



Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

1. Introduction

The Board of Management of Scoil Naomh Muire, Farran, 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 PostPrimary Schools 2024.

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

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

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

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

As a Catholic school, we are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual. No human person is to be devalued, and all have an indispensable part to play in the school community, regardless of difference.

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. 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. 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.

4. Bullying behaviour that occurs outside of school

As per the Bí Cineálta Procedures, 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 bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved.

Examples of prohibited bullying behaviours that can occur outside of school (non-exhaustive list):

- Bullying behaviour that occurs in the area immediately outside the school, the local shops and the wider local area.
- Bullying behaviour that occurs on the journey to and from school.
- Bullying behaviour that occurs in organised clubs and groups outside of school such as sports clubs.

- Online bullying (cyberbullying) behaviour, along with other types of bullying behaviour can cause significant harm and have a lasting impact on students who experience this behaviour. Access to technology means that online bullying behaviour can happen any time and that 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.

5. Requests to take no action

A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than “look out” for them. The student may not want to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They may feel that telling someone might make things more difficult for them. Where this occurs, it is important that the member of staff shows empathy to the student, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the student to work out together what steps can be taken to address the matter and how their parents will be informed of the situation. It is important that the student who has experienced bullying behaviour feels safe. Parents may also make schools aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action. Parents should put this request in writing to the school or be facilitated to do so where there are literacy, digital literacy or language barriers. However, while acknowledging the parent's request, schools have a right to act and may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying 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	10 June 2025 12 March 2025	Half day closure for training and to get input. Staff Questionnaire
Students	May 2025	Student Council Meeting Pupil Questionnaire Individual Class Sessions
Parents	May 2025	Parent Questionnaire Newsletter Parents' Association Meeting
Board of Management	20th October 2025	BOM Meeting
Date policy was approved: 20th October 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

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):

In developing preventative strategies which this school will use to prevent all forms of bullying behaviour, we come from the context of our Catholic ethos where inclusivity permeates the school in a real way.

This school takes positive steps to ensure that the culture of the school is one which welcomes a respectful dialogue and encounter with diversity and difference, by ensuring that prevention and inclusivity strategies are given priority and discussed regularly at board of management and staff meetings.

The dignity and the wellbeing of the individual person is of paramount concern. This school will listen closely to and dialogue with parents, thereby building a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, trust and confidence.

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

Prevention Strategies

The school adopts a comprehensive whole-school approach to preventing bullying behaviour. This approach is structured around four key domains: Culture and Environment; Curriculum; Policy and Planning; and Relationships and Partnerships.

Culture and Environment

- A culture of “telling” is actively promoted. Pupils are regularly reminded that reporting bullying is responsible and safe. Bystanders are encouraged to report incidents and are assured they are helping, not “telling tales”.

- Trusted adults are identified and accessible to pupils, ensuring support when bullying is reported.
- Posters and pupil-created materials promoting respect and inclusion are displayed school-wide.
- Staff model respectful language and behaviour, addressing discriminatory or derogatory language consistently.
- Clear behavioural expectations are explicitly taught and reinforced through consistent classroom and school routines.
- Regular yard supervision is supported by use of a yard journal and pupil-identified bullying “hot spots” and “hot times”.
- Homophobic and transphobic bullying is actively prevented through a visibly inclusive environment.
- Strategies to prevent racist bullying include celebrating cultural diversity, visual representation of the school’s ethnic makeup, and responding to the needs of EAL (English as an Additional Language) pupils.
- Gender stereotypes are challenged, and sexist language or behaviour is not tolerated.
- Reward systems reinforce kindness and inclusion.
- Kind behaviour is recognised at assemblies and through class awards.
- Each class sets and regularly reviews rules aligned with the Code of Behaviour.
- Bí Cineálta Week (November) Friendship Week (February) highlight anti-bullying themes through class activities, competitions, and surveys.

