

Scoil Chríost Rí, Drumnacurra Ns Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Scoil Chríost Rí, Drumnacurra NS 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 such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the 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 each person 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 all have an indispensable part to play in the school community, regardless of difference.

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	1/3/25	Questionnaire Collaborative staff discussion utilising the Bí Cineálta guidelines, along with relevant scenarios and provided resources.
Students	1/05/25	Pupil Questionnaires Student Meeting
Parents	1/06/25	Questionnaire
Board of Management	June BOM	Discussion and ratification of policy
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	May 2025	Emailed to parents
Date policy was approved: June 16 th 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: March 2026		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

In developing 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 the 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 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 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.

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):

Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary Schools

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*.

Criminal Behaviour

- Bullying behaviour can be considered criminal behaviour under certain circumstances and legal consequences can apply. The age of criminal responsibility in Ireland is 12 years old.

Outside School

- A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care and responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the student involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, Scoil Chríost Rí will deal with it in accordance with our *Bi Cineálta* Policy.

Behaviour that is not Bullying Behaviour

- Some students with special educational needs may have social communication difficulties which make them communicate their needs through behaviours that can hurt themselves or others. It is important to note that these behaviours are not deliberate or planned, but, in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they can't control.

Preventing Sexual Harassment

- The school will use SPHE and RSE lessons to teach students about healthy relationships and how to treat each other with respect and kindness
- Ensure all students and parents adhere to established behavioural standards as outlined in the code of behaviour
- Promote positive role models within the school community
- Challenge gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment
- Outline specific consequences for inappropriate behaviour as per the code of behaviour
- Clearly communicate the school's zero tolerance stance on sexual harassment.
- Foster an environment of mutual respect and understanding of personal boundaries.

Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour

- Members of staff will actively model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex
- Ensure equal access to resources, activities, and leadership roles for all students irrespective of their sex.
- Celebrate diversity at school and acknowledge the contribution of all students
- Organise awareness campaigns, workshops and presentations on gender equality and respect
- Encourage parents to reinforce these values of respect at home.
- Highlight positive male and female role models within the school community.
- Encourage both boys and girls to represent the school equally in sports and extracurricular activities.

Preventing Racist Behaviour

- Promote inclusion by encouraging inclusive practices in both the classroom and during yard activities.
- Foster a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students 'see themselves' in their school environment
- The cultural diversity of the school will be visible and on display.
- Conduct workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of racism.
- Encourage peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- Encourage bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour.
- Provide supports to school staff to respond to the needs of students for whom English is an additional language for communication with their parents
- Provides supports to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma students, and to encourage communication with their parents,
- Celebrate cultural diversity by recognising and celebrating various cultures within the class.
- Educate about racism and differences by teaching lessons that address racism and emphasize the value of our differences.
- Invite speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds.
- Ensure that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds
- Utilise inclusive resources: Incorporate books, posters, and other materials that support diversity and inclusion.
- Teach correct terminology and guide students on using appropriate and respectful language when describing other cultures.

Preventing Homophobic/Transphobic Behaviour

- Maintain an inclusive physical environment such as incorporating materials that reflect diverse family dynamics and situations and by displaying relevant posters
- Encourage peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- Challenge gender-stereotypes
- Conduct workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour
- Encourage students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour
- Demonstrate respect and inclusivity in everyday interactions.
- Address homophobic and transphobic behaviours immediately and consistently.
- Provide topical and relevant lessons to promote understanding and respect.

Preventing Cyberbullying Behaviour

- Hold a Safer Internet Day to promote awareness and education on safe online practices.
- Implement the SPHE curriculum
- Implement the digital literacy curriculum which teaches students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship
- Have regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- Communicate the acceptable use policy for technology
- Refer to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour
- Promote or host online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online
- Incorporate Webwise lessons to teach responsible internet usage.
- Collaborate with organisations like Zeeko and Barnardos for expert guidance.
- Facilitate visits from the Community Garda to discuss online safety and legal implications.
- Consistently talk about and reinforce appropriate online behaviour.
- Educate children early on about the lasting impact of their online actions and about their digital footprint
- Raise awareness about the consequences of enabling cyberbullying.
- **Highlight Legal Consequences:** Use age-appropriate information to emphasize the criminal age of responsibility (12 years old)

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policy along with a yard supervision policy in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

In alignment with the Bí Cineálta procedures and our commitment to fostering a safe and inclusive environment for all students, this procedure outlines the supervision and monitoring strategies implemented to prevent and address bullying behaviour in St. Fintan's NS. Effective supervision and monitoring are critical components in ensuring a positive school climate where all students feel safe and respected.

