Our Lady of Fatima Special School

Roll No.	19266T
Principal Teacher	Glenda McKeown
Policy	Bí Cineálta Policy
Date created	9th April 2025
Date reviewed	
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Approved by	*Richael Gleeson*
	Chairperson, Board of Management
	28/05/2025
Date for review	Annually

Our Lady of Fatima

School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Our Lady of Fatima Special 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.

Ireland ratified the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child1 in September 1992. In doing this we are committed to promoting, protecting and fulfilling the rights of children.

Bullying is a children's rights issue. Bullying interferes with the following rights of the child:

➢ The right to freedom of expression (Article 13)
➢ The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 14)
➢ The right to freedom of association and freedom of peaceful assembly (Article 15)
➢ The right to privacy (Article 16)
➢ The right to be protected from all forms of abuse and neglect (Article 19)
➢ The right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health (Article 24)
➢ The right to education (Article 28)
➢ The right to enjoy their own culture, religion or language (Article 30)

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 Traveler community.

Definition of Bullying

• Bullying is **targeted behaviour**, online or offline, that causes **harm**.

• The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature and can have lasting effects on the child experiencing the behaviour.

• Bullying behaviour is **repeated** over time and involves an **imbalance of power** in relationships between two people or groups of people in society.

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

The harm can be:

➢ Physical (e.g.: personal injury, damage or loss of property)

➢ Social: (e.g.: withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion)

➢ Emotional: (e.g.: 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 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.

Criminal Behaviour:

Bullying behaviour can be considered criminal behaviour under certain circumstances and legal consequences can apply. **The age of criminal responsibility in Ireland is 12 years.** Some online behaviour may be illegal, and pupils need to be aware of the **far-reaching consequences of posting inappropriate or harmful content online**. In cases of intimate imagery, the Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020, also known as **Coco's Law,** criminalises the nonconsensual sharing of intimate images and also criminalises threatening to share these images.

If bullying behaviour involves physical violence or threats of violence, it may be considered assault.

If bullying behaviour involves discrimination or hate speech targeting a pupil based on their race, religion, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation or membership of the Traveler community, it may be considered a hate crime under the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989, and those engaging in such behaviour may face criminal charges.

If bullying behaviour involves sexual harassment or sexual assault, this may also be considered criminal behaviour.

An Garda Síochána is the appropriate authority to investigate alleged criminal behaviour.

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 hurts, insults or humiliates the student – this may refer to physical appearance, sex, clothes, gender, accent, academic ability, race or ethnic origin.

• Written: Writing insulting remarks in public places, passing notes or drawings about the student.

• Extortion: where something is obtained through force or threats.

 Bullying can be: Indirect

• Exclusion: where a student is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded or ignored by a student or group of students.

• Relational: Where a student'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 student.

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.

Types of Bullying Behaviour. There are many different types of bullying behaviour. These can include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

disablist bullying behaviour	behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of a perceived or actual disability or additional need
exceptionally able bullying	behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their high academic ability or outstanding talents
gender identity bullying	behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual gender identity
homophobic/transphobic (LGBTQ+) bullying	behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual membership of the LGBTQ+ community
physical appearance bullying	behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their physical appearance. Students who "look different" can be mocked or criticised about the shape, size or appearance of their body
racist bullying	behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their race or ethnic origin which includes membership of the Traveler or Roma community. Exclusion or discrimination against individuals or groups based on colour, descent or national or ethnic origin.
poverty bullying	behaviour that intends to humiliate a student because of a lack of resources
religious identity bullying	behaviour that intends to harm a student because of their religion or religious identity
sexist bullying	behaviour that intends to harm a student based on their sex, perpetuating stereotypes that a student or a group of students are inferior because of their sex
sexual harassment	any form of unwanted verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on sex which affects the dignity of the student

Section A: Development/review of our Bi 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	March 2025	Survey Staff meeting Draft Policy
Students	January 2024 March 2025 April 2025 May 2025	Part of National Focus Group Survey Focus group collated results for Student friendly Bí Cineálta Policy Presented to all students for feedback Analyzed results of parental survey Presented to student body at assembly Presentation to parents/coffee morning
Parents	March 2025 April 2025 May 2025	Survey- results collated Draft policy shared with PA for review Presentation by students to parents
Board of Management	26/03/2025 May 2025	Review of Draft Policy – leading to consultation and final ratification after final amendments made
Wider School Community e.g. Bus Escorts, ancillary staff	March 2025 April 2025	Survey to ancillary staff Draft policy shared with PA for review
Date policy was approved: 28/05/2025		
Date Policy was last reviewed:		

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. Ensuring the **journey to school on the** bus is a happy and safe experience.