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

- Bullying and respectful behaviour are taught through SPHE, Stay Safe, RSE, Webwise, Weaving Well Being, Walk Tall, Grow in Love, and the FUSE (DCU Anti-Bullying) programme (4th–6th Class).
- Anti-bullying lessons are delivered at the start of each term.
- Digital literacy and safe online behaviour are explicitly taught, in line with the Digital Media Literacy curriculum.

- Pupils are taught:
- The role of the bystander
- Clear, respectful terminology: “pupil engaging in”, “experiencing”, or “witnessing” bullying behavior.
- Anti-bullying themes are embedded in Art, Drama, Religion, and PE to build empathy and cooperation.
- In younger classes picture/story books can be used to teach important concepts.
- Pupils build self-worth and resilience through varied programmes and extracurricular activities (e.g. GAA, Music, Scór).
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.

Policy and Planning

- Bullying prevention is embedded in the school’s:
- Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)
- Code of Behaviour
- Supervision Policy
- Classroom internet use is supervised, and sanctions for misuse follow the AUP and Code of Behaviour.
- Policies and strategies are reviewed annually, informed by pupil and parent feedback and surveys.
- Staff engage in teacher professional learning (TPL), including:
- Friends for Life
- SPHE/RSE delivery
- Staff information-sharing supports early intervention.
- Staff monitor, record, and follow up on bullying behaviour using the Incident Report Sheet (on Aladdin)

Relationships and Partnerships

- The Student Council is involved in pupil voice and policy feedback.
- Pupils are encouraged to report witnessed bullying and are affirmed for doing so.
- Parents are engaged promptly when bullying is reported or suspected.
- Parents and the Parents' Association are involved in digital safety and inclusion initiatives.
- Workshops and seminars for staff, pupils, and parents address bullying, identity-based bullying, and respectful online behaviour.
- A range of extracurricular and cooperative activities extends inclusion beyond the classroom.
- The school works with wider community stakeholders (e.g. bus drivers, local Gardaí, support workers) to monitor and respond to concerns.

The school implements the following supervision and monitoring measures to prevent and address bullying behaviour, in accordance with Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta Procedures:

- Supervised Yard Duty: All breaktimes are actively supervised by staff members. A supervision rota ensures adequate adult presence in all outdoor areas during yard time.
- Identified Bullying Hot Spots and Hot Times: Pupils and staff collaborate to identify high-risk areas and times for bullying. Supervision is increased in these locations (e.g. corridors, toilets, cloakrooms, entry/exit points, halla).
- Use of Digital Yard Journal: A digital yard journal is maintained to record incidents and observations. This enables patterns of behaviour to be tracked and responded to early.
- Classroom Supervision: Staff remain alert to subtle forms of bullying (e.g. exclusion, whispering, non-verbal intimidation) and supervise transitions between classes and activities.
- Safe Physical Spaces: The school environment is designed to reduce blind spots. Measures include clear lines of sight and open-plan arrangements in high-traffic areas.
- Visibility of Staff: Supervising staff are easily identifiable to pupils during outdoor activities.
- Structured Break Time Activities: Organised yard games and designated play zones support positive peer interaction and reduce opportunity for bullying behaviour.
- Consistent Use of Behaviour Records: All staff use a standardised incident report form. Repetitive low-level concerns are escalated for review by the relevant class teacher.
- Monitoring of Online Behaviour: Pupil access to digital devices is supervised during use. All online activity on school devices is subject to the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) and is monitored by staff.
- Transition Points: Increased supervision is provided at key points of the school day — arrival, dismissal, transitions to PE, assembly or group work — where unsupervised interaction may occur.

6. Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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):

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):

Procedures for Dealing with an Alleged Bullying Incident

(Aligned with Chapter 6, Bi Cineáltas Procedures)

Stage 1: Initial Response and Investigation

- Reporting and Investigation

When a verbal or written report of suspected bullying behaviour is received, the Class Teacher investigates all incidents—whether occurring within or outside the school environment—to establish the facts and end any inappropriate behaviour.

