



Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and PostPrimary Schools



# Scoil Eoin Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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

The Board of Management of Scoil Eoin 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, recognising 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.”

*These procedures are underpinned by a range of legislation which includes the following: The Education Welfare Act 20006 provides that the board of management of a recognised school shall, after consultation with the principal of, the teachers teaching at, the parents of students registered at, and the educational welfare officer assigned functions in relation to, that school, prepare, in accordance with subsection (2), a code of behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school. The Code of Behaviour Guidelines for Schools requires schools to have an antibullying policy as part of the school’s Code of Behaviour.*

*Schools have an obligation under the Equal Status Acts 2000–20188 to prevent harassment (including sexual harassment) on the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, and membership of the Traveller community.*

*The Children First Act 2015 places a statutory obligation on schools to ensure, as far as practicable, that each child attending the school is safe from harm while attending school or otherwise participating in school activities.*

*The Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020 also known as Coco’s Law provides that a person who distributes, publishes or threatens to distribute or publish an intimate image of another person (a) without that other person’s consent, and (b) with intent to cause harm to, or being reckless as to whether or not harm is caused to, the other person, is guilty of an offence.*

## **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 following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- **Deliberate exclusion** i.e. forming cliques, favouritism and isolation
- **Malicious gossip** and other forms of relational bullying
- **Cyber-bullying**
- **Identity-based bullying** such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person’s membership of the Traveller community or residential address and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.
- **Humiliation**; including name-calling, reference to academic ability, physical characteristics, accent or distinctive voice, sexual innuendo etc.

- **Intimidation**; including aggressive use of body language / dirty looks/mimicking.
- **Verbal abuse**, showing disrespect anonymous or otherwise.
- **Physical abuse** or threatened abuse. (pushing, punching, kicking, tripping, assaulting)
- **Sexist Bullying Behaviour**
- **Sexual Harassment**
- **Aggressive or obscene language.**
- **Disablist Bullying**
- **Exceptionally Able Bullying**
- **Physical Appearance Bullying**
- **Poverty Bullying**
- **Offensive** joke; whether spoken or by email, text messaging etc.

***Any repeat of the above behaviour is considered bullying***

**NOTE:** However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be view and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour. (This includes group messages).

***Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the schools' code of behaviour.***

Scoil Eoin has developed and will implement this Bí Cineálta policy setting out how the school community prevents and addresses bullying 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	September 2024 March 14 <sup>th</sup> 2025	Staff Meeting & Inservice
Students	September 2024	Student Council Meeting
Parents	September 2024	Parents Association Meeting
Board of Management	May 28 <sup>th</sup> 2025	Board Meeting

Wider school community as appropriate for example, bus drivers	September 2024 March 2025	Bus Escorts
Date Policy was approved: May 28 <sup>th</sup> 2025.		
Date policy was last reviewed: May 28 <sup>th</sup> 2025.		

## **Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour**

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by this school to address all forms of bullying behaviour, in whatever form and however motivated, including online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment..

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

Creating a positive culture and environment is foundational to preventing bullying and promoting a sense of belonging for all students and staff. In a school where kindness, respect, and inclusion are prioritized, students are more likely to feel safe, supported, and connected. This sense of belonging significantly reduces bullying incidents and fosters a climate where everyone thrives academically and socially. In Scoil Eoin we will implement the following strategies:

### **1. Promote Kindness and Respect as Core Values**

- **Kindness Initiatives:** We actively promote kindness as a core value through targeted initiatives. Acts of Kindness are encouraged and celebrated at class level and at our monthly School Assemblies.
- **Empathy Building:** We cultivate empathy by integrating lessons on understanding others' feelings and perspectives. Activities such as role-playing or empathy exercises help students learn how to step into someone else's shoes and appreciate the impact of their words and actions.
- **Celebrating Positive Behaviours:** Celebrate kindness, respect, and helpfulness through monthly school assemblies and social media posts – Kindness Awards and School Spirit Award. Public recognition of students who embody these values can inspire others to follow suit and reinforce the school's positive culture.

