Scoil Chiaráin C.B.S.

Bí Cineálta Policy

Preventing and Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Scoil Chiaráin C.B.S 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.

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.

A school's obligation

Scoil Chiaráin C.B.S. is required to develop and implement a Bí Cineálta policy that sets out how the community of our school 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.

Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary Schools

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

Stakeholders	Date Consulted	Method of Consultation
Students	September 2025	Focus groups with each class; facilitated by member of Leadership team
School Staff	April 2025	Staff Meetings / Staff training – half day closure
Parents	September 2025	Informed of the focus groups taking place, via email, and invited to contribute
Board of Management	June 2025	Consulted and informed at BOM meeting
Wider School Community	September 2025	Email

Date Policy was approved: June 2025

Date Policy was reviewed: 12th May 2026

Date published on school website: September 2025

Student-Friendly Policy

A student-friendly version of this policy has been developed and communicated to all students.

Where displayed:

- In each classroom
- In the main corridor/assembly area
- On the school website

How communicated to students:

- Read and discussed with all classes by class teachers during SPHE lessons
- Shared at school assembly by Class of the Week
- Reinforced during Stay Safe and Webwise programmes

How communicated to parents:

- Published on school website
- Shared via email to all parents
- Available in hard copy on request

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.

Please see the list below. This is not exhaustive.

School culture and ethos

Continuing to create an open, welcoming and trusting school environment, and to further build and develop our school culture of inclusiveness, and valuing the voice of all stakeholders, is one of the most effective methods used to prevent bullying behaviours.

The supervision employed in our school offers all children the chance to be welcomed on a number of occasions before they begin their day. Staff members greet all children, reaffirming their importance in our school, and offering them the chance to start their day well.

Our school culture is one of positivity, celebrating our school values of respect, fairness, community and hard work.

Being a DCU Changemaker School also allows us to celebrate the pillars of empathy, creativity, leadership and teamwork.

This is done on a weekly basis at our school assembly. This is run by Class of the Week, where the accomplishments, news and learning of all classes is shared. Together, we celebrate the culture of our school, focusing on the positive work going on amongst our most important group, the students.

Other methods that support our school culture (not exhaustive):

- **The NEPS resource – My thoughts about school.** This is completed twice a year with all classes. This provides us with invaluable information about each pupil, and also allows us to use it as a reflective tool to assess a child's year.
- **Mood Trackers** – a tablet device that the children access daily.
- **The Hive – Our Nurture Room** – a core element to our school culture and the promotion of well-being and "being ready to learn".
- **A Berry Street School** - following the trauma-informed approach to behaviour, emphasises the importance of behaviours being a communication for something else that might be going on, and the strategies best employed to address these behaviours.
- **Telling to be safe** - There is a strong emphasis on telling to be safe. Behaviours that affect the well-being and happiness of pupils goes against our school values. Children are encouraged to tell when these behaviours take place, or are witnessed. Children trust to tell, knowing that the behaviours will be addressed, and the voices of those involved will be heard, supporting our school values of respect and fairness.

Online Bullying Behaviour

- Stay Safe Programme
- Webwise resources
- FUSE Online Programme
- Don't be mean behind your screens – workshop held annually for 5th and 6th classes
- Parent talk facilitated by Paula O'Connor – Don't be mean behind your screens
- Telling culture of anything unsafe/mean or unkind that takes place

Identity bullying (homophobic, sexist etc)

- Zero tolerance for disrespectful, insulting language
- RSE programme taught in all classes
- SPHE curriculum
- Stay Safe programme

- Open culture of discussion and factual sharing of information – age appropriate
- Additional RSE workshops provided for 5th and 6th class – held annually
- Boys in the Making project – 2nd class – challenging stereotypes associated with being a boy

Racist Bullying

- Zero tolerance for racist, discriminatory, derogatory language
- Role modelling good values and respect through discussion, education and restorative practice
- Dispelling misinformation in the safe environs of the class
- SPHE Curriculum
- Stay Safe Programme
- Liaising with external agencies – Immigrant Council of Ireland, Trócaire, Dept of Foreign Affairs, etc.
- Show Racism the Red Card – Immigrant Council Programme – staff to avail of training in this programme

This is not exhaustive and can be amended on an annual basis

Additional school policies that support Bí Cineálta

- Code of Behaviour
- Children First: Child Safeguarding Statement
- Acceptable Use Policy
- SPHE policy
- Record Keeping and Data Protection Policy

Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teacher with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour is **Noreen McLoughlin**. This is done in consultation with the school principal and the class team involved. SET and HSCL may also have a role to play.

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:

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

The teacher/s will establish if bullying behaviours have occurred, following their training, the school code of behaviour and strategies outlined and suggested in Bí Cineálta resources.

Where bullying behaviour has occurred

School staff should know what to do when bullying behaviour is reported to them or when they witness bullying behaviour. The school's Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour and the student support policy should clearly explain what actions will be taken when bullying behaviour is reported. It is important for school staff to be fair and consistent in their approach to address bullying behaviour. Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is engaged in bullying behaviour need support. It is important that the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour is engaged with without delay so that they feel listened to, supported and reassured.

Requests to take no action

A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than "look out" for them. The student 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 student, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the student 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 student 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 be facilitated to do so where there is literacy, digital literacy or language barriers. However, while acknowledging the parent's request, schools may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

Determining if bullying behaviour has ceased

The teacher must engage with the students and parents involved **no more than 20 school days** after the initial discussion to review progress following the initial intervention. Important factors to consider as part of the review are the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the students involved. Even though the bullying behaviour may have ceased, ongoing supervision and support may be required for both the student who has experienced the bullying behaviour as well as the student who has displayed the behaviour.

Recording Bullying Behaviour

All incidents of bullying behaviour should be recorded. The record should document:

- The form (Section 2.5) and type (Section 2.7) of bullying behaviour
- The views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour
- The review with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and their parents in relation to this
- The date of each of these engagements and the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased
- Any engagement with external services/supports

Where records are

Recording Bullying Behaviour (continued)

Where records are stored:

All records of bullying behaviour are stored securely in the principal's office in locked filing cabinets. Digital records are stored on password-protected school systems with restricted access.

Who has access:

Access is restricted to the principal, deputy principal (if applicable), and the teacher with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour. Records may be shared with the Board of Management in anonymised format as part of the Bullying Behaviour Update.

Retention periods:

Records are retained in accordance with the school's Record Keeping and Data Protection Policy and in line with GDPR regulations. Where a Student Support File exists for a student, a copy of the record will be placed on the student's support file to assist the school's student support team in providing a consistent and holistic response to support the wellbeing of the students involved.

Complaints Procedures

Parents have the right to raise concerns about how the school has addressed bullying behaviour. Where a parent is dissatisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, they will be referred to the school's complaints procedures as set out in the school's Complaints Policy, which is available on the school website and on request from the school office.

Oversight and Reporting

Board of Management Updates

The principal will present a **Bullying Behaviour Update** at every ordinary Board of Management meeting. This update will include:

- The number of bullying behaviour incidents reported since the last meeting
- How these incidents were addressed
- Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased
- Any emerging patterns or concerns

This ensures ongoing oversight and allows the Board to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the Bí Cineálta policy throughout the year.

Annual Review

The Board of Management will undertake an **annual calendar review** of this policy and its implementation in consultation with the school community. As part of this review, the Board will complete the formal **Bí Cineálta Policy Annual Review Template** (Appendix E) and discuss:

- The effectiveness of prevention strategies
- Whether all incidents have been addressed in accordance with this policy
- Any areas requiring improvement
- Whether the student-friendly policy needs updating

The annual review will be informed by consultation with:

- **Students** – through class discussions, student council input, and NEPS 'My Thoughts About School' survey data
- **Parents** – through parent surveys, parent association meetings, and written feedback
- **Staff** – through staff meetings and feedback from those addressing bullying behaviour

Any areas identified for improvement will be addressed through an action plan with clear timeframes, which will be adopted by the Board and communicated to the school community.

The outcome of the annual review will be minuted by the Board of Management and published on the school website.

Publication and Communication

Both the full Bí Cineálta policy and the student-friendly version are:

- Published on the school website at [insert website address]
- Available in hard copy from the school office on request
- Communicated to all new families as part of enrolment

Date of publication: [Insert date]

Ratification and Review Dates

Policy adopted by Board of Management: [Insert date]

Next review date: [Insert date - one calendar year from adoption]

Signed: _____ (Chairperson, Board of Management)

Date: _____

Sources

[1] Bí Cineálta Policy Annual Review Template for Schools