• Incorporate artwork and signs to promote our school values and diversity – creation of a **student wellbeing charter** promoting rights – equality, inclusion and respect.
• Encourage a **sense of belonging** with ownership over their own space through art, creativity and activities.

• Create a **positive school culture and climate** which:

   o is **welcoming** of difference and diversity and is based on **inclusivity**.
   o encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
   o promotes **respectful relationships** across the school community.
   o Promotion of positive Behaviour through **Fatima House Cup – positive peer modelling and mentoring.**

 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 Staff Room noticeboard for ease of access also.

• **Anti Bullying week** activities such as Random acts of Kindness, Poster making, slogan making, etc.

• Playground leaders – students in Preparation class trained in this programme (supported by Wexford County Council), in turn to support younger classes on yard to help with games and positive interactions. **Introduction of a Buddy Bench.**

• Child Friendly Anti- Bullying Policy - 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. N.B. **Zoned areas** during breaktime allocated to staff on duty. Rotation of and introduction of different **activities** on yard to ensure **engagement and inclusivity. Communication board for nonverbal students** to support a "telling" and inclusive environment.

• Class and School Charter development as well as noticeboard to promote kindness and build responsibility amongst pupils.

• Staff led initiatives based on an agreed calendar of events to celebrate and promote diversity and wellbeing (Appendix G)

<u>Curriculum (teaching and learning)</u>

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.

• Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that:

> ➢ build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
> ➢ explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular homophobic and transphobic bullying.

• Supports for staff.

• Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and

•On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

<u>Policy and planning</u>

The aim of Our Lady of Fatima Special School's Bi Cineálta 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 noting, 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.

  ☐ The Acceptable Use Policy, Supervision policy, Code of Behaviour policy and Wellbeing promotion, all support the implementation of the Bí Cineálta policy.

  ☐ Effective leadership is a key component with Principal, Deputy Principal, DLP, DDLP, and all middle management focused on supporting the implementation of this policy.

Relationships and Partnerships

• Interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as our parents' association, student council, wellbeing committee and other groups.

• 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. Promoting kindness by awarding a **"Kindness in Action Award",** on prize-giving days.

• Conducting workshops and seminars for students, staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying. Supporting activities that build empathy, respect and resilience.

• Encouraging peer mentoring and peer support.

• Supporting active participation of students in school life. Use of **Restorative Practice** to encourage active listening skills and develop respect for others.

• Engaging parents and students in **actively contributing to the formation of a Child Friendly Anti Bullying Policy – to encourage** both to become active participants in promotion of and discussion of useful ways to identify and reduce bullying behaviour and to highlight procedure and how to deal with bullying if and when it occurs.

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

Preventing cyberbullying behaviour

Technology and social media have provided many positive opportunities for entertainment, social engagement and education. Technology is a part of life that can impact even the youngest members of society. However, the increase in the use of technology has led to students becoming increasingly vulnerable to cyberbullying or unacceptable online behaviour.

Schools should proactively address these challenges by promoting digital literacy, digital citizenship, and fostering safe online environments.

Strategies to prevent cyberbullying include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- implementing the SPHE curriculum

- implementing the Digital Media Literacy curriculum which teaches students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship

- having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online

- developing and communicating an acceptable use policy for technology

- referring to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour

- promoting or hosting online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online.

- holding an Internet safety day to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour

In Ireland the digital age of consent is 16. Therefore technically, children under the age of 13 should not have a social media account.

Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour

All students including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students, have a right to feel safe and supported at school.

Strategies to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- maintaining an inclusive physical environment such as by displaying relevant posters

- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities

- challenging gender stereotypes

- conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour
- encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour

Preventing racist bullying behaviour

Schools have become much more culturally diverse over the last number of decades. Students attending schools come from many different cultures and backgrounds. Students from diverse backgrounds may face discrimination and prejudice and may be subject to racist bullying behaviour.

