



# Holycross National School

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

The Board of Management of Holy Cross 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 children 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 2024* as targeted unwanted 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.

- 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.
- It is behaviour which is deliberate in nature and is unwanted. It is not accidental or reckless behaviour.

The harm can be :

- Physical ( eg: personal injury, damage to or loss of property)
- Social: ( eg: withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion)
- Emotional: (eg: low self-esteem, depression, anxiety)
  - A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards a student is not bullying behaviour. However, a single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be visible to a wide audience and has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and so becomes repeated behaviour.

### **Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour:**

If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour, but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying, but, importantly, must be addressed under the school 's code of behaviour.

Some students with special educational needs, may have social communication difficulties which may make them communicate their needs through behaviours that can hurt themselves or others. It is important to note that these behaviours are not deliberate or planned, but in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they cannot control.

Disagreement between students is not considered bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

### **Types of Bullying:**

There are many different types of bullying behaviour. These can include directing bullying at someone focused on the following: disability, exceptional ability, gender identity, LGBTQ+ , physical appearance, racism, poverty status, religious identity, sexism and sexual harassment. This is not an exhaustive list.

Bullying can be: **Direct:**

- **Physical:** pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping students. Physical assault. Destruction of personal property.
- **Verbal:** continual name calling which insults, humiliates the student – this may refer to physical appearance, clothes, gender, accent, academic ability, race or ethnic origin.
- **Written:** Writing insulting remarks in public places, passing notes or drawings about the child.
- **Extortion:** where something is obtained through force or threats.
- Bullying can be: **Indirect:**
- **Exclusion:** where a child is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded or ignored by a child or group of children.
- **Relational:** Where a child's attempts to form friendships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined, threats, non-verbal gesturing, malicious gossip, spreading rumours, silent treatment and manipulation of friend groups etc can all form relational bullying for a child.

### **Online bullying behaviour:**

Cyber bullying is carried out via text, direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, email, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chatrooms and other online technologies. This can include:

- Sending or sharing of insulting and offensive or intimidating messages or images via online means as mentioned above.
- Posting information which is personal, private or sensitive without consent.
- Making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other students.
- Exclude/disrupt access to a student on purpose on online chat groups/access to accounts/from an online game.
- It must be noted that children in our school are not permitted to have any smart phones or watches in school. The children's use of technology in school is detailed in our acceptable use policy.

### 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	15/01/2025	Half Day Closure– staff provided with the opportunity to discuss the new Bi Cineálta action plan and stemming from this discussion, staff were informed of the important points in dealing with an incidence or report of bullying. Staff given time to discuss and relay feedback. Sharing of draft policy with staff to discuss / consult and make any amendments.
	03/04/2025	Further review and discussion of policy during staff meeting with emphasis on reaching out to wider community, parents and children.
	29/05/2025	Final policy reviewed and accepted by staff.
Students	05/02/2025	Pupil survey completed by all classes.
	07/04/2025	Student council formed focus group discussion on student friendly policy.
	12/05/2025-16/05/2025	Children were given the opportunity to create a bespoke student friendly policy.
	23/05/2025	The winning poster was chosen by the children and will be used as our student friendly poster.
Parents	17/02/2025	Parent Survey sent.
	15/05/2025	A volunteer group of parents met as a

		focus to review the new Bi Cineálta policy and came up with ideas to help it work in our school.
Board of Management	06/02/2025 03/04/2025 12/06/2025	Board updated on policy to date. Board informed of progress to date. Board final review and approval of policy.
Wider school community as appropriate	03/04/2025	Copy of policy given to our after school facilitator, for perusal and suggestions. Copy of policy given to school secretary, for perusal and suggestions. Copy of policy given to our cleaner, for perusal and suggestions. Copy of policy given to our GAA coach for perusal and suggestions.
Date policy was approved: 12 <sup>th</sup> June 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:

### **Culture and Environment:**

We strive to:

- Create a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.
- Involve parents as active partners in fostering an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated.
- Support the idea that our school is a telling environment.
- Promote the concept of a trusted adult – stay safe linkage – who to tell.
- Create safe spaces in our school building and yards – visibility
- Incorporate artwork and signs to promote our school values – creation of a school charter promoting rights – equality, inclusion and respect.
- Encourage a sense of belonging with ownership over their own space through art and creativity.
- Create a positive school culture and climate which is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity; encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and promotes respectful relationships across the school community.
  - Create an ethos of empathy in our school and teach it implicitly so children understand
  - Reward examples of acts of kindness/empathy and highlight to all during yard line up.

### **The ways in which we work to achieve these goals are as follows:**

- Staff are briefed on the uniform approach we must take to handle all reports of bullying – this is distributed to staff and a copy is displayed on the office notice board for ease of access also.
- Anti Bullying week activities such as Random acts of Kindness homework, Poster making, slogan making, etc
- Playground helpers – students in higher classes volunteer to support younger classes on yard to help with games and positive interactions.
- Child Friendly Anti- Bullying Policy was formed with pupil and parent input and is distributed to parents, children and staff to discuss. This policy outlines various ways to tell.
- Parents receive information at times regarding useful information on Anti Bullying.
- Stay safe and SPHE lessons focusing on positive behaviour form part of curricular content in all classes.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils.
- Notice board to promote kindness and build responsibility amongst pupils.
  - Possibly have a friendship week to encourage inclusion and mend bridges

## **Curriculum (teaching and learning)**

We strive to:

- Provide teaching and promote learning which is collaborative and respectful, fostering inclusion and respect for diversity.
- Display a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact. Ways in which we work to achieve this:
  - Teach SPHE and RSE content which fosters students' well-being and self-confidence as well as promoting personal responsibility for their own behaviours and actions.
  - Model respectful behaviour towards colleagues, pupils and visitors in our school environment.
  - Curricular and Extra-curricular activities can help to develop a sense of self-worth, working together, inclusion and respect.
  - Students are given regular opportunities to work in small groups with peers, which can help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy.
  - Acknowledgment of our diverse school population – celebrating diversity and culture in our school through art, displays, photographs, international events.
  - Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and to explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including homophobic and transphobic bullying.
  - Supports and training for all staff, including cultural sensitivity (including allowing time for staff to complete reports)
  - Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies)
  - On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.
    - Creating a positive school culture, detailed in our Wellbeing policy.
    - Support the child who has engaged in bullying behaviour- help them to understand damage and figure out why they might do it and give them ways and steps to control themselves (Traffic lights/fizz/flip their lid/5,4,3,2,1 )
    - Movies suitable for their age that promote deeper thinking (Inside out)
    - Art – pupil designed posters promoting friendship and reminding each other of inclusion.

## **Policy and planning**

The aim of Holy Cross National School's Bi Cinealta policy is:

- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils, parents/guardians.
- To promote a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To ensure appropriate supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
- To develop procedures for reporting, investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To implement a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- To work with appropriate agencies in countering all forms of bullying and promoting anti bullying behaviour.

- To create awareness of kindness and respect among students.

### **Relationships and Partnerships**

- Interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as our student council, amber flag, active flag committees, sport, drama and creativity.
- Age and stage appropriate awareness initiatives that engage the student body in looking at their own behaviour – promoting acts of kindness and friendship, being an active help to others and looking at the causes of and impact of bullying during SPHE lessons.
- Conducting workshops and seminars for students, staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying.
- Encouraging peer mentoring and peer support
- Supporting active participation of students in school life and active participation of parents in school life also.
- Engaging parents and students in actively contributing to the formation of a Child Friendly Anti Bullying Policy to make them active participants in promotion of and discussion of useful ways to identify and reduce bullying behaviour and highlight procedure and how to deal with it if it does occur.

### **Preventing Cyber Bullying, Homophobic/Transphobic bullying, Racist bullying, Preventing sexual harassment.**

In addition to the above-mentioned strategies, the school has the following in place to prevent and address bullying:

- Staff always endeavour to encourage pupils to show respect for each other.
- Implementation of the SPHE curriculum.
- Positive self-esteem is fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences, by acknowledging good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success. • Digital Media Policy includes learning about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship. AUP is also developed for technology in our school.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed regularly with the pupils.
- Staff are particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of bullying/ being bullied.
- All disclosed incidents of bullying are investigated thoroughly and consistently by following the correct procedure as outlined to staff and recorded on using the agreed template for this.
  - School wide awareness raising on all aspects of bullying, supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extracurricular activities.
  - Involvement of pupils in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Kindness/ anti-bullying week, and other activities that can help pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support
  - Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell.
  - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
  - Refer to appropriate online behaviour when using devices and in SPHE lessons.
  - Promote online safety events or material for parents •

The listing of supports to be used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school e.g. [www.tacklebullying.ie](http://www.tacklebullying.ie), [www.antibullyingcentre.ie](http://www.antibullyingcentre.ie), [www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie), Oide and NEPS.

- Raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour and encourage

students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour.

- Foster a culture where diversity is celebrated, and students feel a part of our school community.

- Modelling of respectful behaviour by staff of all irrespective of sex.
- Ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of sex.
- Making clear that our school has a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment of any kind with enforceable policy - See Code of Behaviour.

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):

- Code of Behaviour
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy
- Acceptable Usage (AU) Policy
- Yard Supervision Policy
- Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Policy
- Wellbeing Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Student Council to promote monitoring of children
- Amber flag Committee for wellbeing awareness and promotion
- Active flag Committee for physical wellbeing awareness and promotion
- Supervision on yard during recreational times
- Timetables for hall time on wet days

### **Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour**

The teacher with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour is:

The class teacher who will oversee recording of bullying reports for students in their class and will inform the principal– this includes using the procedure guidelines to investigate reports of bullying and recording bullying behaviour on the correct form.

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All staff will be vigilant to bullying behaviour.

- Principal will inform Board of Management of incidences of Bullying.

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

- ensure that the child experiencing bullying behaviour is heard and reassured
- ensure that the child who is conducting bullying behaviour is heard
- 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 child who is experiencing bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- act 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):

### **Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred**

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the teacher should consider the following: what, where, when and why?

If a group of children is involved, each child should be engaged with individually at first. Thereafter, all students involved should be met as a group.

At the group meeting, each child should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views. Each child should be supported, as appropriate, following the group meeting. It may also be helpful to ask the children involved to write down their account of the incident.

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 follows:

- a. While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the 'Relevant Teacher(s)', the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' will use his/her/their professional judgement in relation to the keeping of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
- b. If it is established by the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' that bullying has occurred, the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- c. The 'Relevant Teacher(s)' must record the bullying incident on the school information management system (Aladdin) by adding an Alleged Bullying Behaviour Report to the relevant pupil's file which will be visible on files on all other pupils named. The 'Relevant Teacher' must inform the Principal. The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore as far as it is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame).

The school's procedures are as follows:

- In investigating and dealing with bullying the teacher(s) will exercise his/her/their judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type it is and how best the situation might be resolved.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, must be investigated and dealt with by the 'Relevant Teacher(s)'. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report instances of bullying, they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, SNAs and cleaners are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them to the Class Teacher.
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
- On being informed of an alleged incident of bullying, the teacher dealing with the report will first interview the victim(s) and discuss the feelings which the victim(s) experienced because of the bullying behaviour.
- Initial investigations of bullying will be done in class where possible, but some incidents might be best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' should seek answers to questions of what, where, who, when and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.

- 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 the other's statements.
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interviewing by the teacher.
- Where the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' has/have 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 anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- Where the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' has/have determined that a pupil has not engaged in bullying behaviour, the parent/child should be informed by the school of this decision.

The 'Relevant Teacher' does not apportion blame but should make an effort to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter.

- When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the 'Relevant Teacher' will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information.
- If a pupil chooses to continue the bullying behaviour, this can no longer be considered a once off occurrence. In this event parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted. The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the support for the pupil.
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may be arranged separately with a view to bringing them together later if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
- Repeated incidents of bullying behaviour will result in the imposition of sanctions. Such sanctions will be proportionate to the seriousness of the bullying behaviour. It must be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required that this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.
- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent must be referred to the school's complaints procedure.
- If a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their rights to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.
- The school will maintain care for the victim over time. This will be done by speaking to the child several weeks after the incident to check on their continuing welfare. The child's parents will also be consulted.
- If a child makes a report of bullying but asks that nothing is to be done about it, the relevant teacher will support the child appropriately to explore how it will be handled sensitively and how parents may be notified. If a parent does so, they must submit in writing that they require no further action to be taken, but even so, the school may still deem it necessary to be investigated and handled appropriately.

