School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Gaelcholáiste Synge 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.

Core definition of Bullying Behaviour

Bullying is 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 of Behaviour.

Building on many years of international research, the core definition above sets out clear criteria to help school communities to prevent, correctly identify and address bullying among students. Alleged incidents of bullying are however often complex and must be considered on a case by case basis.

There are many different methods of bullying behaviour, including physical, verbal and relational forms, and it can take place online and offline. There are also many different motives for bullying behaviour which can be understood on an individual level (for example, desire for dominance, status, revenge) and/or on a societal level (for example, identity-based bullying such as racist, disablist, sexist or LGBTQ+ bullying). Bullying behaviour in schools is often strongly influenced by attitudes, behaviours, norms and power dynamics that are deeply engrained in our society.

The core elements of the definition are further described below:

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 of behaviour.

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.

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 not bullying behaviour

A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards another student is not bullying behaviour. However, a single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be visible to a wide audience and has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and so becomes a repeated behaviour.

Disagreement between students, or instances where students don't want to be friends or to remain friends, is not considered bullying behaviour unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others including deliberate manipulation of friendship groups.

Some students with special educational needs may have social communication difficulties which may make them communicate their needs through behaviours that can hurt themselves or others. It is important to note that these behaviours are not deliberate or planned but, in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they can't control.
Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying.

These behaviours, while not defined as bullying can be distressing.

Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

Criminal behaviour

Bullying behaviour can be considered criminal behaviour under certain circumstances and legal consequences can apply. The age of criminal responsibility in Ireland is 12 years.
Some online behaviour may be illegal, and students need to be aware of the far-reaching consequences of posting inappropriate or harmful content online. In cases of intimate imagery, the Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020, also known as Coco's Law, criminalises the nonconsensual sharing of intimate images and also criminalises threatening to share these images.

If bullying behaviour involves physical violence or threats of violence, it may be considered assault.

If bullying behaviour involves discrimination or hate speech targeting a student based on their race, religion, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation or membership of the Traveller community, it may be considered a hate crime under the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989, and those engaging in such behaviour may face criminal charges.

If bullying behaviour involves sexual harassment or sexual assault, this may also be considered criminal behaviour.

An Garda Síochána is the appropriate authority to investigate alleged criminal behaviour.

How bullying behaviour occurs

Bullying behaviour can take many forms, which can occur separately or together. These can include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

Direct bullying behaviour:

Physical bullying behaviour:

- Physical bullying behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping students. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While students can often engage in "mess fights" they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.
- Personal property can be a focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, schoolbooks and other learning material or interference with a student's locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

Verbal bullying behaviour:

- Continual namecalling directed at a student which hurts, insults or humiliates the student should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often namecalling of this type refers to physical appearance; for example, size or clothes worn or gender identity. It can also refer to a student's accent, distinctive voice characteristics, academic ability, race or ethnic origin.

Written bullying behaviour:

- Written bullying behaviour includes writing insulting remarks about a student in public places, passing around notes about or drawings of a student.

Extortion

- Bullying behaviour can involve extortion. Extortion is where something is obtained through force or threats.

Indirect bullying behaviour:

Exclusion

- Exclusion bullying behaviour occurs where a student is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded or ignored by a student or group of students.

Relational

- Relational bullying behaviour occurs when a student's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. Common forms include control: "Do this or I won't be your friend anymore"; a group of students ganging up against one student; nonverbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a student; giving a student the "silent treatment"; and the deliberate manipulation of friendship groups to make someone unpopular.

Online bullying behaviour:

- Online bullying behaviour (cyberbullying) is carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text or direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, email, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chatrooms and other online technologies.

This form of bullying behaviour can include:

- sending or sharing nasty, insulting, offensive, and/or intimidating messages or images via text messages, emails, direct messages or other websites or apps
- posting information considered to be personal, private and sensitive without consent
- making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or

humiliate other students

- excluding or disrupting access to a student on purpose from online chat groups, access to accounts or from an online game

Even though a message may be posted online just once by a student it can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be seen by a wide audience where it is intended to be shared or has a likelihood of being shared multiple times and is thus repeated.

As online bullying uses technology to carry out bullying behaviour and does not require face-to-face contact it can occur at any time. Many types of bullying behaviour can be facilitated through online bullying. In many cases online bullying can relate to an "offline" experience with someone known to the student. This type of bullying may involve forms of sexual exploitation including but not limited to, sextortion and the nonconsensual sharing of intimate images. The sharing or threatened sharing of images without consent is a criminal offence.

Where bullying behaviour can occur

Bullying behaviour can happen anywhere, online or offline and at any time, but there are certain places and times where bullying behaviour can be more likely to occur. These can include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

Inside School

School physical environments can have a significant influence on social relationships among students and can impact on the ability of school staff to effectively prevent and address bullying. Well-designed school environments play a vital role in preventing bullying behaviour and promoting inclusion, positive relationships, and a safe and supportive learning environment.

School yard: Bullying behaviour can take place in the school yard. School grounds with hidden or obscure parts may provide an environment where bullying behaviour is more likely to occur. Many common school yard games present opportunities for bullying behaviour because of their physical nature. Continuing provocation may lead to a physical fight and in some cases the student experiencing bullying behaviour may appear to be the aggressor as they give vent to their frustration.

In the classroom: Bullying behaviour can take place in class. It may occur subtly through glances, looks, sniggers or may take the more overt form of physical intimidation or deliberate isolation. Bullying behaviour may also occur between class periods when the students or the teacher moves.

Other areas: Bullying behaviour can take place in other areas such as toilets, corridors, cloakrooms, locker areas, changing rooms, showers, gym, canteen and assembly hall.

Outside School

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 involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, schools should deal with it in accordance with their Bí Cineálta policy.

Coming to and from school: Bullying behaviour can occur in the area immediately outside the school, the local shops and the wider local area. Bullying behaviour can take place at the bus stop or on the journey to and from school whether the students are walking, cycling or on school buses.

Bullying behaviour can also take place in organised clubs and groups outside of school such as sports clubs.

Online bullying (cyberbullying) behaviour, along with all other types of bullying behaviour, can cause significant harm and can have a lasting impact on students who experience this behaviour. Access to technology means that online bullying behaviour can happen anytime, and the student's home is no longer a safe place. The nature of these technologies means that digital content can be shared and seen by a very wide audience almost instantly and the content is almost impossible to delete permanently.

Types of bullying behaviour

There are many different types of bullying behaviour. These can include the following which is not an exhaustive list:

- **disablist bullying behaviour:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of a perceived or actual disability or additional need
- **exceptionally able bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their high academic ability or outstanding talents
- **gender identity bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual gender identity
- **homophobic/transphobic (LGBTQ+) bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual membership of the LGBTQ+ community
- **physical appearance bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their physical appearance. Students who "look different" can be mocked or criticised about the shape, size or appearance of their body
- **racist bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their race or ethnic origin which includes membership of the Traveller or Roma community. Racism is defined in the National Action Plan Against Racism as "a form of domination which manifests through those power dynamics present in structural and institutional arrangements, practices, policies and cultural norms, which have the effect of excluding or discriminating against individuals or groups, based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin"
- **poverty bullying:** behaviour and language that intends to humiliate a student because of a lack of resources
- **religious identity bullying:** behaviour and language that intends to harm a student

because of their religion or religious identity

- **sexist bullying:** behaviour and language that intends to harm a student based on their sex, perpetuating stereotypes that a student or a group of students are inferior because of their sex
- **sexual harassment:** any form of unwanted verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on sex which affects the dignity of the student

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	10 February 2025	Half-day staff training Questionnaire
Students	10 February 2025	Questionnaire
Parents	10 February 2025	Questionnaire
Board of Management	18 March 2025	Report of findings from questionnaires
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers		
Date policy was approved:		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by Gaelcholáiste Synge. 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).

Mission Statement

The Irish language, Enthusiasm and Respect are the core values of Gaelcholáiste Synge. Gaelcholáiste Synge provides an excellent education through the medium of Irish. We foster the holistic development of our students so that each student reaches their full potential with enthusiasm and courage. We create a vibrant, respectful and inspiring learning community.

School Aims

- We provide a high-quality education through the medium of Irish, fostering a love of the Irish language and culture through the arts, sport and traditions.
- We focus on the academic, moral, physical, emotional, social and cultural development of students.
- We create a school community in which every student feels safe, supported and encouraged to achieve excellence.
- We work closely with parents and the community to reinforce the values of the school. We foster an inclusive, vibrant school community based on respect, dignity and partnership.

