

Scoil Phádraig, Ballyhale, Co. Kilkenny.

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Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Scoil Phádraig, Ballyhale 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

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

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

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

Definition of bullying

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

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

A student friendly version of this policy is available as Appendix A.

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.

<u>Date Consulted</u>	<u>Method of Consultation</u>
<p>School Staff - Bí Cineálta Training 13th Nov.</p> <p>Kieran O'Malley Oide facilitator visit to school March 5th to view policy draft.</p> <p>Restorative practice workshop.</p> <p>Draft policy sent to all staff May 19th.</p> <p>Webinar, scenarios and policy review May 21st with all staff.</p> <p>Finalising of policy June 2025.</p>	<p>In-service in Ed. Centre for Principal and D.P.</p> <p>Meeting with Principal and D.P.</p>
<p>Pupils – Survey Wed. 20th and 21st of May</p> <p>Pupils – Child friendly Bí Cineálta poster</p>	<p>Online survey.</p> <p>Lessons with Student Council and 6th class.</p> <p>Child friendly poster designed.</p>
<p>Parents – Google survey sent to parents April 29th to May 2nd.</p>	<p>Online survey.</p>
<p>Board of Management – Circular 55/2024</p> <p>Email sent Wed. 21st of May of draft policy and video from CPSMA.</p>	<p>Discussed at BOM meeting 13th of Feb. 2025</p> <p>Draft policy sent with video for discussion at BOM meeting June 17th 2025.</p>
<p>Wider community e.g. bus drivers</p>	<p>Draft policy given to Bus drivers on 4th of June 2025.</p>

Date policy was approved: _____

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:

Our school's strategies to prevent bullying behaviour are set out under the headings in the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice:

1. Culture and Environment

- 1.1 Relationships between all members of the school community should be based on respect, care, integrity and trust,
- 1.2 Open collaboration between the patron, board of management, school staff, students, and their parents and guardians will help to foster a collaborative approach and shared responsibilities in relation to the prevention and addressing of bullying behaviour.
- 1.3 The school leadership team influences the school culture and set standards and expectations for the school community when preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.
- 1.4 Each member of the school staff has a responsibility to develop and maintain a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and to take a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.
- 1.5 Parents and guardians, as active partners in their child's education, can help foster an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated through promoting empathy and respect.
- 1.6 Students can shape the school culture by promoting kindness and inclusion within their peer group and maintain a positive and supportive school environment for all.
- 1.7 Our school community will endeavour to ensure that our school is a "telling" school, where students feel comfortable to talk about concerns regarding bullying behaviour.
- 1.8 Circle time and restorative practice may also be used in Scoil Phádraig.

2. Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

We provide opportunities for students to develop a sense of self-worth across all curricular subjects

The Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum is taught every year to every class level, including the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) module and the Stay Safe and Walk Tall modules on alternating years.

The FUSE programme for 3rd to 6th class. DCU Anti-bullying Centre.

Students also learn about diversity and inclusion as part of the Grow In Love Patron's programme.

PDST Anti-Bullying Support Material – Primary Resource.

3. Policy and Planning

3.1 The wellbeing of students is at the heart of the school plans and policies in our school.

Wellbeing promotion is addressed in school policies and plans including, but not limited to:

- SPHE and other curricular subjects
- Code of Behaviour Policy
- Supervision Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Critical Incident Policy
- Health and Safety Statement
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy

3.2 In addition, we will continue to ensure that appropriate professional development is available for school staff to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

4. Relationships and Partnerships

4.1 Scoil Phádraig, Ballyhale continues to develop strong relationships and partnerships with parents/guardians and the wider school community, to effectively prevent and address bullying behaviour. These interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures, including committees with parental and student input (Green School Committee, , Active School Committee, Student Council), Parent's Association

4.2 The following, which is not an exhaustive list, are ways in which we strengthen relationships and partnerships between members of our school community:

4.3 Age appropriate awareness initiatives that look at the causes and impacts of bullying

4.4 Behaviour including those dealing with navigating friendships, identity based bullying, racist bullying, homophobic/transphobic bullying, sexism and sexual harassment