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves a whole school approach. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, no one intervention/support programme works in all situations.

**Supporting Bullied pupils:**

- Ending the bullying behaviour,
- Fostering respect for bullied pupils and all pupils, - Fostering greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils,

- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through annual awareness-raising programmes,
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations,
- Helping bullied 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 class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).

#### **Supporting Bullying pupils:**

- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a 'clean sheet,'
- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honourable thing and giving them praise for this,
- Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school),
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth,
- In dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child,
- In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a 'clean sheet' and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.

#### **Requests to take no action**

A child reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than "look out" for them. The child 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 child, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the child 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 child 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 bullying behaviour has ceased**

The teacher must engage with the children 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 the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the children involved.

Even though the bullying behaviour may have ceased, ongoing supervision and support may be required for both the child who has experienced the bullying behaviour as well as the child 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 child 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. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant child, their parents and the school.

### **Recording bullying behaviour**

All incidents of bullying behaviour should be recorded. The record should document the form (Section 2.5) and type (See Section 2.7) of bullying behaviour, if known, where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students 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. It 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. It is important to document the date of each of these engagements and the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased. Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted.

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

Where a Student Support File exists for a student, schools are encouraged to place a copy of the record 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 children involved. Where a Student Support Plan exists, the plan should be updated to incorporate response strategies and associated supports.

### **6.6 Complaint process**

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

Additional Information relating to schools' complaint procedures are available at the following link: <https://www.gov.ie/en/policyinformation/parentalcomplaints/>.

If a student and/or parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, a student and/or parent 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 are available to help prevent and address bullying behaviour.

These include the following:

#### **National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)**

The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) of the Department of Education provides a comprehensive, school based psychological service to all primary and post primary schools to support the wellbeing, academic, social and emotional development of all students. The NEPS model of service is a consultative, capacity building model, in which there is a balance between casework and support and development work.

The psychological services which NEPS provides for students are differentiated in terms of whether the service involves the psychologist's direct involvement with the student, known as Direct Casework, or involves the psychologist working through teachers or teachers/parents to provide a psychological service for a student, known as Indirect Casework. NEPS staff can support schools with issues around bullying through this 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 social and emotion skills, social skills, executive function skills, promoting resilience and skills in relationship repair between peers as appropriate.

### Oide

Oide is the Department of Education's support service for schools, and it supports professional learning for primary and post primary school leaders and teachers in recognised schools and centres for education.

Oide fosters a culture of continuing professional learning among school leaders and teachers encouraging lifelong learning, reflective and enquiry-based practices. 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.

### Webwise

Webwise is the online safety initiative of the Department of Education and is cofunded by the European Commission. Webwise promotes safer, better internet use through awareness raising and education initiatives targeting teachers, students and parents. Webwise develops and disseminates resources that help teachers integrate digital citizenship and online safety into teaching and learning in their schools. Webwise also provides information, advice, and tools to parents to support their engagement in their children's online lives. With the help of the Webwise Youth Advisory Panel, Webwise develops youth-oriented awareness raising resources and training programmes that promote digital citizenship and address topics such as online wellbeing and cyberbullying.

### National Parents Council

The National Parents Council (NPC) is the representative organisation for parents of children in early years, primary and post primary education. NPC was established as a charitable organisation in 1985, under the programme for Government, as the representative organisation for parents of children attending school. It received statutory recognition in the Education Act 1998.

The NPC works to ensure that all parents are supported and empowered to become effective partners in their children's education. NPC seeks to achieve true partnership and deliver better outcomes for all students.

The NPC delivers online and in person courses to support parents of both primary and post primary students to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

### Dublin City University (DCU) Anti Bullying Centre

The DCU Anti Bullying Centre is a university designated research centre located in DCU's Institute of Education. The centre is known globally for its research in bullying and online safety. The Anti Bullying Centre offers a range of modules as part of its FUSE programme for the entire school community that can be used to help to promote a positive school culture and assist in preventing and addressing bullying behaviours.

### Tusla

Schools should contact Tusla directly for advice in cases where it is considered that bullying behaviour is a child protection concern (section 2.4 for guidance on when bullying behaviour becomes a child protection concern).

## Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools


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:  \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 12/6/25  
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed:  \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 12/06/25  
(Principal)