- Pupil Accounts

Pupils involved may be asked to write or draw an account of the incident. This standard practice aids in gathering facts and does not imply fault.

- Interview and Documentation

The Class Teacher interviews all relevant pupils, including those alleged to be involved in the bullying. The Investigation of Alleged Bullying Form (Appendix 1) is completed. Consultation with other staff may occur to assist in determining whether bullying has taken place.

- Preliminary Findings

Based on the information gathered, the Class Teacher determines whether:

- a. The incident is isolated, or
- b. Bullying behaviour has occurred and needs intervention.

Stage 2: Confirmed Bullying Behaviour

- Restorative Engagement

If bullying is confirmed, the Class Teacher and Principal meet with the pupils involved. The approach is restorative and non-punitive, aimed at resolving the issue and repairing relationships. Bullying is presented as behaviour that must stop and can be corrected.

- Commitment to Change

The pupil responsible is asked to sign a written promise to treat all pupils fairly, equally and with respect, including those targeted. This reinforces a culture of accountability without blame.

- Parental Involvement

Where deemed necessary, parents/guardians are involved to support a resolution strategy and

reinforce the pupil's commitment to change. The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for the pupil.

- Formal Record

Once the investigation and any interventions are concluded, the Class Teacher completes the Bullying Behaviour Record Form (Appendix 2). This includes findings, strategies used, outcomes, and any relevant contextual details.

Stage 3: Failure to Comply

- Escalation to Principal

If a pupil breaches their written promise, the case is escalated to the Principal. A formal meeting is convened with the Principal, Class Teacher, parents and pupil. The school's Code of Behaviour is implemented as appropriate.

- Board of Management Referral

In serious or unresolved cases, the matter may be referred to the Board of Management.

- If a parent(s) is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools they should be referred to the school's complaints procedures (available on our website).

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

Recording and Reporting Bullying Behaviour

Stage 1: Before Determination

- The Class Teacher completes the Investigation of Alleged Bullying Form (Appendix 1).
- The teacher uses professional judgement to decide the level of record-keeping required.
- The Principal is informed of all investigations but does not intervene at this stage.

Stage 2: Bullying Confirmed

- If bullying is established, detailed written records must be kept by the relevant teacher to support resolution and relationship restoration.
- The Bullying Behaviour Record Form (Appendix 2) is completed.
- At each Board of Management meeting, the Principal submits a summary report to the Board

of Management. This includes the number of bullying cases and confirmation that procedures have been followed.

7. Section D: Oversight

Principal's Report

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.

Availability

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.

Annual Review

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: 20 October

2025 (Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____

Date: 20 October

2025 (Principal)

Appendix 1: Investigation of alleged bullying

Procedure

Appropriate personnel interview the students involved in a bullying incident
Teachers speak separately to the pupils involved
Individuals involved may draw or write an account of the incident involved
Teachers speak to other pupils who are not directly involved to gain additional information
Answers are sought to questions of What, Where, When, Who and Why
Members of a group are met individually and as a group

Report

Who	
What	
Where	
When	
Why	

Conclusion

Is behavior targeted at a specific student/group of students?	
Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?	
Is the behavior repeated?	

If the answer to all of these questions is yes, then the behavior is bullying behavior and must be dealt with using BÍ Cineálta procedures.

If the answer is no to one or more of these questions, then the behavior is not bullying behavior and should be dealt with within the school's Code of Behaviour.

Teacher: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX 2: Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name: _____ Class _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behavior

3. Source of bullying concern/report-tick box(es)

Pupil concerned	
Other pupil(s)	
Parent	
Teacher	
Others	

4. Location of incidents -tick relevant box(es)

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
Other	

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

6.

6. Types of Bullying Behaviour -tick relevant box(es)

Physical aggression	Cyber -bullying
Damage to property	Intimidation
Isolation/Exclusion	Malicious gossip
Name calling	
Other (specify)	

7. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

8. Details of actions taken

Signed _____ Date _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____