



Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Scoil Bhríde Rathcormac 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 such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the bullying or harassment of our students in whatever form and however motivated. Catholic schools have a distinctive understanding of the human person, recognising 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 each person 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 all have an indispensable 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.

Behaviour 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. Disagreement between two students, or instances where students don't want to be friends or to remain friends, is not considered bullying 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 can't control.

Bullying behaviour 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. Examples of prohibited bullying behaviours that can occur outside of school (non-exhausted list):

- Bullying behaviour that occurs in the area immediately outside the school, the local shops and the wider local area.
- Bullying behaviour that occurs on the journey to and from school.
- Bullying behaviour that occurs in organised clubs and groups outside of school such as sports clubs.
- Online bullying (cyberbullying) behaviour, along with other types 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 any time 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.

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 are literacy, digital literacy or language barriers. However, while acknowledging the parent’s request, schools have a right to act and may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying 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	01/05/2025 16/05/2025	Staff Survey Half Day Closure for Bí Cineálta training delivered by Rory Gibbons.
Students	12/06/2025	Whole-Class Discussions with students, led by teachers
Parents	01/05/2025	Parent Survey
Board of Management	25/05/2025	Discussion
Date Policy was approved: 16/9/25		
Date Policy was last reviewed:16/9/25		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by this school to address all forms of bullying behaviour, in whatever form and however motivated, including online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment.

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.

This school takes positive steps to ensure that 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.

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1. Culture and Environment

- At Scoil Bhríde, Ráth Chormaic, we live by our Golden Rules:
 - Be kind to yourself and others
 - Be respectful
 - Be honest
 - Do your best
 - Look after our environment
- In our school, we encourage children to speak to a trusted adult if they see or experience bullying.
- We will ensure children know there are safe spaces and safe people they can turn to.
- At Scoil Bhríde, we display posters and reminders about kindness, respect, and inclusion.
- We will provide strong supervision in classrooms, corridors, and the yard.
- In our school, we celebrate diversity so every child feels welcome. Each year, we run Friendship Week to promote positive relationships.

2. Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

- In our school, we teach about kindness, respect, and empathy through SPHE, RSE, and Stay Safe.

- We use programmes such as:
 - Zippy's Friends (Rang 1)
 - Webwise online safety lessons (Rang 3–6)
 - Garda SPHE lessons on personal safety and cyberbullying
- We will teach children:
 - What bullying is and why it happens
 - How to get help
 - The role of the bystander
- At Scoil Bhríde, we use circle time, role play, group work, and class charters to build respect.
- We will give monthly reminders in each class about the meaning of bullying and what to do if it happens.

3. Policy and Planning

- We will share a child-friendly version of this policy with all pupils.
- In our school, children are reminded regularly of the rules about respect and kindness.
- At Scoil Bhríde, this policy is linked with other policies:
 - Code of Behaviour
 - Child Safeguarding Statement
 - Supervision Policy
 - Acceptable Use of Technology
- We will review supervision plans regularly to ensure children are safe in all areas of the school.

4. Relationships and Partnerships

- In our school, we work to build positive relationships between pupils, staff, and parents.
- At Scoil Bhríde, we encourage parent and pupil involvement in promoting positive behaviour.
- We work closely with the Parents' Association and Student Council on anti-bullying initiatives.
- We value the role of non-teaching staff (SNAs, caretaker, secretary, cleaners) in keeping our school safe.
- We will also seek support from outside groups such as Gardaí, Oide, Webwise, FUSE, and NEPS.
- In our school, we give pupils opportunities to support each other through buddy systems and peer activities.

Note

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
- Acceptable Use of the Internet 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.

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):

1. Investigating Reports of Bullying Behaviour:

- All reports, including anonymous reports, are taken seriously and investigated promptly by the relevant teacher (usually the class teacher at primary level).
- A calm, non-judgemental, problem-solving approach is used during all investigations.
- The relevant teacher listens carefully to the student experiencing the behaviour and ensures their voice is heard.
- Interviews may be conducted with all involved – individually first, and then as a group if appropriate.
- Questions such as who, what, when, where and why are used to clarify the facts.
- Investigations are conducted with sensitivity and confidentiality, taking into account the age and ability of the students involved.

2. Determining Whether Bullying Has Occurred:

- The relevant teacher will assess whether the behaviour:
 - Is targeted
 - Has been or is likely to be repeated
 - Involves an imbalance of power

-If the behaviour meets these criteria, it will be recorded as bullying.

3. Recording the Incident:

- If bullying is confirmed, the Alleged Bullying Behaviour Report is completed and recorded using the school's information system (e.g., Aladdin).
- All pupils involved are noted, and the Principal is informed.
- Details of the behaviour, context, dates, and actions taken are documented.
- Where the behaviour is deemed not to meet the criteria for bullying, but still causes harm, it is addressed under the Code of Behaviour.

4. Responding to the Bullying Behaviour:

- A restorative approach is used where appropriate, supporting students to reflect on their behaviour and its impact.
- The school ensures the student experiencing bullying is supported, feels safe, and is included.
- Students engaging in bullying behaviour are helped to understand the consequences and are supported to change their behaviour.
- Parents/guardians of all students involved are contacted and informed about the situation and the supports in place.
- Where necessary, additional school supports (e.g., SET team, NEPS) are involved.

5. Reviewing Progress:

- A review is conducted within 20 school days to determine whether the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- Follow-up conversations are held with the students involved, with particular care taken to check on the wellbeing of the student who experienced the bullying.
- The relevant teacher updates records and reports the outcome to the Principal.

6. Where Behaviour Continues:

- If the bullying behaviour continues, further interventions are implemented, which may include:
 - Behaviour plans or targets
 - Team meetings
 - Referral to external services
 - Disciplinary measures, if necessary, are applied in line with the Code of Behaviour.
- In serious cases, the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) may be informed, and Child Protection Procedures followed.

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. Supporting Students Who Experience Bullying Behaviour:

Students who have experienced bullying will be supported through:

- Listening carefully to their account and ensuring they feel heard, believed, and safe.
- Reassurance that the bullying is not their fault and that the situation will be addressed.
- Regular check-ins to monitor their wellbeing after the incident has been resolved.
- Opportunities to rebuild friendships through group work, cooperative learning, or structured play.
- Social and emotional support, such as using Circle Time, well-being check-ins, or SPHE activities.
- Referral to the SEN or support team where additional intervention may be needed.
- Referral to appropriate external services where necessary.

2. Supporting Students Who Witness Bullying Behaviour:

Bystanders play a key role in stopping bullying. To support students who witness bullying:

- We create opportunities in class to discuss the importance of telling and standing up for others.
- Students are reassured that telling is not “telling tales” but is a responsible and caring action.
- Children are taught safe ways to support peers – such as seeking help, including others, and showing kindness.
- Witnesses are included in follow-up conversations, where appropriate, to ensure they feel supported and empowered.
- Circle Time, SPHE, or group discussions are used to build empathy and reflect on group dynamics.

3. Supporting Students Who Engage in Bullying Behaviour:

Students who have engaged in bullying behaviour will be supported to:

- Understand the impact of their actions on others.
- Take responsibility and commit to change in a respectful, restorative way.
- Reflect on the reasons behind their behaviour with adult guidance and support.
- Participate in restorative conversations or meetings, if appropriate and with consent.
- Access support to build empathy, self-esteem, and positive behaviour strategies.
- Receive structured support such as:

-Behaviour contracts or plans

-Check-in/check-out systems

-Regular mentoring with a trusted adult

- Where needed, the child may be referred to the SEN team or external services for further support.

We will ensure that students who show a willingness to change are supported in making a fresh start, and that the emphasis remains on restoring relationships rather than punishment alone.

4. Whole-School Supportive Approaches Include:

- Use of SPHE and RSE curriculum to develop social skills, empathy, and respectful relationships.
- Restorative practices as a tool for resolution and rebuilding trust (used where appropriate).
- Annual Anti-Bullying Awareness Week to promote kindness and positive peer culture.
- Development of student voice initiatives, such as classroom charters or buddy systems.
- Visual reminders across the school environment of how to tell, who to tell, and what support is available.

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)