Scoil Fhursa

Bí Cineálta Policy

(Policy/Measure to prevent and deal with bullying behaviour in the school)

The Board of Management of Scoil Fhursa has adopted the following policy to prevent and deal with bullying behaviour.

This policy fully complies with the requirements of Be Kind: Procedures for Preventing and Dealing with Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2024. The Board of Management recognises that bullying behaviour violates the rights of the child as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We all have a responsibility, as a school community, to work together to prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to deal with the negative impact that bullying behaviour has.

We are committed to ensuring that all students who attend our school are kept free from harm and that the well-being of our students is at the forefront of everything 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 reasonably practicable steps to prevent harassment of students or staff on any of the nine grounds specified: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and being a member of the Traveller Community.

Definition of bullying behavior

Bullying is defined in *Cineáltas: Plean Gníomhaíochta ar an mBulaíocht agus Bí Cineálta: Gnásanna chun Iompraíocht Bhulaíochta a Chosc agus Dul i nGleic léi do Bhunscoileanna agus d'Iar-bhunscoileanna* as **targeted behaviour, online or offline, that causes harm**. The harm caused may be physical, social and/or emotional. Bullying behaviour continues over a period of time and involves an imbalance of power in the relationship between two or groups of people in society. The detailed definition is given in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures. Strategies for dealing with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are discussed in the school's Code of Behaviour.

Section A: Development/review of our Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour

All members of our school community were given the opportunity to have input into the development/review of this policy.

	Date Consulted	Method of Consultation
School Staff	March/April 2025 April 2025	Survey Half-day training
Students	June 2025	Questionnaires 2nd-6th class
Parents	June 2025	Online questionnaires
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	N/A	
Date the policy was approved	19 November 2025	

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that the school will use. These include strategies specifically aimed at preventing online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexual bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate. (See Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures).

• A positive and inclusive school culture and environment are essential to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. The school environment is a space where students and school staff feel a sense of belonging and where they feel safe, connected and supported.

• Relationships between all members of the school community should be based on respect, care, integrity and trust.

• It is the responsibility of all members of the school community to develop and maintain a school culture that is free from bullying behaviour and to adopt a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.

• Students shape the culture of the school by promoting kindness and inclusion within their peer group and maintaining a school environment that is positive and supportive for all.

• As active partners in their child's education, parents can help foster an environment that is free from bullying by promoting empathy and respect.

• Silence is not always a good thing. The school community supports an environment where it is understood that silence is not always a good thing.

• Principal, Deputy Principal, Classroom Teachers, Classroom Assistants and other staff: We support students who witness bullying behaviour and encourage them to report it so that it can be addressed. Students who witness bullying behaviour on social media have an important role to play in helping to address the behaviour by reporting the behaviour to a trusted adult.

• The teacher will reassure the student that the student had the right to report the behaviour and support the student while the appropriate staff member addresses the behaviour.

• We strive to create safe physical spaces as much as possible with psychological safety in mind and is an important measure to prevent bullying behaviour.

- We ensure that the school is well lit to avoid dark corners or spaces.
- There are no visual barriers such as posters on windows
- Staff members supervising at break times including yard duty.

• Strategies to prevent cyberbullying behaviour include, but are not limited to:

- implementing the SPHE curriculum
- implementing the digital media literacy curriculum, which teaches students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship
- regular discussions with students about fostering respectful and kind relationships online
- develop and communicate an acceptable use policy for technology
- promote or run online safety events for parents who are responsible for supervising their children's online activities
- hold an internet safety day to raise awareness of appropriate online behaviour

Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour

• All students, including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students, have the right to feel safe in our school.

• Strategies to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour include, but are not limited to:

- creating and maintaining an inclusive physical environment, such as displaying relevant posters
- challenging gender stereotypes
- encouraging students to speak up when they see homophobic behaviour occurring.

Preventing racist bullying behaviour

Strategies to prevent racist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- We have fostered a school culture where diversity is celebrated, and students see themselves in their school environment
- Encouraging those who witness racist behaviour to report it.

Preventing Sexually Bullying Behaviour

• Strategies to prevent sexually bullying behaviour include, but are not limited to, the following:

- We ensure that staff members display respectful behaviour and treat students equally regardless of gender.
- We ensure that all students have the same opportunities to participate in school activities
- regardless of their gender.
- We celebrate diversity in school and recognise the contribution of all students.

Preventing sexual harassment

• Sexual harassment is never trivialised as teasing or bullying.

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour. (See Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta Code)

Appropriate supervision is an important measure to help prevent and address bullying behaviour. We make every effort to ensure the safety of our students and to supervise students when they are attending school or at school events.

