



Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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The Board of Management of **Scoil Naomh Eoin, Ballinameen N.S.** has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

This policy fully complies with the requirements of *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2024*.

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

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

We confirm that we will take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the bullying or harassment of our students in whatever form and however motivated.

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	Staff Meeting August 2024 Staff Meeting May 2025	Staff Discussion at Meeting Staff Survey
Students	Student Survey May 2025	Student Survey
Parents	Parent Online Survey May 2025	Parent Survey
Board of Management	Board of Management Meeting September 2024 Board of Management Meeting 2025	Discussions at Board of management meetings
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	May 2025	Discussion with Bus Drivers and Private Afterschool staff
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 (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.

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.

Creation of **Annual Yard Audit**- a process whereby staff of the school examine how our students use the yard area. Identify Yard "Black Spots", Discuss Yard Rota, discuss staff duties on yard and examine all elements of our yard culture for staff and students. Discuss appropriate supervision of the student's while on yard and in light of yard audit.

Creation of a **Yard Reward System** to encourage positive behavior. "Bí a Réalt". – Which examines student behavior on Yard and highlights/rewards positive yard behavior.

Creation of **Bí Cinéalta Poster** to be used to educate students of our New Policy. (Student and Adult Version)

Creation of **Bí a Réalt/ Yard Réalt Posters** to be used by class teachers to help educate students of expectations of behavior for yard and of new positive reward system.

Liaising with **local agencies (including Local Community Garda)** to discuss anti bullying, online awareness and online safety. Visits from Local Garda to highlight and educate about online safety. In particular to highlight the dangers of Cyberbullying and Online Bullying.

Use of annual **Parent's Association Night** to highlight the importance of Online Safety with Parent's Association. Also, to highlight how parents can access different school policies if needed.

The school will participate in the **STAY SAFE Programme** annually – the programme aims to educate students about the prevention of child abuse. The aim of the programme is to reduce vulnerability to child abuse and bullying through the provision of a personal safety programme for children at primary school level. This programme will also target online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate.

Teaching of **S.P.H.E. Curriculum and general use of the curriculum** throughout the school year to educate students about Anti-bullying methodologies. – Including explicitly teaching pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.

Participation in Programmes like Friends for Life, Fun Friends and Walk Tall.

Participation in **Internet Safety Day** and other initiatives which promote the positive use of online media and other internet platforms.

Use of whole school **Assembly and Class Assembly** to highlight:

- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.

Promotion of positive role models nationally and locally to help promote positive values of respect and inclusion, especially in relation to online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate.

Student, Staff and Parent Surveys annually to examine how our community feels about their safety in school.

Creation of the **Mural Wall** at school in which students help create a painted wall which promotes inclusion, diversity, anti-bullying and positive wellbeing.

Use of **Annual Review** to inform practice into the future and examine any changes to the school practices.

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):

Class time is always to be supervised by an **adult** -if for some reason (e.g. Health and Safety reason)– a teacher must step out of the room and there is no other adult left in the room, they are to ask the teacher in classroom beside them to supervise and leave door open between both classrooms. The students are

On **YARD – SNAS** are assigned to monitor particular pupils – **Teachers** will roam the Yard.

On YARD – Students are not permitted to go around the front of the school.

ON YARD – Students are not permitted to go back inside the building without the permission (and knowledge) of an adult on yard. (The exception to this is Junior and Senior Infants, they will be encouraged to go to the toilet before yard however they will be permitted to go to the toilet at yard in case of toileting accidents) This is only to be allowed in circumstances of utmost need. Children are expected to go to the toilet before they go to yard.

On Yard the senior room are not permitted to play football with any of the other classes

Staff have a record book which records any incidents on yard.

The teacher on Yard records the **Yard Star (Bí a Réalt)** each yard. Which highlights and promotes students who are behaving in a positive manner. The allocation of the yard star is at the teacher's discretion. The criteria for getting the star will be taught to the students at the beginning of each year. All Realts are recorded on a log chart.

