

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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The Board of Management of Scoil Naomh Sheosaimh, Buaile Beag 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 behavior 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.

Catholic schools have a distinctive understanding of the human person, recognising that every person is created in God's image and likeness and has inherent dignity as a child of God. This is the basis for ensuring that each person in our school is treated with respect and care, in accordance with the Catholic Schedule.

As a Catholic school, we are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual. No human person is to be devalued, and all have an indispensable part to play in the school community, regardless of difference.

Definition of bullying:

Bullying is defined in *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying* and *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* as targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and /or emotional in nature.

Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society. The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

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

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

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

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	April & May 2025	CP- Webinars & Presentations Staff meeting discussions Half Day Closure- workshop Staff Survey
Students	Sept 2025	Student survey Developed a Bí Cineálta noticeboard Communicated policy at whole school assembly Child –friendly policy on display in every room
Parents	May- June 2025	Parent surveys Child –friendly policy on display in every room
Board of Management	Sept 2025	BOM meeting- in person discussion Review and Ratification
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	Sept. 2026	School website
Date policy was approved:11/06/2025		
Date policy was last reviewed:11/06/ 2026		

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 behavior and sexual harassment as appropriate (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures): In developing preventative strategies which this school will use to prevent all forms of bullying behaviour, we come from the context of our Catholic ethos, where inclusivity permeates the school in a real way. This school takes positive steps to ensure that the culture of the school is one which welcomes a respectful dialogue and encounter with diversity and difference, by ensuring that prevention and inclusivity strategies are given priority and discussed regularly at board of management and staff meetings.
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The dignity and the wellbeing of the individual person is of paramount concern in our Christian response. This school will listen closely to and dialogue with parents, thereby building a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, trust and confidence.

In continuing to develop prevention strategies, this school will listen to young people and parents, to help establish their particular context and needs. Frequent periods of reflection and engagement by the school, young people and parents, will be used to discern appropriate supports for young people in this school and to help inform future prevention strategies.

Culture and Environment: *We strive to;*

- Ensure a school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- Create a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.
- Ensure all members of the school community model respectful behaviour at all times.
- Maintain bright, colourful, decorated, spacious, clean and tidy classrooms and corridors where students feel safe, accepted, connected and supported.
- Promote kindness and inclusion among student body- peer support and positive environment.
- Catch the children being good- all staff to notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Create safe spaces in our school building and yards- modern furniture, spacious bright foyer and hall, library area, multi-sensory room, plants and garden, large yard areas, pitch, toilets in classrooms.
- Provide a large staffroom where all staff are facilitated to take a break, unwind or gather their thoughts without interruption for at least 20 minutes of the school day.
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying and bí cineálta.
- Have our child-friendly Bí Cineálta Policy on display prominently in every classroom and around the school.
- Incorporate artwork and signs to promote our school values- mission statement on display, celebration of children's work and creativity on classroom and corridor walls and notice boards throughout the school to encourage a sense of belonging with ownership and pride over their own space.
- Encourage a culture of telling with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. 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
- Ensure that children know who to tell and how eg. direct approach to teacher after class/ hand up a note to teacher with their home or school work , get a parent or a friend to tell.
- Provide supports for staff
- Parents receive information at times regarding useful information on Anti-Bullying. Guest speakers for children in senior classes on social media use, online bullying.
- Encourage all staff to engage in continuous professional development.

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.
- Implement the Social, Physical and Health Education curriculum, according to our school plan, including the Relationship and Sexuality Education and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Deliver school wide anti-bullying lessons through the Stay Safe programme, the Walk Tall programme and Web-wise.
- Provide curricular and extra-curricular activities that can help to develop a sense of self-worth, working together and respect.
- Allow students regular opportunities to work in small groups with peers which can help develop a sense of connection, belonging and empathy.
- Model respectful behaviour towards colleagues, pupils, ancillary staff and visitors in our school environment.
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour as outlined in this policy and in the Working Together document.
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of our teaching and our policies.

Relationships and Partnerships: *We strive to:*

- Support interpersonal connections through a range of formal and informal structures.
- Support active participation of students in school life and active participation of parents in school life.
- Promote acts of kindness and friendship and age appropriate awareness initiatives that engage the student body.

Self-esteem and Confidence Building:

Buaile Beag school has a long history of providing a wide range of co-curricular and extra-curricular opportunities that, over the course of a school year, will allow children to shine.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

Swimming lessons for all children , Cumann na mBunscol football, hurling and camogie training and competitions, mini-7's competitions, school plays for all children, GAA and rugby blitzes for different classes, badminton, volleyball and basketball coaching, choir including participation in church celebrations , carol singing at local venues , the Peace Proms initiative, participation in the Bord Gáis Theatre Awards and Stars ,coaching from development GAA officers and local clubs.