1. Morning Supervision

- **Classroom Supervision:** Deputy Principal

2. Supervision During Transition Times

- **Arrival and Departure:**
 - Teachers will supervise students as they arrive at and leave the school premises. From 8:40 am in the mornings. and 1:30 for Infants and 2:30 from 1st to 6th
 - Any incidents or patterns of concern observed during these times will be logged and reported to the relevant staff for follow-up.
- **Corridor Supervision (Wet Days):**
 - During wet days all pupils will remain in hall / Teacher remain in class with pupils.
 - Staff will monitor for signs of exclusionary or intimidating behaviours and intervene promptly if necessary.

3. Classroom and Break Supervision

- Teachers will remain vigilant during classroom time and breaks, observing interactions among students and addressing any inappropriate behaviour.
- Teachers will monitor communal areas such as yard, the play area and bathrooms as appropriate to ensure these spaces remain safe.
- Teachers must not leave their classrooms unattended except for toilet breaks or urgent medical reasons. In such cases:
 - The teacher in the nearest classroom must leave their door open and provide supervision for both rooms.

4. Use of Monitoring Tools

- **Incident Logs:**
 - A record of all incidents involving bullying behaviour will be maintained, noting the time, location, individuals involved, and actions taken.
 - Patterns of bullying behaviour will be reviewed periodically to inform proactive measures and interventions.
- **Student Surveys and Feedback:**
 - Anonymous surveys may be conducted periodically to gauge student experiences and identify areas of concern.
 - Feedback from students will be used to adapt supervision strategies and address any blind spots in current practices.

5. Staff Training and Awareness

- All staff will receive regular training on:
 - Recognising signs of bullying behaviour, including subtle and indirect forms.
 - Effective intervention strategies to de-escalate and address incidents.
 - Promoting inclusive and respectful behaviour among students.

6. Parental and Community Involvement

- Parents will be encouraged to report concerns about bullying behaviour, whether observed or reported by their children.
- Communication channels will be established to ensure that parental input informs supervision and monitoring practices.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

All teaching staff are responsible 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 (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

Steps to Determine if Bullying Behaviour Has Occurred

1. Initial Inquiry

- Teachers consider **what, where, when, and why** during the investigation.
- Interview individuals separately if multiple students are involved.

2. Group Discussion

- After individual interviews, hold a group meeting to clarify everyone's perspective.
- Encourage each student to share their account to foster mutual understanding.

3. Written Accounts

- Request students to write down their accounts to ensure clarity and provide documentation.

4. Defining Bullying

- Refer to the definition of bullying in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures to and use the questions in Appendix C to assess if the behaviour meets the criteria.

5. Consideration of Context

- Distinguish between hurtful or unacceptable behaviour and bullying, referencing the school's **Code of Behaviour** for non-bullying issues.

Approaches to Address Bullying Behaviour

1. Engagement with Students

- Meet promptly with students involved to ensure they feel **listened to, supported, and reassured**.
- Maintain privacy and conduct sensitive conversations appropriate to the age and ability of the students.

2. Support Mechanisms

- **For the student experiencing bullying:** Provide emotional support and involve them in deciding the next steps.
- **For the student displaying bullying behaviour:** Address underlying relational issues and provide strategies for improved behaviour.

3. Involvement of Parents

- Notify and consult parents at an early stage while addressing communication barriers (e.g., literacy or language challenges).
- Acknowledge requests for no action, but balance these with the need to address behaviour appropriately.

