

Scoil Barra Naofa

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Scoil Barra Naofa 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.

Catholic education places a strong emphasis on the values of acceptance, respect and the importance of reaching out to the most vulnerable and marginalised. To reflect this the BÍ Cineálta Policy Guidance for Catholic Schools is integrated throughout this policy and recommended wording is quoted throughout this policy. 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 everybody 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 everybody has a part to play in the school community, regardless of difference.

Definition of Bullying: Bullying is defined in 'Cinealtas: Action Plan on Bullying' and BÍ Cineálta: procedures to prevent and address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools' (2024) 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.

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 (eg: personal injury, damage to or loss of property)
 - Social: (eg: withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion)
 - Emotional: (eg: 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 a repeated behaviour.

Bullying that is not bullying behaviour:

- If the 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.
- 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 insults, 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, e- mail, 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 and/or images 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.

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	March 2025	Stage 1: Staff Meeting and Half Day Closure – staff provided with the opportunity to discuss the new Bí Cineálta action plan. Staff given questionnaires and time to discuss and relay feedback.
	June 2025	Sharing of draft policy with staff to discuss consult and make any amendments

Students	May 2025	<p>In May the Student Council and Wellbeing Committee were briefed on the new Bullying Prevention guidelines to seek their input in developing a Bí Cineálta policy in a Child Friendly Format – their wording, examples and suggestions were all taken into account when drafting this Policy.</p> <p>May: Students participated in a focus group and were asked a variety of questions to gather their thoughts about Bullying in School</p>
Parents	May 2025	<p>Parents were asked to complete a questionnaire to gather their thoughts about Bullying in School.</p> <p>Attention drawn to our policy and Child Friendly policy, resources and initiatives in the school</p> <p>Friendship week/month (February Annually) sent out via school website and social media.</p> <p>Bí Cineálta policy draft shared with parent representatives and parent association for feedback.</p>
Board of Management	June 2025	<p>Review new policy draft – leading to consultation and final ratification after amendments made where necessary.</p>
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

'In developing the 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 our 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 our Board of Management and Staff Meetings'

'The dignity and the wellbeing of the individual person is a 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 further engagement by the school, young people and parents, will be used to discern appropriate supports for young people in this school and to help inform future prevention strategies'.

Culture and Environment: A positive and inclusive school culture and environment is crucial in preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

We strive to :

- Create a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and a consistent approach to address bullying behaviour.
- Involve parents as active partners in fostering an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated.
- Support the idea that our school is an environment where pupils feel comfortable talking with staff members and reporting incidents as they happen.
- Promote the concept of a trusted adult
- Stay safe programme. Pupils need to be aware who to tell.
- Create safe spaces in our school building and yards
- Incorporate artwork and signs to promote our school values
- Encourage a sense of belonging with ownership over their own space through art and creativity.
- Create a positive school culture and climate which-
 - Is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
 - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;

Students can help to shape the school culture by promoting kindness and inclusion within their peer group and maintaining a positive and supportive environment for everyone.

Ways to achieve these goals are as follows:

- Friendship Month activities such as Random acts of Kindness, homework, Poster making, slogan making, etc
- Lunchtime Pals: students in higher classes volunteer to support younger classes on yard to help with games and positive interactions.
- Restorative Practice as a strategy in our Code of Behaviour
- 6th Class pupils leading Restorative Practice Lunchtime Buddies
- Child Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy was formed with pupil input and is distributed to parents, children and staff to discuss. This policy outlines various ways to tell.
- Parents are updated regarding useful information on Anti Bullying.
- Stay safe and SPHE lessons taught in the school focusing on positive behaviour form part of curricular content in all classes.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils.
- School Management and Classroom management development as well as notice board to promote kindness and build responsibility amongst pupils.

Curriculum: Teaching and learning

- Teaching methodologies across all subject areas include collaborative and respectful teaching and learning approaches. Students have opportunities to engage in group work and peer collaboration. This provides an environment which nurtures empathy, social skills, and a sense of community.