Culture and Environment

The staff, students and wider community of Gaelcholáiste Synge endeavour to promote a positive and inclusive school culture and environment. We:

- Foster a school environment, where students and school staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported.
- Develop relationships based on respect, care, integrity and trust between all members of the school community.
- Employ open communication between the patron, boards of management, school staff, students and their parents.
- Maintain a collaborative approach and shared responsibilities in relation to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.
- Set high standards and expectations for the community of Gaelcholáiste Synge, when preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.
- Maintain that each member of school staff has a responsibility to develop and maintain a school culture, where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and to take a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.
- Believe that students can shape the school culture by promoting kindness and inclusion within their peer group and maintain a positive and supportive school environment for all.
- Agree that parents, as active partners in their child's education, can help foster an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated through promoting empathy and respect.

A Telling Environment

Gaelcholáiste Synge supports a 'telling environment'. Gaelcholáiste Synge endeavours to promote a safe environment where reporting of bullying behaviour is encouraged:

- Reporting incidents of bullying is responsible behaviour.
- We encourage a 'telling' atmosphere, where it is made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Students, parents/guardians are informed of the anti-bullying policy on admission. This policy is made available to all members of the school community via the school website and it is reviewed annually.
- References to policies relevant to anti-bullying and prevention strategies are frequently mentioned at assemblies and during classes across the curriculum.

The school staff ensures that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, for example:

- Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
- Hand note up with homework.
- Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
- Anti-bullying report system on the website.
- Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
- Administer a confidential questionnaire to pupils.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

A Trusted Adult:

- Students who witness bullying behaviour in Gaelcholáiste Synge are encouraged to report the behaviour to a trusted adult in the school so that the behaviour can be addressed. Students, who witness bullying behaviour on social media, have an important role in helping to address the behaviour by reporting the witnessed behaviour to a trusted adult.
- The trusted adult should reassure the student that they have done the right thing by reporting the behaviour and the trusted adult should, without delay, inform the member or members of staff, who have responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour.
- In Gaelcholáiste Synge the trusted adults are: any teacher or member of staff.
- If unsure of who to inform the trusted adult should tell the Principal or Deputy Principal. The trusted adult should continue to support the student, as appropriate, while the behaviour is being addressed by the relevant staff member.

Curriculum (Learning and Teaching)

The Gaelcholáiste Synge school community:

- applies a school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the
- school community.
- promotes learning and teaching that is collaborative and respectful.
- gives students opportunities in class to work in small groups and in pair work, which helps to build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy amongst students.
- offers curricular subjects which provides opportunities for students to foster inclusion and respect for diversity.
- provides opportunities for students to develop a sense of self-worth through both curricular and extra-curricular programmes.
- specifically considers the additional needs of pupils with regard to programme implementation.
- ensures that there are opportunities for staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it — prevention and intervention and ensures that there is professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s). promotes school-wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
- developed and promotes, together with students, a student-friendly version of Bí Cineálta procedures for the school - to be included in student journals and displayed publicly in classrooms and in shared areas of the school.
- Discusses the school's Bí Cineálta procedures with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school (every year). The school's

Bí Cineálta procedures are discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s)s can access the Bí Cineálta procedures on the school 's website. Parents must sign to acknowledge their awareness of and as proof of having read the procedures as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school (every year).

- informs students, parents/guardians of the Bí Cineálta procedures and other policies related to anti-Bullying. The Bí Cineálta procedures and other policies related to anti-bullying are made available to all members of the school community via the school website and these are reviewed annually.
- references policies relevant to Anti-bullying and prevention strategies at assemblies.
- has a Student Support Team consisting of Principal, Deputy Principal and teaching staff to promote friendship activities and foster and promote positive relationships amongst students and meet regularly to discuss any issues.
- implements regular (e.g. per year/per term/per month/per week) whole-school awareness measures e.g. a dedicated notice board in the school and classrooms on the promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention; annual themed weeks and parent(s)/guardian(s) seminars (from the NPC and other agencies, when available); annual or term or monthly student surveys; weekly assemblies by principal, deputy principal etc.
- attempts to create an atmosphere of respect between all members of the school community and provide opportunities for students to develop self-confidence and become empathetic and resilient individuals. Class and cross curricular opportunities encourage and allow for a fostering of positive relationships, such as: working together as a class, Sports Day, competitions, Smile Files, promoting a positive class atmosphere: working together, shared success, RAK (Random Act of Kindness) weeks, Themed Weeks: LGBTQi week, Stand up! Against Homophobic and Transphobic bullying

campaign, Anti-bullying week, Internet Safety Week, amongst many others, which seek to promote understanding and tolerance for all.

