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## **Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour**

### **Introduction**

The Board of Management of Ballycullane 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 wellbeing of our students is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our students and we are fully committed to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

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

### **Definition of bullying**

Bullying is defined in Cineálta: Action Plan on Bullying and Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools as targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society. The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

Each school is required to develop and implement a Bí Cineálta policy that sets out how the school community prevents and addresses bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

## Section A: Development/review of our Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour

All members of our school community were provided with the opportunity to input into the development/review of this policy.

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	28th March 2025	Half Day Closure, staff meeting
Students	Week of 2nd June	Survey Circle time/discussion around Bí Cineálta. Created posters to convey messages
Parents	7th May 2025	Survey
Board of Management	16th June 2025	Board meeting- policy read and discussed
Wider Community	Not applicable	Not applicable
Date policy was approved		
Date policy was last reviewed- Anti Bullying Policy October 2024		

## Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by the school. These include strategies specifically aimed at preventing online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

<b>Culture and Environment-</b>	<p>We aim to promote and encourage-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● a positive and welcoming atmosphere in school</li> <li>● staff and students to have a sense of belonging, feel safe and connected and supported</li> <li>● relationships between all members of the school community that are based on respect, care, integrity and trust.</li> <li>● open communication between the patron, boards of management, school staff, students and their parents</li> <li>● Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders.</li> <li>● Emphasis on giving people confidence to tell and ensuring there is an awareness that reporting bullying is not telling tales.</li> <li>● Promote “other ways to tell”- worry box in the corridor, hand up a note with homework, message via Aladdin, phone call or friend telling on behalf of someone else.</li> <li>● a ‘trusted adult’ strategy. Staff regularly check in with pupils and always remind them that there is people to come to if they witness/experience bullying behaviour</li> <li>● supervision of all play areas during break times. 2 staff members to cover top yard and court/pitch</li> <li>● artwork and signage to promote school values of respect, inclusion and equality</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole School Assemblies</li> </ul>
<b>Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students are given regular opportunities to work in groups with their peers in order to build a sense of connection and belonging.</li> <li>• SPHE(Walk Tall), RSE and Stay Safe are taught across all class levels</li> <li>• Students partake in a block of Nurture Group with SET. Groups/students are rotated.</li> <li>• Staff have completed CPD in Incredible Years and Friends for Life</li> <li>• Staff are encouraged to complete CPD in this area</li> <li>• Friendship Week, Acts of Kindness</li> <li>• Ensure that students can only access appropriate websites while using the internet.</li> <li>• internet usage is monitored</li> <li>• Consideration is given to the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and</li> <li>• the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately</li> </ul>
<b>Policy and Planning</b>	<p>Policies that support the implementation of Bí Cineálta-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acceptable Use Policy</li> <li>• Code of Behaviour</li> <li>• Bí Cineálta Policy</li> <li>• Student Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy</li> <li>• SEN inclusion Policy</li> <li>• RSE Policy</li> <li>• Child Safeguarding Policy</li> <li>• Supervision and Monitoring Policy</li> <li>• Staff engage in CPD where possible</li> </ul>
<b>Relationships and partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age appropriate awareness initiatives</li> <li>• Supporting active participation of students and parents in school life.</li> <li>• Student Council</li> <li>• Creative Schools Committee</li> <li>• Playground Leaders</li> <li>• Rackard League/ Mini 7s</li> <li>• Parents Association</li> <li>• Teaching problem solving</li> </ul>
<b>Prevention Strategies</b>	
<b>Preventing cyberbullying behaviour</b>	<p><b>Strategies to prevent cyberbullying behaviour-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• implementing the SPHE curriculum</li> <li>• implementing the Digital Media Literacy curriculum which teaches students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship</li> <li>• having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online</li> <li>• informing and reminding students that the digital age of consent in Ireland is 16 years old. Children aged 13 to 16 should have written parental permission to join social media</li> <li>• developing and communicating an acceptable use policy for technology</li> <li>• holding an Internet safety day to reinforce awareness around</li> </ul>

