



Scoil Bhailenóra

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Ethos of the School

Scoil Bhailenóra is a Catholic School. This ethos needs to be enlivened by persons in our school community. Our school aims to respect all its pupils and staff members, as well as parents and the local community. Fairness, concern, compassion, and forgiveness are all gospel values that we model for pupils. The pupils are regularly reminded of the Golden Rule, to treat others as they would like to be treated.

Mark 12:31, Luke 10:27 - "...Love your neighbour as yourself..."

This policy recognises and endeavours to adopt the values that are set out in the ethos of the school. It attempts to support and sustain a harmonious environment in which potential is nurtured through the co-operation between staff, pupils, parents, board members and all other relevant parties.

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of **Scoil Bhailenóra** 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*.

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.

It must also be recognised that an allegation of bullying is a very serious one, and the rights of all parties to fair procedures and natural justice will be fully respected.

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

Core definition of Bullying Behaviour

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

This is expanded upon in chapter two of the [Action Plan](#).

Each school is required to develop and implement a Bí Cineálta policy that sets out how the school community prevents and addresses bullying behaviour. This is done in partnership with the community, including parents. 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	7 th – 13 th February 2025	Questionnaires
	21 st March 2025	Half-Day School Closure
Students	7 th - 11 th February 2025	Questionnaires
Parents	12 th – 18 th March 2025	Questionnaires
Board of Management	12 th February 2025	Meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	After school childcare	Meeting
Date policy was approved: 08/05/25		
Date policy was last reviewed: 08/05/25		

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):

Whole-School Prevention Strategies

Culture and Environment

- Catholic Ethos of the school requires can and respect for others, recognising and celebrating each individual.
- The school promotes a positive, inclusive environment where all students and staff feel safe, respected, and supported.

- Strong relationships built on respect, care, trust, and integrity underpin all interactions within the school community.
- Leadership sets the tone by modelling high standards and clear expectations around behaviour and inclusion.
- Open communication between staff, students, parents, and the wider school community encourages a shared approach to preventing bullying.
- A 'telling environment' is fostered, where students are encouraged to report bullying without fear of retaliation or judgement.
- The school supports the role of a "trusted adult" to ensure students know who they can approach with concerns and feel reassured and supported when they do.
- Safe physical spaces are maintained through good visibility, clear supervision, and well-kept school grounds to reduce areas where bullying might occur.
- Student ownership of space, including art and collaborative projects, helps build a sense of belonging and pride in the school.
- Break times include a variety of structured activities to cater to all interests and reduce unstructured time where bullying may arise.

Curriculum: Teaching and Learning

- The school promotes collaborative and respectful learning environments, encouraging regular group work to build empathy, connection, and a sense of belonging among students.
- It uses the primary curriculum to foster inclusion and respect for diversity across all subject areas.
- Pupils are given opportunities to develop self-worth, confidence, and personal responsibility through both curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- The school delivers the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) programmes to support pupil well-being and promote respectful, inclusive behaviour. These programmes help pupils build self-confidence, empathy, and an understanding of how to maintain positive relationships.
- The school integrates diversity and inclusion into:

-Religious Education – to promote respect for different beliefs and ways of living.

-Social and Environmental Education (SEE) – to encourage awareness of community, equality, and the interdependence of people and environments.

Policy and Planning

- The school places the wellbeing of the entire school community at the centre of all policies and planning.
- It implements a Bí Cineálta policy and a student-friendly version to prevent and address bullying behaviour in an accessible and age-appropriate way.
- A range of related school policies support the Bí Cineálta policy, including:
 - Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)
 - Supervision Policy
 - Special Education Teaching Policy
 - Code of Behaviour
 - Mobile Phone Charter (voluntary)
- The school actively involves students in the development and implementation of policies, increasing awareness and promoting shared responsibility.
- Staff are supported through ongoing professional learning on preventing and responding to bullying and promoting inclusion and diversity.
- Teachers regularly share good practice and experiences to strengthen a whole-school approach to anti-bullying.