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:

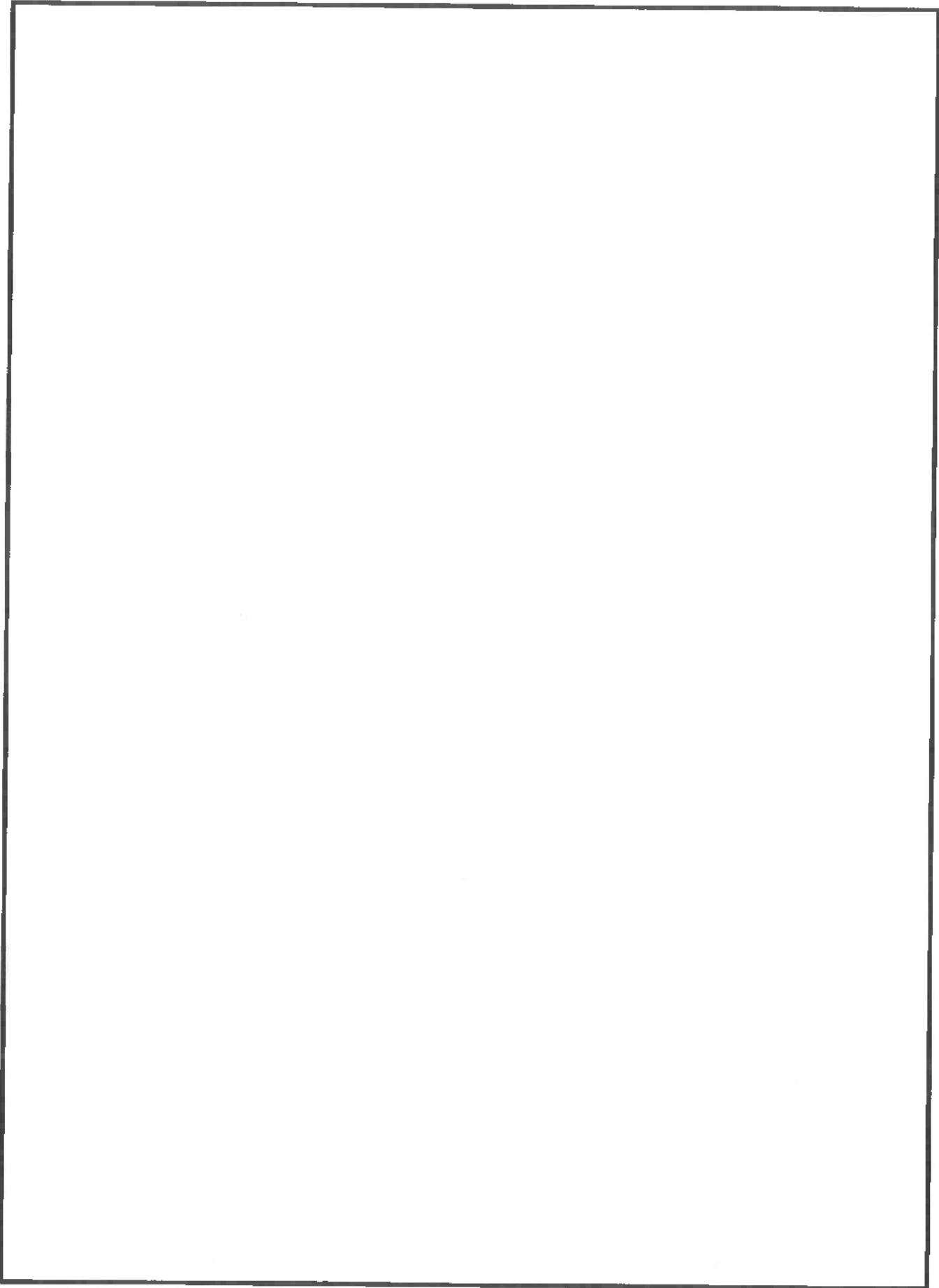
- Teach SPHE and RSE content which fosters student's well-being and self confidence as well as promoting personal responsibility for their own behaviours and actions.
- Model respectful behaviour towards colleagues, pupils and visitors in our school environment.
- Curricular and Extra-curricular activities 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.
- Acknowledgment of our diverse school population – celebrating diversity and culture in our school through art, displays, photographs and school events.
- 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
- Supports for staff;
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

Policy and planning

The wellbeing of the school community is central to all school policies and plans. The school's *Bí Cineálta* policy and student friendly policy plays a key role in preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. A range of policies also create a safe and inclusive school environment. These include the Code of Behaviour, Child Safeguarding Policy, Acceptable Usage Policy and Special Education Policy.