Strategies to prevent racist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students "see themselves" in their school environment

- having the cultural diversity of the school visible and on display

- conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of racism

- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities

- encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour

- providing supports to school staff to respond to the needs of students for whom English is an additional language and for communicating with their parents

- providing supports to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma students, and to encourage communication with their parents

- inviting speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds

- ensuring that **library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences** of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds

Preventing sexist bullying behaviour

Schools should focus on gender equality as part of the school's measures to create a supportive and respectful environment.

Strategies to prevent sexist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex.

- ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex.

- celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contributions of all students organising awareness campaigns, workshops and presentations on gender equality and respect

- encourage parents to reinforce these values of respect at home

<u>Preventing sexual harassment</u>

Preventing sexual harassment requires an approach that focuses on education, awareness and clear enforceable policies. Schools must make it clear that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment. Sexual harassment should never be dismissed as teasing or banter.

Strategies to prevent sexual harassment include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- using the updated SPHE specifications at primary & post primary level to teach students about healthy relationships and how to treat each other with respect and kindness

- promoting positive role models within the school community

- challenging 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:

<u>All teachers and Senior Management (Principal & Deputy Principal)</u>

√ 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.

√ The DLP will follow up after 20 days to investigate if bullying has ceased.

√ All staff will be vigilant to bullying behaviour.

√ The principal will inform the Board of Management of the incidences of bullying.

√ Supports and up to date information will be provided to assist the class teacher in addressing concern.

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:

Approach

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

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

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.

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

- √ Is the behaviour **targeted** at a specific student or group of students?
- √ Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional **harm**?
- √ 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: One-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 individually 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 (**Appendix D)** should be kept of the engagement with all involved

√ This record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known 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 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 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 continues to display the behaviour, then the school consideration should be given to using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school

√ If a parent(s) is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools. they should be referred to the school's complaints procedures

√ If a parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions have had a negative effect on the student.

Requests to take no action

A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than "look out" for them. The student may not want to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They may feel that telling someone might make things more difficult for them. Where this occurs, it is important that the member of staff shows empathy to the student, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the student to work out together what steps can be taken to address the matter and how their parents will be informed of the situation. It is important that the student who has experienced bullying behaviour feels safe. Parents may also make schools aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action. Parents should put this request in writing to the school or be facilitated to do so where there are literacy, digital literacy or language barriers. However, while acknowledging the parent's request, schools may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

When bullying behaviour becomes a child protection concern

Section 10 of the Children First Act, 2015 places a statutory obligation on schools, as a "provider of a relevant service" to ensure, as far as practicable, that each child attending the school is **safe from harm** while attending school or otherwise participating in school activities. The Children First Act defines harm as assault, ill-treatment, neglect or sexual abuse and covers single and multiple instances. **The threshold of harm is reached where the mandated person believes that a child's health, development or welfare have been, or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected**. The Children First National Guidance document 2017 is the national, overarching guidance regarding child safeguarding. The Guidance provides that **in cases of serious instances of bullying where the behaviour is regarded as possibly abusive, a referral may need to be made to Tusla or An Garda Síochána as appropriate.** Generally, bullying behaviour can be addressed without the involvement of Tusla. However, **bullying behaviour may become a child protection concern when it results in significant physical or emotional harm, or where it becomes a**

persistent and severe problem and measures taken to address it are not effective. In determining when bullying behaviour should be reported to Tusla the following factors should be considered:

- The impact on the child

- protective/appropriate action taken by the parents

- protective/appropriate action taken by the school

- engagement of child/family with support services such as NEPS

If there is doubt about whether bullying behaviour is a child protection concern schools should contact Tusla's social work department for advice. This will enable the social worker to explore the situation with school staff and provide advice on the best course of action.

Supports

The school may see the support of any of the following when working with students affected by bullying:

√ NEPS – advice on best practice to prevent and address bullying. Provision of training in preventative initiatives

√ Building self-esteem and developing social skills

√ Use of Restorative practices to re-build and maintain relationships initiatives

√ Co-operation with parents

√ Referral to outside agencies (if necessary) in co-operation with parents

√ Oide

√ Webwise

√ Tusla

√ DCU Anti-Bullying Centre

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

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,

• Nurture. Incidents will be discussed at teacher meetings in a confidential manner, to further support bullied pupil.