- provides several curriculum components and programmes, which are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying and the promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness. Most specifically, the updated SPHE specifications aims to help students to feel empowered to create, nurture and maintain respectful healthy relationships with themselves and others. It makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging, integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships. The Relationship and Sexuality Education strand of the specification provides space for post-primary students to examine and consider relationships and human sexuality which can foster an understanding of diversity which may help to reduce gender and identity-based bullying as well as sexism and sexual harassment.
- ensures that students can also consider diversity and inclusion through the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment's Religious Education specifications/syllabus. As well as this, diversity and inclusion can be experienced via the Edmund Rice Schools Trust's ethos and values, which aim to encourage respect and understanding of different beliefs, perspectives and ways of living. In Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE), there is a focus on the interdependence of people in communities, at local as well as national and international levels. History and, at Senior Cycle, Politics and Society can be used to raise awareness of racism and colonialism. By examining historical and contemporary examples of racial discrimination and colonial legacies, students can develop an understanding of the root causes of bias and prejudice. Resources and materials are also available to support incorporating Traveller culture and history across all areas of the curriculum.

- ensures that there is space within the teaching of all subjects to foster an attitude of respect for all: to promote the value of diversity; to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour. In many other subjects, we use literature to stimulate discussion. We use references to colonisation, exploitation and dictatorships to illustrate the negative aspect of power.
- promotes co-operation and group enterprise through team sports, school clubs and societies as well as through practical subjects.
- works to raise the awareness of bullying so that all members of the School community understand what bullying is and how the School deals with bullying behaviour. The subject is discussed with each year group throughout the year, CCTV is in operation and many aspects of bullying are interwoven into the School 's Learning Code. We ensure that there is adequate supervision before, during and after school.
- encourages students to make friends and promote positive wellbeing and a supportive atmosphere in the school .
- encourages a 'telling' atmosphere, where it is made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- ensures that pupils know who to tell and how to tell as mentioned already above.
- identifies clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied. The protocol should be developed in consultation with parents.
- developed an Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.
- lists the supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school e.g. GLEN www.glen.ie, BeLonGTowww.belongto.org

- can delivers lessons on bullying from evidence-based programmes, e.g. Cool School Lessons, #UP2US, Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme, On My Own Two Feet.
- can deliver lessons on Relational aggression (Cool School Programme: A Friend in Deed), cyberbullying (#UP2US, Be Safe-Be Web wise, Think Before you Click, Let's Fight it Together, Web wise Primary teachers' resources), Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying (Growing up LGBT, Stand Up Programme, The Trust pack) Diversity and Interculturalism.
- works with the Community Gardai on the Garda SPHE Programmes. These lessons are delivered by Community Gardai and cover issues around personal safety and cyberbullying.

Education and Prevention Strategies to counter Cyberbullying:

Technology is a part of life that can impact even the youngest members of society. However, the increase in the use of technology has led to students becoming increasingly vulnerable to cyberbullying or unacceptable online behaviour.

Gaelcholáiste Synge proactively addresses these challenges by promoting digital literacy, digital citizenship, and fostering safe online environments. The strategies listed below help to prevent cyber-bullying behaviour. This is not an exhaustive list.

The Gaelcholáiste Synge community:

- promotes the positive use of technology; discusses etiquette, personal safety issues and digital literacy throughout the year and via our Internet Safety Week and Safer Internet Day.
- Has regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online works to prevent Cyberbullying by educating students on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while online and on developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber bullying.
- treats cyberbullying as a whole school community issue and another form of bullying within the School's Bí Cineálta procedures. We teach students that bullying is wrong. We help them understand that cyberbullying is hurtful and wrong and to always treat others on and offline with the respect we would like from others.
- Promotes and hosts online and in person safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online informs and educates students and parents of the School's Acceptable Use Policies (AUPs) and the sanctions for the misuse of ICTs to cause hurt and distress to other students.
- provides and publicises different ways of reporting cyberbullying in the School.

