



Bí Cineálta - Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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1. Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Gorey 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.

2. 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.

3. Review of our *Bí Cineálta* policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour

All members of our school community were given the opportunity to input into this policy's development/review.

Date policy was approved: 31 st August 2026
Date policy was last reviewed: 25 th August 2025

4. Preventing Bullying Behaviour

The following strategies are categorised into the four key areas of the national Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (Culture and Environment; Curriculum (Teaching and Learning); Policy and Planning; Relationships and Partnerships).

These are essential for a holistic, whole school approach to wellbeing promotion. This is a **non-exhaustive list** of the prevention strategies that may be used by the school.

Culture & Environment

- Promotion of a whole-school environment where respect and kindness are key, and effective leadership from staff and students creates a positive school culture.
- Creation and maintenance of a telling environment, with staff and students made aware of all this entails.
- Encouraging the culture of students having trusted adults within the GCS community.
- Creation and maintenance of safe physical spaces in GCS, with an emphasis on access routes & communal areas.

Curriculum (Teaching & Learning)

- The principles of prevention of bullying behaviour are addressed through the school's Wellbeing programme, including CSPE, SPHE, PE, RE and Senior Cycle Wellbeing.
- Cross-curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular learning reinforce the values of the school as well as providing access to information and processes to maintain and enhance student safety.
- School assemblies which address (among other things) positive behaviours, GCS' identity as a Telling School, our ethos of kindness, respect and ambition, and which aim to help in recognising and addressing bullying behaviours.
- Expert speakers, regularly reviewed for maximum impact and relevance.
- The facilitation within the curriculum of regular opportunities for students to feed back about anti-bullying generally in the school, and specifically for their year group.
- Promotion of positive behaviours through targeted interventions and through the school's Wellbeing Programme.
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Policy & Planning

- Child Safeguarding Statement & Risk Assessment is updated annually and displayed in school and on our website.
- Supporting student voice and student participation in School policies
- Engaging staff in professional learning and development, and recognising the role of all school staff in identifying and preventing bullying behaviour
- Maintenance, planning and development of school buildings & infrastructure
- A focus on the wellbeing of all students involved where bullying behaviour is determined to have taken place.
- Review of the School's Bí Cineálta policy each year, or more frequently as necessary
- Reference to Bi Cinealta in school's Code of Behaviour
- Student wellbeing is at the centre of School Self-Evaluation
- All schemes of work make reference to differentiation, wellbeing and inclusion
- Subject department plans are evaluated, reviewed & updated annually

Relationships & Partnerships

Strengthening relationships and partnerships, including

- age-appropriate awareness initiatives which look at the causes and impacts of bullying behaviour including those dealing with navigating friendships, exclusion, identity-based bullying, racist bullying, homophobic/transphobic bullying, sexism and sexual harassment
- supporting the active participation of students in school life
- supporting the active participation of parents in school life, including those who may find it difficult or daunting to engage with the school due to being unfamiliar with the education system or due to language or cultural barriers
- providing education for students, school staff and parents aimed at raising awareness of the impact of bullying
- encouraging students to stand up against bullying-behaviour rather than be by-standers
- supporting activities, and a school ethos, which builds empathy, respect and resilience
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring
- promoting acts of kindness such as through the annual Class Kindness Award, GCS Spirit of TY, Student of the Year and Achievement awards

- teaching problem-solving through group work and extracurricular projects
- a focus on building and maintaining positive relationships across the GCS community

5. Specific strategies

Strategies specifically aimed at preventing online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate.

Preventing cyberbullying behaviour

Promoting strategies which include

- promoting digital literacy and digital citizenship
- implementing the SPHE curriculum
- implementing the Digital Media Literacy curriculum which teaches students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship
- having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- developing and communicating an Acceptable Use Policy for technology
- 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's activities online
- promoting Safer Internet Day to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour

Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour

Promoting strategies which include:

- maintaining an inclusive physical environment such as by displaying relevant posters and participation in Awareness Week
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- encouraging and facilitating promotion of, and participation in, school clubs and activities

- promoting respectful interactions
- conducting workshops and seminars for members of the school community aimed at raising awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour
- encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic or transphobic behaviour

Preventing racist bullying behaviour

Promoting strategies which include:

- fostering GCS' school culture as one in which where diversity is celebrated and where students feel valued in their school environment
- having GCS' cultural diversity visible and on display
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy-building activities
- encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour
- 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
- providing supports to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities and to encourage communication with their parents
- inviting speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds
- ensuring that reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds

Preventing sexist bullying behaviour

Promoting strategies which include

- ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex
- ensuring all students have opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex
- celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contributions of all students
- organising awareness campaigns, workshops and presentations on gender equality and respect
- encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home

Preventing sexual harassment:

Promoting strategies which include

- using the updated SPHE specifications to teach students about healthy relationships and how to treat each other with respect and kindness
- promoting positive role models within the school community

- Providing educational information to parents on healthy relationships
- challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment.

