas

Targeted and Proactive Approaches

- Areas identified as potential hotspots for bullying behaviour are prioritised for increased staff presence and monitoring.

- Student access to safe spaces, such as the Breakfast Club room, Games Club, The Hub or Library, is supported during breaks to offer inclusive social options for students who may feel isolated or vulnerable.
- The school also implements a system of split lunches divided by Junior and Senior Cycle groups to help manage student flow and reduce crowding during lunch, with clear expectations communicated to students.

Monitoring and Follow-up

- All Staff must log (Appendix A – Initial Incident Report Form) and report any concerns related to bullying behaviour or social exclusion to the Year Head or relevant Deputy Principal.

Preventing Cyberbullying Behaviour

At De La Salle College Waterford, we recognise the increasing influence of digital technology in the lives of our students. While online platforms offer valuable educational and social opportunities, they also present significant risks in the form of cyberbullying and harmful online behaviour. Our prevention strategies are both proactive and educational, aiming to equip students with the skills and awareness needed to navigate the digital world responsibly.

Our key strategies include:

- **Embedding digital citizenship** in the curriculum through SPHE and Wellbeing classes, with a focus on online respect, consent, and resilience.
- **Use of the FUSE Anti-Bullying Programme**, including lessons specifically on cyberbullying, empathy, and safe online interactions.
- **The Social Media Guidelines and Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)** clearly outline behavioural expectations for students and are reviewed with parents and students.
- **Mobile Phone and Digital Device Policy** restricts device usage on school grounds to minimise risks and support focused learning.
- **Themed assemblies and guest speakers**, including input from An Garda Síochána, reinforce respectful digital behaviour and highlight the legal and emotional consequences of cyberbullying.
- **Parent engagement**, including anti-bullying talks and communication through Vsware and newsletters, supports families in reinforcing safe digital habits at home.

Preventing Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying Behaviour

De La Salle College Waterford is committed to creating a school culture where all students, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, feel respected, safe, and included. Homophobic and transphobic bullying is explicitly addressed through education, policy and whole-school messaging.

Preventative strategies include:

- **Display of inclusive symbols**, such as LGBTQ+ flags and posters during Stand Up Awareness Week and throughout the year.
- **SPHE, RSE, and Wellbeing curricula** include learning about identity, relationships, and LGBTQ+ inclusion.
- **Encouraging active bystanders** through peer discussions and student voice initiatives like the BelongTo.
- **Creating opportunities for safe discussions**, particularly in SPHE and during Awareness Weeks, supports understanding and empathy.

Preventing Racist Bullying Behaviour

De La Salle College Waterford is proud of its growing diversity and is committed to ensuring that all students, regardless of cultural or ethnic background, feel a sense of belonging and inclusion. Racist bullying is taken seriously and proactively prevented through cultural celebration, curriculum integration, and clear policy.

Key strategies include:

- **Culture Day during Inclusivity Week**, showcasing the diversity of our school community through student-led activities, food, music and presentations.
- **Visible celebration of cultural identity**, including multilingual signage, student artwork, and inclusive representation in school displays.
- **Curricular inclusion**, where subjects like SPHE, CSPE, RE, and English actively explore issues of racism, identity and respect.
- **Support for EAL students**, including translation tools, pastoral mentoring, and cultural integration support.
- **Parent communication**, particularly with families from minority ethnic and Traveller backgrounds, fosters partnership and trust.
- **Staff intercultural awareness**, included through Oide and Yellow Flag initiatives.

Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour

We believe that promoting gender equality is central to fostering a respectful school environment. At De La Salle College Waterford, we challenge all forms of sexist bullying and stereotyping through both policy and practice.

Our preventative measures include:

- **Modelling of respectful relationships by all staff**, ensuring fair treatment and inclusive language in our interactions.
- **Guest speakers** explore themes such as respect, masculinity, and challenging toxic gender norms.
- **Curriculum content**, especially in RSE, English, History, and SPHE, encourages critical engagement with gender roles and representation.
- **Equal access to leadership, academic, and extracurricular opportunities**, ensuring that students are not restricted or discouraged based on gender.
- **Whole-school celebration of achievements** that reflect the diversity and talent of all students, regardless of traditional gender roles.

Preventing Sexual Harassment

De La Salle College Waterford operates a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment. It is never excused as ‘craic’, ‘banter’ or ‘just a joke’.

Key strategies include:

- **Explicit SPHE and RSE instruction** on respectful relationships, consent, and recognising coercive behaviour, aligned with the updated Junior Cycle SPHE curriculum and the forthcoming Senior Cycle changes.
- **Annual student surveys and focus groups** provide insight into students’ experiences and inform targeted prevention efforts.
- **Clear reporting structures**, including online, digital reporting and trusted adults, empower students to seek help without fear.
- **Workshops** during Inclusivity Week raise awareness of the impact of sexual harassment and how to challenge it safely.
- **Collaboration with parents and outside agencies**, including input from the HSE and Gardaí, supports a consistent and community-wide message.