- teaches students that the Internet is not a private place and they should guard their private information online.
- teaches students that they have rights and responsibilities online.
- Implements the SPHE curriculum
- Implements the Digital Media Literacy curriculum which teaches students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship

The following additional strategies may be used from time to time:

- anti-bullying (including cyberbullying) awareness days and events.
- parents are supported in their role by meetings organised by the Student Support Team consisting of Principal, Deputy Principal and teaching staff.

Preventing Homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour

- All students including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students, have a right to feel safe and supported at school.
- The strategies listed below help to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour.

This is not an exhaustive list.

The Gaelcholáiste Synge community:

- maintains an inclusive physical environment such as by displaying relevant posters
- encourages peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities

- challenges gender stereotypes
- conducts workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour
- encourages students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour

Preventing Racist Bullying behaviour:

The students in our school come from many diverse cultures and backgrounds. Students from diverse backgrounds may face discrimination and prejudice and may be subject to racist bullying behaviour.

The strategies listed below help to prevent racist bullying behaviour. This is not an exhaustive list.

The Gaelcholáiste Synge community:

- fosters a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students 'see themselves' in their school environment
- has the cultural diversity of the school visible and on display
- conducts workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness Of racism
- encourages peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- encourages bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour
- provides supports to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma students, and to encourage communication with their parents
- invites speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds
- ensures that library reading materials and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds

Preventing sexist bullying behaviour:

The school focuses on gender equality as part of our measures to create a supportive and respectful environment. The strategies listed below help to prevent sexist bullying behaviour. This is not an exhaustive list.

The Gaelcholáiste Synge community:

- ensures that members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex
- ensures that all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex
- celebrates diversity at school and acknowledge the contributions of all students
- organises awareness campaigns, workshops and presentations on gender equality and respect
- encourages parents to reinforce these values of respect at home

Preventing sexual harassment:

At Gaelcholáiste Synge there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment. Sexual harassment should never be dismissed as teasing or banter. The strategies listed below help to prevent sexual harassment. This is not an exhaustive list.

The Gaelcholáiste Synge community:

- uses the updated SPHE specifications to teach students about healthy relationships and how to treat each other with respect and kindness

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

Creating Safe Physical Spaces in Gaelcholáiste Synge

Gaelcholáiste Synge has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour. The creation of safe physical spaces supports psychological safety and is an important measure to prevent bullying behaviour.

The staff at Gaelcholáiste Synge take the following measures to create safe physical spaces:

- We ensure that good lighting is present to avoid dark corners and spaces
- We remove visual barriers such as posters on windows
- We ensure that there is adequate supervision at school entrances and exits
- On the corridors before and after classes and during lunch breaks
- Teachers stand at their classroom doors at the break of classes and are vigilant to any bullying behaviour on the corridors
- Teachers and school staff who are moving from one class to another are vigilant to any bullying behaviour on the corridors
- Cameras are used in the school as a preventative measure to bullying behaviour
- Artwork, murals and informative posters are also used to promote the school's and our patron's (ERST) values.
- Any extra-curricular activities that are held at lunchtime or after school are supervised.
- Gates and doors are supervised and/or locked in the morning, during classtime, at lunchtime and after school.
- CCTV is in operation in the school to prevent bullying behaviour

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The whole school community has a responsibility to prevent and address bullying behaviour. Schools should work in partnership with their patron, board of management, staff, students and their parents to develop and implement their Bí Cineálta policy.

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/guardians 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):

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

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.

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour you should consider the following questions:

1. Is the behaviour targeted at a specific 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.

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

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred teachers should consider what, where, when and why?