The aim of Scoil Barra Naofa School's Bi Cinealta 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.
- Effective leadership is a key component with Principal, Deputy Principal, 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 and our various student committees and groups for example of Student Council and Wellbeing Committee.**
- **Age and stage appropriate awareness initiatives that engage the student body in looking at their own behaviour – promoting acts of kindness and friendship, helping others and looking at the causes of and impact of bullying during SPHE lessons.**
- **Conducting workshops and seminars for students, staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying.**
- **Encouraging peer mentoring and peer support**
- **Supporting active participation of students in school life and active participation of parents in school life also.**
- **Engaging parents and students in actively contributing to the formation of a BÍ Cineálta Policy to make them active participants in promotion of and discussion of useful ways to identify and reduce bullying behaviour and highlight procedures on how to deal with it if it does occur.**

Preventing Cyber Bullying, Homophobic/Transphobic bullying, Racist bullying, Preventing sexual harassment.

In addition to above mentioned strategies, the school has the following in place to prevent and address bullying:

- Staff at all times endeavour to encourage pupils to show respect for each other.
- Implementation of the SPHE curriculum.
- Positive self-esteem is fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences, by acknowledging good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success.
- The school's BÍ Cineála Policy is discussed regularly with the pupils.
- Staff are particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of bullying/ being bullied.
- All disclosed incidents of bullying are investigated thoroughly and consistently by following the correct procedure as outlined to staff and recorded on Aladdin using the template for this.
- School wide awareness raising on all aspects of bullying, supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extracurricular activities.
- Involvement of pupils in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Kindness/ anti-bullying week, and other activities that can help pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Refer to appropriate online behaviour when using devices and in SPHE lessons.
- Promote online safety events or material for parents
- The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school e.g. www.webwise.ie
- Challenge gender- stereotypes – equal participation of all. Equal recognition.
- Foster a culture where diversity is celebrated and students “see themselves” in the school environment.

Addressing Bullying Behaviour :

Section C

- The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour is (are) as follows:
 - 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 Principal/Deputy Principal will follow up after twenty days to investigate if bullying has ceased.
 - All staff will be vigilant to bullying behaviour.
 - Principal will inform Board of Management of incidents of Bullying.
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When bullying behaviour occurs in school, 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. The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:
 - While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the 'Relevant Teacher(s)', the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' will use their professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
 - If it is established by the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' that bullying has occurred, the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' must keep appropriate written records which will assist their efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
 - The 'Relevant Teacher(s)' must record the bullying incident on the school information management system (Aladdin) by adding an Alleged Bullying Behaviour Report to the relevant pupil's file which will be visible on files of all other pupils named. The 'Relevant Teacher' must inform the Principal.
 - The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame). With this in mind the school's procedures are as follows:
 - In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher(s) will exercise his/her/their judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type if it has and how best the situation might be resolved.
 - All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the 'Relevant Teacher(s)'. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report instances of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
 - Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, SNAs, caretakers and cleaners are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them to the Class Teacher.
 - Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.

- On being informed of an alleged incident of bullying, the teacher dealing with the report will first interview the victim(s) and discuss the feelings

- In any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.
- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent must be referred to the school's complaints procedure.
- 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 rights to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.
- The School will maintain care for the victim over time. This will be done by speaking to the child a number of weeks after the incident to check on their continuing welfare. The child's parents will also be consulted.
- If a child makes a report of bullying, but asks that nothing is to be done about it, the relevant teacher will support the child appropriately to explore how it will be handled sensitively and how parents may be notified. If a parent does so, they must submit in writing that they require no further action to be taken, but even so, the school may still deem it necessary to investigate appropriately.

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 the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations and through annual awareness-raising programmes,
- 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 or after school).

Supporting pupils displaying bullying behaviour:

- Making it clear that pupils displaying bullying behaviour who reform are not blamed or punished and get a 'clean sheet,'
- Making it clear that pupils displaying bullying behaviour who reform are doing the right and honourable thing and giving them praise for this,
- Making adequate information 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 behaviour in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child,
- In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a 'clean sheet' and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.

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: Francis Connell
(Chairperson of board of management)

Date: _____

Signed:
(Principal)

Date: _____

Bullying Record Template

1: Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

3. Source

4. Location of incident

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

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6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

Physical Aggression	Cyber-bullying	
Damage to Property	Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion	Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling	Other (specify)	

Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)

Brief Description of bullying behaviour and Its impact

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10. Details of actions taken

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Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

*** Note:** The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances _____

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Signed:
(Chairperson of board of management)

Date: Francis Connell

Signed:
(Principal)

Date: Orla O'Shea

