Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour in Scoil Bhride, Kill

The Board of Management of Scoil Bhríde, Kill, Roll No. 17662R 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 **Appendix A**

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.

Core Definition of Bullying Behaviour

Bullying is defined in Bí Cineálta 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. Bullying is repeated, intentional behaviour causing hurt or distress. The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures available here.

This policy sets out how the school community at Scoil Bhríde, prevents and addresses bullying behaviour, in accordance with the requirements of the *Bí Cineálta* procedures. Strategies for responding to inappropriate behaviour that does not constitute bullying are outlined in 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	Dec.2025 Week 31st March - April 8th April 2025	Seminar Principal's Training Questionnaire via Google Forms ½ Day closure to discuss document as Whole School Staff
Students	Week 31st March - April 28th May 2025	Focus Groups with children Bí Cineálta Poster Competition
Parents	Week 31st March - April	Questionnaire via Google Forms
Board of Management	16th June 2025 28th August 2025 24th September 2025 End of September 2025	BOM notified of changes from Anti Bullying to Bí Cineálta from Sept 2025 Provisional policy ratified by BOM in consultation with staff. Final draft of Bí Cineálta Policy shared with BOM and video from Patrons Office, to invite feedback and suggestions. Ratify and monitor implementation and effectiveness of the policy through feedback from the principal at each meeting and its annual review
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	26th September 2025	Discussion
Date policy was approved: 28th August 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: 24th September 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):

A positive and inclusive school culture and environment is essential to prevent and address bullying behaviour. The school environment should be a space where students and school staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported.

Relationships between all members of the school community should be based on respect, care, integrity and trust. Open communication between the patron, boards of management, school staff, students and their parents help to foster a collaborative approach and shared responsibilities in relation to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

The school leadership team influences the school culture and set the standards and expectations for the school community when preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. Each member of school staff has a responsibility to develop and maintain a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and to take a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.

Students can shape the school culture by promoting kindness and inclusion within their peer group and maintain a positive and supportive school environment for all.

Parents, as active partners in their child's education, can help foster an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated through promoting empathy and respect.

We are committed to creating and maintaining a positive school climate that promotes respectful relationships across the school community. Our prevention strategies are guided by the **Bí Cineálta** procedures and focus on fostering a culture where bullying is never acceptable. We implement the following prevention strategies:

1. **Whole-School Approach**
   - o We promote a positive school culture through regular whole-school initiatives that reinforce respectful behaviour, kindness, inclusion, equality, equity and empathy (e.g. Wellbeing Activities, 70 Acts of Kindness, Assemblies).
   - o Our Code of Behaviour outlines expectations for respectful behaviour and the consequences of engaging in bullying.
   - o There are a large variety of preventative educational programmes and resources available to staff **Appendix B**

2. Prevention through Education

- o Anti-bullying education is embedded in the SPHE curriculum across all class levels, with particular emphasis on topics such as self-esteem, empathy, conflict resolution, respect for diversity and the impact of bullying.
- o We use the Stay Safe and Walk Tall programmes to support pupils in identifying bullying behaviour and knowing how to respond appropriately. We use the Weaving Wellbeing programme as well as online safety and digital citizenship training programmes via WebWise.
- o We provide RSE workshops in both 5th and 6th class.
- o Our whole staff are engaging in two years of sustained support from the NCSE on 'Relate': a regulation first approach to reframing behaviour and supporting student engagement and participation. This begins in October 2025.

3. Digital Citizenship and Online Safety

- o Online safety and digital citizenship are taught explicitly to all classes, using materials from WebWise and other age-appropriate resources.
- o Pupils are educated about the impact of online behaviour and how to be responsible, respectful internet users. This includes guidance on managing privacy settings, reporting abuse, and understanding the consequences of cyberbullying.
- o We are concerned about the level of screen time the children are accessing and are asking parents to place limits and parental controls on their devices and apps.
- o See comprehensive list of recommended Oide resources attached to this policy which the staff use as Preventative Educational programmes

4. Addressing Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying

- o We promote respect for all individuals regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.
- o Lessons and school discussions affirm that homophobic and transphobic language or actions are unacceptable.
- o Staff are supported in confidently addressing these forms of bullying and modelling inclusive language and attitudes.

5. Addressing Racist and Sexist Bullying and Sexual Harassment

- o Through SPHE, History, and intercultural activities, we foster an appreciation of diversity and educate pupils about the harmful effects of racism and sexism.
- o We explicitly teach that discrimination or harassment based on race, culture, nationality, gender, or perceived gender roles is unacceptable.
- o Age-appropriate lessons help pupils understand the meaning of personal boundaries and respectful interactions.

6. Staff Training and Supervision

- o Staff receive training, CPD and guidance on identifying, preventing, and responding to bullying behaviour, including specific types such as online, racist, homophobic, and sexist bullying.

- o Effective supervision of pupils occurs during all transitions and break times. Staff remain vigilant for early signs of bullying and respond immediately in line with school procedures.

7. **Pupil Voice and Participation**
   - o Pupil input on whether the school is a safe and inclusive space for all, is encouraged through class discussions, the Student Council, The Junior SSE Team etc.
   - o Children are empowered to report bullying and to support peers in doing the same, knowing they will be heard and supported. This can be facilitated through Circle Time and building open relationships with teachers etc. We have a 'telling culture' in Scoil Bhríde.
   - o The whole staff support positive behaviours within Scoil Bhríde by rewarding customised Scoil Bhríde blue tokens to pupils for deeds of kindness, respect, helpfulness and support.
   - o Student voice is recognised and valued through their involvement in the Junior SSE Team, part of the Relate team and Junior Librarians etc.

7. **Parent and Community Involvement**
   - o Parents are encouraged to model and reinforce positive, respectful behaviours at home and at school.
   - o Parents are informed of the school's anti-bullying procedures (Bí Cineálta) through the school website.
   - o We foster open communication with families and the wider community to promote a consistent approach to preventing and addressing bullying

Supervision

We recognise the critical role that supervision and monitoring play in preventing and responding to bullying behaviour. The school has the following supervision and monitoring structures in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures). In line with *Bí Cineálta* procedures, the following measures are in place:

- o **Supervision of Pupils:**

  All pupils are actively supervised during school hours within the building for arrival, break times, transitions, and dismissal. Staff are present in key areas such as classrooms, corridors and yards to ensure safe and respectful interactions.

- o **Monitoring of Behaviour:**

  Teachers use observation and informal monitoring during class time and yard duty to identify early signs of bullying behaviour. The children are familiar with the 'Yard Book' for denoting both positive and negative behaviours on yard. Staff are alert to changes in behaviour or social dynamics that may indicate bullying.

o **Communication Among Staff:**

Regular staff meetings and informal check-ins allow for the sharing of concerns regarding pupil wellbeing or suspected bullying behaviour. This ensures a coordinated and timely response.

o **Classroom Management:**

Class teachers implement proactive strategies to foster positive behaviour, such as clear rules, cooperative learning, seating plans, and promoting kindness and inclusion.

o **Record-Keeping and Reporting:**

Incidents of bullying or suspected bullying are recorded in line with school policy and the *Bí Cineálta* reporting procedures. Patterns are monitored over time to ensure appropriate follow-up and support.

o **Supervision Structures:**

The school's supervision procedures are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect good practice and to ensure it effectively supports the prevention and early identification of bullying behaviour.

o **School Environment:**

o Efforts are made to ensure that all school spaces are welcoming and inclusive, with visual reminders (e.g. posters, displays) reinforcing messages of anti-bullying and positive behaviour.

o A simplified version of the Bí Cineálta Policy, written in accessible language for students and parents, with input from our pupils is on display in every classroom and on the corridors of Scoil Bhríde. **Appendix D**

o Sixth class have many occasions to support infant classes through the Comhairleoirí Clois on infant yard and reading buddy systems within the school day.

These strategies support a proactive approach to preventing bullying and ensuring all pupils feel safe, respected, and supported throughout the school day.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

At **Scoil Bhríde** all members of staff have a shared responsibility to respond to bullying behaviour. However, specific roles are assigned to ensure a consistent and effective response:

o **Class Teacher:**

The class teacher is the first point of contact for addressing any concerns related to bullying behaviour involving pupils in their care. They investigate reports, support the pupils involved and communicate with parents where appropriate.

o **Principal / Deputy Principal:**

The Principal (and Deputy Principal, where applicable) oversees the implementation of the Bí Cineálta policy and ensures that all reports of bullying are dealt with in accordance

with the *Bí Cineálta* procedures. They manage cases requiring further intervention, support staff in their roles and liaise with parents and outside agencies when necessary.

Supporting Students When Bullying Occurs

When bullying behaviour occurs, Scoil Bhríde is committed to ensuring that the response is compassionate, respectful and effective. The school will:

- o Ensure that the student experiencing bullying is heard and reassured.
- o Seek to ensure the privacy and dignity of all involved.
- o Conduct all conversations with sensitivity and care.
- o Consider the age, ability and needs of those involved in addressing the situation.
- o Listen carefully to the views of the student experiencing bullying regarding how best to resolve the issue.
- o Take timely and appropriate action to address the behaviour.