### **2. Building an Inclusive and Welcoming Atmosphere**

- **Inclusive Language and Actions:** From classroom discussions to hallway interactions, the use of inclusive language by staff and students is key to creating a welcoming environment. Teachers and staff model inclusive behaviour, avoiding discriminatory or exclusionary language, and encouraging students to do the same.
- **Cultural Awareness and Diversity Celebrations:** We celebrate diverse backgrounds, traditions, and experiences of our students. Students are given the opportunity at School Assemblies to share their backgrounds and learn from each other, fostering mutual respect and understanding.
- **Safe and Supportive Spaces:** We strive to ensure that every child feels safe by creating dedicated support systems in the school, for example movement breaks, supervised yards at Breaktimes and arrival to school, extra supervision for excursions, Braincalm programme, Draw & Talk programme, Social skills groups etc for children requiring some extra supports. School policy is around discrimination, making it clear that all students, regardless of race, gender, religion, or ability, are equally valued members of the school community.

### 3. Creating Strong Student-Teacher Relationships

- **Teacher as Role Models:** Teachers play a critical role in modelling positive behaviours. Teachers are expected to demonstrate kindness, patience, and respect in their daily interactions, setting a tone for how students should treat one another.
- **Positive Feedback and Recognition:** Teachers provide positive reinforcement for respectful and kind behaviour, offering praise and rewards when students demonstrate consideration for others.

### 4. Involving the Whole School Community

- **Whole-School Commitment to Values:** Everyone will be made aware of and actively promote the school's core values of respect, kindness, and inclusion. Regular reminders of these values, through posters displayed around the school, assemblies, and visual displays, keep the community aligned.
- **Student Voice and Empowerment:** Involving students in shaping the school's culture gives them a sense of ownership and responsibility. We have established a student council in the school. They get an opportunity each year to brainstorm and suggest initiatives aimed at improving school climate, such as anti-bullying campaigns, inclusion programs, or peer mediation schemes.
- **Family and Parent Involvement:** Parents are key partners in reinforcing a positive school culture. We keep open communication lines between home and school regarding bullying prevention.

### 5. Encouraging Positive Peer Interactions

- **Cooperative Learning and Team-Building:** Teachers encourage cooperation and teamwork rather than competition in their classes. Group projects and cooperative learning activities, create opportunities for students to work together, learn from each other, and build strong peer relationships based on mutual respect.
- **Buddy Systems:** A buddying system has been established, where older students are paired with younger students, to encourage and build friendships across age groups and greater connection and sense of belonging amongst the school community.
- **Celebrating Teamwork and Collaboration:** We celebrate teamwork and collaboration through public recognition on our Facebook page, whether in sports, academics, or creative endeavours, highlighting the benefits of working together strengthens the sense of community.

## **6. A Focus on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)**

- **Embedding SEL in the Curriculum:** Social and We implement Emotional Learning (SEL) programs such as Zippy's Friends and Friends For Life to help students develop crucial skills like emotional regulation, empathy, conflict resolution, and decision-making. Incorporating SEL into the curriculum ensures that students are equipped with the tools they need to navigate social interactions healthily and positively.
- **Circle Time:** Teachers use Circle Time, where students and teachers engage in open, respectful dialogue about their feelings and experiences, can build stronger relationships and resolve tensions before they escalate into bullying. These circles can be used to discuss school culture, peer challenges, and ways to create a more supportive environment.

## **7. Maintaining a Safe Physical Environment**

- **Designing Safe Spaces:** Our physical spaces promote safety and comfort. Classrooms are arranged to encourage participation and inclusion, as well as outdoor areas that are closely supervised to prevent bullying "hot spots."
- **Supervised Free Time:** Sos time and lunchtime are carefully supervised by staff to ensure that students have the opportunity to engage in positive social interactions.
- **Clear Anti-Bullying Signage:** Signage around the school reinforces anti-bullying policies, the importance of kindness, and the value of respect serving as a constant reminder of the school's commitment to a positive environment.

