

Scoil na mBráithre Bí Cineálta Policy

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Scoil na mBráithre 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.

“We confirm that we will take all steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent all bullying or harassment of our students in whatever form and however motivated.

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 everybody in our school is treated with respect and care, in accordance with the Catholic Schedule.

As a Catholic school, we are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual. No human person is to be devalued and everybody has a 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. 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	Dec 5 th 2024	Google Form Staff Meeting on March 14 th to give feedback on draft policy
Students	Dec 9-13 th 2024	Google Form
Parents	Dec 5 th 2024	Google Form
Board of Management	Dec 10 th 2024	Board of Management meeting
Wider school community as appropriate		publish on school website www.dooncbs.com
Date policy was approved: June 4 th 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: N/A		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by this school to address all forms of bullying behaviour, in whatever form and however motivated, including online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment.

In developing the 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 our 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 our 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 dialogue with parents, thereby building a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, trust and confidence.

In continuing to develop prevention strategies, this school will listen to young people and parents, to help establish their particular context and needs. Frequent periods of reflection and further engagement by the school, young people and parents, will be used to discern appropriate supports for young people in this school and to help inform future prevention strategies.

Culture and environment:

- Positive and inclusive school culture
- Positive relationships
- Effective leadership
- Positive culture and environment
- Telling environment
- Tell a trusted adult
- Safe physical access
- Supervision
- Concern box in classrooms
- Opportunities to participate in class and all school activities to raise self-esteem

Curriculum

- Teaching and learning in SPHE
- RSE curriculum
- Student participation
- SPHE Methodologies
- Promoting inclusion and diversity
- Extracurricular activities to develop positive self worth
- Group work / collaboration
- Role-play, acting out scenarios
- Circle time
- Morning meetings

Policy and Planning

- BÍ Cineálta policy
- Student friendly BÍ Cineálta policy
- Code of behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Supervision
- RSE policy
- SEN policy
- DEIS Well-Being in education

Relationships and Partnerships

- Strong interpersonal connections
- Bullying awareness initiatives
- Student care and participation
- Critical thinking skills
- Promoting peer support
- Supporting activities that build empathy, respect and resilience

Preventing cyber bullying behaviour : (Note- the digital age of consent is the minimum age a user must be before a social media or Internet company can collect, process and store their data. In Ireland the digital age of consent is 16. Children between 13 and 16 must have parental permission to sign up to social media services. Most social media platforms have a minimum age requirement and for the majority of these, it is 13 years old. Therefore, children under the age of 13 should not have a social media account)

- Promoting digital citizenship
- Implementing SPHE curriculum

- Open conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- Referring to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the code of behaviour
- Promoting online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children activities online
- Holding Internet Safety Day

Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour

- Maintaining an inclusive physical environment such as displaying relevant posters
- Encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- Challenging gender – stereotypes

Preventing racist bullying behaviour

- Fostering at school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students ‘ see themselves’ in their school environment
- Encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- Encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour
- Providing support to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma students, and to encourage communication with their parents
- Ensuring that reading material and textbooks represent appropriate experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds

Preventing sexist bullying behaviour

- Ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex
- Ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities, irrespective of their sex
- Celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contribution of all students
- Encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home

Preventing sexual harassment

- Promoting positive role models within the school community
- Challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

- Teacher and 2 SNA's present to supervise small break and lunchtime
- Children are accompanied by at least one staff member on all school trips
- Children are told where to play when on yard and spaces to avoid
- Teachers bear in mind children who may have recently clashed when organising groups for collaborative work/teams etc with a view to getting space to give the children involved time to heal.

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and management policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying and behaviour and facilitate early intervention where possible.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Joanne Breen, Elizabeth Breen, Denis Moloney and Donal O' Connell

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

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

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

Identify if bullying behaviour has occurred:

- Two staff members can be present when engaging with children individually initially without parents notification and presence
- Two staff members can be present when engaging with a group of children to investigate what happened. Teacher's discretion can be used with this approach about when best to use it.
- A group meeting will provide the opportunity for the children to give their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views. Each student should be supported, as appropriate, following the group meeting. It may also be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account.

The following three questions should be considered to determine if bullying has occurred

1. Is the behaviour targeted at a student or group of students ?
2. Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?
3. Is the behaviour repeated?

If the answer to each of the questions above is Yes , then the behaviour is bullying behaviour and the behaviour should be addressed using the Bí Cineálta procedures.

Requests no action taken

A student who reports bullying behaviour may ask a member of staff not to do anything and just ' look out' for them due to not wanting to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They might feel that telling someone might make things more difficult for them. Where this occurs, it is important that the member of staff shows empathy to the student, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the student to work out together what steps can be taken to address the behaviour. It must be made clear to the pupil that other parties may need to be informed for their welfare.