Keep parents of all parties informed throughout the process to foster cooperation and support.

The steps below will be taken by the school to determine if bullying behaviour has occurred, approaches taken to address the bullying behaviour and to review progress are taken from the approach outlined in Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

1. **Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred**

The definition of bullying, as stated on Page 1, sets out clear criteria to help schools to identify bullying behaviour.

Incidents can occur where behaviour is unacceptable and hurtful, but the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies that deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour. When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the teacher should consider the following: what, where, when and why?

i. **Initial Concern raised:** A staff member, usually the class teacher, will listen carefully to the concern raised by a pupil, parent or colleague.

ii. **Gathering Information:**

The teacher will gather relevant information by speaking sensitively with the pupil(s) involved, witnesses (if any) and reviewing any written accounts or observations. Pupils are supported and reassured throughout. Appendix 6 *Bí Cineálta* supports meeting both with groups and individuals. If a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first. Thereafter, all students involved should be met 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 should be supported, as appropriate, following the group meeting. It may also be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident.

iii. **Assessing the Behaviour:**

The teacher assesses the behaviour against the definition of bullying as repeated, intentional behaviour causing hurt or distress. The *Checklist for Determining if Bullying Has Occurred* (from Bí Cineálta) may be used to support this step.

2. Where bullying behaviour has occurred

Stage 1 – Resolving Informally:
- Where appropriate, the behaviour is addressed through supportive interventions, including: Restorative conversations: Using Restorative questions **Appendix C,** Clarifying expectations and school rules
- Mediation between pupils
- Encouraging reflection, empathy and understanding
- Parent/guardians of all parties are informed.

Stage 2 – Formal Investigation and Recording:
If the behaviour persists or is serious in nature:
- A formal investigation is conducted by the class teacher and/or Principal. Good practice would be to conduct interviews outside the classroom and nearby.
- The behaviour is recorded using the *Bí Cineálta* template (Date NB)
- Parents/guardians of all parties are informed, taking account of potential communication barriers
- Support is put in place for both the pupil experiencing bullying and the pupil engaging in the behaviour.

Stage 3 – Ongoing Monitoring and Support:
- Listen to the student(s) and involve them in deciding the next steps.
- Individual behaviour support plans may be used.
- Counselling / pastoral care supports may be accessed (internal or external).
- The school works in partnership with parents/guardians to monitor progress and prevent recurrence.

Where the student displaying the bullying behaviour is not a student in the school, but the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour is a student in the school, the school should support the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as appropriate and engage with them and their parents to determine what steps can be taken.

The following principles must be adhered to when addressing bullying behaviour:

1. ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured
2. seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
3. conduct all conversations with sensitivity
4. consider the age and ability of those involved
5. listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
6. take action in a timely manner inform parents of those involved

3. Requests to take no action

A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than "look out" for them. The student may not want to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They may feel that telling someone might make things more difficult for them. Where this occurs, it is important that the member of staff shows empathy to the student, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the student to work out together what steps can be taken to address the matter and how their parents will be informed of the situation. It is important that the student who has experienced bullying behaviour feels safe.

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 to the school or be facilitated to do so where there are literacy, digital literacy or language barriers. However, while acknowledging the parent's request, schools may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

4. Determining if bullying behaviour has ceased

Reviewing Progress

- o **Follow-up Meetings:**
  Follow-up meetings are held with pupils and parents (no more than 20 school days after initial discussion) to ensure the bullying behaviour has stopped and that relationships are improving.
- o **Monitoring for Recurrence:**
  Staff continue to monitor the situation over time, particularly during unstructured times (e.g. yard, group work).
- o **Review by Leadership Team:**
  Patterns of behaviour or repeat incidents are reviewed by the Principal and staff to ensure appropriate measures are in place school wide.

Restorative and Preventative Actions:

Restorative practices and further prevention strategies are implemented to rebuild trust, support relationships, and reinforce a positive school culture.

Staff Training: in keeping with the advice on Pg 54 of procedures, staff have been trained in Restorative Practice by a trained facilitator and refreshed on 12th March 2024

If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students and parents and agree to meet again over an agreed timeframe until the bullying behaviour has ceased.

Where it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school should consider using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school.

5. Recording bullying behaviour

All bullying behaviour will be recorded Aladdin. 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. In line with the **Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (DES, 2023)**, where there is a concern that a child is being, or at risk of being, bullied and such bullying is regarded as **child abuse**, the matter will be referred to the **Designated Liaison Person (DLP)** (principal) **or Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLP)** (deputy principal) without delay. The DLP will then follow the correct reporting procedures as outlined in the school's **Child Safeguarding Statement** and national guidelines.

