



# Gaelscoil Ó Doghair

## Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of **Gaelscoil Ó Doghair, Bóthar an Stáisiúin, Caisleán Nua Thiar, Co. Luimnigh** 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.

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."

## Definition of bullying

- Bullying is targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm.
- The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature and can have lasting effects on the child experiencing the behaviour.
- 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.

## 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	11/04/2025	Half Day School Closure Full Staff Planning
Students	12/05/2025	Pupil Questionnaire
Parents	19/05/2025	Parent Questionnaire
Board of Management	26/05/2025 23/10/2025	Board of Management meetings
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	September 2025	Discussions via telephone
Date policy was approved: 23/10/2025		
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):

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 in this school and to help inform future prevention strategies”.

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 (Teaching and Learning); Policy and Planning; and Relationships and Partnerships. These four areas have been considered when developing measures to prevent bullying behavior:

#### Culture and Environment

In Gaelscoil Ó Doghair we strive

- to create a positive and inclusive school culture and environment where students and school staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported.
- to create a welcoming, inclusive school culture and climate where kindness is promoted.
- to promote respectful relationships, trust and open communication across the school community.
- to promote a telling environment and promote the concept of a trusted adult - Bí Sábháilte/Stay Safe linkage - who to tell.
- to involve parents as active partners in fostering an environment where bullying is not tolerated.
- to create safe, visible spaces in our school buildings and yards where effective supervision and monitoring of pupils takes place.
- to promote our school values through artwork displays and signage, through our Seachtain Frith-Bhulaíochta / Anti Bullying Week activities such as Random Acts of Kindness etc
- to ensure each member of staff develops and maintains a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and takes a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour. Staff are briefed on the uniform approach to be taken to handle all reports of bullying behaviour. This is distributed to staff. The school leadership team in consultation with the whole school community constantly evaluates the effectiveness of the school's Bí Cineálta policy.

#### Curriculum (teaching and learning)

In Gaelscoil Ó Doghair we strive

- to provide teaching and promote learning that is collaborative and respectful, fostering inclusion and respect for diversity. We celebrate our diverse school population through art work and through our event; ‘Lá Cultúrtha’.
- to provide students with regular opportunities to work in small groups with their peers, helping to build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy.

Gaelscoil Ó Doghair will provide opportunities for students to develop a sense of self-worth through a wide variety of both curricular and extra-curricular programmes including the following:

- sport - football / hurling / camogie
- lego camp
- school band - Raic sa Teach

- swimming
- drama - school plays
- gardening
- art projects
- reading club

SPHE and RSE curricula will aim to foster students' well-being, self-confidence and sense of belonging and to develop students' sense of personal responsibility for their own behaviour and actions. The Friends For Life and Zones of Regulation programmes being used within the school help children in navigating their emotions and manage their own wellbeing.

#### Policy and Planning

The wellbeing of the whole school community will be at the heart of Gaelscoil Ó Doghair's policies and plans. Our Bí Cineálta policy and student friendly version will be reviewed annually along with the range of other policies that contribute and support the implementation of our Bí Cineálta policy. These include our acceptable use policy, supervision policy, special education teaching policy and Code of Behaviour. Student voice will be an important element of school policy and planning. This will help increase awareness and ensure effective implementation. Teachers and school staff will engage in appropriate professional learning courses to support us in preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

#### Relationships and Partnerships

Strong personal connections are a vital part of effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. These interpersonal connections will be supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as our Coiste Cineáltais and parents' association. Annual celebration of Seachtain na gCairdeas/Friendship Week and Seachtain Frith-Bhúlaíochta/Anti Bullying Week help reinforce positive relationships and highlight the causes and impacts of bullying behaviour.

Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying recognises the importance of positive relationships across the whole education community to promote empathy, understanding and respect. The meaningful involvement of the board of management, staff, students and their parents in the development, implementation and review of their school's Bí Cineálta policy and student friendly version is essential to effectively prevent and address bullying behaviour.

Preventing Cyber Bullying Behaviour, Homophobic/Transphobic Bullying Behaviour, Racist Bullying Behaviour, Sexist Bullying Behaviour and Sexual Harassment

Note - the digital age of consent is the minimum age a user must be before a social media or internet company can collect, process and store their data. In Ireland the digital age of consent is 16. Children between 13 and 16 must have parental permission to sign up to social media services. Most social media platforms have a minimum age requirement and for the majority of these, it is 13 years old. Therefore children under the age of 13 should not have a social media account.

In Gaelscoil Ó Doghair the following steps are taken to prevent and address bullying behaviour;

- Raise awareness on all aspects of bullying behaviour throughout the year.
- Promote digital citizenship.
- Implement in full the SPHE curriculum.
- Regularly discuss with students positive and negative behaviours and the impacts of both.
- Open conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online and in person.
- Refer to appropriate online and in person behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour.
- Promote online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's

activities online.

- Hold Safer Internet Day and invite the school liaison garda to speak to the students.
- Regularly review the school's Acceptable Use Policy & Bí Cineálta Policy.
- Maintain an inclusive physical environment such as displaying relevant posters/art work.
- Host events that celebrate diversity and inclusion of all kinds such as our Lá Cultúrtha.
- Model good behaviour by promoting good role models within the school.
- Challenge stereotypes of race, and gender through SPHE curriculum and when they occur incidentally.
- Promote a culture of telling and encourage bystanders to report when they witness bullying behaviour. Ensure students know who to tell.
- Ensure that each class has a collection of reading materials promoting diversity.
- Ensure all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of gender.
- Model respectful behaviour by staff of all irrespective of gender.
- Investigate thoroughly and consistently all disclosed incidents of alleged bullying behaviour, follow correct procedures as outlined to staff and keep a record.
- Supervise students at break times and on school outings as per the school's supervision policy.
- Use school assembly/tionól to emphasise the importance of positive behaviour and looking after one another
- Give the students a voice through the Coiste Cineáltais.