- if a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first
- thereafter, all students involved should be met as a group
- at the group meeting, each student should be asked for 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 be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident(s)

Where bullying behaviour has occurred

- parents are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with schools, in addressing bullying behaviour. Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the students involved must be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to consult with them on the actions to be taken to address the behaviour
- it is important to listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- a record should be kept of the engagement with all involved
- this record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known (see Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the Bi Cineálta procedures), where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students involved and their parents
- the record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour

Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred

- the teacher must engage with the students involved and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement
- important factors to consider as part of this engagement 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
- the teacher 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
- the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased should also be recorded any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted
- ongoing supervision and support may be needed for the students involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased
- if the bullying behaviour has not ceased the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents. A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased
- if it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school consideration should be given to using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school

Recording bullying behaviour

All incidents of bullying behaviour should be recorded. The record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known, where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students and their parents.

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. 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. Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted. These records should be retained in accordance with the school's record keeping policy and in line with data protection regulations.

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. Where a Student Support Plan exists, the plan should be updated to incorporate response strategies and associated supports.

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 can discuss the complaints procedures with the Principal.

In the event that a student / parent / guardian is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, they can make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions have had a negative effect on the student.

The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour (see Chapter 6 of the Bi Cineålta procedures):

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

Pupils, who have been bullied, will be supported by the school, using the resources available in the school, through the provision of opportunities to attend meetings and check-ins with a member of the Student Support Team.

They may participate in activities designed to raise self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and, thereby, build resilience and a sense of self-worth, whenever this is needed. The staff at Gaelcholáiste Synge will support students by listening, showing empathy and reassuring the student. Restorative practices and mediation may be used when the students involved agree to this. The school will devise appropriate 'check-in' mechanisms to be agreed upon by the students.

Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools

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*.

Supports

Supports are available to help prevent and address bullying behaviour. These include the following:

- **Aware**: Provides support and information for those who experience depression, anxiety or mood disorder. Address: 9 Upper Leeson Street, Dublin 4, D04 KD80 Website: www.aware.ie Phone: 01 661

7211 or 01 524 0361. Email: infor@aware.ie

- **Barnardo's**: work with vulnerable children and their families. Address: Christchurch Square, Dublin 8. Eircode: D08 DT63. Phone: (01) 453 0355 . Website: www.barnardos.ie Email: info@barnardos.ie
- **CAMHS** (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service): Referred through family G.P. Address: Grangegorman Primary Care Centre, Upper Grangegorman Road, Grangegorman, Dublin 7, Dublin, D07 H984. Phone: 018676370.
- **CTYI** (Centre for Talented Youth Ireland): Supported gifted and talented children. Website: https://www.dcu.ie/ctyi Phone: 01 700 5634
- **Dub Doc**: Out of hours mobile GP Service. Address: The Meath Primary Care, Heytesbury Street, Dublin City, Dublin, D08 Y1TW. Phone: 01 454 5607. Email: dubdoc.ie
- **Family Mediation Service**: Website: www.legalaidboard.ie Phone: 01 646 9600 Email: info@legalaidboard.ie.
- **Foróige**: operates a comprehensive range of youth work. D8 Youth Engagement and Family Support – Address: Unit 2b, Christchurch Hall, High St, The Liberties, Dublin, D08 VNW9. Phone: 086 1657696. Email: john.fitzgerald@foroige.ie Website: www.foroige.ie
- **Garda National Youth Diversion Programme**: www.garda.ie 01 666 7000
- **Jigsaw**:Jigsaw Dublin City is a free and confidential service supporting the mental health and well-being of people aged 12— 25. Phone: 01 658 3070. Email: dublincity@jigsaw.ie Website: www.jigsaw.ie
- **NCSE** (National Council for Special Education): Supporting children and

schools with programmes, which address behaviour for learning. Local SENO (Special Educational Needs Organiser): Nuala Connell, Ground Floor, County Hall, Belgard Square North, Town Centre, Tallaght, Dublin 24. D24 YNN5. Telephone: 01 6033256. Email: Nuala.Connell@ncse.ie