4.5 Supporting the active participation of students in school life

- 4.6 Supporting the active participation of parents in school life, including those who may find it difficult or daunting to engage with the school due to being unfamiliar with the education system or due to language or cultural barriers
- 4.7 Conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying
- 4.8 Supporting activities that build empathy, respect and resilience
- 4.9 Encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring
- 4.10 Promoting acts of kindness
- 4.11 Teaching problem solving

Scoil Phádraig has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour:

- Our school constantly works towards creating safe, engaging spaces in our school environment for students to engage with each other in.
- Our school has a supervision policy in place to ensure the appropriate supervision of students and we also offer a mix of organised activities during breaks (sports coaching, outdoor play space, senior class games with younger pupils etc.) to accommodate a range of interests and preferences.
- Staff in our school build positive relationships with students, including letting them know that they can talk to them. This builds the concept of a trusted adult, an effective strategy to encourage students to report bullying behaviour relating to themselves or others.
- We also engage with the wider school community, who are in regular contact with students, such as the school bus drivers, and members of the community, who have the opportunity to report to the school if bullying behaviour is occurring.

To prevent cyber-bullying behaviour, our school:

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 16.22 For the purposes of data collection, students between the age of 13 and 16 years old must have parental permission to sign up to social media services where companies use the legal basis of consent to collect process and store users' data. Most social media platforms and services have a minimum age requirement and for the majority of these services it is 13 years' old. Therefore technically, children under the age of 13 should not have a social media account. It is important for their child's safety, that parents are aware of their children's use of technology including smartphones and gaming consoles.

Implements the SPHE curriculum

- We have regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- Have developed and communicated an acceptable use policy for technology
- Refer to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour
- Promote or host online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online
- Provide specific workshops on digital literacy and online engagement to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour.

To prevent homophobic and transphobic behaviour, our school:

- Maintains an inclusive physical environment (All Together Now Primary Programme)
- Encourages peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- Challenges gender stereotypes
- Provides a dialogical space for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour
- Encourages students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour.

To prevent racist bullying behaviour, our school:

- Show Racism the Red Card.
- Fosters a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students "see themselves" in their school environment
- Has the cultural diversity of the school visible and on display

- Creates dialogical spaces for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of racism
- Encourages peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- Encourages bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour
- Provides supports to school staff to respond to the needs of students for whom English is a
- second language
- Provides supports to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities, including Traveller
- and Roma students
- Invites speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds
- Ensure that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of
- students and adults from
- different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

To prevent sexist bullying behaviour, our school:

- Gender Equality Matters.
- Ensures staff members model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of sex
- Ensures students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of sex
- Celebrates diversity at school and acknowledging the contributions of all students
- Organises awareness campaigns, workshops and presentations on gender equality and respect
- Encourages parents to reinforce these values of respect at home.

To prevent sexual harassment, our school:

- Teaches students about healthy relationships and how to treat each other with respect and
- kindness
- Promotes positive role models within the school community
- Challenges gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

All class teachers and SET teachers.

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

- a) ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour is heard and reassured
- b) seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- c) conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- d) consider the age and ability of those involved
- e) listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- f) take action in a timely manner
- g) inform parents of those involved

The whole school community has a responsibility to prevent and address bullying behaviour. Schools should work in partnership with their patron, board of management, staff, students and their parents to develop and implement their Bí Cineálta policy.

The primary aim in addressing reports of bullying behaviour should be to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the students involved, rather than to apportion blame.

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:

When addressing bullying behaviour teachers should:

- Ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured
- Seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- Conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- Consider the age and ability of the students involved
- Listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- Take action in a timely manner
- Inform parents of those involved.

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 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.

A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards another student is not bullying behaviour. However, a single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be visible to a wide audience and has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and so becomes a repeated behaviour. Disagreement between students, or instances where students don't want to be friends or to remain friends, is not considered bullying behaviour unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others including deliberate manipulation of friendship groups. Some students with special educational needs may have social communication difficulties which may make them communicate their needs through behaviours that can hurt themselves or others. It is important to note that these behaviours are not deliberate or planned but, in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they can't control. Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying. These behaviours, while not defined as bullying can be distressing.

