



# GAELSCOIL MHICHÍL UÍ CHOILEÁIN

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“Ar scáth a cbéile a mbairimid”

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

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

The Board of Management of Gaelscoil Mhichíl Uí Choileáin 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 pupils 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 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 pupils 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

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	School Year 2024/2025	Meetings & Email
Students	June 2025	Classroom talks
Parents	13.06.2025	Email
Board of Management	School year 2024/2025	Meetings
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	June 2025	Email
Date policy was approved: 20.06.2025		
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:

### Preventing Cyberbullying Behaviour

Technology and social media have provided many positive opportunities for entertainment, social engagement, and education. Technology is a part of life that can impact even the youngest members of society. However, the increase in the use of technology has led to pupils becoming increasingly vulnerable to cyberbullying or unacceptable online behaviour.

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

- implementing the SPHE curriculum
- having regular conversations with pupils about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- developing and communicating an acceptable use policy for technology
- referring to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour
- promoting or hosting online safety events for parents who are responsible for

overseeing their children's activities online

- holding an Internet Safety Day to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour.

### **Preventing Homophobic/Transphobic Bullying Behaviour**

All pupils including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students, have a right to feel safe and supported at school.

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

- maintaining an inclusive physical environment such as by displaying relevant posters
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- challenging genderstereotypes
- conducting workshops and seminars for pupils, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour
- encouraging pupils to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour

### **Preventing Racist Bullying Behaviour**

Schools have become much more culturally diverse over the last number of decades. Pupils attending schools come from many different cultures and backgrounds. Pupils from diverse backgrounds may face discrimination and prejudice and may be subject to racist bullying behaviour.

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

- fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where pupils "see themselves" in their school environment
- having the cultural diversity of the school visible and on display
- conducting workshops and seminars for pupils, school staff and parents to raise awareness of racism
- 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 respond to the needs of students for whom English is an additional language and for communicating with their parents
- providing supports to school staff to support pupils from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma pupils, and to encourage communication with their parents
- inviting speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds
- ensuring that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of pupils and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

### **Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour**

Schools should focus on gender equality as part of the school's measures to create a supportive and respectful environment.

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

- ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat pupils equally irrespective of their sex
- ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex
- celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contributions of all pupils
- organising awareness campaigns, workshops and presentations on gender equality and respect
- encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home.

### **Preventing Sexual Harassment**

Preventing sexual harassment requires an approach that focuses on education, awareness and clear enforceable policies. Sexual harassment should never be dismissed as teasing or banter. Strategies to prevent sexual harassment include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- 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:

Polasáí Maoirseachta  
Internat Acceptable Use Policy  
Code of Behaviour Policy  
Health & Safety Policy

### Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Class Teacher, In School Management Team, Principal.

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When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

- ensure that the pupil 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 pupil 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:

### **Identifying if Bullying Behaviour has Occurred**

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.**

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour the school will consider the following questions:

1. Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of pupils?
2. Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?
3. Is the behaviour repeated?

If the answer to each of the questions above is Yes, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour and the behaviour will be addressed using the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

**One off incidents may be considered bullying in certain circumstances. A single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and thus becomes a repeated behaviour.**

If the answer to any of these questions is No, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred teachers should consider what, where, when and why?

- if a group of pupils is involved, each pupil should be engaged with individually at first
- thereafter, all pupils involved should be met as a group
- at the group meeting, each pupil should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views
- each pupil should be supported as appropriate, following the group meeting
- it may be helpful to ask the pupils involved to write down their account of the incident(s)

### **Where Bullying Behaviour has Occurred**

- parents are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with schools, in addressing bullying behaviour. Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the pupils involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to consult with them on the actions to be taken to address the behaviour
- the school will listen to the views of the pupil who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- where the pupils displaying the bullying behaviour is not a pupil in the school, but the pupils who is experiencing the bullying behaviour is a pupil in the school, the school will support the pupils who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as appropriate and engage with them and their parents to determine what steps can be taken.
- a record will be kept of the engagement with all involved

- the record will document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known, where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the pupils involved and their parents
- the record will include the views of the pupils and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour.

The school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when pupils are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, the school will support the pupils involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, the school will deal with it in accordance with their Bí Cineálta policy.

#### Follow up where Bullying Behaviour has occurred

- the staff will engage with the pupils involved and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement
- important factors considered as part of this engagement are the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the pupils involved
- the staff will document the review with pupils and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of pupils and their parents in relation to this.
- the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased will be recorded
- any engagement with external services/supports will also be noted
- ongoing supervision and support may be needed for the pupils involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased
- if the bullying behaviour has not ceased the staff members will review the strategies used in consultation with the pupils involved and their parents. A timeframe will be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased
- if it becomes clear that the pupils who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then consideration will be given to using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant pupils, their parents and the school
- if a parent(s) is/are not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools they will be referred to the school's complaints procedures
- if a parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions have had a negative effect on the pupil

#### Requests to take no Action

A pupil reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than "look out" for them. The pupil may not want to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They may feel that telling someone might make things

more difficult for them. Where this occurs, it is important that the member of staff shows empathy to the pupil, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the pupil to work out together what steps can be taken to address the matter and how their parents will be informed of the situation. It is important that the pupil who has experienced bullying behaviour feels safe.

Parents may also make schools aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action. Parents should put this request in writing to the school or will be facilitated to do so where there are literacy, digital literacy or language barriers. However, while acknowledging the parent's request, the school may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour:

#### **Whole-School Approach**

- **Bí Cinéalta Policy:** Develop, implement, and regularly review a school-wide policy.
- **SPHE Curriculum:** Teach emotional literacy, empathy, and respect through the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum.
- **Code of Behaviour:** Ensure consistency between the Bí Cinéalta Policy and the school's Code of Behaviour Policy.

#### **Support for Those Who Experience Bullying**

- **Listening and Validation:** Provide a safe, confidential space where pupils feel heard and believed.
- **Pastoral Support:** Pastoral support from a staff member.
- **Restorative Practices:** Where appropriate, use restorative approaches to rebuild relationships.
- **Monitoring:** Regular check-ins to ensure the bullying has stopped and the pupil feels

safe.

### **Support for Witnesses (Bystanders)**

- Empowerment Training: Teach pupils how to safely intervene or seek help (e.g., through role play and discussion).
- Clear Reporting Channels: Provide anonymous ways to report bullying behaviour (e.g., worry boxes).
- Promote a “Telling” Culture: Reinforce the message that reporting is responsible, not “telling tales.”

### **Support for Those Displaying Bullying Behaviour**

- Behavioural Interventions: Understand underlying reasons for bullying behaviour and work with the pupil to modify their behaviour.
- Restorative Conversations: Help them understand the impact of their actions and repair harm.
- Mentorship: Assign a staff mentor to guide the pupil and monitor behaviour over time.
- Parental Involvement: Engage parents or guardians in a non-punitive, solution-focused manner.

### **Preventative Measures**

- Circle Time & Assemblies: Use regular class discussions and school assemblies to promote inclusion and respect.
- Buddy Systems / Peer Support: Pair younger or vulnerable pupils with older “buddies” for guidance and friendship.
- Staff Training: Ensure all staff can recognise, respond to, and report bullying in line with national policy.
- Digital Safety: Teach pupils about cyberbullying and internet safety, in collaboration with parents.

### **Policy and Documentation**

- Record Keeping: Maintain records of bullying behaviour incidents in accordance with BÍ Cinéalta guidelines.
- Review and Feedback: Conduct surveys among pupils and parents to monitor the school climate and to help improve strategies.
- Annual Policy Review: Update the BÍ Cinéalta policy annually, involving the board of management, staff, and school community.

### **External Partnerships**

- Support Services: Liaise with NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service), Tusla, or other agencies when needed.
- Workshops and Visitors: Invite external facilitators (e.g., Barnardos, ISPC) for workshops on respect, empathy, and conflict resolution.

### **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 pupil 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: **Traolach Ó Donnabháin**  
Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 20.06.2025

Signed: **Pádraig Ó hEachthairn**  
Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 20.06.2026