



## Holy Spirit G.N.S.

### Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Holy Spirit G.N.S. 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*. This policy was approved by our Patron on the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2025.

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

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

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

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

Catholic schools have a distinctive understanding of the human person, recognising that every person is created in God's image and likeness and has inherent dignity as a child of God. This is the basis for ensuring that everybody in our school is treated with respect and care, in accordance with the Catholic Schedule.

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

It is very important to note that this policy is fully aligned with the *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* and that it should be read in conjunction with the procedures. Schools are required to follow the procedures fully, as set out by the Department of Education.

#### 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.

## **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 has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and thus becomes a repeated behaviour.

Disagreement between two students, or instances where students don't want to be friends or to remain friends, is not considered bullying 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 their behaviours are not deliberate or planned, but, in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they can't control.

## **Bullying behaviour that occurs outside of school**

As per the B' Cine'alta 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.

## **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	28 <sup>th</sup> March 2025 27 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	Half-day closure for training day and to get input. Staff Questionnaires
Students	April 2025 May 2025	Student Council Meeting Questionnaires 2 <sup>nd</sup> -6 <sup>th</sup> class
Parents	27 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	Parent's Questionnaire
Board of Management	April 2025 June 2025	Meeting outlining new procedures Meeting & ratification
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	27 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	Questionnaire Bus driver , Cookery tutors, tea lady, caretaker, secretary
Date policy was approved: 10 <sup>th</sup> December 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: November 2025		

## Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

The *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice* provides the following four key areas that are essential for a holistic, whole-school approach to wellbeing promotion: Culture and Environment; Curriculum; Policy and Planning and Relationships and Partnerships.

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

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

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

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

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

### **Culture and Environment**

- Create a positive school environment where all students feel safe, respected and valued.
- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Encourage open communication between students, staff and parents.
- Encourage students to discuss and disclose incidents of bullying. Create a telling environment
- Establish clear expectations for behaviour and enforce them consistently.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with additional needs and/or differences.
- Systems of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines may be used where appropriate.
- All staff will actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Promote acts of kindness and celebrate 'Friendship/Kindness Month' annually.
- Display anti-bullying signs and messages around the school.

### **Curriculum**

- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Explicitly teach students about bullying and its effects.

- The implementation of the Social Physical and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum, according to our school plan, including the Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE), Walk Tall and Stay Safe Programmes.
- School-wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence-based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme, programmes to teach about cyberbullying (e.g. Webwise teachers' resources and lessons from ([www.cybersafekids.ie](http://www.cybersafekids.ie)))
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Organise seminars/workshops given by relevant professionals to older pupils and to parents/guardians, focusing on educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while online and also on developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyberbullying. The school-wide approach and the role of parents is of great importance in this regard.
- In younger classes, picture/story books can be used to teach important concepts e.g. racism etc.
- Use of programmes such as Friends for Life (which looks at social skills and resilience), the FUSE Programme (from the DCU Anti-Bullying Policy)
- Participation in pilot programmes such *the Counselling in Primary Schools Pilot* which aims to support schools in their work to put well-being at the heart of their school community.
- 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.
- Use of Behaviour Reflection Templates

#### **Policy and Planning**

- Have our child-friendly Bí Cineálta Policy on display prominently around the school.
  - If pupils bring mobile phones, they should be switched off at all times and a note given to the teacher to explain the reason the child needs it (as per the school's Acceptable Use Policy and Mobile Phone Policy).
  - Please refer to the school's policy documents on the Code of Behaviour, Acceptable Use Policy, Child Protection Policy, Supervision of Pupils, and Attendance Strategy (DEIS Plan), SEN/Inclusion Policy.
  - Student Council/Student Voice
  - All staff will ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision (as per the school's Supervision Policy).
  - School staff and pupils can identify hot spots and hot times for bullying in the school.
- Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, toilet areas, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
  - Hot times tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard, arriving into the classroom or moving classrooms.

#### **Relationships and Partnerships**

- Build positive relationships with students and families
- Catch the children being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- At assemblies, school rules are reinforced on a regular basis. Raise awareness of the definition of bullying behaviour and how the school deals with such behaviour.

- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Support the active participation of students in school life through formal and informal structures, e.g. circle-time activities, assemblies, sports teams, student council, playground teams and paired readers.
- Support the active participation of parents in school life, e.g. being a member of the Parents' Group, attending HSCL's initiatives, hosting school events.
- Encourage Teacher Professional Learning
- Collaborate with community organisations to provide additional support to students.
- Work with parent's/guardians to educate them of the dangers of cyberbullying by facilitating external speakers

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

Supervision Policy

Acceptable Use of Policy

Code of Behaviour

Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment

SEN Policy

Inclusion Policy

Mobile Phone Policy

## Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Mainstream class teachers and SETs (where appropriate).

The Principal/Deputy Principal will provide support and advice and will become involved where appropriate.