Relationships and Partnerships

- The school recognises that strong interpersonal connections are key to preventing and addressing bullying effectively.
- It supports these connections through formal and informal structures such as the student council and parent association,
- The school takes steps to strengthen relationships and partnerships across the school community, including:
 - Encouraging the active participation of students in school life and decision-making.
 - Supporting the active involvement of parents, especially those facing barriers due to language, culture, or unfamiliarity with the education system.
 - Organising workshops and seminars for students, staff, and parents to raise awareness of bullying and its effects.

- Promoting activities that develop empathy, respect, and resilience.
- Promoting acts of kindness, problem-solving skills, and structured activities to build respectful communication.
- The school ensures the meaningful involvement of the board of management, staff, students, and parents in developing, reviewing, and implementing the Bí Cineálta policy and its student-friendly version.
- It reflects the values of the Cineáltas Action Plan on Bullying, emphasising empathy, understanding, and respect throughout the school community.

Preventing Specific Types of Bullying Behaviour

Bullying behaviour	<p><u>Resources used by Teachers:</u> Friendship and Bullying lessons in the <i>Stay Safe</i> Programme Friendship and Bullying lessons in <i>Walk Tall</i> <i>Zippy's Friends HSE</i> (Junior end of School) Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) Programme</p>
Online bullying behaviour,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school promotes safe, respectful, and responsible use of technology to minimise the risk of cyberbullying and inappropriate online behaviour. • Digital safety is taught through the SPHE and Digital Media Literacy curricula, with a focus on digital citizenship and maintaining positive online relationships. • Students are regularly encouraged to build kind and respectful online behaviour through classroom discussions and role-modelling. • The school has a clearly defined Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) and outlines expected online conduct in the Code of Behaviour. • The school hosts and promotes online safety events for parents and observes Internet Safety Day to raise digital awareness. • The school implements a Smartphone Parental Charter, which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Encourages families to delay smartphone ownership until after primary school. -Aims to reduce exposure to online risks such as

	<p>cyberbullying, social media pressure, and harmful content.</p> <p>-Promotes healthier development, focus, and screen-free learning environments.</p> <p>-Reinforces community-wide support for prioritising safety, real-world interaction, and balanced use of technology.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are encouraged to stay informed about their children’s digital use and are supported through access to resources, including the Smartphone Charter guidance. • The school educates the community on age-appropriate use of social media: <p>-The digital age of consent in Ireland is 16.</p> <p>-Most social media platforms require a minimum age of 13, and parental consent is required for users under 16.</p> <p><u>Resources used by Teachers:</u> <i>Webwise Resources:</i> 1st – 4th Class – <i>HTML Heroes</i>. 3rd/4th class – <i>Be Kind Online</i> 5th/6th - <i>My Selfie and the Wider World</i> 9 – 12-year olds - <i>All Aboard for Digitown</i> 4th – 6th class – <i>Fuse - Anti-Bullying & Online Safety Programme</i></p>
<p>Homophobic bullying behaviour and Transphobic bullying behaviour</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school ensures that all students feel safe, respected, and supported. • The school implements the following strategies to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Actively challenges gender stereotypes to encourage acceptance and reduce bias. -Encourages and empowers students to speak up and report when they witness discriminatory or hurtful behaviour.

	<p><u>Resources used by Teachers:</u> RESPECT Guidelines - Creating a Welcoming and Positive School Climate to Prevent Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying 5th /6th Class: <i>All Together Now</i> 3rd – 6th Class: Specific lessons focused on homophobic and transphobic bullying in the <i>Stay Safe</i> Programme.</p>
<p>Racist bullying behaviour</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school celebrates cultural diversity and promotes a welcoming environment where all students feel seen, valued, and respected. • Strategies to prevent racist bullying include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Fostering a school culture of inclusion, where diversity is visible, acknowledged, and celebrated. -Ensuring students from all backgrounds can ‘see themselves’ reflected in school displays, materials, and messages. -Promoting bystander responsibility by encouraging students to report racist behaviour when they witness it. -Supporting staff in meeting the needs of students with English as an additional language, and in communicating effectively with their families. -Ensuring library and classroom materials reflect diverse lived experiences, representing a range of national, ethnic, and cultural perspectives. <p><u>Resources used by Teachers:</u> 3rd – 6th Class: Specific lessons focused on racist bullying in the <i>Stay Safe</i> Programme.</p>