• 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 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 honorable thing and giving them praise for this.

• Making adequate counseling facilities available to help those who need it learn other ways of meeting their needs besides violating the rights of others.

• 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 behavior in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge, and correct the behavior while supporting the child.

• In dealing with bullying behavior, seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a 'clean sheet' and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform. Discussion of same at teacher meetings to provide further support in seeking resolution.

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 bullying 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)

Guide to providing Bullying Behaviour Update for board of management meeting of DD/MM/YYYY

Having reviewed the details of the incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the previous board of management meeting, the principal must provide the following information at each ordinary meeting of the board of management:

Total number of **new** incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the last board of management meeting.	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour currently ongoing.	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the beginning of this school year.	

Where incidents of bullying behaviour have been reported since the last meeting, the update must include a verbal report which should include the following information where relevant:

> the trends and patterns identified such as the form of bullying behaviour, type of bullying behaviour if known, location of bullying behaviour, when it occurred etc.

> the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour

> any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour

> if any serious incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred which have had a serious adverse impact on a student

> if a parent has informed the school that a student has left the school because of reported bullying behaviour

> if any additional support is needed from the board of management

> if the school's Bí Cineálta policy requires urgent review in advance of the annual review

This update should not include any personal information or information that could identify the students involved.

Appendix B

Review of the Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual (calendar) review of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and its implementation in consultation with the school community. As part of the review, this document must be completed.

Bí Cineálta Policy Review

1. When did the Board formally adopt its Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools? Insert date when the Bí Cineálta policy was last adopted by the school. _____/_____/20_____

2. Where in the school is the student friendly Bí Cineálta policy displayed?

   _____

3. What date did the Board publish the Bí Cineálta policy and the student friendly policy on the school website? _____/_____/20_____

4. How has the student friendly policy been communicated to students?

   _____

5. How has the Bí Cineálta policy and student friendly policy been communicated to parents

   _____

6. Have all school staff been made aware of the, school's Bí Cineálta policy and the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools?

   _____ Yes   _____ No

7. Does the Bí Cineálta policy document the strategies that the school uses to prevent bullying behaviour?

   _____Yes   _____ No

8. Has the Board received and minuted the Bullying Behaviour Update presented by the principal at every ordinary board meeting over the last calendar year?

   _____ Yes   _____ No

9. Has the Board discussed how the school is addressing all reports of bullying behaviour.

   _____ Yes   _____ No

10. I s the Board satisfied that all incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed in accordance with the school's Bí Cineálta Policy?

    _____ Yes   _____ No

11. Have the prevention strategies in the Bí Cineálta policy been implemented?

_____ Yes   _____ No

12. Has the Board discussed the effectiveness of the strategies used to prevent bullying behaviour?

_____ Yes   _____ No

13. How have (a) parents, (b) students and (c) school staff been consulted with as part of the review of the Bí Cineálta Policy?

_____

14. Outline any aspects of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and/or its implementation that have been identified as requiring further improvement as part of this review:

_____

15. Where areas for improvement have been identified, outline how these will be addressed and whether an action plan with timeframes has been developed?

_____

16. Does the student friendly policy need to be updated as a result of this review and if so why?

_____

17. Does the school refer parents to the complaints procedures if they have a complaint about how the school has addressed bullying behaviour?

_____ Yes   _____ No

18. Has a parent informed the school that a student has left the school due to reported bullying behaviour?

_____ Yes   _____ No

19. Has the Office of the Ombudsman for Children initiated or completed an investigation into how the school has addressed an incident of bullying behaviour?

_____

Signed: _____   Signed: _____

(Chairperson of board of management) (Principal)

Date: Date_____

Date of next review: _____

Notification regarding the board of management's annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management of _____ confirms that the board of management's annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour and its implementation was completed at the board of management meeting of_____ [date].