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 B Cineálta procedures):

The whole school community has a responsibility to prevent and address bullying behaviour. The following approach and steps are *based on the information contained in Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*. Parents are an integral part at the school community and play an important role, in partnership with schools, in addressing bullying behaviour

### Approach

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.

- Class teacher(s) investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour with a view to establishing the facts and managing the behaviour.
- In investigating and dealing with the class teacher(s) will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- Class teacher(s) should consider the following: what, where and when?
- Class teacher(s) will be fair and consistent in their approach when addressing bullying behaviour reported by pupils to staff or parents.
- Interviews will be conducted outside the classroom in a fair and consistent way.
- Non-teaching staff such as special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers/ cleaners are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them, to a class teacher.
- Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour need support

### When addressing bullying behaviour, the teachers with responsibility will:

- > ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured
- > seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- > conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- > consider the age and ability of the students 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.

### Stage 1 – 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 B Cineálta procedures.

Where bullying behaviour is suspected, parents/guardians report it to the class teacher, child/children report it to the class teacher or any other person reports it.

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour we will 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 B Cineálta Procedures.

*Note: One-off incidents may be considered bullying behaviour 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 (Stage 1), teachers should consider what, where, when and why? as follows:

(Note that these steps are required – as outlined in the Procedures):

- > Where one student is reported to be involved, the student should be engaged with individually at first.
- > Thereafter, this student and the student who is reported to be experiencing the bullying behaviour should be met together.
- > If a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first.
- > Thereafter, all students involved and the student who is reported to be experiencing the bullying behaviour 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).
- > Parents will be supported by the school, if needed, with recommendations for useful resources/guides to help them support their children.

## **Stage 2: 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.
- > All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the form and type of behaviour if known (see pages 20-24, Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the B Cineálta procedures for descriptions/examples of the forms and types of bullying 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*.

> The record should be shared with the Principal.

### **Stage 3: 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 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.

> If a parent(s) is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with the B 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.

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):

- All instances of bullying behaviour will be managed on a case-by-case basis
- Managing the bullying behaviour.
- Supporting the pupils who have experienced bullying behaviour, displayed bullying behaviour and witnessed bullying behaviour.
- All students involved will be checked-in with regularly and behaviour will be monitored carefully. The teacher will check-in with parents too and will look for their ongoing support to monitor their child at home and to communicate with the school if needed.
- We will use resources, as appropriate – including those developed by NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service), Oide (support service for schools) and from programmes/sites such as Webwise and FUSE.
- Promote a positive school culture where pupils feel safe, respected and valued
- Raising awareness of the appropriate programmes and teacher training.
- Helping pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills e.g. participation in group work in school teams, small social groups with SET
- Making it clear that adopting the strategies is a positive step towards creating a more respectful and inclusive school environment.
- In dealing with challenging behaviour, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on positive reinforcement
- Teachers will be encouraged to attend training in Restorative Practices

## 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 B 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:

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed:

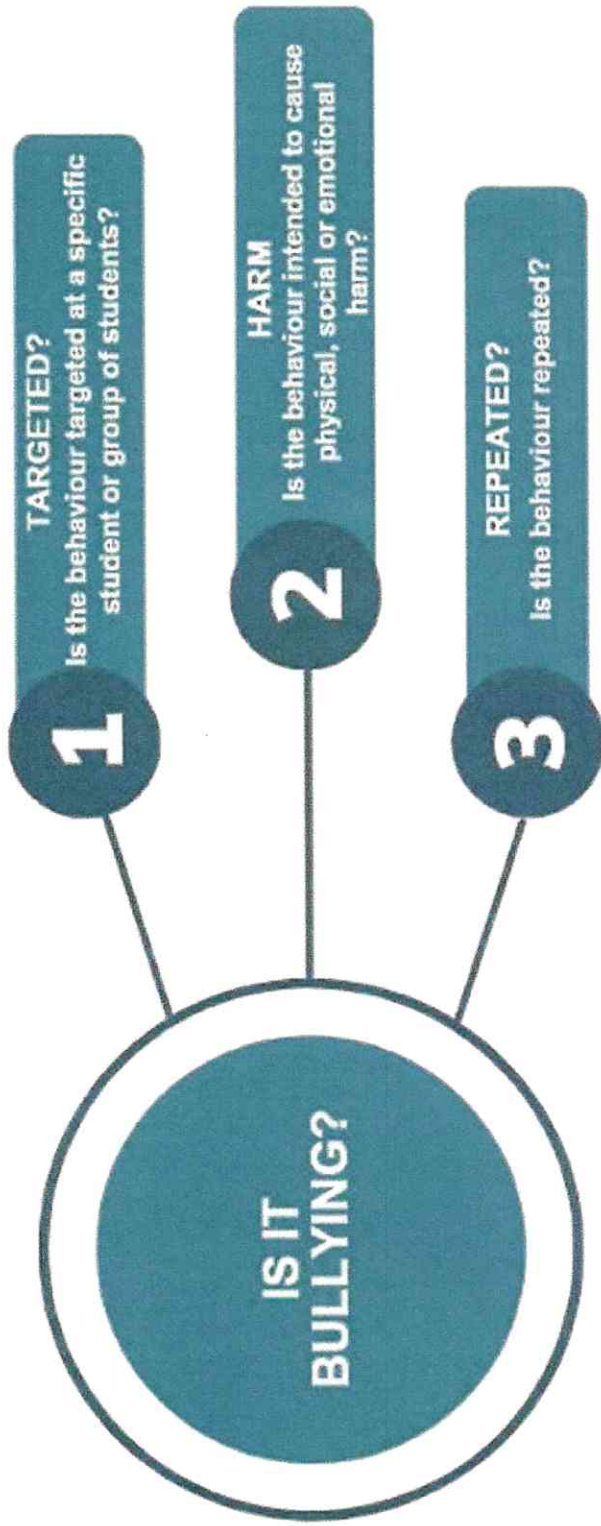
(Principal)