In developing preventative strategies which this school will use to prevent all forms of bullying behaviour, we come from the context of our Catholic ethos where inclusivity permeates the school in a real way. This school takes positive steps to ensure that the culture of the school is one which welcomes a respectful dialogue and encounter with diversity and difference by ensuring that prevention and inclusivity strategies are given priority and discussed regularly at board of management and staff meetings. The dignity and the wellbeing of the individual person is of paramount concern in our Christian response. This school will listen closely to, and in dialogue with parents, and thereby build a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, trust and confidence.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

Purpose

The primary aim in addressing reports of bullying behaviour should be to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the students involved, rather than to apportion blame.

All staff have a responsibility to report suspected incidences of bullying.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
All Staff	Identify and report suspected bullying. Complete Appendix A - Initial Incident Report Form.
Year Heads / Deputy Principal	Investigate incidents. Decide if bullying has occurred. If so, complete Appendix B – Bullying Incident Report Form. Inform parents. Address behaviour. Follow up within 20 school days using Appendix D – 20 Day Follow Up Report Form. Maintain clear documentation and store in Principals Office.
Principal	Provide updates to the Board of Management using Appendix E - Bullying Report for Board of Management. Oversee implementation of the Bí Cineálta Policy.
Anti-Bullying Liaison Person	Coordinate prevention strategies, support staff training, monitor effectiveness, and lead policy reviews.
Student Support Team	Provide pastoral, behavioural, and emotional strategy support to staff and students involved when requested. The team includes: Guidance Counsellors, Chaplain/Home School Liaison Person, AEN Coordinator, Behaviour Support Teacher, and Check & Connect Teachers.
Parents/ Guardians	Model respectful behaviour, Support school policy, Report concerns promptly, Encourage open communication, Collaborate with school staff, Participate in reviews and planning, Reinforce school messages.
Students	Treat others with respect and kindness, Report bullying behaviour, Support peers, Participate in prevention activities, Contribute to a ‘telling environment’, Participate in policy development, Understand the impact of bullying, Take responsibility for their actions.

Process for Addressing Bullying Behaviour

1. Reporting Bullying Behaviour

Any student, parent, staff member, or concerned member of the wider school community can report bullying behaviour.

Reports may be made:

- Directly to any staff member the student or parent feels comfortable approaching
- In writing, e.g. by submitting a signed note via homework
- Via email or telephone to the relevant Year Head or Deputy Principal
- Anonymously through the "Report Bullying" feature on the school website, which is monitored by the Anti-Bullying Liaison Person
- With the support of a parent, guardian, or friend

All staff are responsible for listening to students and taking their concerns seriously. It must be made clear that reporting bullying is not "telling tales," but rather a courageous and responsible action.

2. Initial Response by Staff

If a staff member receives a report of bullying behaviour, they must:

- Listen supportively and reassure the student that they will be helped
- Complete Appendix A - Initial Incident Report Form
- Forward the report without delay to the relevant Year Head or Deputy Principal for further investigation

Appendix A - Initial Incident Report Form ensures that even informal or early-stage concerns are documented and can be tracked if patterns emerge.

3. Determining Whether Bullying Behaviour Has Occurred

The Year Head or Deputy Principal will investigate the report and determine whether the behaviour meets the definition of bullying as outlined in the *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

The three core criteria to assess are:

- 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** over time?

If all three criteria are present, the behaviour is considered bullying and must be addressed in line with this policy.

If any of the criteria are missing, the behaviour is still unacceptable and must be addressed through the school's Code for the Promotion of Positive Behaviour.

Important Exception (Online Behaviour):
A single incident of online bullying — such as posting a harmful message, image or video that is likely to be reshared or viewed repeatedly — is considered bullying behaviour, due to its ongoing nature and impact. This reflects the *Bí Cineálta Procedures*, which acknowledge that repetition in the online context can occur through digital circulation even if the original act was singular.

The outcome of this determination must be formally recorded using:

- **Appendix B: Bullying Incident Report Form**, which captures details of the behaviour, students involved, location, form of bullying (e.g. verbal, physical, cyber, identity-based), and initial actions taken.

This determination is a critical decision point and must be approached carefully, using the school's agreed definitions and procedures. Staff may consult the Principal or Anti-Bullying Liaison Person for support in complex cases.

4. Informing and Engaging Parents/Guardians

Once a determination is made:

- The Year Head or Deputy Principal contacts the parents/guardians of all students involved — both the student experiencing bullying behaviour and the student(s) displaying the behaviour
- This contact should happen at an early stage
- Parents are invited to provide input and collaborate on the proposed actions

The views of the student experiencing bullying behaviour must be central in planning the next steps. Sensitivity, privacy, and reassurance are key at this stage.