These records should be retained in accordance with the school's record keeping policy and with data protection regulations.

6. Complaint process

If a parent is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with these procedures, they should be referred to the school's complaints procedure.

In the event that a student and/or parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, a student and/or parent 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 Office of the Ombudsman for Children can be contacted at ococomplaint@oco.ie.

7. Supports

Supports are available to help prevent and address bullying behaviour. Further information on the following are available on Chapter 6 Bí Cineálta (pg 46):

National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) , Oide, Webwise, National Parents Council, Dublin City University (DCU) Anti Bullying Centre, Tusla.

Bullying Outside of School

While the primary responsibility of Scoil Bhride relates to incidents that occur on school grounds or during school-related activities, the school acknowledges that bullying behaviour taking place outside of school—such as online or within the wider community—can significantly affect a pupil's wellbeing and engagement in school life. When such incidents are reported to school staff and are found to impact a pupil, the school will, insofar as is practicable and within its remit, respond in accordance with this policy. This may involve collaboration with parents and, where appropriate, referral to relevant external agencies.

Scoil Bhríde will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour, tailoring to the needs of each individual, as outlined below:

1. Supporting Pupils Who Experience Bullying Behaviour

- o **Listening and Reassurance:**
  Pupils are listened to openly with empathy and their concerns are taken seriously. They are reassured that they are not to blame and that steps will be taken to keep them safe.
- o **Restoring a Sense of Safety and Confidence:**
  Pupils are supported to rebuild their self-esteem and sense of belonging in the school through positive relationships, encouragement, and inclusion in group activities.
- o **Ongoing Check-ins:**
  Designated staff (usually the class teacher) will follow up regularly with the pupil to monitor their wellbeing and ensure the bullying has stopped. Check-ins with parents/responsible adults.
- o **Access to Pastoral Supports:**
  Where appropriate, additional supports such as school-based wellbeing programmes, informal mentoring or external counselling services may be advised/offered.

2. Supporting Pupils Who Witness Bullying Behaviour

- o **Encouragement to Speak Up:**
  Pupils are encouraged and praised for reporting concerns or supporting a peer who may be experiencing bullying.
- o **Empowering Bystanders:**
  Class discussions and SPHE lessons help pupils understand how to safely and effectively intervene, report bullying, and support inclusion.
- o **Ensuring Their Wellbeing:**
  Pupils who witness bullying are also given the opportunity to speak about their feelings and receive reassurance or support as needed.

3. Supporting Pupils Who Display Bullying Behaviour

- o **Understanding the Behaviour:**
  Pupils are helped to understand the impact of their behaviour on others and to take responsibility for their actions in a non-shaming, supportive manner.
- o **Restorative Practices:**
  Where appropriate, restorative conversations or activities are used to repair harm, promote empathy, and rebuild relationships.
- o **Behaviour Support and Re-education:**
  Targeted behaviour plans, social skills teaching and self-regulation strategies may be put in place to support positive behaviour change.
- o **Parental Involvement:**
  Parents/guardians are actively involved in supporting their child's behaviour change through positive reinforcement and consistent messaging.

These approaches reflect our school's commitment to fostering a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for all pupils, as guided by the **Bí Cineálta** procedures.

Below is a synopsis of each group and how and who can support them.

Group	Supports Provided	Led by
Pupils Experiencing Bullying	Listening, reassurance, restorative support	Class Teacher, Principal
Witnesses	Bystander empowerment, check-ins	Class Teacher, SPHE lessons
Pupils Engaging in Bullying	Behaviour plans, restorative conversations, re-education	Class Teacher, SET Co-ordinator, Parents

Supporting Students at Greater Risk

At Scoil Bhríde, we recognise that some pupils may be more vulnerable to bullying behaviour, including students with additional needs and special educational needs (SEN), those from minority or marginalised backgrounds and those experiencing other forms of disadvantage. We are committed to providing additional tailored supports to these pupils to ensure their safety and wellbeing. This includes differentiated pastoral care, individualised behaviour support plans where needed, collaboration with SETs and inclusion staff, and close communication with families. Our staff receive ongoing training to understand the unique challenges faced by these pupils and to foster an inclusive environment that actively counters discrimination and promotes respect for diversity, in line with Chapter 3 of the Bí Cineálta procedures. Supports will be informed by the NCSE Guidelines for Supporting Students with SEN and the school's Wellbeing and Inclusion policies. Where necessary, advice from NEPS and external professionals will be sought.

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: *Fiona Pakenham*　　　　　　　　　　**Date:** 25/09/2025

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: *Carmel Linehan*　　　　　　　　　　**Date:** 25/09/2025

(Principal)