



School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Gaelscoil Mhic Amhlaigh 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, recognizing 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.

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	31/01/2025 23/05/2025 27/05/2025 28/05/2025	Oide Seminar- GEC Staff Meeting Wellbeing Team Meeting- Teachers Wellbeing Team Meeting- Children and Teachers
Students	27/05/2025 28/05/2025	Wellbeing Team Meeting/ Children's Committee Meeting Wellbeing Meeting
Parents	28/05/2025	Parents Committee Meeting Parents Questionnaires
Board of Management	05/ 06/ 2025	Board of Management Meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	Sept. 2025	E- Mail. Newsletter
Date policy was approved: 05/ 06/ 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: 16/ 09/ 2025		

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 respectful dialogue and welcomes diversity and difference, by ensuring that preventative and inclusive strategies are given priority and discussed regularly at Board of Management and staff meetings. The dignity and the wellbeing of the individual person are of paramount concern in our Christian response. This school will listen closely to and welcome dialogue with parents, thereby building a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, trust and confidence. In continuing to develop preventative strategies, this school will listen to children and

their parents, to help establish their particular context and needs. Frequent periods of reflection and engagement by the school, children and parents, will be used to discern appropriate support for young people in this school and to help inform future prevention strategies.

Culture and Environment

- A positive and inclusive culture and environment is essential to prevent and address bullying behaviour.
- Relationships between all members of the school community should be based on respect, care, integrity and trust.
- Each member of the school staff has a responsibility to develop and maintain a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and to take a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.
- Students can shape the school culture by promoting kindness and inclusion within their peer group and maintain a positive and supportive school environment for all. Our school promotes positive practices through Self-respect, self-control and responsibility amongst the school community. Our School's Motto is Respect for myself, Respect for others and Respect for Belongings.
- Regular (e.g. each year/term/month/week) activities to promote awareness in the school e.g. Notice boards in school and classrooms to promote Friendships and prevent bullying behaviour; Friendship Week each year which includes the Bucket Fillers Programme and parents/guardians information Seminars/ yearly/termly/monthly surveys for pupils; Regular Assemblies led by our Principal/ Deputy - Principal and Assistant Principals.
- It is important that the school community supports a "telling" environment-in this way children feel comfortable to tell. This sense of trust is very important. Children are reminded when they are reporting an incident of bullying behaviour that they are not telling or snitching but rather behaving responsibly.
- An Acceptable Usage Policy is in action which includes the appropriate steps to ensure careful monitoring on the use of technology in school. for example the use of a mobile phone
- Educate pupils on appropriate behaviour on-line and how to stay safe on-line e.g. Webwise
- A positive and supportive environment which is supportive to all.
- Neat and clean displays on notice boards in classrooms and hallways.
- As active partners in our children's education, parents can help to create an environment where bullying behaviour is not acceptable by promoting empathy and respect at home.
- One Good Adult- teachers should let children know that they can talk to them when they need to.
- Safe physical areas within and outside the school building.

- Consistent supervision of pupils during unstructured times.
- Strong messages of Respect to be shown in classrooms, assembly areas and throughout the school. Children to be involved in conveying these messages.
- The following help children to feel connected to and responsible for their school.
Committees- Neurodivergent Committee, Green Schools Committee, Wellbeing Team, Student Council, Parents Committee and Assemblies.
- Other Examples- Playground Buddies, Reading Buddies, co-operative games between classes, Golden Time and many After -School activities.
- Quiet place available in classrooms. Choice of seating and sensory resources e.g. wobble stools and fidgets
- School Mural created by the pupils- Cineáltas(Creative Schools Initiative)
- Assemblies each half term where pupils get an opportunity to perform for or share learning with others- Coming together as a community.
- Celebration of pupils accomplishments announced on the intercom/newsletters or children visiting other classrooms
- Positivity Boxes in classrooms
- Friendship Week
- Parent/ Teacher Meetings- Communication is very important
- School Mass and Christmas Celebrations- school community coming together to celebrate
- Slán le Rang 6 held each year involving the Parents Committee
- Planting our school garden to promote school values and show pride in our school
- INTO Posters- Different Families, same Love displayed in school.

