

Appendix A

School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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The Board of Management of Bishopstown Community 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.

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	April 23 rd 2025	Whole staff presentation on Cinealta, discussion and staff survey.
Students	October 13 th 2025	The policy was given to Student Council members to read and review. Discussion, clarification and a survey. The policy was described and explained to the whole student body at Tutor Time on 21 st October 2025
Parents	October 13 th 2025	Parents Association, to read, review and comment
Board of Management	October 23 rd 2025	
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers		
Date policy was approved: October 23 rd 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: October 2025		

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):

- The Code of behaviour
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- The SPHE and RE syllabi
- The Student Council
- Peer Mentoring
- Course content in a variety of subjects, which fosters respect and inclusion
- Extra-Curricular activities
- Guest Speakers
- Lunchtime activities

- Digital Literacy Short Course
- Stand-up week
- Gratitude week
- World Religions Week
- Intercultural week
- Celebrating student achievement.
- Wellbeing Week
- Shine Positive Mind-set Workshop (5th Years)
- Student Achievement Awards
- Alert Programme
- Getting it Together Programme
- Check and Connect

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):

- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develop an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on students' lives and the need to respond to it through both prevention and intervention e.g. FUSE anti-bullying programme
- Professional development focusing specifically on the training of relevant teachers
- Whole school awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying to include students, parent(s) / guardian(s) and the wider school community
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours, extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and to report issues to the relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student's use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) within the school. (For full details see schools Acceptable usage policy)

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Heads, Class Teachers.

All staff have a responsibility to be alert to bullying behavior and to report any suspicion or evidence of such behavior.

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):

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the Year Head / Class Teacher / Key Person will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- Parent(s) / guardian(s) and students are required to cooperate fully with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is possible, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible
- The investigating Year Head / Class Teacher / Key Person should use a calm and problem solving approach
- All incidents should be investigated outside the classroom to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all students involved. Students who are not directly involved (bystanders) can also provide useful information in this way
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the Year Head / Class Teacher / Key Person should seek answers to questions of who, what, where, when and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-confrontational manner
- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved may be met as a group. If a group meeting takes place, each member should be asked for his / her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the Year Head / Class Teacher / Key Person. In some cases it may be appropriate to ask members of a group to write their statement down to avoid pressure from other group members
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant Year Head / Class Teacher / Key Person, that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s) / guardian(s) of the parties involved should be contacted as soon as possible to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy) The school should give parent(s) / guardian(s) an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the students
- Where the Year Head / Class Teacher / Key Person has determined that a student has engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the schools anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the point of view of students being bullied

- It must also be made clear to all parties involved (student(s) and parent(s) / guardian(s)) that in any situation where sanctions through the school's code of behaviour policy are required, is a private matter between the student receiving the sanction, their parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school
- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately addressed the Year Head / Class Teacher / Key Person must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
 - Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased
 - Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is possible
 - Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is possible
 - Any feedback from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s) or the school Principal / Deputy-Principal
- Follow up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the student who has been bullied is ready and agreeable
- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be referred, as appropriate to the Principal / Deputy Principal

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):

- All in school supports and opportunities will be provided for students affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise self-belief, to develop friendships and build resilience e.g.
 - Interventions through the student support team
 - Peer mentoring
 - Year Head / Class Teacher / Key Person Support
- If students require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to provide this support either in school through the Guidance Counsellor or will endeavour to liaise with the relevant outside agencies to organise same

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)