<p>Sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school promotes gender equality and mutual respect as core values to ensure a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for all students. • Preventative strategies include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Staff model respectful behaviour and treat all students equally, regardless of their sex or gender. -All students are given equal opportunities to participate in school activities, leadership roles, and learning experiences. -The school celebrates diversity and acknowledges the strengths and contributions of all students. -A zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment is enforced—such behaviour is never excused as teasing or banter. -Through SPHE and RSE, students are taught about healthy relationships and respectful communication. -The school promotes positive role models and respectful peer interactions throughout the school community.
<p>All teaching resources mentioned above are accessible on our school's Bí Cineálta Anti-Bullying Padlet</p>	

<p>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):</p>
<p>Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)</p> <p>Supervision Policy</p> <p>Special Education Teaching Policy</p> <p>Code of Behaviour</p>

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

All teachers in the school.

As with any concern, a parent must bring a bullying related concern to their child's class teacher first.

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 rights of the child / children accused to fair procedures and natural justice will also have to be respected.

The steps that will be taken by the school to determine if bullying behaviour has occurred, the approaches taken to address the bullying behaviour and to review progress are as follows (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

Identifying if Bullying Behaviour has Occurred

Bullying is defined in Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying and Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools as **targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society.** The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

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

1. Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?
2. Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?
3. Is the behaviour repeated?

If, following a full investigation, the investigating teacher can conclude that 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 very limited 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, both the (those) accused and the accuser, should be met as a group – if deemed appropriate by staff
- > 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)
- > to recognise different situations that arise in schools, and different maturity levels, development stages of pupils, there is discretion allowed with regard to investigation and sanction if directed by the principal.

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. However, **the sanction will be decided by the school, and this sanction is a private matter. The accusing child / parents do not have a right to know the sanction.**

> a record should be kept of the engagement with all involved

> this record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known (see Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the *Bi Cineálta* procedures), where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students involved and their parents

> the record should include the constructive views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour

Follow up where Bullying Behaviour has Occured

> 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 3

> 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):

For Students Experiencing Bullying:

- **Immediate Engagement:** Ensure that students who report bullying feel heard and reassured. Actions should be taken promptly to support them.
- **Timely and Ongoing Support:** Continuous monitoring and support may be required to help rebuild relationships and ensure the student feels safe and valued.
- **Parent Engagement:** Parents of the student experiencing bullying should be informed early and involved in discussions about how to best address the situation.
- **Privacy and Sensitivity:** Conversations should be handled with sensitivity, maintaining privacy for all involved in so far as practicable, and considering the age and ability of the students.

For Students Displaying Bullying Behavior:

- **Support to Address Relational Difficulties:** Schools must identify and provide the necessary supports for students exhibiting bullying behavior to manage relational challenges and develop positive social skills.
- **Fair and Consistent Approach:** It is crucial that the same level of support and engagement is provided to both the student who is experiencing bullying and the student displaying bullying behavior.
- **Reflection and Rebuilding Trust:** Restoring trust and accountability is key. The focus should be on educating the student about the impact of their behavior and promoting personal responsibility.

For Students Witnessing Bullying:

- **Encourage Reporting:** Schools should foster a “telling environment” where students feel comfortable reporting bullying without fear of retaliation.
- **Empathy Building:** Activities aimed at developing empathy and teaching students how to be supportive bystanders are essential. Encouraging students to intervene appropriately and report bullying is a key aspect of creating a supportive school culture.

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: *Barry O'Sullivan*

Date: 08/05/25

(Chairperson of board of management)

Appendix 1

Child Friendly poster

The emphasis is on being kind, preventing unwanted behaviours. Should such behaviours occur, the emphasis is on restoring relationships between children.