This review was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Education's Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Signed: _____   Signed: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)   (Principal)

Date: _____   Date: _____

Appendix D: Recording of Bullying Behaviour

1. Name of Student being bullied: _____

2. Class: _____

3. Name(s) and Class(es) of students allegedly engaged in bullying behaviour:
   _____

   _____

4. Source of bullying concern/report (tick as relevant):

Student Concerned	
Other student(s)	
Teacher	
Parent	
Other	

5. Where and when:

Location:	
Date/Time:	

6. Form of Bullying: (Refer to section 2.5 -Tick all that apply)

Physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, pushing)	
Verbal (e.g. name-calling, teasing, insults)	
Psychological (e.g. intimidation, manipulation)	
Cyberbullying (e.g. harmful messages, social media misuse)	
Relational (e.g. exclusion, spreading rumours)	
Gender-identity bullying	
Other:	

12. Date of initial engagement:

√ With student: _____

√ With parent: _____

13. Views of student(s)/parent(s):

(regarding the actions to be taken to address bullying behaviour)

_____
_____
_____

14. Date of Review (*to determine if bullying behaviour has ceased)*

Review Date:	
Outcome:	
View(s) of student(s):	
View(s) of parent(s):	

15. Engagement with external services/supports (If any):

Services contacted:	
Details of engagement:	

16. Recording Teacher:

Name:	Signed:
Date recorded:	
Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal:	Signed:

Overview of the Bí Cineálta Procedures for Preventing and Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The following is a guide to the main changes between the requirements of the 2013 Acti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools and the requirements of the 2024 Bí Cineálta procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, which replace the 2013 procedures. This is not an exhaustive list.

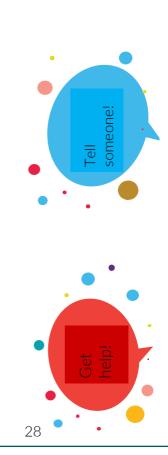| Chapter 1	Responsibilities of the School community	All members of the school community must work together in partnership to prevent and address bullying behaviour at school.
	Legal Basis	Legislation underpinning Bí Cineálta. Children First Act 2015 Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020 also known as Coco's Law.
Chapter 2	What is bullying behaviour?	Undated definition of bullying behaviour based on Cineálta Action Plan on Bullying (2022).
	Criminal behaviour	Undated information on when bullying behaviour can be considered criminal behaviour.
	Child Protection concerns	Updated information relating to when bullying behaviour becomes a child protection concern.
Chapter 3	Impact of bullying behaviour	Updated information on how bullying behaviour can impact students who experience bullying behaviour, students who witness the behaviour and students who engage in bullying behaviour.
Chapter 4	Bí Cineálta Policy	Schools must engage with the whole school community to develop their Bí Cineálta policy, using the template in Appendix A.
		The policy must list preventative strategies that are used including those to specifically prevent cyberbullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate.
		Schools must list specific support strategies for individuals experiencing bullying behaviour, those who witness bullying behaviour and those displaying bullying behaviour.
		All incidents of bullying behaviour must be recorded.
		The school principal is required to provide a bullying behaviour update at each ordinary board of management meeting.
	Addendix A	The school's Bí Cineálta policy must be reviewed in collaboration with the whole school community once each calendar year and sooner if a serious incident occurs and the board of management determines an

	Bí Cineálta Policy	urgent review is required.
		This templte document must be used as a basis for each school's Bí Cineálta Policy.
	Student-Friendly Bí Cineálta Polciy	Every school must develop a student-friendly version of it's Bí Cineálta policy and display it where students and the school community can see it.
	Appendix B Student-Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy	This template document can be used by schools as a basis for their student-friendly policy.
Chapter 5	Preventing Bullying Behaviour	Prevention measures are linked to the four areas of Wellbeing Promotion.
		Importance of fostering a "telling environment" in schools and the role of the trusted adult.
		Prevention strategies must be provided relating to specific types of bullying behaviour including cyberbullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment, as appropriate.
Chapter 6	Appendix C Guide to Addressing Bullying Behaviour	Guide can be used to address bullying behaviour.
	Remit of the school in addressing bullying behaviour	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.
	Request to take no action	Guidance for schools on how requests by students and parents to "take no action" should be addressed.
	Engagement with students involved in bullying behaviour and their parents	Schools must engage with students who have experienced bullying behaviour to decide the actions to be taken to address the incident of bullying behaviour.
		Schools must also engage with their parents.
		Schools must engage with students who have displayed bullying behaviour as well as their parents when deciding actions to be taken.
		Schools must engage with all involved when reviewing progress and determining whether bullying behaviour has ceased.
	Recording incidents of Bullying Behaviour	All incidents of bullying behaviour must be recorded by the teacher addressing the behaviour.
Chapter 7	Update to the Board of	Principal must provide an update to the board of management at each ordinary board meeting. This