	appropriate online behaviour
<b>Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour</b>	<p><b>Strategies to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● maintaining an inclusive physical environment</li> <li>● encouraging peer support and empathy building activities</li> <li>● awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour (Stay Safe 5th and 6th)</li> <li>● encouraging students to speak up when they witness bullying behaviour</li> </ul>
<b>Preventing racist bullying</b>	<p><b>Strategies to prevent racist bullying behaviour-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated</li> <li>● having the cultural diversity of the school visible and on display</li> <li>● raise awareness of racism (Stay Safe)</li> <li>● encouraging peer support</li> <li>● encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour</li> <li>● providing supports to school staff to respond to the needs of students for whom English is an additional language and for communicating with their parents</li> <li>● providing supports to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma students, and to encourage communication with their parents</li> <li>● ensuring that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds</li> </ul>
<b>Preventing sexist bullying behaviour</b>	<p><b>Strategies to prevent sexist bullying behaviour-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex</li> <li>● ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex</li> <li>● celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contributions of all students</li> </ul>
<b>Preventing sexual harassment</b>	<p>Schools must make it clear that there is a zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment. <u>Sexual harassment should never be dismissed as teasing or banter.</u></p> <p><b>Strategies to prevent sexual harassment include the following</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● promoting positive role models within the school community</li> <li>● challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment</li> </ul>

## Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

ALL STAFF

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

- ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour is heard and reassured
- seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- consider the age and ability of those involved
- listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- take action in a timely manner
- inform parents of those involve

**The steps that will be taken by the school to determine if bullying behaviour has occurred, the approaches taken to address the bullying behaviour and to review progress are as follows (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):**

<p><b>Identify if bullying behaviour has occurred</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The teacher gathers information by considering the what, where, when, and why of the reported incident.</li> <li>● If multiple students are involved, each is interviewed individually first before conducting a group meeting.</li> <li>● During the group meeting, each student provides their account to clarify the situation and ensure mutual understanding.</li> <li>● Students may also be asked to write down their version of events for documentation.</li> <li>● The schools definition of bullying, and the following guiding questions, will be used to assess whether bullying has occurred.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?</li> <li>2. Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?</li> <li>3. Is the behaviour repeated?</li> </ol> </li> <li>● Some incidents may involve inappropriate but non-bullying behaviour, which will be addressed using the school's Code of Behaviour.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Where bullying behaviour has occurred</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● School staff act according to the Bí Cineálta policy and student-friendly policy.</li> <li>● If the bullying occurs outside of school but affects the student within the school environment, appropriate support is provided.</li> <li>● If the bullying involves a student from another school, the school will support the affected student and engage with their parents to explore solutions.</li> <li>● The response is fair and consistent, ensuring both the student experiencing bullying and the student displaying the behaviour receives support.</li> <li>● The affected student is engaged with immediately to reassure them and determine their preferred approach to resolving the issue.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Parents of all involved students are informed at an early stage, unless a student has concerns about this, in which case a support plan will be developed.</li> <li>● Privacy and sensitivity are maintained in all discussions, considering the students' age and ability.</li> <li>● Action is taken promptly, and students are actively involved in decisions about resolving the situation (Appendix ).</li> <li>● Approaches such as restorative practice or mediation may be used.</li> <li>● 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.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Requests to take no action</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A student may request that no action be taken beyond staff monitoring the situation.</li> <li>● The staff member acknowledges the student's feelings and works with them to determine appropriate next steps.</li> <li>● Parents may also make schools aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action.</li> <li>● Parents should put this request in writing to the school or be facilitated to do so where there are literacy, digital literacy or language barriers.</li> <li>● However, schools may decide to intervene based on the circumstances.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Determining if bullying behaviour has ceased</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The teacher must engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress.</li> <li>● Important factors to consider as part of the review 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.</li> <li>● Even though the bullying behaviour may have 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.</li> <li>● If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the teacher should 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.</li> <li>● Where it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school should consider using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.</li> <li>● If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school.</li> </ul>