4. Timely and Tailored Actions

- Take prompt action, ensuring measures align with the **Bí Cineálta** policy.
- Avoid actions that diminish the student's agency.

5. Strategies and Training

- Utilise restorative practices, mediation, or other approaches where staff have been trained, and students consent to the process.
- Refer to external supports like NEPS, Webwise, or the DCU Anti-Bullying Centre for guidance and training.

6. Addressing Complex Cases

- Handle cases involving external parties or off-campus bullying impacting school life

through supportive interventions.

- Use the school's **Code of Behaviour** for ongoing or severe issues requiring disciplinary action.

Steps to Review Progress

1. Follow-Up Review

- Engage with students and parents within **20 school days** of the initial intervention.
- Assess the nature of the bullying, effectiveness of strategies, and current relationships.

2. Continuous Monitoring

- Supervise both the student experiencing bullying and the student displaying the behaviour to ensure ongoing support.
- Address lingering relational difficulties proactively.

3. Adjustments as Needed

- If bullying persists, revise strategies with input from students and parents and schedule further reviews.
- Apply the school's **Code of Behaviour** where necessary.

4. Documentation

- Maintain detailed records of incidents, actions taken, and follow-ups.
- Update Student Support Files or Plans as applicable, ensuring consistency in addressing the issue.

5. Final Assessment

- Confirm if the behaviour has ceased.
- Document all engagements, including dates of resolution and any consultations with external services.

6. Complaint and Support Resources

- If parents are dissatisfied, guide them to the school's complaint process or external bodies like the Ombudsman for Children.
- Highlight supports available through NEPS, Oide, Webwise, NPC, and the DCU Anti-Bullying Centre for long-term resolution and prevention.

This approach ensures fairness, sensitivity, and clarity while addressing bullying effectively and promoting a safe school environment.

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):

1. Supporting Students Who Experience Bullying Behaviour

- **Empowering Through Trusted Adults:** Encourage students to report incidents of bullying to a trusted adult within the school. Trusted adults will provide reassurance, listen attentively, and validate the student's experience.
- **Engagement and Emotional Support:** Offer immediate support to help the student feel safe, listened to, and reassured. Tailored strategies will be developed based on their individual needs, including ongoing emotional support.
- **National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS):** Utilise NEPS, where appropriate, for direct and indirect casework to support the student's social, emotional, and psychological wellbeing. NEPS can also assist in addressing the impact of bullying through resilience-building and social skills training.
- **Parental Involvement:** Engage parents early to ensure a supportive environment both at home and school. Parents will be consulted in creating a plan to address the situation while considering the student's preferences and concerns.
- **Ongoing Monitoring and Follow-Up:** Maintain consistent communication with the student to ensure the effectiveness of interventions and adjust support strategies as needed.

2. Supporting Students Who Witness Bullying Behaviour

- **Fostering Reporting Culture:** Encourage witnesses to report bullying incidents by emphasising their critical role in addressing such behaviour. Reinforce the concept of trusted adults as approachable and supportive figures.
- **Education and Awareness:** Use resources from Webwise and other programmes to educate students on the importance of standing against bullying and safe reporting methods, including online incidents.
- **Recognition and Validation:** Ensure that students who report bullying are acknowledged for their courage and supported throughout the process.
- **Building Empathy and Responsibility:** Conduct workshops and activities to promote empathy and a sense of collective responsibility within the school community, fostering a proactive stance against bullying.

3. Supporting Students Who Display Bullying Behaviour

- **Individualised Support Plans:** Identify the underlying causes of the behaviour and implement targeted interventions to address relational difficulties. Use NEPS resources to develop social and emotional skills, self-regulation, and conflict resolution.
- **Parental Collaboration:** Involve parents in understanding the behaviour, its impact, and the steps required to encourage positive change.
- **Restorative Practices:** When appropriate and with trained staff, employ restorative practices to repair relationships and encourage accountability while promoting positive behaviour.
- **Ongoing Supervision and Support:** Provide consistent oversight to ensure the student's progress in managing their behaviour and adapting to healthier interpersonal interactions.

