



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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Definition of bullying**

Bullying is defined in *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying* and *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* as:

**“targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society.”**

The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the *Bí Cineálta* procedures.

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

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

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

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	December 2024 & January 2025 January 2025 & February 2025 January 2025 February 2025	Bí Cineálta Team Meetings Leadership Team Meetings – Focus Group Staff Survey Staff Engagement Day
Students	January 2025 February 2025	Surveys for 2 <sup>nd</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup> Class Pupils Student Council Meeting
Parents	January 2025 February 2025	Survey for Parents Parent Association Meeting – Focus Group
Board of Management	March 2025 May 2025	Policy Discussion & Feedback from other Stakeholders Policy was ratified
Wider school community as appropriate	January 2025	Survey for wider school community
Date policy was approved: 29 <sup>th</sup> May 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: N/A		

## 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):

### Culture and Environment

We foster an inclusive school environment where bullying behavior is unacceptable, and respect, care, and trust are prioritised. This includes a ‘telling’ environment, trusted adults for reporting, and maintaining safe physical spaces with effective supervision.

- **A Telling Environment** – “Say no, get away, tell an adult you trust”
- **A Trusted Adult** – pupils are encouraged to identify five trusted adults.
- **Creating safe physical spaces in schools:** careful consideration has been given to physical space to avoid blind spots. We have school values on display in the school hall. The Bí Cineálta poster and School Standards are displayed throughout the school. Cultural diversity is celebrated through displays and special events.
- **Supervision:** there is a Supervision Timetable in place which ensures all pupils are monitored when arriving to school, at all break times and at home time.

## Curriculum

We integrate social, personal, and health education (SPHE), the Stay Safe Programme, and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE), Weaving Wellbeing and the Follow Me Programme in Religious Education to develop students' understanding of respect, empathy, and the effects of bullying.

- **SPHE**
  - RSE
  - Stay Safe Programme
  - Weaving Wellbeing
- **Religious Education**
  - Follow Me Programme
- Cooperative Learning Skills (group work, project work, etc.)
- Reflect diversity in choice of texts and speakers/coaches (where possible)

## Policy and Planning

We regularly update our policies to maintain a respectful school culture.

### *Organisational Policies & Planning*

- Acceptable Use Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment
- Code of Behaviour
- Mobile Phones and Smart Devices Policy
- Special Education Teaching Policy
- Staff Training and CPD
- Supervision Timetable
- Swimming Policy
- Wellbeing Policy

### *Curricular Policies & Planning*

- Religious Education
- RSE
- SPHE
- Stay Safe

## Relationships and Partnerships

We encourage pupil voice and foster partnerships with all stakeholders to create an empathetic, inclusive school community.

- **Staff:** Staff meetings, ISM meetings and BÍ Cineálta team meetings to facilitate collaboration with colleagues.
- **Pupils:** Student Council, Green Schools Committee, Active Schools Committee.
- **Parents:** Parent Association, PA Events, Online Safety Events, Open Evening, Parent-Teacher Meetings, phone calls and meetings as required.
- **Board of Management:** Board of Management Meetings.
- **Pastoral:** The school has three patron churches and the clergy fulfill a pastoral role for the school community.
- **Clear Communication:** Aladdin, School Website, School Newsletter, School Standards.
- **School Assemblies:** Promotion of core school values and celebration of school and pupil successes.
- **Special Weeks:** Kindness Week, Active Week, Science Week, Safer Internet Day, Digital Literacy Lessons.
- **Initiatives:** Inclusion Library, The Zones of Regulation, Weaving Wellbeing, Shared Education, PE Coaching, Music Lessons, Literacy Lift Off.

