

Gaelscoil Phort Láirge

School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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The Board of Management of Gaelscoil Phort Láirge 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	04/04/25, 20/05/25	Survey, staff meeting
Students	12/5/25	Assembly and surveys
Parents	March 2025	Survey Parents Association meeting
Board of Management	May 2025	Meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers		
Date policy was approved: 24/06/25		
Date policy was last reviewed: June 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):

In order to implement a prevention strategy the school should consider engaging with members of the wider school community who are in regular contact with students, such as the following, which is not an exhaustive list: school bus drivers, education welfare officers, Traveller and Roma community education workers, traffic wardens and local businesses that are close to the school. These members of the wider school community can be encouraged to report any bullying behaviour to the school as appropriate.

Culture and Environment:

- Safe physical spaces
- appropriate supervision
- positive relationships
- a trustworthy adult
- Effective leadership
- A positive and inclusive school culture
- Extra curricular activities eg chess, drama, Lego, football, hurling, quizzes
- Fundraising events for charities eg GOAL, Food Bank, Children's Hospital etc (Sale of Work, cake sale, Jersey Day/non uniform day)
- Workshops with guest speakers/facilitators eg Fairtrade, Barnardos, Dogs Trust, Coast Guard
- Parental involvement: Parents are welcome in the school and activities are organized for them (coffee mornings, Irish language lessons, Grandparents' Day). The Parents' Association meets throughout the year.
- Regular and positive communication with parents through weekly newsletters
- Weekly assembly
- Awards and recognition for pupils
- Celebrating birthdays
- Discussion of themes
- Class presentations based on relevant topics/themes
- Developing the child's voice

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning):

- The SPHE curriculum, including the Stay Safe, RSE (Relationships and Sexuality Education), and Misneach (Resilience) programmes
- SPHE methodologies/approaches such as Circle Time
- Social Stories
- Aistear (early childhood curriculum framework)
- Role-play/Drama
- Pair/Group work
- Differentiation
- Team games – Football, hurling, basketball etc.
- Free Writing

Policy and Planning:

- Be Kind Policy
- Be Kind Policy for Students
- Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Special Education Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Mobile Phones – GEN FREE CHARTER
- Dignity in the Workplace

- Digital Strategy
- School Self-Evaluation and Wellbeing
- Appropriate Professional Development

Relationships and Partnerships:

- Age-appropriate awareness initiatives that address the causes and impacts of bullying behaviour, including those dealing with managing friendships, identity-based bullying, racist bullying, homophobic/transphobic bullying, sexism and sexual harassment
- Supporting active student participation in school life – Student Council with pupils from 3rd to 6th Class
- Supporting active parent participation in school life: “Meet the Teacher” (for junior classes), coffee mornings, invitations to school events, Parents’ Association
- Supporting activities that develop empathy, respect, and resilience
- Encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring
- Promoting acts of kindness
- Teaching problem-solving
- Hosting debates

Strategies to prevent cyberbullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- implementing the SPHE curriculum
- having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- developing and communicating an acceptable use policy for technology
- referring to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour
- promoting or hosting online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children’s activities online
- holding an Internet safety day to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour

Strategies to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- maintaining an inclusive physical environment such as by displaying relevant posters
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- challenging gender stereotypes
- conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour
- encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour

Strategies to prevent racist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students “see themselves” in their school environment
- having the cultural diversity of the school visible and on display
- encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour
- providing supports to school staff to respond to the needs of students for whom English is an additional language and for communicating with their parents
- providing supports to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma students, and to encourage communication with their parents
- ensuring that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds

Strategies to prevent sexist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex
- ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex
- celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contributions of all students
- encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home

Strategies to prevent sexual harassment include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- promoting positive role models within the school community
- challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment

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):

Appropriate supervision is an important measure to help prevent and address bullying behaviour.

- The Stay Safe Programme is taught in every class, every year, and the principal oversees the implementation of the programme.
- The school staff supervise the children at all times, and a schedule is in place to cover the classes of teachers on yard duty, five minutes before break and lunch time, to allow them to escort children to the toilet, etc.
- There are three teachers and three special needs assistants (SNAs) on the yard every day during break and lunch times.
- The teachers carry out active supervision, rotating around the yard during break and lunch times.
- The SNAs supervise children with additional needs.
- Children are not allowed to enter out-of-sight areas in the yard, and cones are set out to prevent them from doing so.
- If an incident occurs in the yard, the teacher on duty informs the class teacher at the end of lunch.
- The same teachers supervise the same yards to ensure continuity and to detect patterns in behaviour.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

- The Principal
- The Deputy principal
- Class teachers
- Special Education teachers

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):

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the teacher should consider the following: what, where, when and why? 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.

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

- ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured
- seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- consider the age and ability of those involved > 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 teacher must engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress following the initial intervention. Important factors to consider as part of the review are the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the students involved. Even though the bullying behaviour may have ceased, ongoing supervision and support may be required for both the student who has experienced the bullying behaviour as well as the student who has displayed the behaviour. It can take time for relationships to settle and for supports to take effect. In some cases, relationships may never be restored to how they were before the bullying behaviour occurred.

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.

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):

It is important for school staff to be fair and consistent in their approach to address bullying behaviour. Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour need support. It is important that the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour is engaged with without delay so that they feel listened to, supported and reassured. School staff should identify the supports needed for the student who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties and ensure that their needs are met.

The school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved. Where the bullying

behaviour continues in school, the school will deal with it in accordance with their Bf Cineálta policy.

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.

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: 24/6/2025
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed:  Date: 24/6/25
(Principal)