



Kilrush Community School

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Mission Statement

In an Irish and global context, Kilrush Community School endeavours to create an inclusive community of mutual understanding and respect within which students can learn and thrive. We co-create opportunities for every student to fulfil their potential.

Kilrush Community School Aims

1. To develop an excellent learning environment which promotes high expectations of individual performance from students.
2. To give students access to a broad and balanced curriculum within a caring, co-operative, and inclusive community.
3. To ensure that all staff and students enjoy equality of esteem and opportunity.
4. To foster among students an awareness of their environment, heritage and health enabling them to play a positive role within the local and wider community.
5. To equip students with a strong sense of self-esteem, self-discipline, and self-motivation.
6. To foster universal values of care, inclusion respect and innovation.

Appendix A

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Kilrush Community School has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

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

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

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

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

Definition of bullying

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

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

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

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

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	March 21st 2025	Individual surveys following Bi Cinnealta workshop, half day closure. Staff meetings.
Students	March 03 rd 2025	MS Forms and focus groups.
Parents	At parent teacher meetings	MS forms and hard copy surveys.
Board of Management	February 27 th & June 04 th 2025	Meetings, presentations, document review, brainstorming.
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	May 2025	In person calls.
Date policy was approved: June 04 th 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: <u>29/09/2026</u>		

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):

- The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its 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.
- Particular focus and concentration will be placed on First Year students to raise awareness of bullying as an unacceptable form of behaviour.
- Create an atmosphere that encourages discussion and disclosure. Encourage students to have a shared sense of responsibility for the safety and welfare of each other.
- Have a comprehensive system of supervision and monitoring measures.
- Develop collective vigilance by the school community in order to prevent the encroachment of bullying.
- Encourage the reporting of suspected bullying behaviour.
- SPHE, CSPE, Computer Study, and RSE classes have a role to play in highlighting the need for the disclosure of bullying.
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our students through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Students will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.

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):

- The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours, and extracurricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- Involvement of the student council in contributing to a safe school environment can help to support students and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- The development of an Acceptable Use Policy in the school includes the necessary steps to ensure that access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the students' use of mobile phones.
- Any member of staff who suspects that bullying is taking place in the school or outside, where it impinges on school life, must report their suspicions to the PCT, the Principal, or Deputy Principal.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

The school's Pastoral Care team (PCT) considers and deals with all cases of suspected bullying and bullying in the school. Designated individual staff on the team deal with cases of bullying behaviour. However, other staff may also have a specific role to play. Generally, one member of the PCT has specific responsibility to investigate and report back to the team and/or Principal/Deputy Principal regarding specific incidences of bullying. The member of the PCT designated to investigate an issue of suspected or actual bullying depends on the nature of the issue itself and those suspected of involvement. The Year Head of student(s) involved also has a role to play in the process.

The specific roles with responsibility are as follows:

- The Principal
- The Deputy Principal
- The Year Heads
- The Pastoral Care Team
- The School Completion Programme Team
- The Chaplain
- The Career Guidance Counsellor
- Class Tutors
- Others as identified by school management
- Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

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):

- *If the bullying allegation meets the criteria for the definition of Bullying as per the Bí Cineálta procedures, (including online bullying) FORM 1 - Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour should be used. See Appendix 1.*
- It is recognised that no one specific intervention works in all situations/cases of bullying.
- The overall aim in any investigation of actual bullying is to resolve the issue and to restore relationships as far as is practicable.
- Students and parents are required to co-operate with any investigation and to assist the school in resolving any issues.
- Any investigation aims to respect, as far as possible, the privacy and integrity of those involved.
- Where a group is involved, each member will be met individually at first. Depending on the nature of the issue, the group itself may be met at a later stage.
- Parents/Guardians may also be informed so as to reinforce and support the action(s) being taken by the school.
- In any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the student being disciplined, his or her parents/guardians, and the school.
- Should a staff member feel that bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by that teacher on the appropriate referral form. The Principal/Deputy Principal must be informed of this.
- The PCT, when determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed, must consider the following factors:
 - Has the bullying behaviour stopped?
 - Have the issues between the parties involved been resolved as far as possible?
 - Has the relationship or status quo between the parties been restored as far as is practicable?
 - Has any feedback been received from the parties involved?