5. Conducting the Investigation

Investigations should take place discreetly, outside of the classroom, and with appropriate sensitivity.

Best practice includes:

- Interviewing each student involved individually first
- Collecting written accounts using Appendix C - Alleged Bullying Incident Student Statement Form
- Bringing students together only if appropriate to clarify conflicting accounts
- Speaking to witnesses, where applicable, to gain additional insight

All findings and agreed interventions should be documented in Appendix B: Bullying Incident Report Form.

A calm, problem-solving approach should be adopted at all times. Staff must be mindful of the age, ability, and needs of all students involved.

6. Implementing Agreed Actions and Supports

Informed by consultation with students and parents, the school will:

- Outline clear and practical steps to address the behaviour
- Put in place agreed supports (e.g. check-ins, seating arrangements, peer monitoring, restorative conversations)
- Record all agreed actions in Appendix B: Bullying Incident Report Form

The goal is to stop the bullying, support all students involved, and begin the process of restoring relationships where possible.

7. Follow-Up and Review Within 20 School Days

No more than 20 school days after the initial engagement, the Year Head or Deputy Principal must:

- Re-engage with all students and parents involved
- Review the situation, including whether the bullying has stopped

- Evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies used

This process is formally documented using Appendix D - 20 Day Follow Up Report Form

If bullying has ceased, continue to monitor and support the students.

If bullying has not ceased:

- Review the approach with parents and students
- Revise strategies and agree on a new timeframe for follow-up
- Consider referrals to support services (e.g. NEPS, Tusla, counselling, SST)
- Consider implementing sanction(s) within the Code for Promotion of Positive Behaviour

8. Principal Oversight and Board of Management Reporting

The Principal is responsible for:

- Reviewing bullying data on an ongoing basis
- Including all incidents where bullying was determined to have occurred in the Board of Management report
- Using Appendix E: Bullying Report for Board of Management for this purpose
    - A verbal update is given at each Board meeting, while maintaining confidentiality.

9. Supports for All Students Involved

For students who were bullied:

- Counselling or check-ins with a member of the Student Support Team
- Ongoing contact with the Year Head

For students displaying bullying behaviour:

- Behavioural Support/Mentoring
- Counselling to understand impact and develop empathy
- Reflection and restorative practices

For bystanders:

- Safe space to discuss the incident

- Emotional support or guidance on taking appropriate action

All supports should be recorded as part of the follow-up in Appendix D - 20 Day Follow Up Report Form.

10. Complaints and Appeals

If a parent or student is dissatisfied with how a bullying incident has been handled:

1. They should first follow the school's Complaints Procedure.
2. If the issue remains unresolved, they may contact the Ombudsman for Children, especially if they believe the school's actions negatively affected the student.

All complaints must be handled with respect, confidentiality, and fairness.

Requests to Take No Action

A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask a member of staff not to take any action other than to "look out" for them. The student may not want to be identified as the person who reported the bullying behaviour. They might worry that telling someone could make their situation worse. In such cases, it is crucial for the staff member to show empathy, handle the situation sensitively, and collaborate with the student to determine what steps can be taken to address the issue. Together, they should agree on how the student's parents will be informed. It is essential that the student who has experienced bullying feels safe and supported.

Parents may also notify the school of bullying behaviour and request that no action be taken. In such instances, parents should put their request in writing or be facilitated to do so if there are literacy, digital literacy, or language barriers. While the school should acknowledge the parent's request, it may still decide, based on the circumstances, that addressing the bullying behaviour is appropriate.

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

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools*, the Board of Management of De La Salle College Waterford has adopted the following policy in conjunction with and within the framework of the school's overall Code for the Promotion of Positive of Behaviour.

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, in student journals 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.

This policy was distributed, where relevant, to Board of Management, Staff, Parents, and Students for their review and approval.

Amendments have been made, where relevant, after consultation with these stakeholders.

This policy was distributed, where relevant, for review, by Staff, Parents / Parents Association and Students / Student Council for their review and approval.

Amendments have been made, where relevant, after consultation with these stakeholders.

Review:

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management on

Signed:_____

Clare Ryan
Chairperson, Board of Management

Appendix A - Initial Incident Report Form

Name of staff member completing Initial Incident Report Form: _____

Name of student experiencing suspected bullying behavior: _____

_____

Class: _____ Time: _____ Date: _____

Name(s) and class(es) of students allegedly engaged in bullying behaviour:

_____

_____

Source of bullying concern/report (tick as relevant):

Student concerned	
Other student(s)	
Staff member	
Parent	
Other	

Staff member notes:

Date submitted to Year Head/ Relevant Deputy Principal:

_____

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Staff Member)

Appendix B - Bullying Incident Report Form

Name of student experiencing suspected bullying behavior: _____

Class: _____ Time: _____ Date: _____

Name(s) and class(es) of students allegedly engaged in bullying behaviour:

_____

_____

Source of bullying concern/report (tick as relevant):

Student concerned	
Other student(s)	
Teacher	
Parent	
Other	

Location of incident(s) (tick as relevant)

School Yard		Classroom	
Bus		Toilets	
Out-of-school		Changing Rooms	
Corridor		Canteen	
Basketball Court		Online	

Name of person(s) who reported the alleged bullying concern:

_____

Is it bullying?

(Tick as appropriate)	**YES**	**NO**
Targeted		
Harmful		
Repeated		
Once-off online incident		
Is it bullying behaviour?		

Type of bullying behaviour (tick as relevant):

Physical		Gender-identity bullying	
Verbal		Extortion	
Damage to personal property		Written bullying	
Exculsion/Isolation		Relational bullying	
Cyber-bullying		Other	

Intimidation			

Have the parents/ guardians of both students been informed?

(Circle as appropriate) **YES** **NO**

Brief description of bullying behaviour:

Impact of bullying behaviour:

Details of action(s) taken:

Date submitted to Principal:_____

Signed: _____Date: _____

(Year Head/Relevant Deputy Principal)

Appendix C - Alleged Bullying Incident Student Statement Form

DATE: _____ **STUDENT:** _____

DETAILS: Include time, place, names of alleged perpetrators, names of bystanders. Detail here both sides of the event

Appendix D - 20 Day Follow Up Report Form

Name of student who experienced bullying behavior: _____

_____

Class: _____

Date of Initial report: _____

Today's Date: _____

Name(s) and class(es) of students that engaged in bullying behaviour:

_____

_____

_____

Were the strategies used effective? Why? Why not?

Record of engagement with Parents/Guardians and Student(s) involved.

Has the bullying behaviour ceased?

Date bullying is determined to have ceased?

Views of the Parents/ Guardians and student in relation to this;

Details of engagement with external services (if applicable)

Details of ongoing supervision and support (if needed)

If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, review strategies with parents/guardians and students involved and agree details of a timeframe for further engagement.

Notes:

Note 1: Has consideration been given to using strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the schools Code for Promotion of Positive Behaviour? If so, these details are a matter between the student displaying the bullying behaviour, their parents/guardians, and the school.

Note 2: 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 should be referred to the school's complaints procedures.

Note 3: 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.

Date submitted to Principal:_____

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Year Head/Relevant Deputy Principal)

Appendix E - Bullying Update for Board of Management meeting of _____ /_____ /_____

Having reviewed the details of the incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the previous board of management meeting, the following information is provided:

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

Where incidents of bullying behaviour have been reported since the last meeting, the update included a verbal report, which includes 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 did not include any personal information or information that could identify the students involved.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chairperson, Board of Management)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Principal)

Appendix F - Review of the Bí Cineálta Policy

Review of the Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual (calendar) review of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and its implementation in consultation with the school community. As part of the review, this document must be completed

1. When did the Board formally adopt its Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools? Insert date when the Bí Cineálta policy was last adopted by the school.
_____/_____/20_____

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

3. What date did the Board publish the Bí Cineálta policy and the student friendly policy on the school website? _____/_____/20_____

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

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

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

7. Does the Bí Cineálta policy document the strategies that the school uses to prevent bullying behaviour?

8. Has the Board received and minuted the Bullying Behaviour Update presented by the principal at every ordinary board meeting over the last calendar year?

9. Has the Board discussed how the school is addressing all reports of bullying behaviour?

10. Is the Board satisfied that all incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed in accordance with the school's Bí Cineálta Policy?

11. Have the prevention strategies in the Bí Cineálta policy been implemented?

12. Has the Board discussed the effectiveness of the strategies used to prevent bullying behaviour?

13. How have (a) parents, (b) students and (c) school staff been consulted with as part of the review of the Bí Cineálta Policy?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chairperson, Board of Management)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Principal)

Date of next review: _____

Bí Cineálta!

We want everyone at our school to feel safe and happy.

If you think that you are being bullied or someone else is being bullied, you need to tell a teacher or another adult that you trust. They will know what to do to help.

Get help!

Tell someone!

If a student tells a staff member that they think they are being bullied, we will:

- talk with the student
- ask the student what they want to happen
- work out a plan together
- talk to their parents
- talk to the other student(s) involved
- talk with the other student's parents

Please tell someone if you think that you are being bullied or someone else is being bullied.

Our school has a Bí Cineálta policy to try to stop bullying behaviour.

We look at this policy every year to see what is working well or what could work better.

We will ask you what you think.

Bullying behaviour is when someone keeps being mean or hurtful to others on purpose over and over again.

When it happens a lot.
Not just once.