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:** Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extracurricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers.
- **Bí Cineálta Code:** Development and promotion of our child-friendly Bí Cineálta Code.
- **A Telling Environment:** Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in “telling”.
- **A Trusted Adult:** Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.: - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
- **Annual Consultation and Policy Review:** Administer surveys and conduct focus groups with key stakeholders. The school’s anti-bullying policy is reviewed every year and published on the school website under School Policies.
- **Parental Awareness:** Ensuring all parents are aware of the clear protocols that parent(s)/guardian(s) should follow in approaching the school if they suspect that their child is experiencing bullying behaviour. In our school, parents are advised to first make contact with their child’s class teacher to set up an appointment to discuss their concerns.
- **Online Safety:** Our school’s Acceptable Use Policy states that pupil access to technology within the school is strictly monitored. Pupils are not permitted to have unsupervised access to technology. Pupils are not permitted to bring mobile phones or smart devices into school.
- **Break Time Activities:** Our school endeavours to offer a mix of activities during break times in order to accommodate a range of preferences and interests.
- **Record-Keeping of Bullying Behaviour:** Teachers will document all reported or observed incidents of bullying behaviour using the school template. The completed records will be stored with the school principal.

## Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

### **Class Teachers and Special Education Teachers.**

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When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

- > ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour is heard and reassured
- > the views of all pupils involved will be listened to
- > 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  
(all parties are informed)

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):

### **Step 1: Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred**

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) (if age-appropriate).

### **Step 2: Where bullying behaviour has occurred**

- 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 Bí 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. **See Appendix A.**

### **Step 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. **See Appendix B.**
- 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.
- 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.
- 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):

- **Emotional Support:** Provide access to support within the school to help students process their experiences, build resilience, and restore self-confidence through programmes such as Weaving Wellbeing and The Zones of Regulation.
- **Calm Spaces:** As a school, we endeavour to designate specific areas in the school as calm spaces where students can seek immediate support or feel secure during free time such as the sensory room or calm corners.
- **A Trusted Adult:** Encourage students to report incidents they witness by connecting them with designated trusted adults in the school.
- **Awareness Initiatives:** Implement lessons on empathy, kindness, and the impact of bullying to empower witnesses to act positively and support affected peers. This can be achieved through circle time and group work. Useful resources are provided by Webwise and the Dublin City University (DCU) Fuse Programme. Special assemblies to address important issues may be utilised if appropriate.
- **Parental Involvement:** Engage parents early in the intervention process, working together on strategies to encourage positive behaviour both in and outside of school. The Parent Association can also organise workshops with the National Parents Council.
- **Engagement with Outside Agencies:**
  - **Oide:** The work of Oide contributes to school improvement by providing high quality professional learning experiences, supports and resources relating to curricular developments, broader educational goals and national priorities, such as wellbeing which includes preventing and addressing bullying. Oide provides continuing professional learning support to schools to support implementation of these procedures.
  - **National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS):**  
If pupils require further supports the school will endeavour to seek advice from NEPS. NEPS staff can support schools with issues around bullying through direct or indirect case work service. In relation to bullying, NEPS psychologists often advise schools on best practice to prevent and address bullying when issues arise in schools and/or provide training in preventative initiatives, such as developing emotional skills, social skills, executive function skills, promoting resilience and skills in relationship repair between peers as appropriate.
  - **TUSLA:**  
The school will contact Tusla directly for advice in cases where it is considered that bullying behaviour is a child protection concern. See section 2.4 for guidance on when bullying behaviour becomes a child protection concern.

All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with students and parents. The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented. If the bullying behaviour is a child protection concern the matter will be addressed without delay in accordance with *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

## Section D: Oversight

The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting. This update will include the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting, the number of ongoing incidents and the total number of incidents since the beginning of the school year. Where incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred, the principal will also provide a verbal update which will include where relevant, information relating to trends and patterns identified, strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant. This update does not contain personal or identifying information. See Chapter 7 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

This policy is available to our school community on the school's website and in hard copy on request. A student friendly version of this policy is displayed in the school and is also available on our website and in hard copy on request.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed, following input from our school community, each calendar year or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this policy refers.

Signed: Derek Whitcomb Date: 29<sup>th</sup> May 2025

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: Linda McMahon Date: 29<sup>th</sup> May 2025

(Principal)