Participation in key religious events which uphold our ethos while also allowing for supervision of children who wish to opt-out, FAI five-a-side soccer and futsal for boys and girls, cross-country competitions, City Sports, Chinese and Spanish lessons, Book Fair, Write a Book competition, Scríobh Leabhar , Lego League, Lean Sigma, Green Schools, Active Schools, Amber Flag, Buddy Reading,

Friendship bench, reverse integration, school art exhibitions, yoga, Irish dancing, University of Galway links ,horse-riding and music therapy and cinema visits, library and museum visits, Engineers Week, STEPS programme, Discover Science, Curious Minds, School Yearbook, An Taisce workshops, Junior Entrepreneur Flag, Blue Star Flag, Aistear, Hour of Code, Beach clean-ups, Guided reading , Literacy Lift-off, Reading Recovery, Gaeilge promotions, WOW & WOOF, Litterpickers.

Guest speakers including author visits, training in Internet Safety/ Cyberbullying from outside professionals in this area, Friday whole school assemblies, sports day, school tours, Friendship week, Lá Glas, Grandparents Day, Bake Sale at Halloween, Ice-cream truck day, Slán le Rang 6.

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):

1. Supervision Policy and Yard Rotas:

Staff are continually reminded of the importance of vigilance in the classrooms, on corridors, in school grounds, on school tours and extracurricular activities.

Children are fully supervised from arrival time and dismissal time. We accept pupils onsite from 8.40 am and this arrival time is clearly communicated to parents. Between 8.40 am and 8.50 am pupils enter their classroom and are supervised by their class teacher. All SNAs are also present in the classrooms from 8.40 am. Children with special needs who arrive by bus are met by their class SNAs at the bus and escorted to their classrooms.

At break time children are fully supervised. Children are kept visible at all times. If a teacher has to leave the classroom at any time the neighbouring teacher is informed and actively supervises the class until the teacher returns.

At dismissal time children are supervised until they are handed over to an after-school provider or their families (unless teachers have been advised that they are walking/ cycling home). Children with special needs travelling by bus are escorted onto the bus by the SNAs. Fully vetted bus escorts accompany them on their journey home.

For school trips an assessment of the supervision requirements is made to ensure full supervision.

Substitute Teacher and SNA Information School Management have a document which details the key information about the running of the school. At the start of each year, each teacher adds in relevant information to do with their class. This is available to substitute teachers upon arrival to the classroom. Each SNA prepares a similar document outlining all their daily routines.

2. Aladdin (Record keeping, attendance and staff and parent communication).

3. Acceptable Usage Policy

4. Code of Behaviour

5. Stay Safe Policy and SPHE Policy

6. RSE Policy

7. Data Protection and Record keeping

8. Attendance Policy

9. Administration of Medicines Policy

10. Child Protection Policy

11. Autism Good Practice Guidance for Schools

12. Class Allocation Policy

13. Risk assessments

14. Induction of New Teachers Policy

15. Special Educational Needs Policy

16. Child Safeguarding Statement

17. Communication Policy

18. Attendance Strategy Statement

19. Dignity at Work Policy

- 20. Equality and Gender Equity Policy
- 21. Misuse of Substances Policy
- 22. Looking at our Schools document
- 23. Oide School Support
- 24. Droichead mentoring

SectionC: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour are the class teachers.

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

All staff will be vigilant to bullying behaviour.

Principal will inform Board of Management of incidences of bullying.

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):

Guide to addressing Bullying Behaviour:

This is based on the information contained in Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Approach:

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.

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.

Note: Once-off incidents may be considered bullying in certain circumstances. A single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and thus becomes a repeated behaviour.

If the answer to any of these questions is No, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour.

Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

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

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

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
- > 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 behavior

Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred

- > the class 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 class 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 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 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):

Those who Experience Bullying:

- Ending the Bullying Behaviour
- Asking the pupil and parents what help they need to move forward e.g buddy system on yard, support in joining activities that may assist with building their confidence.
- All staff on the child's supervision rota will be alerted to the bullying and the child will be put on observation for a two week period after the investigation and the class teacher will feed back on the results to the parents. This will be extended if necessary.

Those who witness bullying:

- If those who witnessed bullying helped with the investigation, they will be acknowledged by the class teacher and it will be explained that they have helped.

Those who display bullying behaviour :

- The class teacher will discuss with the parents involved as to why the bullying behavior occurred.
- The class teacher will seek to, with the support of the parents, help the child understand the impact of their actions.
- The class teacher should identify ways to ensure the child better manages relational difficulties.
- Set Clear Expectations on future behaviour

All staff on the child's supervision rota will be alerted to the bullying and the child will be put on observation for a two week period after the investigation and the class teacher will feed back on the results to the parents. This will be extended if necessary.

We cater for children in primary school and children, who make mistakes, must be allowed to learn from mistakes and move forward.

For supporting all three, the class teacher may seek advice from the relevant support teacher and school management.

The class teacher may also seek advice from NEPS (National Education Psychology Service). However, NEPS allocate a certain amount of time to each school so the support we receive is limited by the caseload they already have with the school and the time they allocate to each school they work with.

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: Niall Ó' Regan

Date: 11/06/25

Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: Damian Ó Caoimh

Date: 11/06/25

_____(Principal)