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

- Collaborative and respectful teaching and learning is promoted in the school.
- The curriculum materials provided to students provide opportunities to foster inclusion and respect for diversity. Schools are encouraged to provide opportunities for students to develop their sense of worth through curricular and extracurricular programmes.
- The updated SPHE specifications aim to help students feel empowered to create, foster and maintain respectful and healthy relationships with themselves and others. In addition, the RSE strand of the specification provides space for students to explore human relationships and sexuality and thereby foster an understanding of diversity, which may reduce gender and identity-based bullying as well as sexism and sexual harassment.

- Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) through SPHE, focuses on the interdependence of people in communities and at national and international levels. History is used to raise awareness of racism and colonialism.

Policy and Planning

- The well-being of the school community is at the heart of the school's policies and plans.
- There are a range of other policies, such as the acceptable use policy, the supervision policy, the special education teaching policy and the school's Code of Conduct that support this policy.

Relationships and Partnerships

- Structures such as the Student committees (Green School/Active Flag), school clubs, parent associations and student support teams greatly assist in school engagement.
- Here are some other ways in which relationships and partnerships are strengthened between members of the school community:

  - age-appropriate awareness initiatives that look at the causes and impact of bullying behaviour, including those that address friendship management, identity-based bullying, racist bullying, homophobic/transphobic bullying, sexism and sexual harassment
  - supporting the active participation of students in school life
  - supporting the active participation of parents in school life,
  - running workshops or seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying
  - supporting activities that develop empathy and respect.

Section C: Dealing with Bullying Behaviour

The procedure for dealing with bullying behaviour is as follows:

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

- Ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour is listened to and reassured.
- Try to ensure the privacy of those involved.
- Conduct all conversations sensitively.
- Consider the age and ability of those involved.
- Listen to the views of the student experiencing bullying behaviour on the best way to deal with the situation.
- Take timely action.
- Inform the parents of those involved

The following are the steps the school will take to determine whether bullying behaviour was taking place, the approaches it will take to address the bullying behaviour and review progress (see Chapter 6 of the Be Kind procedures):

In the event of bullying behaviour:

- We contact the parents of the students involved at an early stage to inform them of the situation and to consult with them on the actions to be taken to address the behaviour.
- We listen to the views of the student experiencing bullying behaviour on the best way to address the situation.
- We keep a record of the discussions held with everyone involved.
- This record documents the form and nature of the bullying behaviour, if known, where and when it occurred and the date of initial contact with the students involved and their parents.
- The record includes the views of the students involved and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour.

The school will use the following approaches to support those who are bullied, those who witness and those who exhibit bullying behaviour (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures): Follow-up discussion where bullying behaviour has occurred.

- The teacher re-engages with the students and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial contact.
- The nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the students involved are discussed.
- The teacher documents the review with the students and their parents to determine whether the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of the students and parents in this regard.
- The date on which it was determined that the bullying behaviour had ceased is recorded.
- If any contact was made with external services/supports this is also recorded.
- If necessary, supervision and ongoing support is provided to the students involved even after the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the teacher reviews the strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents and a timeline is agreed for further discussion until the bullying behaviour ceases.
- If it is clear that the student engaging in bullying behaviour is continuing to engage in the behaviour, consideration is given to using the strategies for dealing with inappropriate behaviour as provided for in the school's Code of Conduct and anti-bullying policy.
- If sanctions are contemplated, this is a matter between the student concerned, his/her parents and the school.
- If a parent(s) is/are not satisfied with the way the school has dealt with the bullying behaviour, in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures for Preventing and Dealing with Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, they are directed to the school's complaints procedures.
- If a parent is dissatisfied with the way the school has dealt with the bullying behaviour, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions have had a negative impact on the student.

Guidelines for Teachers:

When addressing bullying behaviour,

teachers:

- ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and is being put at ease
- try to ensure the privacy of those involved
- conduct all conversations sensitively
- consider the age and ability of the students involved
- listen to the views of the student experiencing bullying behaviour on the best way to address the situation
- take timely action
- inform the parents of the students involved

All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it occurred, and the date of contact with students and parents. The agreed actions and supports to address bullying behaviour will be documented. If bullying behaviour is a child protection concern, the matter will be dealt with promptly in accordance with the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Section D: Supervision:

The principal shall present an update on bullying behaviour at each meeting of the Board of Management. This update shall include the number of incidents of bullying behaviour 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 shall also provide a verbal update including, where relevant, information relating to trends and patterns identified, strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and any broader strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour. This update does not contain personal or identifying information. See Chapter 7 of the Bí Cineálta procedures. This policy is available to the school community on the school website and in hard copy upon request. A student-friendly version of this policy 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 practicable after a material change in any matter to which this policy refers.

Signed: Seán Ó Meachtain Date: 19/11/2025
(Chairman of the Board of Management)

Signed: Bríd Ní Neachtain Date: 19/11/2025

(Principal)