Curriculum

- Through our Patron's Curriculum Programme - I nGrá Dé, the pupils will experience a varied inclusive and cooperative education.
- Our OSPS Curriculum will be implemented where specific provisions are undertaken to explore bullying behaviour alongside community and inclusivity, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships e.g. Stay Safe Programme, RSE, Walk Tall, . Weaving Well, Webwise, Mind -Up, Friends for Life, Incredible Years, Include, Zeeko, Anti-bullying Awareness Infants to 6th Class- ABC Behaviour Record Form and Anti-Bullying Campaign for R3-R6.
- work will be extended in other areas such as Art, Drama, Religious Studies and PE. Co-operation and Team building will be developed through Team Games, schools clubs and associations and through practical activities.

- Continuous Professional Development in Bí Cineálta
- All resources on the OSPS Curriculum will be shared with all staff on the Shared Drive
- The Garda Síochána Primary Programme offered by our Community garda will be offered to pupils- this includes personal safety and cyberbullying.
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.
- promote cooperative and respectful teaching and learning with regular opportunities to work in small groups with their peers.

Policies & Planning

- Bí Cineálta Policy
- Child Protection and Risk Assessment Statement
- Wellbeing put central to all policies and planning
- Acceptable Usage Policy
- Supervision Policies
- Special Education Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Attendance Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Class Rules
- Support participation of pupils in the development of policies in the school e.g. Wellbeing, Code of Behaviour, Polasaí Scoil Gaeltachta
- Encourage participation of the school staff in professional development in all areas of preventing and addressing Bullying behaviour e.g. Oide, Zeeko, Cybersafe Kids.

Relationships and Partnerships

- The Board of Management, the staff, the pupils and parents/guardians are all involved in a worthwhile way in developing, implementing and reviewing our Bí Cineálta Policy
- Positive relationships throughout the school to promote empathy, understanding and respect
- Ensure all children know who they tell and how to go about this. (This is discussed with each class as they set out their class rules each year and is brought to the children's attention regularly) e.g.

❖ Go directly to the teacher at an appropriate time e.g after class

- ❖ Send a note in with homework
- ❖ Phone the school or teacher they trust
- ❖ Ask a parent/guardian or friend to tell
- ❖ Regular surveys administered throughout the year Rang 3-6 e.g 5 surveys each year from The Anti- Bullying Campaign (October, End of November, January, March and May or when needed if bullying behaviour is reported or suspected).
- Clear Protocol for parents and guardians in order to encourage them to act if they suspect their child may be experiencing bullying behaviour.
- Promote the active participation of pupils in school life e.g. Student Council, Neuro-Divergent Committee, Green School's Committee, Wellbeing Team.
- Promote the active participation of parents and guardians in school life e.g. Parents Committee, Table Quiz Committee, Christmas Fair, Book Fair & School Tours.
- Workshops and seminars for pupils, staff and parents/guardians to highlight the effects of bullying behaviour e.g. Zeeko, NPC Workshop on line, guest speakers.
- Peer Support- between classes for Reading and Maths Activities
- promote Acts of Kindness - bosca Dearfach
- Teach Problem Solving
- Meetings, questionnaires, newsletters, committees
- Two versions of the Bí Cineálta Policy appropriate for pupils in Nai - R2 and R3-R6
- Support and advice from NEPS, NCSE and Oide

Prevention of Cyberbullying Behaviour

The digital age of consent is the minimum age a user must be before a social media or internet company can collect, process and store their data. In Ireland the digital age of consent is 16. For the purposes of data collection, students between the age of 13 and 16 years old must have parental permission to sign -up to social media services where companies use the legal basis of consent to collect, process and store users' data. Most social media platforms and services have a minimum age requirement and for the majority of these services it is 13 years' old. Therefore technically, children under the age of 13 should not have a social media account. It is important for their child's safety, that parents are aware of their children's use of technology including smartphones and gaming consoles.