- **NEPS** (National Educational Psychological Services): Address: Marlborough Street, Dublin 1, D01 RC96 Website: https://www.gov.ie/education/. Phone: 01 8896400 Email: info@education.gov.ie
- **Pieta House**: one-to one counselling for young people at risk of self-harm or suicide. Phone: 01-4624792 Website: www.pieta.ie Address: First Floor, Greenhills Retail Park Greenhills Road, Tallaght Dublin 24 D24 RH59
- **Samaritans**: Confidential phone counselling service. Phone: 1 1 6123. Address: 112 Marlborough Street, Dublin 1. Email: jo@samaritans.ie
- **St James' Hospital** – Address: James's Street, Dublin 8, Dublin, D08 NHY1. Phone: 014103000. Website: stjames.ie
- **St. Patrick's Mental Health Services**: The support & information service is a free & confidential telephone and email service staffed by experienced mental health nurses. Address: St Patrick's University Hospital, James' Street, Dublin 8, D08 K7YW. Phone: 01 249 3200. Website: https://www.stpatricks.ie/
- **Teen Counselling (Cross Care)**: Address: 2 Saint Mary's Place North Dublin 7, D07 Y768 Website: www.crosscare.ie Phone: 01 8360011 Email: info@crosscare.ie
- **Young Parents' Support Programme**- Website: youngparents.ie

Email: info@ypsp.ie Phone: 0872518428 Address: 28 North Great Georges Street Dublin 1.

- **Temple Street Childrens' Hospital**: Contact 01 8784200
- **Tusla** – Child and Family Agency. Website: www.tusla.ie Address: The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, Saint John's Road West, Dublin 8. D08 X01F. Phone: 01 7718500. Email: info@tusla.ie
- **Webwise**: promotes safer, better internet use through awareness raising and education initiatives targeting teacher, parents and students. (Webwise - Internet Safety)
- **YMCA** is an initiative that does youth work in Dublin 8. Address: 53 Aungier Street, Dublin 2, D02 CH96. Phone: (01) 478 2607. Email: grace.burke@ymca-ireland.net

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: _____ Date: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Principal)

Guide to Providing Bullying Behaviour Update

Guide to providing Bullying Behaviour Update for board of management meeting

Having reviewed the details of the incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the previous board of management meeting, the principal must provide the following informa tion at each ordinary meeting of the board of management:

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 must include a verbal report which should include 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 etc

>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 should not include any personal information or information that could identify the students involved.

Verbal Report Summary (for Principals use only)

Where incidents of bullying behaviour have been reported since the last meeting, the update must include a verbal report which should include the following information were relevant: (This update should not include any personal information or information that could identify the students involved.)

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 etc.	
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 Bi Cineålta policy requires urgent review in advance of the annual review	

Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour

If the bullying allegation meets the criteria for the definition of Bullying as per the Bi Cineálta procedures, (including online bullying) this template could be used

1. Name of pupil experiencing bullying behaviour

Name: _____ Year: ____

2. Name(s) & years of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

_____

_____

3. Form(s) of Bullying (Please circle):

Physical	Verbal	Written	Extortion
Exclusion	Relational	Online	Other*

*Please state: _____

4. Type of Bullying (Please circle):

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 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 _____ (no more than 20 days after the initial discussion to review progress following the initial intervention).

15. Details of Engagement with external supports (if any)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Signed: _____ (Teacher)

Date: _____

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.

Bí Cineálta Policy Review

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?** ____/_____/_____

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. Select the appropriate answer

	Yes	No
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*?		
Does the Bí Cineálta policy document the strategies that the school uses to prevent bullying behaviour?		
Has the Board received and minuted the Bullying Behaviour Update presented by the principal at every ordinary board meeting over the last calendar year?		
Has the Board discussed how the school is addressing all reports of bullying behaviour?		
Is the Board satisfied that all incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed in accordance with the school's Bí Cineálta Policy?		
Have the prevention strategies in the Bí Cineálta policy been implemented?		
Has the Board discussed the effectiveness of the		

strategies used to prevent bullying behaviour?		

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

8. 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:

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

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

11. Select the correct answer

	Yes	No
Does the school refer parents to the complaints procedures if they have a complaint about how the school has addressed bullying behaviour?		
Has a parent informed the school that a student has left the school due to reported bullying behaviour?		
Has the Office of the Ombudsman for Children initiated or completed an investigation into how the school has addressed an incident of bullying behaviour?		

Notification regarding the board of management's annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management of Gaelcholáiste Synge confirms that the Board of Management's annual review of the school's *Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour* and its implementation was completed at the board of management meeting of _____/_____/20_____ [date].

This review was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Education's *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.*

Signed:

_____

(Chairperson of board of management)

Date: _____/_____/20_____

Signed:_____

(Principal)

Date: _____/_____/20_____

Date of next review:

_____/_____/20_____