<b>Recording bullying behaviour</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All incidents of bullying behaviour should be recorded.</li> <li>● The record should document the form (Section 2.5) and type (See Section 2.7) of bullying behaviour, if known, where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students and their parents.</li> <li>● The record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour.</li> <li>● It should document the review with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and their parents in relation to this.</li> <li>● It is important to document the date of each of these engagements and the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased.</li> <li>● Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted.</li> <li>● These records should be retained in accordance with the school's record keeping policy and in line with data protection regulations.</li> <li>● Where a Student Support File exists for a student, schools are encouraged to place a copy of the record on the student's support file. This will assist the school's student support team, where they exist, in providing a consistent and holistic response to support the wellbeing of the students involved.</li> <li>● Where a Student Support Plan exists, the plan should be updated to incorporate response strategies and associated supports.</li> </ul>
<b>Complaint Process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● If a parent is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with these procedures, they should be referred to the school's complaints procedure.</li> <li>● Additional Information relating to schools' complaint procedures are available from Complaint Procedures for Schools.</li> <li>● In the event that a student and/or parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, a student and/or parent 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.</li> </ul>

<b>The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures)</b>	
In School	Activities within school aim to promote self esteem, confidence, building connections and friendships, developing social skills and building resilience-

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Nurture Groups</li> <li>● NEPS- Incredible Years/ Friends for Life</li> <li>● Buddy System</li> <li>● Group Work</li> <li>● Friendship Week</li> <li>● Circle time</li> <li>● Regular check in with students</li> <li>● Continued monitoring of particular situations</li> <li>● Continued contact with parents</li> <li>● Continued contact with the Board of Management</li> </ul> <p>If the school feels that pupils require counselling or further support the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise the same.</p>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● NEPS</li> <li>● OIDE</li> <li>● Webwise</li> <li>● An Garda Síochána</li> <li>● National Parents Council</li> <li>● TUSLA</li> <li>● DCU ANti Bullying Centre</li> </ul>

## Section D: Oversight

The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting. This update will include the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting, the number of ongoing incidents and the total number of incidents since the beginning of the school year. Where incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred, the principal will also provide a verbal update which will include where relevant, information relating to trends and patterns identified, strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant. This update does not contain personal or identifying information. See Chapter 7 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

This policy is available to our school community on the school's website and in hard copy on request. A student friendly version of this policy is displayed in the school and is also available on our website and in hard copy on request.

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

Signed: *Fr William Byrne* Date: 16/6/25

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: *Deirdre Byrne* Date: 16/6/25

(Principal)

## Appendix 1

<b>Recording Bullying Behaviour</b>	
<b>1. Name of Children Involved</b>	Student(s) Experiencing Bullying
	Student(s) Engaging in Bullying Behaviour
	Other Witnesses (if any)
<b>2. Form of Bullying</b> <i>(Refer to Section 2.5 – Tick all that apply)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Physical (e.g., hitting, kicking, pushing) <input type="checkbox"/> Verbal (e.g., name-calling, teasing, insults) <input type="checkbox"/> Psychological (e.g., intimidation, manipulation) <input type="checkbox"/> Cyberbullying (e.g., harmful messages, social media misuse) <input type="checkbox"/> Relational (e.g., exclusion, spreading rumors) <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
<b>3. Type of Bullying</b> <i>(Refer to Section 2.7 – Tick all that apply)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Peer-to-Peer <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher-to-Student <input type="checkbox"/> Group Bullying <input type="checkbox"/> Prejudicial Bullying (e.g., based on race, religion, gender) <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Bullying (e.g., inappropriate comments, harassment) <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
<b>4. Where and When</b> <i>(If known)</i>	Location:  Date/Time:
<b>5. Date of Initial Engagement</b>	With Student(s):  With Parent(s):
<b>6. Views of Student(s)/Parent(s)</b>	

<i>(Regarding the actions to be taken to address bullying behaviour)</i>	
<b>7. Date of Review</b> <i>(To determine if bullying behaviour has ceased)</i> <i>(reminder - 20 days)</i>	Review Date:  Outcome:  Views of Student(s):  Views of Parent(s):
<b>8. Engagement with External Services/Supports</b> <i>(If any)</i>	Services Contacted:  Details of Engagement:
<b>9. Recording Teacher</b>	Name  Date Recorded