



Scoil Náisiúnta an Easpaig Ó Gealbháin

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Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Introduction

The Board of Management of Bishop Galvin NS 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 recognize the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our pupils 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”.

This policy sets out how our 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 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
11 th & 29 th April 2025	School Staff-Staff meetings
8 th & 10 th April 2025	Students-Focus Groups
16 th May 2025	Parents-Email & Survey
12 th May 2025	Board of Management-Meeting
Date policy was approved:	16 th June 2025
Date policy updated:	August 2026
Date policy to be reviewed	June 2026

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by this school to address all forms of bullying behaviour, in whatever form and however motivated, including online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment.

-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.

-The use of **Restorative Practice** to resolve conflict in peer relationships. The use of restorative meetings will be used, with the expectation of engagement of all involved, focusing on finding and enacting solutions.

-Staff at all times will endeavour to encourage pupils to show **respect** for each other and will model respectful behaviour at all times.

-Respect for all, the promotion of the value of diversity, the unacceptability of prejudice and stereotyping and the **unacceptability of bullying behaviour** will be central to all curricular areas.

-Every effort will be made, through curricular and extra-curricular programmes, to provide pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of **self-worth and resilience**.

- **Positive self-esteem** will be fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences, by acknowledging good behaviour and by providing opportunities for and celebrating success.

-Pupils will be helped to develop **empathy** across a range of curriculum areas by discussing feelings and by trying to put themselves in the place of others.

-The school will **visually display** key BÍ Cineálta respect and restorative messages around the school.

-The school will ensure there is appropriate **supervision and monitoring** of pupils at all times.

-**Parents** will be asked be aware of the content and adhere to the procedures of the school's Bí Cineálta policy by encouraging positive behaviour both at home and at school, by being vigilant for signs and symptoms that their child is experiencing conflict within their relationship with others in school.

-The **SPHE curriculum** provides opportunities for role playing when there is conflict in relationships. The curriculum will also seek to raise awareness of and an understanding of bullying and will deal explicitly with identity based bullying, to include homophobic and transphobic bullying.

-The **SPHE programme** will make specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships.

-The **Stay Safe Programme** will be fully implemented in the school. It will be repeated as appropriate and referred to at least once a month. Parents will be encouraged to visit the Stay Safe website and a link is provided from the school website.

-Staff will consistently tackle the use of **discriminatory and derogatory language** and explicitly teach what respectful language and behaviour looks like.

-The school's Code of Behaviour and Bi Cineálta policy will be **explicitly taught** to the pupils.

-**Restorative Practice** will be regularly on the agenda of the staff meeting, and all staff member are expected to engage in professional development in RP.

-The Principal will report to the **BOM** at each meeting setting out the number of bullying cases and confirming that all cases referred to are being dealt with appropriately.

-A **class check-in circle** will take place on a regular basis, with a focus on key messages from the school Code of Behaviour. An **Ubuntu Week** will take place each year in conjunction with the Stay Safe Programme, whereby the school celebrates our culture and relationships, which is underpinned by Restorative Practice. This will include lessons on resilience and explicitly outline the procedures in the school when there is conflict, both once off and/or repeated. The anti-bullying lessons in the Stay Safe programme will be extended by each teacher to include identity-based bullying.

Cyber-Bullying requires access to technology. Pupils will be supervised at all times when working with technology in the school. Pupils will not have access to their mobile

phones/smartphones/smartwatches during the school day. They should be turned off in schoolbags. The **Fuse** programme will be taught in classrooms where relevant and appropriate.

- Pupils will get appropriate advice in relation to internet safety and all pupils will sign an **Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)**. Parents will be asked to discuss the AUP with their children.
- Resources** pertaining to Internet safety, as well as information relating to cyber-bullying, racist bullying, sexist bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying, will be made available to parents. **Show Racism the Red Card** will be taught in classrooms where relevant and appropriate.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Class Teacher and/or relevant Support Teacher

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:

Step 1: Determine if bullying behaviour has occurred.