	Management	report includes the number of incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the last board meeting. The number of incidents ongoing and the total number reported since the beginning of the school year.
		The principal must provide a verbal update which will include, where relevant, trends and patterns, the strategies used to address the incidents and whether an urgent review of the policy is needed.
		The update is to inform discussion at each ordinary Board of Management meeting regarding the effectiveness of the preventative strategies used by the school and the overall effectiveness of the Bí Cineálta Policy.
	Appendix D Guide to providing bullying behaviour update to the Board of Management	Guide can be used to assist principals in providing bullying behaviour update to Board of Management.
	Review of Bí Cineálta Policy	The Bí Cineálta policy must be reviewed once each calendar year. In collaboration with the whole school community, and earlier if the Board determines an urgent review is warranted.
	Appendix E Review of the Bí Cineálta Policy	The review template must be completed when the Bí Cineálta policy is reviewed.
	Appendix F Notification of Annual Review	The template can be used to notify the school community that the annual review has been completed.

Bí Cineálta!

We want everyone at our school to feel safe and happy.

If you think that you are being bullied or someone else is being bullied, you need to tell a teacher or another adult that you trust. They will know what to do to help.

Please tell someone if you think you are being bullied or if someone else is being bullied.

Our school has a Bí Cineálta Policy to try to stop bullying beaviour. We look at this policy every year to see what is working well or what could work better. We will ask you what you think.

Tell someone!

Get help!

If a student tells a staff member that they think they are being bullied, we will;

➤ Talk with the student
➤ Ask the student what they want to happen
➤ Work out a plan together
➤ Talk to their parents
➤ Talk to the other student(s) involved
➤ Talk with the other students parents

Bullying behaviour is when someone keeps being mean or hurtful to others on purpose over and over again.

When it happens a lot. Not just once.

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Month	Celebration
September – Neurodiversity Celebration Month *A focus on neurodiversity as a whole – embracing differences like Autism, ADHD, PDA, Dyslexia, and more.*	• Launch your year with a positive theme: "Different, Not Less." • Include general awareness activities and allow students/staff to learn about the range of neurodivergent conditions.
October – Dyslexia Awareness Month (Global)	• Week of activities and visuals explaining how dyslexia affects learning. • Create posters to dispel myths and share strategies for support.
November – International Day of Tolerance (16th Nov)	• Focus on anti-bullying and respect differences. • Could tie into Stand-Up Awareness Week (LGBTQ+ inclusion in schools – Ireland). • Use this month to highlight emotional wellbeing and kindness.
December – Human Rights & Inclusion Month	• International Day of Persons with Disabilities (3rd Dec). • Highlight abilities, not disabilities – celebrate student strengths. • Link to winter themed "Everyone Belongs" projects.
January – ADHD Awareness (Custom Focus)	• Though globally ADHD awareness is in October, January is a great time to re-engage after Christmas with a dynamic focus. • Promote understanding of focus, energy regulation, and creative thinking.
February – Celebrate Cultural Diversity (Custom Focus)	• Link with Lunar New Year and other global celebrations. • Explore music, food, flags, and traditions from different backgrounds.

	• Create an inclusive visual map of the world with student contributions.
March – World Autism Acceptance Week (Usually end of March)	• Focus on acceptance and celebrating Autistic identities. • Activities could include sensory-friendly lessons, storytelling, and myth-busting posters. • Encourage students to share what makes them feel safe and understood.
April – Down Syndrome Awareness Month (Ireland-specific)	• World Down Syndrome Day (21st March but carry it into April). • Celebrate individuals with Down Syndrome and promote understanding of communication and friendship.
May – Mental Health Awareness Month (Global)	• Promote wellbeing, mindfulness, and self-care strategies. • Include student voice where possible – "What helps me feel okay." • Tie in activities around emotional regulation and support networks.
June – Pride & Identity Month	• Celebrate LGBTQ+ inclusion and support for students and families. • Age-appropriate discussions around identity, expression, and acceptance. • Emphasise that everyone should feel safe being themselves.