Parents may also make the school aware of bullying behaviour and specifically request no action is to be taken by the school. Parents should put this in writing to the school. However, the school may decide that based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour through the Bí Cineálta procedures and or the Code of Behaviour where appropriate.

Determining if the 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. Factors to consider in the review include:

- The nature of the bullying
- The effectiveness of strategies used to address bullying behaviour
- The relationship between the students involved

Ongoing supervision of both the child experiencing bullying behaviour and the child's playing bullying behaviour may be required as well as continued support. 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 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.

When it becomes clear that the student who was displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school should consider using the stories to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided within the Schools code of behaviour.

If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant students, their parents and School.

Recording bullying behaviour:

All incidence of bullying behaviour should be recorded. The following details should be included on the record.

- form (see section 2.5 of Bí Cineálta procedures)
- type (see section 2.7 of Bí Cineálta procedures)
- where and when (if known)
- the date of initial engagement with the students and their parents
- the views of the students and their parents* regarding the action to be taken to address the bullying behaviour (*only in relation to their own child)
- When review takes place, it should be noted if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of the students and parents in relation to this.
- note the date of reviews and engagements
- note the date that the bullying behaviour has ceased
- any engagement with external services/ supports should also be noted
- if a SSF exists for a pupil involved, schools are encouraged to place a copy of the record on the student's support file

Complaint process:

If a parent is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with these procedures, they should be referred to the School complaints procedure. Any event that a student and/or parent is satisfied following the complaints procedure, they may make a complaint to the ombudsman for children.

Supports:

NEPS

Oide

Webwise

National parents Council

Tusla

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):

Where bullying behaviour has occurred:

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 and involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues into school, then School will deal with it in accordance with this policy.

It is important for staff to be fair and consistent in their approach to address bullying behaviour. Both the student experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour needs support. Engage with the student who is experiencing bullying without delay. School staff should identify the support needed for the student who was displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties.

It is important that a student's agency is not decreased further by adults deciding what will happen next without listening to the student and involving them in deciding on the actions that will be taken. The following principles must be adhered to when addressing bullying behaviour:

- Ensure the child experiencing bullying behaviour fears are listened to 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 view 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

Parents of both parties involved must be contacted at the stage to inform them of the matter and to consult with them on the actions to be taken to address the behaviour as outlined in the schools policy. In the circumstances where a student expresses concern about their parents being informed, the school should develop an appropriate pledge to support the student and for how their parents will be informed.

All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with students and parents. The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented. If the bullying behaviour is a child protection concern the matter will be addressed without delay in accordance with *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Section D: Oversight

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

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

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

Signed: Noel Kelly Date: June 4th 2025

(Chairperson of board of management) Noel Kelly

Signed: Joanne Breen Date: June 4th 2025

(Principal) Joanne Breen

Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour

This template is only to be used when bullying behaviour has been identified, in line with the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

1. Date of initial engagement with pupil(s) and parent(s)

2. Initials of pupil who has experienced bullying behaviour and class group

Initials _____ Class _____

3. Initials and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

Initials _____ Class(es) _____

4. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es)*)		5. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es)*)	
Pupil concerned		Yard	
Other Pupil		Classroom	
Parent		Corridor	
Teacher		Toilets	
Other		Other (specify)	

6. Initials of person(s) who reported the bullying concern and/or relationship to the pupil(s)

7. Dates of when the bullying behaviour occurred

6. Form of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box/boxes) See Pg 21

Physical Bullying Behaviour		Exclusion Bullying Behaviour	
Verbal Bullying Behaviour		Relational Bullying Behaviour	
Written Bullying Behaviour		Online Bullying Behaviour	
Extortion		Other (specify)	

7. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box/boxes)

Disablist Bullying Behaviour		Homophobic/Transphobic (LGBTQ+) Bullying Behaviour	
Exceptionally Bullying Behaviour		Physical Appearance Sexual Harassment	
Gender Identity Bullying Behaviour		Racist Bullying Behaviour	
Sexist Bullying Behaviour Sexual Harassment		Religious Identity Bullying Behaviour	
Poverty Bullying Behaviour		Other (specify)	

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

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9. Views of pupil(s) and parent(s) regarding the actions to be taken

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10. Date of review with pupil(s) and parent(s) (within 20 days)	
11. Has bullying behaviour ceased?	
12. Views of pupil(s) and parents in relation to this	
13. If bullying behaviour has not ceased, set an agreed timeframe to meet again and review strategies	
14. Engagement with external services or supports (if any)	

If bullying behaviour continues beyond the review timeframes, the school's Code of Behaviour is to be used.

Signed: _____ (Relevant Teacher)

Date: _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal: _____