6. Supervision & Monitoring of Students

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

- A system for the supervision of the school grounds before and after school & during break and lunchtimes, with specific reference to areas identified by students as those which, if poorly supervised, could be particularly conducive to bullying behaviour.
- The school operates CCTV on corridors, entrances/exits and outdoor areas. The school operates Verkada, a CCTV & sensor alarm system for vaping.
- The school's SNAs circulate in locker/resource areas during break times. While this is for the benefit of specific students, this presence is useful in preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. The school's SNA team meets regularly with Special Class teachers and SENCO.
- The Principal holds a team meeting each week with the Year Head of each year group. This gives targeted support and attention to individual year groups as appropriate. These teams can include input from Learning Support, Chaplaincy, Deputy Principals, Assistant Year Heads, Special Class staff and Guidance Counsellors.
- Student Support Team - This team includes input from the Principal, AEN Dept, Chaplain, School Completion Programme, Year Heads, Special Class staff and the Guidance Counsellor.
- Year Head Team members have specific times each day when they are available for students to avail of drop-in support or to alert them to any concerns they have in relation to themselves or others.
- School attendance is monitored daily by the Year Head Team.
- The school has a Class Tutor system, allowing students regular contact with their Class Tutor, and giving parents a specific contact within the school for concerns/issues which may arise.
- The school's Chaplain's office and Guidance suite is available for students to drop-in to alert them to any concerns they have in relation to themselves or others.

7. Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teachers with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour are as follows:

Class Teachers, Class Tutors, Relevant Year Heads, Guidance Dept, Chaplain, Deputy Principals & Principal.

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 (class teachers, tutors, year heads, guidance counsellors, chaplain, Deputy Principals, Principal, support teams and non-teaching staff) are responsible for reporting suspected bullying incidences. These reports should be made to the relevant Year Head who will complete a Bullying Incident Report Form (Appendix 1).

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

When the school is made aware of potential bullying behaviour (this information can come from a wide variety of sources), the relevant staff in GCS will use the three questions outlined in the Bí Cineálta procedures to make a preliminary assessment of whether bullying behaviour has occurred:

- Is it targeted?
- Is it repeated?
- Is it causing harm?

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

If the answer to **any** of the questions above is No, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for in the school's Code of Behaviour.

It may be necessary to make a determination as to whether the bullying behaviour has taken place in school or not, or whether the bullying behaviour has affected students in the school (see Bí Cineálta: Procedures pp 22-23).

One-off incidents may be considered bullying in certain circumstances. A single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and thus becomes a repeated behaviour.

The relevant teacher (in most cases this will be the Year Head/Co-ordinator or the Deputy Principal) will gather relevant information from students involved in order to make a preliminary assessment, with reference to the information and guidance contained in the Bí Cineálta procedures. This information may be gathered using written statements or interviews. The requisite reporting form will be used for this, and the follow-up with students and parents will take place within the timeframe, as outlined in the Bí Cineálta Procedures. The relevant teacher, with other staff as necessary, will determine that bullying behaviour has or has not taken place.

Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the school will seek to

- ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured
- ensure the privacy of those involved insofar as is practicable
- 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

‘Take no action’ requests

Parents may also make schools aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action. **Parents must make this request in writing to GCS.** It may be the case that the school forms the view that the behaviour still needs to be dealt with under the school’s Code of Behaviour or Bí Cineálta.

Determining if bullying behaviour has ceased

The relevant teacher must engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress following the initial intervention.

Principal 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.
- 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.

Recording bullying behaviour

The relevant teacher will use the Bullying Incident Report Form to note the particulars involved in each instance of bullying behaviour, along with the actions taken at each step.

The record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour.

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.

Review of Bullying Behaviour Incident

The relevant teacher / Year Head will engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress following the initial intervention.

Important factors to consider as part of the review will include

- the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the students involved.
- 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.
- The record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions taken to address the bullying behaviour.
- 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.
- This review meeting should be documented on the Bullying Incident Report Template and forwarded to the Principal to form part of his Report to the Board of Management.

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

- Student support via Pastoral Care Teams
- Student support (as appropriate) via Chaplaincy, Guidance Counselling, Year Head, SCP, Learning Support and Special Class provision
- Contact with parents
- Check-in meetings with trusted adult(s) - not necessarily Guidance / Year Heads
- Follow-up surveys and fact-finding to determine if (a) behaviour has ceased and (b) support needs to continue
- Wider support for year groups/class groups/ small groups from experts inside and outside the school.

Record Keeping

All bullying behaviour will be recorded on the School Bullying Report Template. 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*.

8. 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.

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. GCS' BÍ Cineálta policy should be read in conjunction with our other policies, including (but not limited to) the School's Code of Behaviour, School Tours Policy, AEN

Policy, Wellbeing Policy, Child Safeguarding Statement and Health & Safety Policy.

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: H. Abdel Nefan

Date: 31/8/26

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: [Signature]

Date: 31/8/26

(Principal)