



Scoil Bhréanainn

Portmagee, Co.Kerry
www.scoilbhreanainn.ie

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Scoil Bhréanainn 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.**”

Types of bullying:

Bullying behaviour can take many forms, which can occur separately or together. These can include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

Direct bullying behaviour:

- **Physical bullying behaviour:**

Physical bullying behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping students. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While students can often engage in “mess fights” they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.

Personal property can be a focus of attention for bullying behaviour. Any repeated damage to any personal property will be investigated by the class teacher.

- **Verbal bullying behaviour:**

Continual name-calling directed at a student which hurts, insults or humiliates the student should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance; for example, size or clothes worn or gender identity. It can also refer to a student’s accent, distinctive voice characteristics, academic ability, race or ethnic origin.

- **Written bullying behaviour:**

Written bullying behaviour includes writing insulting remarks about a student in public places, passing around notes about or drawings of a student.

- **Extortion**

Bullying behaviour can involve extortion. Extortion is where something is obtained through force or threats.

Indirect bullying behaviour:

- **Exclusion**

Exclusion bullying behaviour occurs where a student is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded or ignored by a student or group of students.

12 Child Protection Procedures <https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/d7be05-child-protection/Procedures-to-Prevent-and-Address-Bullying-Behaviour-for-Primary-and-Post-Primary-Schools>

- **Relational**

Relational bullying behaviour occurs when a student’s attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. Common forms include control: “Do this or I won’t be your friend anymore”; a group of students ganging up against one student; non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a student; giving a student the “silent treatment”; and the deliberate manipulation of friendship groups to make someone unpopular.

- **Online bullying behaviour:**

Online bullying behaviour (cyberbullying) is carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text or direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, e-mail, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chatrooms and other online technologies.

This form of bullying behaviour can include:

- > sending or sharing nasty, insulting, offensive, and/or intimidating messages or images via text messages, emails, direct messages or other websites or apps
- > posting information considered to be personal, private and sensitive without consent
- > making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other students
- > excluding or disrupting access to a student on purpose from online chat groups, access to accounts or from an online game

Even though a message may be posted online just once by a student it can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be seen by a wide audience where it is intended to be shared or has a likelihood of being shared multiple times and is thus repeated.

As online bullying uses technology to carry out bullying behaviour and does not require face-to-face contact it can occur at any time. Many types of bullying behaviour can be facilitated through online bullying. In many cases online bullying can relate to an “offline” experience with someone known to the student. This type of bullying may involve forms of sexual exploitation including but not limited to, sextortion and the non-consensual sharing of intimate images. The sharing or threatened sharing of images without consent is a criminal offence.

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	December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Meeting – staff provided with the opportunity to discuss the new Bi Cinealta action plan and stemming from this discussion, staff were informed of the important points in dealing with an incidence or report of bullying – notice board in staff room with the relevant information displayed as well as resources and record form. Staff given time to discuss and relay feedback. Sharing of draft policy with staff to discuss / consult and make any amendments • Half day school closure in March 2025
Students	January 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google forms Questionnaire • Student Council were given an opportunity to develop an Anti-Bullying policy in Child Friendly Format – their wording, examples and suggestions were all taken into account when drafting this Policy.
Parents	February 2025	Google forms Questionnaire
Board of Management	May 2025	Read, discussed and adopted at meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	April 2025	Questionnaire
Date policy was approved: May 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

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:

We at Scoil Bhréanainn strive to create a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour throughout the school. We involve parents as active partners in fostering an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated. The children are encouraged to tell a “trusted adult” if they think they or someone they know are being bullied.

Supervision: Our school yard is supervised in the morning from 9:10 and at both breaks by 2 teachers and numerous SNAs.

We as a school strive to create a safe place for children to play – We are adding attractive toys, we will incorporate artwork and signs in our school to act as reminders to children to treat everyone with kindness and the importance of telling.

We are creating a positive school culture and climate which is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity.