Date:

10/12/2025

Date:

10/12/2025



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

If the answer to any of the 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.



**Oide**

Ionad na n-Éireann  
Chomairle na n-Éireann  
Go raibín siad againn

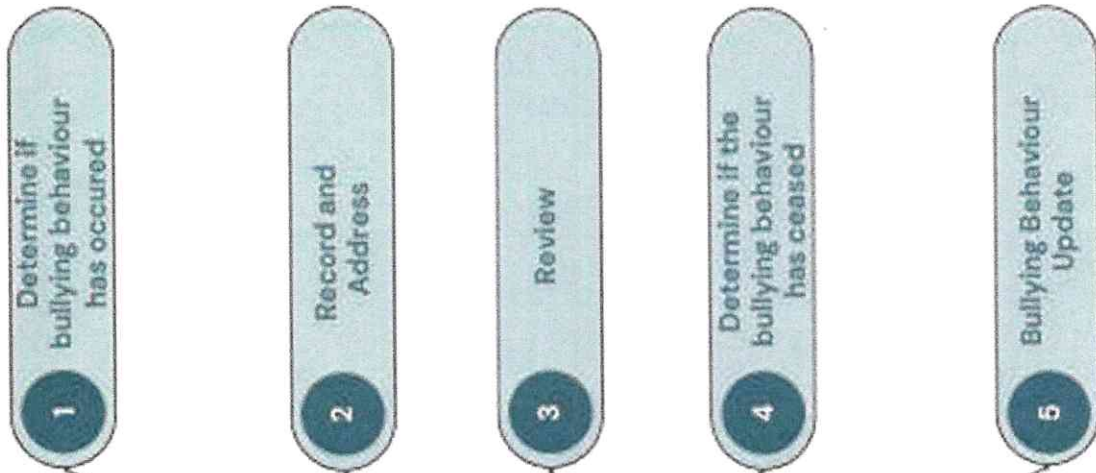
Support for the National  
Council for School Leaders  
and Teachers

# Bí Cineálta: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

Refer to your Bí Cineálta Policy, Section 6 and Appendix C Guide

**Bullying behaviour is reported. The teacher(s) with responsibility should...**

ALL incidents of bullying must be included in the bullying behaviour update.



Teacher(s) investigate as per school policy. Record as per Section 6.5.

If the behaviour **IS NOT** bullying, deal with in line with your Code of Behaviour.

If the behaviour **IS BULLYING**, proceed to Step 2.

Record as per Bí Cineálta policy and Section 6.5, Bí Cineálta.

Inform parent(s) of parties involved at an early stage.

Complete agreed actions, as per your Bí Cineálta policy, monitor and evaluate.

No more than **20 school days** after **initial engagement**, review with student(s) and parent(s).

If bullying has ceased, continue to monitor.

If bullying has **not ceased**, review strategies, seek external support, if appropriate, and review within the agreed timeframe.

Principal must include all bullying behaviour in their update to the board.

Principal provides verbal update to the board.

Review policy, if needed.

## Holy Spirit G.N.S. Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_

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

Initials \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

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

Initials \_\_\_\_\_ Class(es) \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Dates of when the bullying behaviour occurred**

**8. Form of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box/boxes) See page 21 Bí Cineálta Procedures**

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

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

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

**10. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact**

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

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<b>12. Date of review with pupil(s) and parent(s) (within 20 days)</b>	
<b>13. Has bullying behaviour ceased?</b>	
<b>14. Views of pupil(s) and parents in relation to this</b>	
<b>15. If bullying behaviour has not ceased, set an agreed timeframe to meet again and review strategies</b>	
<b>16. Engagement with external services or supports (if any)</b>	

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

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Relevant Teacher)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal \_\_\_\_\_