## **8. Education and Awareness Programs**

- Scoil Eoin as part of the SPHE curriculum implements ongoing education programs that teach students about the effects of bullying, the importance of bystander intervention, and how to foster a respectful community. Some programs include: Walk Tall Programme, Stay Safe Programme, Webwise

## **9. Restorative Practices**

- Teachers employ restorative practices such as restorative conversations, mediation, or peer support in supporting pupils to work towards amends and repair relationships.

## Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

***The Class teacher (and Principal where necessary) has responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour:***

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:

**Bullying that occurs in school- i.e REPEATED** instances of unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) or **once off postings (within school) in the case of 'Cyberbullying'**.

**To begin with, we need to ensure that we are differentiating between BULLYING and BOTHERING.** Sometimes, it's simply a conflict with a friend that hasn't been resolved. Oftentimes, parents use the term "bullying" when it's simply an issue of peer groups that aren't getting along.

**Allegations of Bullying within school:**

**Step 1 - TO BE DEALT WITH BY CLASS TEACHER**

- A. All allegations of bullying will be investigated by the class teacher.
- Speak to the Students involved
    - First interview the victim(s)
    - then interview the alleged perpetrator. If bullying involves a group of Students, member of that group will be first met individually and then as a whole.
- B. The teacher records whatever details are known by completing 'Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour.'

C. Should there be no evidence to support allegation, teacher should inform all parents/guardians concerned to this effect.

D. Alternatively, should there be evidence of bullying:

- Inform parents/guardians concerned
- Speak to entire class if appropriate
- Impose appropriate sanction
- Support victim/s of bullying
- Resolve any issues and restore as far as practicable the relationships of the parties involved, Mediation between Students, acknowledging what has happened, what harm has been done and what can be done to put it right, apologising and finally agreeing a way forward is at the heart of this practice.
- Record actions taken in Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour.
- While the Principal is not directly involved at this stage,
  - he will be informed of the matter and
  - completed copy by the teacher of Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour will be filed in Principal's office.,
- Should the Student engage in further bullying behaviour, he / she will be:
  - Referred to the Principal

### **STEP 2 – TO BE DEALT WITH BY THE PRINCIPAL**

- Parents/guardians will be informed and a meeting organised with the Student, principal and class teacher
- A further sanction will be imposed and parents and Student will be informed that any further bullying will lead to suspension from school as per school's Code of Behaviour.
- Record of this meeting will be filed in Principal's office.

### **Incidents of Bullying that occur outside of school.**

Where bullying occurs outside of the school and

a) **spills into the school and becomes an issue here or**

b) **follows on from a systematic pattern of antagonism within school** then we have a duty of care to deal with the issue in the same manner as we would incidents of bullying within the school.

If the above is not the case i.e. that there is no history of antagonism in the school involving these Students and /or the conflict hasn't spilled into the school the following are the steps to follow:

- Take steps to ensure the Student isn't being victimised in school
- Inform parents of perpetrator/s that a report/complaint has been made against their child
- Support the victim by reinforcing that this isn't their fault and give them advice around keeping safe
- Support parents by giving them advice around
  - keeping their Students safe
  - Putting them in touch with link agencies if required.ie NEPS, Kerry Counselling services, Gardai etc.

### **Cyberbullying and Punishment**

We can only punish students for engaging in cyberbullying activities if

1. School technology resources are used (hardware or network);
2. Personal technologies are used on school grounds or at school-sponsored events;

Note:

- the punishment appropriately measures up to the severity of the infraction
- the punishment is similar to a punishment that would occur in a face-to-face bullying episode.

