

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Kilcoona NS 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.

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	17/1/25 6/6/25 13/6/25	Training Day Sabrina and Maria All Staff training day Staff survey
Students	11/6/25 23/6/25	Focus Group and Student online survey, Student Council,
Parents	11/6/25 First Term 25/26	Parents Survey Parents Association consultation with Sabrina Policy published on school website, feedback sought.
Board of Management	2025/2026	BOM Meeting to ratify policy.
Patron	9th June 2025	Request from diocese to input wording from Archbishop Duffy.
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers		
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. 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. 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.

Culture And Environment

- A positive and inclusive school culture and environment – Inclusivity, Buddy Bench,
- A Telling Environment
- Creating Safe Physical Spaces in the School

The dignity and the wellbeing of the individual person is of paramount concern in our Christian response. This school 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, this school 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.

Relationships and Partnerships

- A Trusted Adult – Staff can let children know that they can talk to them
- Supervision – Appropriate supervision of all children during breaktimes and outside school events
- Student Council, Parents Association
- Peer activities with other classes
- Give time to listen to children

Curriculum

- SPHE and RSE programmes, small group and pair works which supports belonging and empathy among students
- RE Programme - Grow in Love
- Oide resources
- The wellbeing of the entire school community is central to all policies, planning, and decision-making.

- Mixed ability groups, clearly defined roles within groups
- Classroom Display with child friendly Bí Cineátla.
- Circle Time
- Drama – Role Play
- Listening and Speaking Games
- “Sorting Out Mat”

Policy and Planning

- Code of Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Anti Bullying Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- Wellbeing Week
- Wellbeing Friday
- Peer tutoring activities

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):

- One teacher and 2 SNAs on Astro yard during breaktimes
- One teacher who walks the perimeter and an SNA on each yard zone area during breaks
- A ratio of 1:10 on all outings outside the school
- Safe physical spaces within the school

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour is (are) as follows:
All class teachers and support teachers if an incident is reported to him/her.

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):

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour the following three questions are very important.

1. Is the behaviour targeted at a specific 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 is **yes** to all of these questions then the behaviour is **bullying behaviour**.
 - If the answer to **any** question is **no** then the behaviour is **not bullying behaviour**.
 - If a group of students is involved, each student will be engaged with individually first. Then as a group.
 - At the group meeting each student should 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 following the group meeting
 - Students write down their account of the incident as appropriate.
 - Staff are fair and consistent in their approach to addressing behaviour
 - Appendix C of the Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying for Primary and Post Primary Schools will be used.
 - **Requests to take no Action** – 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. However, while acknowledging the parent's request, schools may decide that, based on circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.
- Review Process**
- Teachers 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.
 - Where it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the bullying behaviour, then our school will revert to the Code of Behaviour and use strategies to address and deal with the inappropriate behaviour.

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 principle must be adhered too by when addressing bullying behaviour

- Ensure that the student experiencing bullying-behaviour feels listened to 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 .
- Record all incidents of bullying behaviour. This record should document the form (Section 2.5) and type (section 2.7) of bullying behaviour: were and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students and their parents.

Supports that are available to teachers and parents

- **NEPS** who can advise on best practice to prevent and address bullying when issues arise, provide training in preventative initiatives such as developing social and emotional skills, promoting resilience and skills in relationship repair between peers as appropriate.
- **Oide** – Professional learning for staff
- **Webwise** –
- National Parents Council
- Tulsa – When a behaviour is considered a child protection issue

Record Keeping

All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include:

- the type of behaviour
- where and when it took place
- 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:

1. the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting,
2. the number of ongoing incidents and
3. 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: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: _____

Signed: _____

(Principal)

Date: _____