

Bí Cineálta: Antibullying Policy



Appendix A School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Scoil Pól, Kilfinane 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 (BOM) 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	28th Feb – 5 th March 2025	Information on the Cinneáltas Action Plan and Bí Cineálta Procedures issued through email. Request for feedback by return email
Students	10 th -14 th March 2025	Presentation in class (random selection), Review by Head Boy/Girl, Request for feedback
Parents	6 th – 11 th March 2025	Information on the Cinneáltas Action Plan and Bí Cineálta Procedures issued via Parents' Association email Request for feedback by return email
Board of Management	26 th March 2025	Information on the Cinneáltas Action Plan and Bí Cineálta Procedures/ Policy BOM meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	6 th – 11 th March 2025	Information on the Cinneáltas Action Plan and Bí Cineálta Procedures issued via email.
Date policy was approved: 26 th March 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

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.

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):

Strategies to prevent online (cyberbullying) bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- Having appropriate controls on I.C.T. provision within Scoil Pól
- Implementing the SPHE curriculum which includes appropriate and safe use of digital media
- Having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- 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 through the Scoil Pól website and social media 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.
- Raising awareness of Coco's law amongst the student body
- Encouraging students to speak up when they witness cyberbullying, through Scoil Pól's '*Open Door*' practice

Strategies to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- Maintaining an inclusive environment
- Encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- Providing students, through SPHE/RSE, opportunities to examine and critique gender, cultural and societal norms
- Conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour
- Encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, through Scoil Pól's '*Open Door*' practice

Strategies 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
- Having the cultural diversity of the school visible and on display.
- Encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- Providing supports to school staff to respond to the needs of students for whom English is an

additional language and for communicating with their parents

- Inviting speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds
- Ensuring that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds
- Using the school curriculum, in particular subjects such as Religion/CSPE/SPHE, to enlighten students about bullying and its effects as well as building self-esteem and resilience. Respect for self and respect for others are key learning themes in these subjects
- Involvement in the 'Schools of Sanctuary' programme.
- Encouraging students to speak up when they witness racist behaviour, through Scoil Pól's '*Open Door*' practice

Strategies 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
- Organising awareness campaigns, workshops and presentations on gender equality and respect
- Encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home

Strategies to prevent sexual harassment include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- Using the updated SPHE specifications to teach students about healthy relationships and how to treat each other with respect and kindness
- Promoting positive role models within the school community
- Challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment
- Facilitating 6th year students to complete the Dublin Rape Crisis module 'Body Right' which raises awareness of personal safety and includes specific lessons on recognising and dealing with sexual harassment

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):

- Effective school supervision rota and monitoring
- Lunch time clubs organised and supervised by staff members
- SNA support
- Supervised Co-curricular and Extracurricular activities
- Supervised study
- CCTV cameras in corridors and outside areas.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

- Year Head/ Assistant Year Head
- Deputy Principal
- Principal

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):

Step 1

A student/parent/staff member/unnamed source may report a bullying concern verbally/via email or school app.

Step 2

The staff member who receives the report completes ***Bí Cineálta Appendix C Form for Reporting Bullying Behaviour*** which is available on the Staff Microsoft Teams platform to notify Year Head. The Year Head must also complete the form if the report is made to them. This form is submitted to Year Head and Senior Management.

Step 3

The Year Head notes receipt of this form on VSware notes of student(s). The Year Head investigates the concerns using the definition of bullying from Chapter 2 (*Bí Cineálta Procedures*). Students will be interviewed by the Year Head as appropriate. Details of the reported allegation of bullying will be written down and read back to the student/students for confirmation. If they so wish, the student may write down their account of the situation.

Document the investigation in ***Bí Cineálta Appendix C Record of Bullying Investigation***.

Step 4

(a) If the incident(s) is deemed bullying:

- Record all steps in ***Bí Cineálta Appendix C Record of Bullying Investigation*** referred to in Step 3.
- Notify parents/guardians of both the target and the perpetrator (as appropriate).

(b) If the incident(s) is not determined as bullying, the bullying case is closed, and the matter is dealt with under the Code of Positive Behaviour and noted on VSware. The relevant sections of the ***Bí Cineálta Appendix C Record of Bullying Investigation*** should be completed, filed in the appropriate folder in the Year Head Microsoft Team and submitted to senior management for filing.

Step 5

- When the investigation is complete, all records should be submitted to senior management. Resolution strategies should be put in place.
- Submission of this form should be noted on VSware notes.
- Appropriate action will be taken by the Year Head, Deputy Principal, Principal as required.
- The views of the students and parents must be recorded in light of the actions to be taken.

If a parent(s) is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, they should be referred to the school's complaints procedures.

If a parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions have had a negative effect on the student.

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 principles must be adhered to when addressing bullying behaviour:

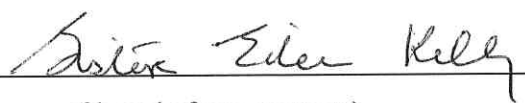
- ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured
- ensure that the student displaying bullying behaviour is heard and supported in changing behaviour
- seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- consider the age and ability of those involved
- listen to the views of the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- take action in a timely manner
- inform parents of those involved at an early stage
- In circumstances where student expresses concern about their parents being informed, the Year Head in consultation with the Student Support Team will develop an appropriate plan to support the student and for how their parents will be informed.
- listen to the views of the parents involved as to how best to address the situation
- make a referral to the school Guidance Counsellor.
- suggest/promote Lunchtime club for students to have lunchtime activities to get involved in and to engage with a wider social circle.
- encourage to report further bullying instances
- The school will address the attitudes of bullying within the school community through assemblies, pastoral care, SPHE, Religion and/or any opportunity that may arise.
- Bullying will be incorporated into SPHE lessons.
- If bullying behaviour has had a wider impact on a class group, or year group the school may hold an assembly to discuss positive paths forward with the year group, invite outside agencies in to work with the affected students and to begin to rebuild relationships and trust.
- If the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour continues to display such behaviour, sanctions as per the school's Code of Positive Behaviour will be implemented.

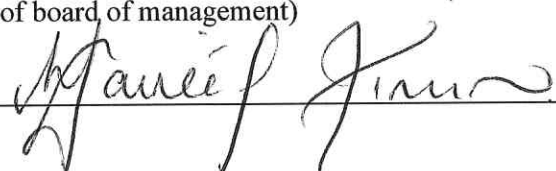
Section D: Oversight

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: 27/08/2026
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed:  Date: 27/08/2026
(Principal)