

School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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The Board of Management of Scoil Eoin, Inis Eonáin 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 steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent all 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 everybody 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 everybody has a 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.

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		Staff meeting.
Students		Class discussion & questionnaire
Parents		Questionnaire
Board of Management		Board of Management meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers		Principal discussion with bus driver
Date policy was approved:		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by the school to address all forms of bullying behaviour, in whatever form and however motivated. 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 the 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 our school in a real way.

The school takes positive steps to ensure the culture of the school is one which welcomes a respectful dialogue and encounter with diversity and difference by ensuring that prevention and inclusivity strategies are given priority and discussed regularly at our Board of Management and staff meetings.

The dignity and the wellbeing of the individual person is of paramount concern in our Christian response. Scoil Eoin will listen closely to and dialogue with parents, thereby building a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, trust and confidence.

In continuing to develop prevention strategies, Scoil Eoin will listen to young people and parents, to help establish their particular context and needs. Frequent periods of reflection and further engagement by the school, young people and parents, will be used to discern appropriate supports for young people in this school and to help inform future prevention strategies.

The following programmes and strategies may be used by Scoil Eoin staff to endeavour to prevent bullying behaviour:

Culture and Environment

- A positive school culture and environment which is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity. The school environment is a place where students, staff and visitors experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported.
- Relationships between all members of the school community are based on respect, care, integrity and trust with open communication between the patron, board of management, staff, students and parents to foster a collaborative approach and shared responsibility.
- Effective school leadership sets standards and expectations.
- Each staff member has a responsibility to develop and maintain a school culture where bullying is not tolerated and is addressed with a consistent approach if it occurs.
- All students shape the school culture by promoting kindness, inclusion and respect within the school community.
- Parents and guardians are aware of the ethos of the school and can help foster an environment where bullying is not tolerated.
- The school community supports a 'telling' environment where students feel comfortable to talk about their concerns regarding bullying behaviour. Reporting such behaviour is encouraged.
- All members of the school community are aware of the reasons why a student may be reluctant to report bullying behaviour: fear of retaliation, fear of being seen as a tell-tale, fear that the adult may not have the necessary knowledge and skills to deal with the situation and may make it worse, fear that they may be denied access to smart devices, fear that they may get into trouble or not be believed, fear that they lack evidence.
- The school community is familiar with the concept of 'a trusted adult' to whom they can report if they or another student is experiencing bullying behaviour. Students who witness bullying behaviour in person or on social media are supported and encouraged to report it.
- The physical spaces in the school are conducive to safety. Visibility is important as hidden spaces or dark areas can facilitate bullying behaviour.
- Signage promoting the school's values such as respect, inclusion and equality are visible throughout the school premises.
- Appropriate levels of supervision are in place during the school day and particularly during unstructured to help in the prevention of bullying.

Curriculum

- Teaching and learning is collaborative and respectful with opportunities for group work with peers.
- Curricular and extra-curricular activities foster development of a sense of self-worth, inclusion and respect.
- Well-being is promoted throughout the curriculum. The Well-being Committee organises activities throughout the year.

- The SPHE and RSE programmes foster well-being, self-confidence, respect and a sense of responsibility for individual behaviour and actions.

Policy and Planning

- The Bí Cineálta Policy has been drawn up collaboratively with input from staff, students and parents.
- Staff are trained in the strategies to prevent bullying and in the procedures to deal with bullying behaviour.

Relationships and Partnerships

- The Board of Management, staff, pupils and parents are involved in the development, implementation and review of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy.
- Workshops are organized for students, staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying.
- Peer support is encouraged in all areas to promote respect and empathy.
- The principal engages with the bus driver and the school warden encouraging them to report bullying behaviour to the school, if they witness it.

Preventing Cyberbullying

- All members of the school community are made aware of the Internet Acceptable Use Policy.
- Online safety workshops are organized regularly for parents and annually for students.
- The Garda addresses the senior classes on Safety Online annually.
- Regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online, while reminding them that, in Ireland, the digital age of consent is 16.

Preventing Homophobic/Transphobic Bullying

- Gender stereotypes are challenged.
- Pupils are encouraged to report to teacher if they witness homophobic behaviour.

Preventing Racist Bullying

- All cultures are celebrated and pupils learn about one another's cultures.
- Reading material represents diversity.
- Those who witness racist bullying are encouraged to report it.

Preventing Sexist Bullying and Sexual Harassment

- Staff model respectful behaviour.
- All students have equal opportunity to engage in school activities.
- Parents are encouraged to reinforce these values of respect at home.



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):

- Classes are supervised at all times. SET teachers co operate with class teachers to ensure this.
- Division of time and play areas by class assists in visibility of all pupils and adequate space for them to play during break times.
- Behaviour in school is underpinned by the Code of Behaviour. In addition to this, we use a Discipline for Learning policy to encourage respectful behaviour and to complete a Behaviour Reflection Sheeet, which is completed at home, discussed and signed by the parents.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

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 (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

Steps to determine if bullying behaviour has occurred

- Consider the following questions:
 1. Is the behaviour targeted at a particular student or group of students?
 2. Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?
 3. Is the behaviour repeated?

If the answer to each question is **Yes**, then the behaviour comes into the category of bullying and should be addressed using the Bí Cineálta procedures.

Approaches taken to address bullying behaviour

- If a group of students is involved, each student will be engaged with individually at first.
- Thereafter, all students involved will be met as a group.
- At the group meeting, each student will be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views.
- Each student will be supported as appropriate.
- Parents of all students 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 student who is experiencing the bullying will be asked for his/her views as to how best to address the situation.
- The strategy decided on will be put in place.
- A record will be kept of all meetings and decisions to include: the form and type of bullying behaviour, where and when it took place, the date of the initial engagement with the students involved and their parents, the views of students and parents on how best to address the bullying behaviour.

Review of Progress

- The teacher will engage with the students involved and their parents no more than 20 days after the initial engagement.
- The effectiveness of the strategies will be assessed.
- The relationship between the students involved will be assessed.
- The review with students and their parents will be documented.
- The date that has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased will be recorded.
- Engagement with external services/supports will be documented.

Steps to be taken if the Bullying Behaviour has not ceased

- The teacher will review the strategies with the students involved and their parents.
- A timeframe will be agreed for further engagement.
- If the bullying behaviour continues, strategies, outlined in the Scoil Eoin Code of Behaviour, to deal with inappropriate behaviour will be considered. Disciplinary actions may then have to be discussed with the student, the parents and the Board of Management.

- If a parent is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures, they will be referred to the Complaints Procedures.
- If a parent is not satisfied with how a complaint has been handled, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

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 following supports are available to prevent and address bullying behaviour:

National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)

Provides a comprehensive, school-based psychological service to support the well-being, academic, social and emotional development of all students.

Oide

Oide provides professional learning opportunities for school leaders and teachers. The work of Oide contributes to school improvement in both educational goals and the wellbeing of pupils, including the prevention of bullying and addressing it when it occurs.

Webwise

Webwise promotes safer, better internet use through awareness raising and education initiatives targeting teachers, students and parents.

National Parents Council

The NPC delivers online and in-person courses to support parents in preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

Tusla

Schools can contact Tusla directly for advice in cases where it is concerned that bullying behaviour is a child protection concern.

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*.

The record will document the following:

- Form of bullying
- Type of bullying
- Where and when (if known)
- Date of initial engagement with student(s)/parent(s)
- View of student(s)/parent(s) regarding the actions to be taken to address bullying behaviour
- Date of review with student(s)/parent(s) to determine if bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and their parents in relation to this.
- Engagement with external supports and services (if any)

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: _____ Date: _____
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Principal)