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):

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

## Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour is (are) as follows:

The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying in Gaelscoil Ó Doghair are class teacher(s) initially, the Principal thereafter if necessary. Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

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's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as detailed below. The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame). Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

#### Reporting bullying behaviour

- Pupils are encouraged to report bullying behaviour as soon as possible.
- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to the attention of any teacher in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretary, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretaker, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

#### Investigating and dealing with incidents

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant) teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved, as quickly as possible.
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.
- When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of *what, where, when, who and why*. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with conflict in a non-aggressive manner. Teachers who are investigating bullying behaviour should keep a written record of their discussions with those involved.
- It is school policy to request the assistance of another staff member in such investigations.
- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements. It may also be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident.
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher.

## Identifying if Bullying Behaviour has Occurred

The definition of bullying provided in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures and included in our Bí Cineálta policy sets out clear criteria to help schools to identify bullying behaviour.

The following three questions should be considered to determine if bullying has occurred.

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. If the answer to any of the above questions is no then the behaviour may be unacceptable and hurtful behaviour but is not considered bullying behaviour and will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour / Cód Iompair na Scoile

## Where Bullying Behaviour has Occurred

- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school will give parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the support being provided to the pupils.
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school.

The following steps are taken in dealing with bullying behaviour:

In Gaelscoil Ó Doghair, we try to enable those involved to engage in a mediated conversation, the purpose of which is to allow for the victim to have a voice and the perpetrator to understand the consequences of their actions. All staff will be made aware of the importance of this practice.

We will also offer the victim an opportunity to complete a reflection sheet if the pupil feels that this would be a helpful exercise for him/her.

A verbal warning is given to the perpetrator to stop the offending behaviour. The perpetrator's parent(s) are informed of this verbal warning. The perpetrator is requested to apologise to the victim in the presence of the Principal and another teacher and to give an assurance that the offending behaviour will stop.

There may be loss of specific privileges which may include the following: exclusion from break/lunchtime play for a specific number of days; parents may be requested to escort their child to and from school.

If bullying behaviour reoccurs, it may be deemed necessary to have the perpetrator sign a contract of agreement to stop the bullying behaviour. This would also be signed by the parent(s). The contract will be monitored regularly by the Principal with the assistance of the class teacher and another member of staff to see that the situation is resolved.

If after the above, the bullying behaviour reoccurs, a formal meeting of the perpetrator, his/her parents /guardians, the Principal and Chairperson of the Board of Management will be held and a

formal suspension may occur. The Chairperson has the authority to enact an immediate suspension. Alternatively, in certain circumstances he/she may issue a final Chairperson's warning to the perpetrator.

While the school supports parents and pupils in dealing with issues that arise outside of school, parents should be aware that the school is limited in its power to deal fully with issues that arise while the children are not under our care.

#### 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 may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

#### Determining if the Bullying Behaviour has Ceased

The teacher must engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress following the initial intervention. Important factors to consider as part of the review are as follows:

- the nature of the bullying behaviour
- the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour
- the relationship between the students involved.

Even though the bullying behaviour may have ceased, ongoing supervision and support may be required for both the student who has experienced the bullying behaviour as well as the student who has displayed the behaviour. It can take time for relationships to settle and for supports to take effect. In some cases, relationships may never be restored to how they were before the bullying behaviour occurred. If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students and parents and agree to meet again over an agreed timeframe until the bullying behaviour has ceased. Where it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school should consider using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour/Cód Iompair na Scoile.. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school.

#### Recording of bullying behaviour

It is important that all recording of bullying incidents is done in an objective and factual manner. This school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour include the following details on record:

- form ( see section 2.5 of Bí Cineálta procedures)
- type ( see section 2.7 of Bí Cineálta procedures)
- where and when ( if known)
- the date of initial engagement with the students and their parents

- the views of the students and their parents/guardians\* regarding the action to be taken to address the bullying behaviour (\*only in relation to their own child)
- when a review takes place, it should be noted if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of the students and parents in relation to this.
- note the date of reviews and engagements
- note the date that the bullying behaviour has ceased
- note any engagement with external services/ supports
  - If a Student Support File exists for a pupil involved, a copy of the record is placed 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.

These records should be retained in accordance with the school's record keeping policy and in line with data protection regulations.

### Complaint Process

If a parent/guardian is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with these procedures, they will be referred to the school's complaints procedure.

In the event that a student and/or parent/guardian is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, a student and/or parent/guardian 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 Office of the Ombudsman for Children can be contacted at [ococomplaint@oco.ie](mailto:ococomplaint@oco.ie).

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):

### Supports

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows

All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience.

If pupils require counselling or further support, the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise such support structures. This may be either for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.

Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

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

NEPS

Oide

Webwise

National Parents Council

DCU Anti bullying centre

Tusla

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: Dónal Cúipéir

Date: 23/10/2025

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: Caitlín Móinbhiol

Date: 23/10/2025

(Principal)