A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, schools should deal with it in accordance with their Bí Cineálta policy. See Section 6.2 of these procedures. Coming to and from school: Bullying behaviour can occur in the area immediately outside the school, the local shops and the wider local area. Bullying behaviour can take place at the bus stop or on the journey to and from school whether the students are walking, cycling or on school buses. Bullying

behaviour can also take place in organised clubs and groups outside of school such as sports clubs. Online bullying (cyberbullying) behaviour, along with all other types of bullying behaviour, can cause significant harm and can have a lasting impact on students who experience this behaviour. Access to technology means that online bullying behaviour can happen anytime, and the student's home is no longer a safe place. The nature of these technologies means that digital content can be shared and seen by a very wide audience most instantly and the content is almost impossible to be deleted permanently.

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred teachers should consider what, where, when and why?

- If a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first
- Thereafter, all students involved should be met as a group
- At the group meeting, each student should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views
- Each student should be supported as appropriate, following the group meeting
- It may be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident(s).

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
- Given the complexity of bullying behaviour it is generally acknowledged that no one approach works in all situations. Each school must therefore decide on an approach that is best suited to its own circumstances
- 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 views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour

Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred

- The teacher must engage with the students involved and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement
- Important factors to consider as part of this engagement are the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the students involved
- The teacher should document the review with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and their parents in relation to this
- The date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased should also be recorded
- Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted
- Ongoing supervision and support may be needed for students, 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 time frame 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 B'í Cine'alta 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.

Requests to take no action

- A student reporting bullying may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than “look out” for them. In such circumstances, staff members should show empathy for the student and speak to the student to work out together how parents will be informed about the situation.
- Parents may also make staff aware of bullying behaviour 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 required. However, the school may still decide to address the bullying behaviour, based on the circumstances. If there is Criminal Responsibility or if there is a Child Protection Concern the school will address the bullying behaviour.

The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour:

Support for children who experience bullying

1. Follow up: a crucial component to support students who have experienced bullying is regular follow up with them and their parents to ensure that the pattern of bullying has stopped. This is an important first step for the student to feel secure and to build confidence levels.
2. Social group intervention: if considered appropriate, we design and implement social groups for victims to share their experiences, build confidence levels and to teach strategies to mitigate against bullying behaviour reoccurring. Where appropriate, this group would include the perpetrator of the bullying.
3. Safe reporting mechanisms: We have anonymous reporting systems, including chat boxes, for students to report bullying without fear of retaliation.
4. One trusted adult: we also encourage victims to identify a trusted adult to whom they can go with concerns or fears in relation to the reoccurrence of bullying behaviour.
5. Professional support: Our school has access to the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS). We can therefore ask for advice from our NEPS psychologist to support victims of bullying.

Support for students who witness bullying

1. Positive reinforcement: A crucial component when following up with children who report bullying not involving themselves is to reinforce the point that they did the right thing. This follow up also involves ensuring that there has been no negative impact on the bystander for reporting the bullying behaviour. If this has occurred, follow up interventions take place to mitigate against any such negativity.
2. Bystander training: We teach students how to safely intervene or report bullying when they witness it, promoting a culture of collective responsibility. Testimonies from bystanders who reported such behaviour is a powerful component of this training.
3. Encourage kindness: We also promotes initiatives that reward acts of kindness and support among peers.

Support for students who engage in bullying behaviour

1. Follow up: a crucial component to support students who have engaged in bullying behaviour is regular follow up with them and their victim/s to ensure that the pattern of bullying has stopped. This is an important first step to break the pattern of bullying behaviour.
2. Social group intervention: if considered appropriate, we design and implement social groups for students who engage in bullying behaviour to understand the impact of their behaviour on others, identify reasons for the behaviour and improve their social skills, emotional regulation, and conflict resolution to help them develop healthier interactions with others. Where appropriate, this group would include the perpetrator of the bullying.
3. Engage parents: Inform and involve parents of students who engage in bullying behaviour in discussions about their child's behavior and the steps being taken to address it. This also involves parents being asked to monitor and evaluate their child's behaviour at home to ensure consistency of approach.
4. Professional support: Our school has access to the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), Oide, the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and Tusla. We can, therefore, seek advice from any or all of these bodies to support perpetrators, victims and bystanders of bullying, as required.

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: _____ (Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____ Date: _____ (Principal)

Appendix A Student friendly Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour