

Bunscoil na Toirbhirte



Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Bunscoil na Toirbhirte, Mitchelstown 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.

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	20 th of June 2025	Staff meetings, training day, questionnaire
Students	June 2025	Questionnaires, class discussions, Student Council, art displays, assemblies and raising of the Bí Cineálta Flag
Parents	June, September 2025	Questionnaires and Parents Council Meetings
Board of Management	April to October 2025	BOM Meetings, Discussions with the Chairperson
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	Secretaries and Caretaker	Discussions regarding the new policy formation
Date policy was approved: 09/10/2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: 09/10/2025		

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:

- Create a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable
- Staff modelling positive behaviour
- Initiatives such as Act of Kindness, Certificate of Achievement
- Bright and Colourful displays on the school corridors
- Achievements celebrated- both in and out of school

- Creation of Social Clubs
- Effective supervision of pupils (yard, corridors and school tours)
- Assemblies celebrating positive behaviour and reminding pupils of kind behaviour
- Involve parents as active partners
- Support the idea that our school is a telling environment- No bystanders
- Promote the concept of a trusted adult – Stay Safe linkage – who to tell.
- Create safe spaces in our school building and yards – visibility
- Incorporate artwork and signs to promote our school values
- Encourage a sense of belonging with ownership over their own space
- Create a positive school culture and climate which is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity- Celebrating Autism Day, Diabetes Day, Williams Syndrome Day, Epilepsy Awareness Day.
- Student Council is in place so that we hear the student voice
- Positive Affirmation Posters
- Safe physical environment
- Opportunities to participate in class and whole school activities to raise self - esteem

Curriculum

- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- All teachers have been trained in the delivery of the Friends for Life Programme
- Three teachers will complete training in the NEPS Emotional Coaching with a view to introducing it to the entire school
- The implementation of the Social Physical and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum, including the Relationship and Sexuality Education, and Stay Safe
- School-wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence-based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme, programmes to teach about cyberbullying (e.g. Webwise teachers’ resources and lessons from (www.cybersafekids.ie))
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Organise seminars/workshops given by relevant professionals to older pupils and to parents/guardians, focusing on educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, “Stop the Bully” and “INETSAFETY” – Ger Brick
- Use of programmes such as Friends for Life (which looks at social skills and resilience)
- Whole School Approach- Breathing and Muscle exercises- NEPS – Department of Education
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.
- Provide teaching and promote learning which is collaborative and respectful, fostering inclusion and respect for diversity.
- Display a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact.
- Model respectful behaviour towards colleagues, pupils and visitors in our school environment.

- Curricular and Extra-curricular activities can help to develop a sense of self-worth, working together, inclusion and respect.
- Students are given regular opportunities to work in small groups with peers, which can help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy- Social Groups
- Celebrate diversity and culture in our school- Chinese New Year.
- Parents receive information at times regarding useful information on Anti Bullying.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils.

Policy and Planning

- Implement Policies such as our Code of Behaviour (including the Acceptable Use of Devices and the Internet Policy), Child Protection Policy, Supervision of Pupils, RSE Policy, SPHE Policy
- All staff, to the best of their ability, will ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision (as per the school's Supervision Policy).
- Hot spots are kept to a minimum. Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, toilet areas, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
- Hot times are taken into consideration and appropriate supervision organised. Hot times tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard, arriving into the classroom or moving classrooms.
- Effective leadership is a key component with Principal, Deputy Principal, DLP, DDLP, and all middle management focused on supporting the implementation of this policy.
- Our child-friendly Bì Cineálta Policy on display prominently around the school. Pupils will be very familiar with what is expected of them.
- The use of Mobile Phones in Bunscoil na Toirbhirte by pupils is forbidden
- Evidence in Cuntas Miosiuil of addressing topic of bullying
- BOM, Parental and student Involvement in policy formation and ratification

Relationships and Partnerships

- Buddy systems / pairing of older and younger classes
- Parent partnerships (e.g., parents council, workshops, events)
- Age and stage appropriate awareness initiatives that engage the student body in looking at their own behaviour –promoting acts of kindness and friendship, being an active help to others and looking at the causes of and impact of bullying during SPHE lessons.
- Conducting workshops for students, staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying – “Stop the Bully” and “INetSafetytalk- Ger Brick”.
- Supporting active participation of students in school life and active participation of parents in school life also.
- Engaging parents and students in actively contributing to the formation of a Child Friendly Anti Bullying Policy to make them active participants in promotion of and discussion of useful ways to identify and reduce bullying behaviour and highlight procedure and how to deal with it if it does occur.
- Catch the children being good – notice and praise desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention- Act of Kindness, Certificate of Achievement
- At assemblies, school rules are reinforced on a regular basis. Raise awareness of the

definition of bullying behaviour and how the school deals with such behaviour.

- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Support the active participation of students in school life through formal and informal structures, e.g. circle-time activities, assemblies, sports' teams, student council, playground pals and paired readers.
- Support the active participation of parents in school life, e.g. being a member of the Parents' Association, Green School Committee
- Parents can now initiate contact their child's teacher directly via Aladdin

Preventing Cyber Bullying:

Bunscoil na Toirbhirte proactively tries to address these challenges by promoting digital literacy, digital citizenship, and fostering safe online environments. Strategies to prevent cyberbullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- implementing the SPHE curriculum
- implementing our Acceptable Awareness policy- agreement signed by pupils in 2nd to 6th class
- having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- visits from Guest Speakers, the Community Guard, Webwise, Ger Brick
- 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:

All students have a right to feel safe and supported at school. Strategies used in Bunscoil na Toirbhirte to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- maintaining an inclusive physical environment
- encouraging peer support such as paired reading, Bunscoil Ceilí, Halloween Disco
- conducting workshops for pupils, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour- Stop the Bully
- encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour

Racist bullying

Schools have become much more culturally diverse over the last number of decades. Students attending schools come from many different cultures and backgrounds. Students from diverse backgrounds may face discrimination and prejudice and may be subject to racist bullying behaviour. Strategies used in Bunscoil na Toirbhirte to prevent

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

- fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students “see themselves” in their school environment
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour
- providing supports to pupils for whom English is an additional language- EAL
- providing supports to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma students, and to encourage communication with their parents
- inviting speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds- Chinese New Year, Traveller Author

Preventing sexist bullying behaviour

Strategies used in Bunscoil na Toirbhirte to prevent sexist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students 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 students
- encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home
- teach the importance of gender equality

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):

- Supervision Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and Practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

- The class teacher will oversee recording of bullying reports for students in their class. This includes using the procedure guidelines to investigate reports of bullying and recording bullying behaviour on the correct form on Aladdin
 - The DLP/ DDLP will follow up after twenty days to investigate if bullying has ceased.
 - All staff will be vigilant to bullying behaviour.
 - Principal will inform Board of Management of incidences of Bullying.
 - Deputy principal /SENCO and Assistant Principal II are available to provide up to date information and supports if needed to assist class teacher in addressing concern
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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):

The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

- a. While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the 'Relevant Teacher(s)', the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' will use his/her/their professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
- b. If it is established by the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' that bullying has occurred, the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- c. The 'Relevant Teacher(s)' must record the bullying incident on the school information management system (Aladdin) by adding an Alleged Bullying Behaviour Report to the relevant pupil's file which will be visible on files of all other pupils named. The 'Relevant Teacher' must inform the Principal.

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame). With this in mind the school's procedures are as follows:

- In investigating and dealing with bullying the teacher(s) will exercise his/her/their judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type if it has and how best the situation might be resolved.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the 'Relevant Teacher(s)'. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report instances of bullying, they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, SNAs, caretakers and cleaners are encouraged to report any incidences of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them to the Class Teacher.
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
- On being informed of an alleged incident of bullying, the teacher dealing with the report will first interview the victim(s) and discuss the feelings which the victim(s) experienced because of the bullying behaviour.

- Initial investigations of bullying will be done in class where possible but some incidents might be best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the ‘Relevant Teacher(s)’ should seek answers to questions of what, where, who, when and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- If a group is involved each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about the other's statements.
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.
- Where the ‘Relevant Teacher(s)’ has/have determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- The “Relevant Teacher” should make an effort to try to get the person carrying out the bullying to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop immediately. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured that will be the end of the matter.
- When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the “Relevant Teacher” will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information. This may be recorded on Aladdin under the Bi Cineálta tab, and uploading a file “Alleged Bullying Behaviour Report”.
- If a pupil chooses to continue the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer be considered a once off occurrence. In this event parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted. The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for the pupil.
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may be arranged separately with a view to bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
- Depending on the seriousness of the bullying some or all of Level 2 Supportive Interventions will be utilized (See School Code of Behaviour)
- Repeated incidents of bullying behaviour will result in the imposition of sanctions. Such sanctions will be proportionate to the seriousness of the bullying behaviour. It must be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation

where disciplinary sanctions are required that this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.

- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent must be referred to the school's complaints procedure.
- In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their rights to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.
- The School will maintain care for the victim over time. This will be done by speaking to the child a number of weeks after the incident to check on their continuing welfare. The child's parents will also be consulted.
- If a child makes a report of bullying, but asks that nothing is to be done about it, the relevant teacher will support the child appropriately to explore how it will be handled sensitively and how parents may be notified. If a parent does so, they must submit in writing that they require no further action to be taken, but even so, the school may still deem it necessary to be investigated and handled appropriately.

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 school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves a whole school approach. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, no one intervention/support programme works in all situations.

Supporting Bullied pupils:

- Ending the bullying behaviour,
- Fostering respect for bullied pupils and all pupils,
- Fostering greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils,
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through annual awareness-raising programmes,
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations,
- Making parents aware of counselling facilities available to pupils
- Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).

Supporting Bullying pupils:

- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a 'clean sheet,'
- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honorable thing and giving them praise for this,
- Making adequate counseling facilities available to help those who need it learn other ways of meeting their needs besides violating the rights of others,

- Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school),
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth,
- In dealing with negative behavior in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child,
- In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a 'clean sheet' and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.

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: _____ Date: _____

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Principal)