



# Policy – Ballycahill National School

## School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

### **Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour**

The Board of Management of Ballycahill National School 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 *Cineálta: 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

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	23.05.2025	Staff Survey
Students	23.05.2025	Student Survey
Parents	23.05.2025	Parent Survey
Board of Management	16.06.2025	Draft sent to B.O.M for review
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers		
Date policy was approved: 17.06.2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: 28/08/2025		

## 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 behavior, in whatever form and however motivated, including online bullying behavior, homophobic and transphobic bullying behavior, racist bullying behavior, sexist bullying behavior and sexual harassment.

In developing the preventative strategies which this school will use to prevent all forms of bullying behavior, 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.

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.

## Culture and Environment

- Promoting a positive, school culture and environment
- Promoting an all inclusive school environment
- Fostering an attitude of respect, care integrity and trust, encouraging open communication between all stakeholders of the school.
- Effective school leadership
- Promoting kindness and inclusion
- Support a telling environment, encouraging children to confide in a trusted adult.
- Effective supervision of pupils at all times
- Improving the visibility of staff on yard supervision by having them wear a high vis jacket.

## Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

- Implementation of the Stay Safe Programme at the beginning of each year. Refresher lesson at the beginning of Term 2 and 3.
- Building self-esteem through the SPHE curriculum
- Raising awareness of cyber bullying – webwise
- Raising awareness of the role of a bystander in bullying, encouraging them to report any incidents.
- Teaching classroom rules – class contracts.
- Using a restorative approach for conflict resolution
- Implementing circle time during SPHE, creating a safe space for children to speak
- Teaching of the RSE programme.

## Policy and Planning

- Implementation of the new Bí Cinealta Policy recommended by the DES. Reviewed by the Board of Management annually.
- Development of a student friendly Bí Cinealta policy
- Schools Acceptable Use Policy (internet safety)
- Supervision Policy
- SET Policy
- Code of Behaviour to support the schools Bí Cinealta policy.
- TPL for all staff members and members of Board of Management.
- Principal's Oversight Report to Board of management at each Board meeting.
- Staff relevant observations and feedback at termly Staff Meeting.
- Policy to be posted on school website, with copy of policy being shared with all parents and staff through Aladdin. Copy of policy given to all school staff to be put in folder.

## Relationships and Partnerships

- Developing strong interpersonal relationships and connections through a range of formal and informal structures such as various school committees and parents associations
- Establishing of a student council to promote and support active participation of student's in school life.
- Whole-school Assembly once a half term.
- Conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying.
- Encouraging peer support – peer mentoring
- Promoting acts of kindness – kindness vouchers
- Promoting problem solving

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):

- Schools Acceptable Use Policy (internet safety)
- Supervision Policy – Appropriate supervision is in place for break and lunch time. Each day there is one teacher and two Special Needs Assistants assigned to yard duty. Yard is segregated according to classes.
- Code of Behaviour to support the schools Bí Cineálta policy

### **Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour**

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

Class Teachers

Principal

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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):

1. Determine if bullying has occurred – teacher(s) investigate as per school policy. If the behaviour is not bullying, deal with in line with Code of Conduct. Record as per Section 6.5 of Bí Cineálta policy.
2. Record and address – record as per Bí Cineálta policy and Section 6.5 of Bí Cineálta. Inform parent(s) of parties involved at an early stage. Complete agreed actions as per your Bi Cinealta policy, monitor and evaluate.
3. Review – no more than 20 school days after initial engagement, review with student(s) and parent(s) will take place.
4. Determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased – if bullying has ceased, continue to monitor. If bullying has not ceased, review strategies, seek external support, if appropriate, and review within the agreed timeframe.
5. Bullying Behaviour Update -principal will include all bullying behaviour in their update to the board. Principal provides verbal update to the board. Review policy, if needed.

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):

- Ensure that the students experiencing bullying behaviours feel 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 at an early stage.

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: Sioshána Ó Mahon  
(Chairperson of board of management)

Date: 28/8/2025

Signed: M. Nealeen Ryan  
(Principal)

Date: 28/8/2025