Among the strategies to prevent cyberbullying are the following:

- Parents are responsible for supervising their children's online activities. Emphasis is placed on the active role of parents and/or the Parents' Association in campaigns to raise awareness about social media.
- It is recommended not to permit primary school pupils on social media sites. If parents permit such accounts, they should ensure they are set to private when using social media platforms, e.g., apps, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.
- Parents are advised to:
 - (a) Be friends with their child on any social media network used by their children.
 - (b) Ensure that accounts are private.
 - (c) Supervise social media usage.
 - (d) Ensure that phones, laptops, etc., are not in the bedroom during nighttime.

- Promote digital responsibility and citizenship, and foster safe online environments — including using filtering systems on all tablets.
- The curriculum on digital literacy, teaching children about responsible online behavior and digital citizenship — for classes 5 & 6. Regular conversations with children** about respectful and kind relationships online.
- Inclusive Technology Use Policy.
- Referencing appropriate online behavior as part of the behavioral standards in the Code of Conduct.
- Internet Safety Day to raise awareness about appropriate online behavior.
- The OSPS curriculum in every class level.

Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour

- maintaining an inclusive physical environment by displaying relevant posters eg INTO Poster
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- challenging gender -stereotypes using novels and videos
- encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour eg language.

Preventing Racist Bullying Behaviour

- Fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students “see themselves” in their school environment.
- 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 support students from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma students, and to encourage communication with their parents
- 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

- ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex
- Ensure every child is offered the same opportunities regardless of sex
- Difference is celebrated at school and recognition is given to every child's participation e.g. Assembly, Displays, Neurodivergent Committee

Preventing sexual harassment

- promoting positive role models within the school community
- challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment

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):

Supervision is an important measure to help prevent and address bullying behaviour

- Every reasonable measure is undertaken to ensure the safety of all pupils when not in class e.g. one space for each year group at playtime. A teacher and SNA to supervise each area. Class teacher to drop off their class and collect them again from the playground
- Various activities will be made available to pupils at playtime e.g. Four Square, Outdoor Classroom, Picnic tables, book club, colouring activities and Gardening Club.
- All reasonable measures will be undertaken to ensure the safety of pupils participating in school events e.g. One adult with 8/10 pupils

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Class teacher - Firstly

Principal or Deputy – Principal if needed

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 entire school community is responsible for preventing and addressing bullying behavior. The main aim when addressing reports of bullying behavior should be to stop the bullying and, as far as possible, to restore the relationship between the children involved, rather than assigning blame.

(i) Identifying whether bullying has occurred or not–

To determine whether the reported behavior constitutes bullying, the following questions should be considered:

1. Is the behavior directed at a particular child or group of children?
2. Is the behavior intended to cause physical, social, or emotional harm?
3. Is the behavior being repeated over time?

If the answer to all the above questions is ‘Yes,’ then the behavior is bullying and should be addressed according to the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

A single incident of negative behavior against another child does not constitute bullying behavior. However, offensive messages posted on social media may be considered bullying behavior because a wider audience can see them, and there is a higher chance that they will be shared repeatedly, making it continuous behavior.

(ii) In cases where bullying has occurred–Approach

- Ensure the child experiencing bullying feels heard and reassured. Make every effort to protect the privacy of those involved.
- Conduct all conversations sensitively.
- Take into account the age and ability of the children involved.
- Listen to the views of the child experiencing bullying about the best way to deal with the situation.
- Act promptly.
- Inform the parents of the children involved as soon as possible—Junior Infants to Second Class.
- Parents of children in Third to Sixth Class see—Anti-bullying Campaign.Appendix 3

If a group of children is involved, each child should be contacted individually at first. Afterward, all children involved will be met as a group.

Support will be provided to each child as appropriate following the group meeting.

In cases where bullying behavior has occurred, parents of the children involved must be contacted soon to inform them of the situation and to consult with them regarding the actions to be taken to

address the behavior.