Adults place an emphasis on prevention of potential incidents – students are assigned to different areas on the yard depending on the time of year and activities that are going on. Students are expected to play age appropriate games in a safe manner. Any student who is not following such rules will follow the school code of behavior.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Mr. McDermott – (4th, 5th and 6th) **Principal**

Ms. McGirl – (1st, 2nd & 3rd)

Ms. Ames – (Junior and Senior Infants) **Deputy Principal**

Ms. Nevin – Special Education Teacher

It is important to note that the class teacher will be the primary lead when dealing with an incident of bullying. There may be occasions where it is necessary for another teacher to support the class teacher in this role of addressing bullying behavior, this includes Principal and SET.

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

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

The 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):

The school will not 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.

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

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

The definition of bullying provided above sets out clear criteria to help to identify bullying behaviour. The questions included below will further assist the school in this regard. It is important to note that - Incidents can occur where behaviour is unacceptable and hurtful but the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies that deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

The following questions will be asked:

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.

Step by Step Procedure for handling cases of bullying

- Listen to the report of alleged bullying incident, whether told by recipient of the alleged behaviour or witness and record as reported.
- Two teachers speak to the alleged victim in a safe, non-threatening environment.
- Two teachers speak to the accused party/parties in a non-threatening environment.

- Broaden the investigation to gather information from anybody who may have witnessed the behaviour in question in order to build up a true picture.
- Parent(s)/ guardian(s) and pupil(s) are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
- Teachers will take a calm unemotional problem-solving approach
- Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way
- Where the relevant teacher(s) has/ have determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;
- In any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter solely between the pupil(s) being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school.

Complaints procedure:

If a parent is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with these procedures, they should be referred to the school's complaints procedure. Additional Information relating to schools' complaint procedures are available at the following [link](#): Complaint Procedures for Schools.

In the event that a student and/or parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, a student and/or parent may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions have had a negative effect on the student. The Office of the Ombudsman for Children can be contacted at ococomplaint@oco.ie.

Recording Bullying Behaviour:

- All incidents of bullying behaviour will be recorded.
- The record will 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 and their parents.
- The record will include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour.
- It will document the review with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and their parents in relation to this.
- It is important to document the date of each of these engagements and the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased.

- Any engagement with external services/supports will also be noted.
- These records will be retained in accordance with the school's record keeping policy and in line with data protection regulations.
- Where a Student Support File exists for a student, a copy of the report will be placed along with the student's file. This will assist the school's student support team, where they exist, in providing a consistent and holistic response to support the wellbeing of the students involved. Where a Student Support Plan exists, the plan will be updated to incorporate response strategies and associated supports.

Follow up and recording

The teacher must engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress following the initial intervention.

Important factors to consider as part of the review are the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the students involved. Even though the bullying behaviour may have ceased, ongoing supervision and support may be required for both the student who has experienced the bullying behaviour as well as the student who has displayed the behaviour. It can take time for relationships to settle and for supports to take effect.

In some cases, relationships may never be restored to how they were before the bullying behaviour occurred. If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students and parents and agree to meet again over an agreed timeframe until the bullying behaviour has ceased. Where it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school should consider using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school.

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):

A full list of the agencies available to the school are available to see in chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta Procedures. Chapter 6 outlines how the school will support those involved with incidents of bullying.

It is important for school staff to be fair and consistent in their approach to address

bullying behaviour. Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour need support.

It is important that the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour is engaged with without delay so that they feel listened to, supported and reassured.

School staff should identify the supports needed for the student who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties and ensure that their needs are met.

A student's agency or sense of power can be decreased when they experience or witness bullying behaviour. When a student tells an adult that they feel that they are experiencing bullying behaviour they may feel that they are taking back some control over what is happening to them. It is very important that a student's agency is not decreased further by adults deciding what will happen next without listening to the student and involving them in deciding on the actions that will be taken.

The following principles must be adhered to when addressing bullying behaviour:

- 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 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

Given the complexity of bullying behaviour it is generally acknowledged that that no one approach works in all situations. International and national research also continues to evolve in this area and the effectiveness of particular approaches continues to be reviewed.

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.
 - Buddy / Peer monitoring system
 - Group work such as circle time
- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavor to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour. The agencies with which the school may liaise with are listed in Chapter 6.7 of the Bí Cineálta Policy framework.

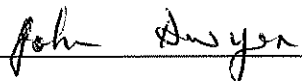
All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with students and parents. The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented. If the bullying behaviour is a child protection concern 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: 24. 9. 26

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed:  Date: 24.09.2026.

(Principal)