We promote respectful relationships across the school community

Make pupils aware of consequences and expectations

Ways in which we work to achieve these goals:

- All staff are briefed on the uniform approach we must take to handle all reports of bullying – This is displayed in the office and staff are reminded at staff meetings.
- Scoil Bhreanainn participates in initiatives such as anti-bullying week, kindness week, friendship week, cyber safety week, morning meetings etc.
- We have regular wellbeing check-ins in each class.
- We have a student elected student council to promote the student voice.
- 6th class children are classroom helpers to younger classes during wet breaktimes to help dissolve conflict and report to teachers on duty if they notice anything
- Child friendly anti bullying policy formed with pupil and parent input and will be distributed to parents, children and staff to discuss,
- Stay safe/ SPHE lessons focusing on positive behaviour form part of curricular content in all classes.
- We promote inclusivity between mainstream and autism classes to encourage empathy and understanding and further prevent misunderstandings that could potentially lead to bullying behaviours
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils.
- We investigate any incidents thoroughly by carrying out individual/paired/group interviews
- Parents receive information regarding useful information on anti-bullying or any appropriate workshops/information evenings in the area.

Curriculum (teaching and learning)

We strive to provide teaching and promote learning which is collaborative and respectful, fostering inclusion and respect for diversity. We strive to display a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact.

Ways in which we work to achieve this:

- Teach SPHE & RSE content which fosters students' wellbeing and self-confidence as well as promoting personal responsibility for their own behaviours and actions.
- Model respectful behaviour towards colleagues, pupils and visitors to the school.
- Students are given regular opportunities to work in small groups with peers which can help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies that build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils
- Explicitly address the issues of cyber bullying and identity-based bullying.
- Supports for staff
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies)
- Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.
- Child-centred learning – we empower our children to believe they are unique and encourage each individual strength

Resources we use to achieve this

Themed weeks (kindness week/ anti bullying week, internet safety week etc)

Social groups/stories

SPHE lessons

Friends for life

Weaving wellbeing programme

Mindfulness

Restorative practice & circles

Emotional ABCs

Outdoor activities

Webwise

Acceptable use policy

Internet safety talks

Developing empathy through novel study

Wellbeing walks

Policy and planning

The aims of Scoil Bhreanainns Bí Cineálta policy:

- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, staff, pupils, parents/guardians.
- To promote a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour
- To ensure appropriate supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.

- To develop procedures for noting, investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To implement programme of supports for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- To work with appropriate agencies in countering all forms of bullying and promoting anti bullying behaviour.

Relationships and Partnerships

Strong interpersonal connections are a vital part of effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. Interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as our parents' association & parents council, Board of Management, and student council.

The school endeavours to strengthen relationships and partnerships between members of the school community by:

- Providing age and stage appropriate awareness initiatives that engage the student body in looking at their own behaviour – promoting acts of kindness & friendship as well as looking at the causes and impacts & causes of bullying behaviour during SPHE lessons.
- Supporting active participation of students in school life and encouraging parents to have an active participation in school life too.
- Conducting /hosting/ participating in workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise the awareness of the impacts of bullying behaviour
- Supporting activities that build empathy, respect and resilience.
- Teaching problem solving strategies to children.
- 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 discussion of useful ways to identify and reduce bullying behaviour and highlight procedure and how to deal with it if it does occur.

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour

Acceptable use policy
 Home use of assistive technology policy
 Additional supports policy
 Child protection * anti bullying
 Child friendly bí Cineálta
 Special Education teaching policy
 Code of Behaviour
 Child Safeguarding
 Special Needs Assistants policy
 Policy of integration and inclusion
 Admissions policy
 Parental complaints procedure
 Home/school communication **
 SPHE Curriculum
 Pe Curriculum
 School Self Evaluation
 Data Protection Policy
 Oversight Report to Bord of Management
 Staff meetings

C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The Acceptable Use Policy, Supervision Policy, Special Education Policy and Code of Behaviour all support the implementation of the Bí Cineálta Policy.

Effective leadership is a key component with Principal (also DLP), Deputy Principal (also DDLP) and all middle management focused on supporting the implementation of this policy.

Responsibility for 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.
- The DLP/DDLP will follow up after 20 days to investigate if bullying behaviour has ceased.
- All staff will be vigilant to bullying behaviour
- Principal will inform Board of Management of incidences of bullying.
- DLP/DDLP will provide up to date information and supports if needed to assist class teacher in addressing concern.

