

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Scoil Nano Nagle

The Board of Management of Scoil Nano Nagle 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. 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.

Behavior that is not bullying behaviour

A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards another student is not bullying behaviour. However, 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.

Disagreements between students or instances where students don't want to be friends or remain friends, is not considered bullying behaviour unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others including deliberate manipulation of friendship groups.

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 their behaviours are not deliberate or planned, but, in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they cannot control.

Bullying behavior that occurs outside of school

As per the Bí Cineálta Procedures, a school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved.

- Bullying behaviour that is considered outside of school includes the following:
- Bullying behaviour can occur in the area immediately outside the school, the local shops, and the wider local area.
- Bullying behavior can take place on the journey to and from school.
- Bullying behaviour can also take place in organised clubs and groups outside of school such as sports clubs.
- Online bullying (cyberbullying) behaviour, along with other forms of bullying behaviour can cause significant harm and have a lasting impact on students who experience this behaviour. Access to technology means that online bullying behaviour can happen anytime and that the student's home is no longer a safe place. The nature of these technologies means that digital content can be shared and seen by a very wide audience almost instantly and the content is almost impossible to delete permanently.

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	7 March 2025	Half-day closure for training day and staff input
Students	10 th June	KIVA anti-bullying surveys with 2 nd Class
Parents	9 April 2025	Bí Cineálta parent survey
Board of Management	24 th June 2025	BOM Meeting

Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers		
Date policy was approved:		
Date policy was last reviewed: N/A		

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):

Culture and Environment

- Staff Visibility During Unstructured Time**
 Staff members are actively visible and present during yard breaks, transitions, and all unstructured times. They are expected to circulate and monitor proactively, providing a strong adult presence to deter inappropriate behaviour and support pupils in real time. This level of supervision also allows for early identification and response to potential bullying situations.
- Adults as Positive Role Models**
 Staff consistently model respectful and inclusive behaviour in their interactions with children, parents, and colleagues. By demonstrating empathy, calm conflict resolution, and fairness, staff set clear expectations for pupil behaviour and help establish a supportive social environment that discourages bullying.
- Positive Behaviour Promotion via DFL System**
 Kindness, cooperation, and problem-solving are actively acknowledged and celebrated through the DFL system. Reinforcing these behaviours publicly fosters a culture where prosocial conduct is the norm and where pupils are encouraged to support one another rather than engage in or tolerate bullying.
- Supervision of Yard and Play Areas**
 A structured rota ensures that all yard and play areas are supervised at all times. Staff maintain active, mobile supervision and check in with pupils regularly. Where additional support is needed—for example, for pupils with autism—designated staff focus on regulation and engagement, while ensuring all areas remain well monitored to prevent and respond to social difficulties.
- Mobile Phone Ban:**

In line with Department of Education Circular 0044/2025, mobile phones are 100% banned for all pupils during the school day. This measure supports a safe, respectful, and distraction-free learning environment and helps prevent misuse of devices that could contribute to bullying or social exclusion.

- **CCTV Monitoring**

Where installed, CCTV supports the safe monitoring of shared spaces in line with data protection and safeguarding guidelines. It complements staff supervision by providing an additional layer of oversight, helping to review incidents objectively while respecting pupils' privacy rights.

Curriculum

- **Implementation of the SPHE Curriculum**

The school fully implements the SPHE curriculum and integrates targeted content on kindness, empathy, diversity, and relationships. Structured lessons provide pupils with a consistent framework to explore emotions, identity, and respectful communication. Lessons addressing bullying prevention and bystander behaviour are scheduled regularly, giving pupils tools to recognise, report, and respond to issues safely.

- **Resilience, Empathy and Respect-Building Activities**

The school calendar includes key initiatives that promote kindness and wellbeing, such as:

- Friendship Week
- Wellbeing Week
- Class Buddy System (e.g., paired reading, joint projects)

These activities promote prosocial values, increase empathy, and strengthen relationships across class levels—creating a peer culture where bullying is less likely to occur and more likely to be challenged.

- **Modelling Turn-Taking and Social Skills**

Essential social skills—including turn-taking, active listening, and respectful disagreement—are explicitly taught and modelled by staff. These skills are embedded in everyday classroom routines and group interactions, helping children navigate peer relationships and reducing the risk of exclusion or conflict.

- **Collaborative Small Group Work**

Teachers use small group tasks to promote cooperation, shared responsibility, and mutual support. These collaborative settings are designed to ensure every pupil is included and has a valued role, which supports group cohesion and helps prevent the emergence of social hierarchies often linked to bullying.

- **Teaching Inclusion: Neurodiversity, Anti-Racism and Equality**

Pupils engage in regular learning experiences focused on inclusion, neurodiversity, equality, and anti-racism. These themes are explored through SPHE, assemblies, and special events, helping children to appreciate difference, challenge bias, and develop empathy. This contributes to a school environment where everyone feels seen, valued, and safe.

Policy and Planning

- **We Are a KiVa School**

Our school is committed to the principles and practices of the KiVa anti-bullying programme. We follow a structured, evidence-based approach to preventing bullying and responding effectively when concerns arise.

- **Separation of Pupils Involved in Incidents**

Where necessary, pupils involved in repeated conflict or suspected bullying may be separated during class time, group work, or yard play. This temporary measure may be recommended following investigation to reduce tension, support emotional safety, and allow time for intervention strategies to take effect.

- **Monitoring for Ongoing Bullying Behaviours**

When concerns arise that bullying may be ongoing, staff are advised to maintain detailed records of incidents, observations, and pupil disclosures. A structured follow-up process, including targeted conversations and check-ins, is carried out to ensure that behaviours are addressed and patterns are tracked. Intervention strategies are reviewed regularly to ensure they are effective in resolving the issue.

Relationships and Partnerships

- **Adults as Positive Role Models**

Staff consistently model respectful and inclusive behaviour in their interactions with children, parents, and colleagues. By demonstrating empathy, calm conflict resolution, and fairness, staff set clear expectations for pupil behaviour and help establish a supportive social environment that discourages bullying.

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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):

- Yard duty policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Mainstream class teachers and SETs (where appropriate). The Principal/Deputy Principal will provide support and advice and will become involved where appropriate.

Response to Bullying Behaviour

At our school, the *Bí Cineálta* approach is centred on empathy, fairness, and proactive support. When bullying behaviour is identified or reported, the school takes it seriously and responds in a calm, compassionate, and structured manner. The following steps guide our response:

1. Responding to Bullying – In Line with the KiVa Programme

As a KiVa school, our approach to bullying prevention and intervention is proactive, student-centred, and grounded in research. The following principles guide how we respond to reports or observations of bullying behaviour, ensuring the wellbeing and dignity of all students.

2. Ensuring Student Experiencing Bullying is Heard and Reassured

The student who reports or is observed experiencing bullying behaviour will be listened to attentively and respectfully. Staff create a safe space where the student feels supported and validated. Reassurance is given that they are not to blame and that the school will take appropriate action to support their wellbeing and safety.

3. Protecting the Privacy and Dignity of All Involved

Every effort is made to protect the identity and privacy of all students involved. Discussions are held in a confidential manner, with information only shared on a need-to-know basis with relevant staff and parents. This approach helps prevent labelling, further distress, or damage to relationships.

4. Sensitivity in All Communication and Follow-Up

All conversations—whether with the student experiencing bullying, the student engaging in the behaviour, witnesses, or parents, are conducted with care and professionalism. Staff use calm, non-judgmental language and focus on problem-solving and support, rather than blame or shame.

5. Taking Age and Ability into Consideration

When responding to incidents, staff consider the developmental stage, communication ability, and any additional needs of the students involved. A more guided, scaffolded

approach is provided for younger children or students with special educational needs to ensure understanding and meaningful participation in the resolution process.

6. Listening to the Views of the Student on How Best to Proceed

Students are encouraged to express their views on what would help them feel safe and supported going forward. While the school retains responsibility for decision-making, the voice of the student experiencing bullying is taken seriously and, where appropriate, helps to shape the support and follow-up plan.

7. Timely and Proactive Intervention

The school responds promptly once a concern is raised. Timely action prevents escalation, minimises harm, and communicates clearly that bullying behaviour is not acceptable. Follow-up is carefully planned, with timelines for review communicated to students and relevant staff.

8. Informing Parents of All Parties Involved

Parents or guardians of both the student experiencing bullying and the student engaging in the behaviour are informed promptly and respectfully. Communication is balanced and focused on student wellbeing, supporting positive behavioural change, and fostering a collaborative home-school partnership.

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):

1. Determining if Bullying Behaviour Has Occurred

Staff are guided by the following three key questions from the *Bí Cineálta* procedures to assess whether a situation meets the definition of bullying behaviour:

1. Is it targeted?

- Is one student (or group) being deliberately singled out or excluded by another?

2. Is harm caused?

- Has the behaviour caused emotional, psychological, social or physical harm to the student?

3. Is it repeated?

- Has the behaviour occurred more than once or is there a risk of it recurring?

If the answer to **all three questions is yes**, the behaviour is considered bullying, and appropriate steps will be taken in line with school policy.

2. Investigation Process

To gather a clear and balanced understanding of the situation, the school will:

- **Speak with the student(s) experiencing the behaviour**, in a safe and supportive manner.
- **Speak with the student(s) displaying the behaviour**, allowing them an opportunity to respond.
- **Interview any witnesses** to the behaviour.
- **Consult staff members** who may have observed the interactions (e.g. teachers, SNAs, yard supervisors).
- **Speak with parents/guardians** to gain relevant context and background information.
- **Review CCTV footage**, if appropriate and available, in accordance with the school's data protection policy.
- **Keep detailed written records** at each stage of the process.

All conversations are handled with sensitivity and respect for privacy, and the focus remains on understanding the facts and supporting a positive outcome for all involved.

3. Addressing Confirmed Bullying Behaviour

Where bullying behaviour is confirmed:

- Appropriate support plans are implemented for both the student who experienced the behaviour and the student displaying it.
- Actions may include restorative conversations, behavioural contracts, increased adult support, or targeted social/emotional learning.
- Parents/guardians of all parties are informed and involved in developing solutions.
- Whole-school strategies and classroom practices continue to reinforce the school's *Bí Cineálta* culture of kindness and inclusion.

4. Setting a Review Date and Monitoring Progress

A **review meeting is scheduled** within an agreed timeframe (e.g. 2–4 weeks) to:

- Ensure the behaviour has stopped.
- Check in on the wellbeing of the student(s) affected.
- Assess progress made by the student who displayed the behaviour.
- Determine if further support or actions are required.

This review is documented and forms part of the school's ongoing commitment to safeguarding student wellbeing.

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):

1. Communication with All Parties Involved

- Staff engage in **open, honest, and age-appropriate communication** with all students involved.
- Students are informed of what actions the school will take and are supported throughout the process.
- **Parents/guardians are kept informed** in a timely, respectful manner and are invited to work collaboratively with the school to support a positive outcome.

2. Referrals for Additional Support

Where needed, students may be referred to **relevant external or internal supports**, including:

- School Completion Programme (SCP)
- Play therapy or counselling services
- Behaviour support services

- NEPS or HSE services
Referral decisions are made in consultation with parents/guardians and based on the child's individual needs.

3. Being Honest and Transparent with Children

In all cases of disclosure or concern, staff are **upfront and supportive with the child** involved. Children are told what will happen next in a way that is clear, kind, and developmentally appropriate. They are never left feeling unsure or alone in managing the situation.

4. Working in Partnership with Parents/Guardians

Parents are seen as essential partners in the anti-bullying process. Staff will:

- Discuss concerns sensitively and constructively
- Share proposed actions or interventions
- Seek agreement on support strategies where possible
- Maintain follow-up communication throughout

5. School-Based Support Initiatives

Depending on need, students may be supported through the following internal programmes and structures:

- **Nurture group** sessions to build emotional regulation, self-esteem and positive peer interactions
- **The Incredible Years** programme (teacher and/or parent training) to promote positive behaviour, social skills and emotional resilience
- **Restorative Practice**, including guided restorative conversations, to rebuild relationships and foster accountability
- **Classroom-based SPHE** lessons to support inclusion, emotional literacy and anti-bullying learning
- KIVA Anti-bullying Programme

6. Whole-School Anti-Bullying Approach

The school promotes a positive, respectful culture through:

- A **planned, whole-school anti-bullying programme**, which may include *Friendship Week*, *Wellbeing Week*, peer buddy systems and kindness campaigns
- Consistent implementation of **SPHE and Wellbeing curricula**
- Clear communication of school values through assemblies, displays and staff modelling
- Ongoing staff training in areas such as **restorative practice, neurodiversity, diversity and inclusion**, and **responding to bullying**

7. Developing a Whole-School Anti-Bullying Programme

As part of our ongoing commitment to student wellbeing, the school recognises the need for a **comprehensive, age-appropriate anti-bullying programme**. This programme will:

- Be evidence-informed and in line with *Bí Cineálta*
- Include preventative lessons across all class levels
- Promote empathy, respect, and inclusion
- Be reviewed and updated regularly with staff and student input

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: Martha Lynch Date: 24/6/25

Martha Lynch

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: Sandra Byrne Date: 24/6/25

Sandra Byrne

(Principal)