It is important to listen to the views of the child experiencing bullying regarding the best way to deal with the situation.

A record should be kept of the discussion with each person involved—this record should document the form and type of bullying behavior, if known—where and when it happened, and the date of initial contact with the children and their parents. The opinions of the children concerned and their parents regarding actions to be taken to address the bullying should be included in the record. See Appendix 3 Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour)

(iii) Review – Follow-up in the case that bullying behavior has occurred

The teacher must re-engage with the children and parents involved within no more than 20 school days after the initial contact. Important factors to consider as part of this discussion include the type of bullying, the effectiveness of strategies used to address the bullying, and the relationship between the children concerned.

The teacher should:

- Document the review with the children and their parents to establish whether the bullying has stopped and their opinions regarding this.
- Also record the date when it was decided that the bullying had ended.
- Note any involvement with external services/supports as well. Ongoing supervision and support may be necessary for the children involved, even after the bullying behavior has ceased.
- If the bullying has not ended, the teacher should review the strategies used, in consultation with the children involved and their parents, and an agreed timeline for further discussion should be established until the bullying behavior ceases.

If it is evident that the child displaying bullying behaviour continues with such behaviour, consideration should be given to the strategies for dealing with inappropriate behaviour as provided for in the school's Code of Behaviour.

If disciplinary sanctions are being considered, this is a matter between the relevant child, their parent(s), and the school.

If a parent is dissatisfied with how the school has addressed the bullying, according to the BÍ Cineálta Procedures for Preventing and Addressing Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-primary Schools, they should be referred to the school's complaints procedures.

If a parent is unhappy with how the school handled the bullying, they may lodge a complaint with the Ombudsman for Children if they believe the school's actions had a negative impact on their child.

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):The school will use the following approaches to support those who have been bullied, those who witnessed it, and those who displayed bullying behaviour (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta Procedures):

It is important that the school staff are fair and consistent in their approach to addressing bullying behaviour. Support is needed for both the child experiencing bullying and the child displaying bullying behavior. It is important to engage with the child experiencing bullying without delay, so that he/she feels supported, reassured, and safe.

School staff should identify the supports needed by the child displaying bullying behaviour to manage related difficulties more effectively and to ensure their needs are met.

A child's agency or sense of power can be reduced when experiencing or witnessing bullying behaviour. When a child tells an adult that he/she thinks they are being bullied, it may help them feel they have some control over the situation. It is crucial that a child's agency is not diminished again if an adult makes decisions about the actions to be taken without listening to the child and without including him/her in the decision-making regarding the actions to be taken.

Recording Bullying Behaviour

All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it occurred, and the dates of communication with students and parents. The agreed actions and supports to address the bullying will be documented. If the bullying behavior raises concerns regarding child protection, the matter will be dealt with promptly in accordance with the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-primary Schools. See Appendix 3.

Section D: Supervision:

The principal will present an update on bullying behavior at each meeting of the Board of Management. This update will include the number of bullying incidents reported since the last meeting, the number of ongoing incidents, and the total number of incidents since the beginning of the school year. If any bullying incidents occurred, the principal will also provide an oral update, including, where relevant, information on trends and patterns identified, strategies used to address the bullying, and any broader strategies to prevent and address bullying behavior. No personal or identifying information is included in this update.

This policy is available to the school community on the school's website and in hard copy upon

request. A version of this policy adapted for children is displayed in the school and is also available on our website and in hard copy upon request.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed annually or as soon as possible following any significant change in any matter to which this policy refers.

Signed: *Seán Ó Leidhinn*
(Chairperson, Board of Management)

Date: 05/ 06/ 2025

Signed: *Dairíona Níc Con Iomáire*
(Principal)

Date: 05/ 06/ 2025

Appendix 1 – Bí Cineálta Policy- Age appropriate for Infants -R2

Appendix 2-Bí Cineálta Policy - Age appropriate for R3-R6

Appendix- Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour.