***OUR CHIEF ROLE IS IN EDUCATION –SUPPORTING THE SCHOOL'S ANTI-BULLYING POLICY - AND IN REINFORCING THE LESSONS IN THE STAY SAFE PROGRAMME, WALK TALL PROGRAMME and RSE PROGRAMME***

### **RECORDS**

A standardised record system will be used to track an individual Student's Behaviour. Such records will contain:

- Incidents of misbehaviour
- interventions used to improve behaviour, including contact with parent(s)/guardian(s) or referral to other agencies
- Evidence of improved behaviour
- Any sanctions imposed, and the reasons they were imposed

Both parents/guardians and Students will be told when a record is being made about a child's behaviour, and the reasons for keeping a record will be explained.

All records will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988 and the Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003.

## 1. The school's programme of support for working with Students affected by bullying is as follows:

The school's programme of support for working with Students affected by bullying is as follows:

- ***Bullied Students:***
  - Ending the bullying behaviour,
  - Changing the school culture to foster more respect for bullied Students and all Students,
  - Changing the school culture to foster greater empathy towards and support for bullied Students,
  - Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted Student through the awareness-raising programme,
  - Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted Student through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations,
  - Helping bullied Students 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).
  - Implementing a 'buddy system' in the school (*if applicable*),
- ***Bullying Students:***
  - Making it clear that bullying Students who reform are doing the right and honourable thing.
  - Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that 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),
  - Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance Students' 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,

## **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.

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)

# Bí Cineálta!

We want everyone at our school to feel safe and happy.

If you think that you are being bullied or someone else is being bullied, you need to tell a teacher or another adult that you trust. They will know what to do to help.

Get help!

Tell someone!

If a student tells a staff member that they think they are being bullied, we will:

- > talk with the student
- > ask the student what they want to happen
- > work out a plan together
- > talk to their parents
- > talk to the other student(s) involved
- > talk with the other student's parents

Please tell someone if you think that you are being bullied or someone else is being bullied.

Our school has a Bí Cineálta policy to try to stop bullying behaviour.

We look at this policy every year to see what is working well or what could work better.

We will ask you what you think.



Bullying behaviour is when someone keeps being mean or hurtful to others on purpose over and over again.

When it happens a lot.  
Not just once.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Indications of Bullying:**

The following signs/symptoms may suggest that a Student is being bullied:-

- anxiety about travelling to and from school - requesting parents to drive or collect them, changing route of travel, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school;
- unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, 'mitching', 'ditching';
- deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school;
- pattern of physical illnesses (e.g. headaches, stomach aches);
- unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour; it may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays;
- visible signs of anxiety or distress - stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting;
- spontaneous out-of-character comments about either Students or teachers;
- possessions missing or damaged;
- increased requests for money or stealing money;
- unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing;
- reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her.

Those signs do not necessarily mean that a Student is being bullied. If repeated or occurring in combination these signs do warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the Student.

#### ***Disclosure:***

Students will be encouraged to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour. They will be helped to differentiate between incidents of a minor nature and those that constitute bullying. They will also be taught the difference between 'telling tales' and asking for help.

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Types of cyber-bullying**

**Flaming:** Online fights, usually through emails, instant messaging or chat rooms where angry and rude comments are exchanged.

**Denigration:** Putting mean online messages through email, instant messaging, chat rooms or websites set up to make fun someone.

**Exclusion:** Intentionally leaving someone out of a group such as instant messaging, friend sites or other online group activities

**Outing:** Sharing secrets about someone online including private information, pictures and videos.

**Trickery:** Tricking someone into revealing personal information then sharing it with others.

**Impersonation/Masquerading:** Pretending to be someone else when posting mean or false messages online using fake email address or instant messaging name.

**Harassment:** Repeatedly sending malicious messages to someone online, sometimes at odd times of the day and night.

**Cyberstalking:** Continuously harassing and denigration including threats of physical harm. Messages are normally sent through personal communication such as email or text messages.