If a parent/guardian is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a case of bullying, in accordance with these procedures, they may use the appropriate school complaint procedures.

- Should a parent/guardian have exhausted the school's complaint procedures and remain unsatisfied, he/she has a right to make a complaint to the Children's Ombudsman.
- In the most serious cases of suspected or actual bullying, staff should report immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal.
- All documentation pertaining to a suspected or actual incidence of bullying must be retained in the school.
- In the event of a student or students resurrecting an issue of bullying where, in the view of the PCT, it has been dealt with, such students will face possible suspension and/or dismissal in the most serious of cases.
- The Principal, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principals, and Year Head's reserve the right, with permission, to access a student's phone. A student who refuses to co-operate in such a case will be considered to be in serious breach of the School Code.
- The school authorities reserve the right to intervene in issues that arise outside the school environment which, in the opinion of the school authorities, impinge on the orderly running of the school.

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):

- Follow-up checks will be made with students, and where necessary with parents, after an issue of bullying has been dealt with.
- It will be attempted to try and get a student or students involved in bullying behaviour to see the situation/issue from the perspective of the student(s) being bullied.
- Funds permitting, counselling may be provided in the most serious of cases.
- As with any investigation into bullying issues, the methodology used by the Pastoral Care Team (PCT) will be one of ongoing counselling and monitoring.

- Sanctions may be imposed on students involved in all forms of bullying behaviour, especially if the behaviour is repeated, as it was counter to the school rules and ethos.
- This could result in probable suspension and/or dismissal in the most serious of cases.

Bullying is a form of harassment and considered to be a criminal offence. It may be necessary, in certain circumstances, for the school authorities to inform the relevant authorities of bullying behaviour.

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: Miriam O'Farrell Date: 29/09/26
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: Eileen Mc Mahon Date: 29/09/26
(Principal)

Next Review Date: **June 2027**

Appendix 1

Bí Cineálta Procedures

FORM 1 - Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour

If the bullying allegation meets the criteria for the definition of Bullying as per the Bí Cineálta procedures, (including online bullying) this Form should be completed

School Assigned Personnel completing this form.		• Deputy Principal • Year Head • Counsellor • Teacher/Class Tutor
1.	Name and Class of pupil experiencing bullying behaviour	
2.	Name(s) & classes of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour	
3.	Form(s) of Bullying: (2.5)	• Physical • Verbal • Written • Extortion • Exclusion • Relational • Online
4.	Type of Bullying: (2.7)	• Disablist • Exceptionally able • Gender-identity • Homophobic/transphobic • Physical appearance • Racist, poverty • Religious identity • Sexist bullying • Sexual harassment
	Other (please state)	
5	Location of incident(s)	
6	Date of incident(s)	
7	Name of person(s) who reported the concern.	
8	Brief description of bullying behaviour and its impact:	
9.	Date of initial engagement with pupil(s) harmed and pupil(s) engaging in harm.	
10.	Names of, and date of initial engagement with parent(s) of student(s) experiencing the bullying	

	behaviour.	
11.	Name of, and date of initial engagement with parent(s) of student(s) displaying bullying behaviours.	
12.	Details of actions taken.	
13.	Views of pupils and parents regarding actions to be taken.	
14.	Date of Review to determine if bullying behaviour has ceased.	
15.	Details of Engagement with external supports (if any).	
16.	Date of behaviour ceasing.	
17.	If bullying behaviour has not ceased, what further actions have been agreed?	
18.	Signed: YearHead / Assigned Teacher	
19.	Date:	
20.	Additional Comments.	
21.	Parent Declaration: I agree that the actions of the school and all involved have addressed the bullying behaviour at this point.	
22.	Date:	
23.	Agreed Report	
24.	Reviewed for completeness: Signed: Deputy Principal	
This report will be filed in the Principal's Office. The term '<i>incident recorded and filed in Principal's Office</i>' will be added to school Management Information System (MIS) - e.g. VSWare.		

Date filed in Principal's Office:

2/10/2026