The Teacher/Support Teacher will meet with each individual separately. Restorative questions will be used:

- ✓ *What happened?*
- ✓ *What were you thinking at the time?*
- ✓ *What have you thought about since?*

✓ *Who has been affected and in what way?*

✓ *How could things have been done differently?*

✓ *What do you think needs to happen next?*

A written account (reflection sheet) of the incident(s) by the individuals involved may be deemed appropriate and helpful.

If behaviour is not bullying, the matter will be dealt with in accordance with the Code of Behaviour.

If the behaviour is bullying, the Teacher/Support teacher will proceed to the next step.

Step 2: Record and Address

The relevant teacher will consult with the principal and record the information using Appendix A.

Parents of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school will discuss with parents ways in which to reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school.

Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to the pupil that he/she is in breach of the school's *Bí Cinealta* policy and efforts will be made to repair and restore relationships. Students' failure to immediately cease bullying behaviour will be viewed by the principal as a serious risk to the safety of others.

Thereafter, if appropriate, a restorative meeting will be held with pupils involved. A written agreement for all the individuals involved may sometimes be deemed necessary. Parents will be notified about any meeting that has taken place, and pupils are encouraged to discuss with their parents.

Step 3: Review

A check in with the relevant parties involved will be arranged separately by the relevant teacher, with a view to bringing the parties together again at a later date, if appropriate and necessary. A review is conducted with the pupil and parent no more than *20 days* after initial engagement.

Step 4: Determine if bullying behaviour has ceased

In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed, the relevant teacher and the principal teacher must, as part of their professional judgement, take the following factors into account:

✓ *Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;*

✓ *Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;*

✓ *Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable;*
and

✓ *Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal*

If bullying has ceased, behaviour continues to be monitored by the class teacher.

If bullying has not ceased, Stage 4 (Formal Intervention) and/or suspension may be warranted in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour. The school may also seek external supports e.g. NEPs, Oide, etc.

The school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when pupils are not under the care or responsibility of the school. If this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, the school will support all pupils' involved e.g. relevant lessons in SPHE, check-ins, etc.

Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.

In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

All bullying behaviour will be recorded (See Appendix 1). 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*. This record will be retained by the Principal for the duration of a pupils' time in BGNS i.e. a period of no longer than 4 years.

If bullying behaviour is reported to the school by a parent and specifically requests that the school is to take no action, this request must be made in writing. However, whilst acknowledging the parent's request, schools may decide that, based on the circumstances (e.g. having an impact on teaching and learning in the classroom, or behaviours on playground), it is appropriate to address bullying behaviour.

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.

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:

Siobhan Farrell

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Kathryn Corbett

(Principal)

Date: 16th June 2025

*Updated on 28th August 2025



Appendix 1: BGNS Template for Investigating Bullying Behaviour

“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”.

Name of Person(s) who reported the bullying behaviour concern: _____

Date bullying behaviour was reported: _____

Relation to person being bullied, allegedly: _____

Name of Pupil being bullied, allegedly: _____

Class: _____

Name(s) and Class(es) of Pupils engaged in bullying behaviour:	
Name	Class

Location of incidents inside school	
Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
Other	

Forms of Bullying Behaviour			
Direct Bullying Behaviour		Indirect bullying behaviour	
<i>Physical</i>		<i>Exclusion</i>	
<i>Verbal</i>		<i>Relational</i>	
<i>Written</i>			
<i>Extortion</i>			
<i>Online bullying</i>			

Where behaviour is identified as identity-based bullying, please indicate category

Homophobic	Disablist	Racist	Traveller	Other

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?

Confirmation that bullying has taken place: *Y N

If Y, record is submitted to the Principal.

Description of Impact:

Follow-up action taken:

Review (within 20 days of initial engagement):

Signed:

Date: