

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

School of the Holy Spirit, Kilkenny



# Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour in School of the Holy Spirit

The Board of Management of School of the Holy Spirit 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.

## 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

The development and review of this policy involved consultation with all members of the school community to ensure a collaborative and inclusive approach. Feedback and input were gathered through surveys, meetings, and digital consultations to reflect the views and experiences of all stakeholders. This collaborative approach ensured that all voices were heard and that the final policy represents a shared commitment to fostering kindness, inclusion, and respect across the School of the Holy Spirit community.

| School Community                                                | Date consulted       | Method of consultation                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| School Staff                                                    | Term 2& 3<br>2024/25 | Google forms. Google Forms; weekly class team meetings                                                        |
| Students                                                        | Term 2& 3<br>2024/25 | Google Forms- all requested. Student Council input. Digital literacy class input for student policy poster    |
| Parents                                                         | Term 2& 3<br>2024/25 | Google forms. Draft policy given to parents council for review                                                |
| Board of Management                                             | Term 3<br>2024/25    | Policy review meeting                                                                                         |
| Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers | Term 2& 3<br>2024/25 | Paper survey- visiting teachers, TY students, bus escorts, therapists and student teachers. Informal feedback |

## 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 process) :

### *Culture and Environment:*

#### *We Strive to:*

- **Foster an Inclusive Culture:** Create a welcoming environment where bullying is unacceptable, and students feel safe, supported, and valued.
- **Involve Parents and the Community:** Engage families and the broader community to actively contribute to preventing bullying, ensuring consistency between home and school.
- **Promote a "Telling Culture":** Establish an environment where students know they can safely report bullying and have the support of trusted adults.
- **Ensure Safe Spaces:** Provide visible areas where students can seek help when feeling unsafe.
- **Promote Positive Values:** Support student-led initiatives that foster values such as equality, inclusion, and respect.
- **Celebrate Diversity:** Encourage activities that raise awareness and appreciation for diverse backgrounds and experiences.

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#### *Ways We Achieve These Goals:*

- **Positive Behaviour Through SPHE Lessons:** Use SPHE and Stay Safe lessons to teach students the importance of kindness and respectful relationships.
- **Staff Awareness and Training:** Ensure all staff are trained to recognize and address bullying, with clear resources for guidance.
- **Lead Anti-Bullying Campaigns:** Implement Anti-Bullying Week and other campaigns to educate students about bullying and encourage positive behaviours.
- **Peer Mentoring and Buddy Systems:** Establish programs where older students mentor younger ones to create positive interactions and prevent isolation.
- **Engage Parents and Families:** Create opportunities for parents to provide feedback on the anti-bullying policy and stay informed about initiatives.
- **Create Clear Reporting Channels:** Ensure there are easy and confidential ways for students to report bullying, including "safe spaces" in classrooms and designated staff members.

### *Curriculum and Teaching: We Strive to:*

- **Promote Respectful Relationships:** Integrate lessons on respectful behaviour and empathy through daily interactions and curriculum content.
- **Cyberbullying and Identity-Based Bullying Education:** Teach students the importance of respecting others both in person and online, reinforcing these principles throughout various subjects.
- **Develop Personal Responsibility:** Provide students with opportunities to reflect on their own behaviour and understand the consequences of bullying.

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### *Support for Students:*

- **Pastoral and Mentoring Support:** Provide emotional and social support through mentoring and pastoral care systems.
- **Student Leadership:** Offer leadership opportunities through student councils, peer mentoring, and involvement in anti-bullying initiatives.
- **Promote Self-Advocacy:** Teach students to stand up for themselves in a safe and responsible manner.
- **Emotional Well-being:** Provide spaces for students to talk and decompress, ensuring they have the emotional tools to deal with bullying.

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### *Policy and Planning:*

- **Clear Procedures:** Ensure clear and fair procedures for handling bullying incidents are in place and followed consistently.
- **Review and Update Policies:** Regularly review the anti-bullying policy, making necessary adjustments based on feedback from the school community.
- **External Support:** Collaborate with external organizations and agencies to provide additional support and resources in addressing bullying.

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### *Relationships and Partnerships:*

- **Promote Positive Interpersonal Relationships:** Foster empathy and respect through peer mentoring and student-led initiatives.
- **Engage Parents:** Encourage parents' active participation in the development and enforcement of anti-bullying policies.

- **Communication and Transparency:** Facilitate open communication between staff, students, and parents to build trust and accountability in preventing bullying.

The school has the following supervision and monitoring strategies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

**1. School Environment and Culture:**

- **Welcoming and Inclusive Environment:** The school maintains a supportive atmosphere by actively greeting students and offering assistance, ensuring every student feels included.
- **Recognition and Celebration:** Regular recognition of student achievements builds self-esteem and reduces the likelihood of bullying.
- **Safe and Aesthetic Environment:** Well-maintained learning and recreation areas contribute to emotional well-being and reduce bullying risks.
- **Social Etiquette Promotion:** Educate students on appropriate digital behaviour and social etiquette, both offline and online.

**2. School Community Relationships:**

- **Peer Buddy Systems:** Implement buddy systems to foster positive relationships between students and encourage empathy.
- **Holistic Child Development:** Focus on emotional, social, and physical well-being, ensuring students have the skills to handle social situations respectfully.
- **Regular Check-ins:** Teachers ensure students feel supported by regularly checking in on their well-being and providing safe spaces for expression.
- **Community and Family Engagement:** Build strong relationships with families and community members to reinforce anti-bullying efforts at home and school.

**3. Policy and Planning:**

- **Anti-Bullying Policy and Initiatives:** The school maintains an up-to-date anti-bullying policy and actively participates in programs like Internet Safety Week and Anti-Bullying Week.
- **Student Input in Policy:** Involve students in policy development to ensure the strategies are relevant to their experiences and promote shared responsibility.
- **Scaffolded Support and Transition:** Provide gradual support through different stages of students' education, ensuring they are well-prepared to transition and handle social challenges.

#### 4. Curriculum and Planning:

- **Inclusive Curriculum:** The curriculum focuses on emotional intelligence, self-regulation, and maintaining positive relationships, equipping students with the tools to prevent bullying.
- **Differentiated Curriculum Support:** Tailor the curriculum to meet each student's social and emotional needs, promoting inclusion and reducing bullying.
- **External Speakers and Support:** Invite guest speakers and experts to provide valuable insights on issues like online safety, mental health, and bullying.

4. **Conclusion:** The school implements a comprehensive approach to prevent and address bullying through a **welcoming environment, strong relationships, clear policies, and inclusive curricula**. These efforts work together to foster a safe and supportive school culture, where students are taught the importance of empathy, respect, and personal responsibility.

### Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

The Class Teacher and/or any staff member who is made aware of bullying behaviour will initially respond to the incident. The designated members of the Anti-Bullying Team, the Deputy Principal, or the Principal may also become involved depending on the nature and severity of the situation.

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

- Ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels heard, reassured, and supported.
- Seek to ensure the privacy and dignity of all students involved.
- Conduct all conversations and interventions with care, sensitivity, and respect for the emotional well-being of the students.
- Take into account the age, ability, and individual circumstances of those involved.
- Consider the views of the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour regarding how best to resolve the situation.

- Act promptly to stop the bullying behaviour and protect all students involved.
- Inform the parents/guardians of all parties involved at an early stage

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):

**Initial Review:**

- The teacher will engage privately with the student who reported or is experiencing the behaviour, listening attentively and without judgment.
- A preliminary assessment will be made using the guiding questions:
  - Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group?
  - Is it intended to cause physical, social, or emotional harm?
  - Is it repeated or likely to be repeated?

• **Information Gathering:**

- If a group is involved, students will first be spoken to individually, and then as a group.
- Each student may be asked to provide a written account of events.
- The teacher will document all relevant details: form and type of bullying, location, timing, and individuals involved.

• **Parent/Guardian Engagement:**

- Parents of both the student experiencing and the student(s) displaying bullying behaviour will be informed and consulted.
- All actions and supports will be agreed upon in collaboration with parents and students.