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:

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:

First - Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

Class teacher(s) will be fair and consistent in their approach when addressing bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents using the above questions as a guide.

The following questions will be explored to first identify if bullying behaviour has occurred:

1. Targeted? Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?
2. Harm? Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?
3. Repeated? Is the behaviour repeated?

If the answer to each of these is yes, then behaviour is bullying behaviour and the behaviour should be addressed using the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

If the answer to any of the questions is no, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

Second - Restorative Practice Method:

If a group of students are involved each student should be engaged with individually at first, thereafter all students will meet as a group.

In the group meeting each student will be asked for their account of what happened and write down their account of the incident using these 6 restorative questions as a guide

1. What happened?
2. What were you thinking at the time?
3. What have you been thinking since?
4. Who has been affected and in what way?
5. How could things have been done differently?
6. What do you think needs to happen next?

When addressing bullying behaviour, the following principles must be adhered to:

- Ensure 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.
- Take action in a timely manner.
- Inform parents of those involved
- Listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation

This can be done by asking the following questions and taking on board what they need

1. What did you think when you realized what had happened?
2. What impact did this incident have on you and others?
3. What has been the hardest thing for you?
4. What do you think needs to be done to make things right?

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 this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved.

Non-teaching staff such as special needs assistants, bus escorts, cleaners are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to a class teacher.

All class teachers are to follow the guidelines set about above.

Given the complexity of bullying behaviour no one approach works to resolve the behaviour in all situations. The resolution will be guided by the responses by both the person being bullied and the person exhibiting bullying behaviour and the severity of the case.

Parental involvement

The parents of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to explain the actions being taken. The school will give parents/guardians an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the support provided to the pupils.

It must be made clear to all involved that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required this is a private matter (under GDPR) between the pupil being disciplined, his/her parents/guardians and the school.

Requests to take no action

A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask that the member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than look out for them. Where this occurs, it is important that the members of staff deals with the matter sensitively and works out together with the student what steps can be taken to address the matter and how their parents will be informed of the situation.

Parents of the pupil who experienced the bullying behaviour may also specifically ask that the school take no action. Parents must put this request in writing to the school. However, while acknowledging the parents request, schools might decide that, based on circumstances it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

Recording bullying behaviour

When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the teacher(s) will complete a report to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the interventions as well as the views of the students, and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour. It should also include a review with the students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased. Any external services/supports engaged should be noted.

The incident will be recorded on databiz under heading log of actions and a copy will be kept in their file to be passed on to the next teacher, if the student has a student support file, it will be updated to include measures taken. The date of the initial engagement with the students, their parents and all engagements after should be noted.

Determining if bullying behaviour has ceased

The class teacher must engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 days after the initial discussion to review the progress following the initial intervention.

If the bullying behaviour has not ceased the class teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents. A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased.

If it becomes clear that the student who is displaying bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school should consider using strategies within the schools' Code of Behaviour. If disciplinary sanctions are considered this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents/guardians and the school.

Complaint's process

If parents/guardians are not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with these procedures, they should be referred to the schools Parental Complaints Procedure.

Approaches for those who experience/witness/display bullying behaviour.

The schools programme of support of working with pupils affected by bullying behaviour is as follows:

- Managing the bullying behaviour
- Promote a positive school culture where pupils feel safe, respected and valued.
- Encourage a school environment where pupils will tell if they see something they don't like.
- Raising awareness of the appropriate programmes and teacher training.
- Teaching friendship and anti-bullying lessons in all classes.
- Teaching self-esteem and tolerance of differences in all classes.
- Helping pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills
- Supporting the pupils who have experienced bullying behaviour, displayed bullying behaviour and witnessed bullying behaviour

Supporting Bullied pupils:

- Ending the bullying behaviour
- 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,
- Inform parents of various supports available that the teacher deems could be helpful.
- 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 pupils who carried out bullying behaviour:

- Making it clear that pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a ‘clean sheet,’
- Inform parents of various supports available that the teacher deems could be helpful.
- Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils’ feelings of self-worth.
- In dealing with negative behaviour 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 slate” or no blame in return for a promise of 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*.

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. 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: Myra Hulme Date: 26.05.2025 (Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: Karen Stenson Date: 26.05.2025 (Principal)