• **Support and Intervention:**

- A "Reform, not Blame" approach will be taken where appropriate, focusing on repairing relationships and teaching positive behaviour.
- Restorative practices may be used to facilitate understanding and healing.
- Where necessary, appropriate sanctions may be applied, in line with the school's Code of Behaviour.

• **Follow-Up and Monitoring:**

- A formal follow-up will occur no later than 20 school days after the initial report.
- Progress will be reviewed with the students and their parents to ensure that the behaviour has ceased and that relationships are improving.
- Further engagement will continue if the behaviour persists.
- If necessary, the matter may be addressed under the school's disciplinary procedures.

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):

- **Students who experience bullying behaviour:**
  - One-to-one support with a trusted adult
  - Pastoral care team involvement
  - Access to social, emotional, and behavioural learning (SEBL) supports
- **Students who witness bullying behaviour:**
  - Encouraged to report and speak up
  - Opportunities to explore empathy and responsibility through SPHE and school assemblies
- **Students who display bullying behaviour:**
  - Supported to reflect on their behaviour and its impact
  - Engaged in restorative conversations or behaviour reflection tasks
  - Access to behaviour support plans where needed
  - Involvement of parents and possible referral to external services if necessary

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

All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with students and parents. The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented. If the bullying behaviour is a child protection concern the matter will be addressed without delay in accordance with Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

**Section D: Oversight**

The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting (Appendix D). 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.

#### Implementation and Review:

This policy was implemented in 2025 and 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: Tommy Lanigan Date: 09/10/2025 (Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: Annmarie Butler Date: 09/10/2025 (Principal)

## Appendix A: Bullying Record Template

Template for recording details of bullying behaviour incidents in line with Bí Cineálta procedures.

| Information                | Details |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Date of Incident           |         |
| Location                   |         |
| Type of Bullying Behaviour |         |
| Student(s) Involved        |         |
| Description of Behaviour   |         |
| Action Taken               |         |
| Follow-Up/Monitoring Plan  |         |
| Staff Member Recording     |         |

## Appendix B: Annual Review Checklist

Checklist to support the annual review of the Bí Cineálta Policy by the Board of Management.

- ☐ Policy reviewed and remains consistent with current Department guidelines.
- ☐ Stakeholder consultation completed and feedback incorporated.
- ☐ All reported incidents recorded and reviewed.
- ☐ Preventive initiatives implemented and evaluated.
- ☐ Staff received relevant training and updates.
- ☐ Student and parent awareness activities conducted.
- ☐ Recommendations for improvement noted and scheduled.

Signatures

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Principal)

## **Appendix C: Supports and Preventive Initiatives Summary**

### **Appendix: Summary of Key Supports and Initiatives to Promote Kindness, Inclusion, and Safety**

#### **1. School Environment and Culture**

- Warm, welcoming, and inclusive atmosphere promoting safety and belonging.
  - Daily morning greetings and staff support for positive student transitions.
  - Celebration of achievements, diversity, and cultural events.
  - Safe, well-maintained facilities with clearly defined safe spaces.
  - Whole-school events (assemblies, birthday recognitions, wellness activities) fostering community spirit.
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#### **2. School Community Relationships**

- Peer buddy systems and student council promoting empathy and leadership.
  - Strong home–school communication and parental involvement.
  - Collaboration with local schools and community organizations.
  - Staff wellbeing initiatives and professional collaboration.
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#### **3. Student Support and Development**

- Individualised, low-arousal support tailored to student needs.
  - High supervision levels and access to 1:1 assistance.
  - Explicit teaching of communication, advocacy, and social skills.
  - Positive reinforcement systems (e.g., Check and Connect).
  - Decompress spaces and inclusive extracurricular options.
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#### **4. Professionalism and Collaboration**

- Consistent professional standards and confidentiality.
- Ongoing training (CPI, Child Protection, CPD) and debriefing sessions.
- Whole-staff collaboration to ensure consistent care.
- Engagement with external