Midleton College
Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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The Board of Management of Midleton College 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.

> the right to freedom of expression (Article 13)

> the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 14)

> the right to freedom of association and freedom of peaceful assembly (Article 15)

> the right to privacy (Article 16)

> the right to be protected from all forms of abuse and neglect (Article 19)

> the right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health (Article 24)

> the right to education (Article 28)

> the right to enjoy their own culture, religion or language (Article 30)

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.

Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying

Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying is Ireland's whole-education approach to preventing and addressing bullying in schools. The development of Cineáltas was heavily informed by the views of children and young people, their parents and school staff. Cineáltas is grounded in UNESCO's Whole Education Approach to prevent and address bullying and is aligned with the four key areas for wellbeing promotion as outlined in the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice: Culture and Environment; Curriculum (Teaching and Learning); Policy and Planning; and Relationships and Partnerships. These four areas ensure that wellbeing is promoted through all areas of school life.

These procedures replace the 2013 Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Responsibilities of the school community

The school community has a responsibility to prevent and address bullying behaviour. The school should work as a partnership involving the Board of Governors (Patron Body), Board of Management, staff, students and parents to implement their Bí Cineálta policy.

Boards of Management must have oversight of the development, implementation and review of their school's Bí Cineálta policy and ensure that the appropriate preventative strategies are in place and are effective.

School staff can prevent and address bullying behaviour by promoting empathy, intervening promptly and implementing policies that create a positive and inclusive environment that fosters kindness among students. The primary aim in addressing bullying behaviour is to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

Students have an important role to play by supporting their peers, understanding the role of bystander, reporting incidents of bullying behaviour and working in partnership with their school community.

Parents also have an important role to play. Collaboration between parents and school staff is essential to effectively prevent and address bullying behaviour. Schools should promote active partnership with parents which can help reinforce values that discourage bullying behaviour.

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 core elements of the definition are further described below:

> Targeted behaviour

Bullying is deliberate, unwanted behaviour that causes harm to others, and where the student displaying bullying behaviour knows that their behaviour is or will be perceived as harmful by the

child or young person experiencing the behaviour. Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. The harm can be physical (for example, personal injury, damage to or loss of property), social (for example. withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion) and/or emotional (for example, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety) and can have a serious and long-term negative impact on the student experiencing the bullying behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying but, importantly, must still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour.

> Repeated behaviour

Bullying takes the form of a systematic pattern of behaviour which is repeated over time. Single offine incidents of intentional negative behaviour involving an imbalance of power are not considered bullying but must still be addressed under the school's code   of behaviour. Posting a single harmful message/image/video online, and which is highly likely to be reposted or shared with others can therefore be seen as bullying behaviour.

> Imbalance of power

In incidents of bullying, the student experiencing the bullying behaviour finds it hard to defend themselves as a result of the abuse of a real or perceived imbalance of power. This imbalance of power may manifest itself through differences in size, strength, age, ability, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, race, ethnic origin including membership of the Traveller and/or Roma communities, sexual   orientation,

This policy 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.

Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour

A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards another student is not bullying behaviour. However, a single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be visible to a wide audience and has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and so becomes a repeated behaviour.

Disagreement between students, or instances where students don't want to be friends or to remain friends, is not considered bullying behaviour unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others including deliberate manipulation of friendship groups.

Some students with special educational needs may have social communication difficulties which may 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.

Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying.

These behaviours, while not defined as bullying can be distressing.

Further details on what constitutes Bullying can be found in the *Bí Cineálta Procedures.*

Criminal Behaviour

Bullying behaviour may be considered criminal under certain circumstances, with legal consequences potentially applying. The age of criminal responsibility in Ireland is 12 years. Some online behaviour may be illegal, and students need to be aware of the serious consequences of posting harmful content online.

In particular:

Physical violence or threats may be considered assault.

Discrimination or hate speech based on race, religion, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or membership of the Traveller community may be considered a hate crime under the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989.

Sexual harassment or sexual assault may also constitute criminal behaviour.

The non-consensual sharing of intimate images is criminalised under Coco's Law (Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020).

Where criminal behaviour is suspected, An Garda Síochána is the appropriate authority to investigate.

Child Protection Concerns

Bullying behaviour may become a child protection concern if it results in significant physical or emotional harm or becomes a persistent and severe issue that is not resolved by school interventions.

Under the Children First Act, 2015, schools have a duty to ensure students' safety. Teachers are Mandated Persons and must report harm above a defined threshold to Tusla, Ireland's Child and Family Agency. All school staff should report reasonable concerns to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP), who may then contact Tusla for advice or make a formal report.

If there is uncertainty about whether bullying is a child protection concern, the school will seek guidance from Tusla's social work department.

Forms of Bullying Behaviour

Bullying behaviour can take many forms, which may occur separately or together. These include, but are not limited to:

Direct Bullying Behaviour

Physical: Pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, tripping, or damaging personal property.

Verbal: Repeated name-calling, insults, or humiliation based on appearance, ability, accent, race, or gender identity.

Written: Insulting remarks or drawings shared publicly or through notes.

Extortion: Forcing someone to give up possessions through threats or force.

Exclusion: Deliberate and repeated isolation or ignoring of a student.

Relational: Undermining a student's social connections through manipulation, spreading rumours, or giving the "silent treatment."

Online Bullying Behaviour (Cyberbullying)

Methods: Utilises text messaging, social media, email, apps, gaming sites, chatrooms, and other online technologies.

Examples:

- Sending or sharing offensive or intimidating messages or images.
- Posting personal, private, or sensitive information without consent.
- Creating fake profiles to impersonate or humiliate other students.
- Excluding or blocking a student from online groups, accounts, or games.

Impact: Even a single hurtful message can constitute bullying if it is widely shared.

Risks: Online bullying can occur at any time and may relate to an "offline" experience. It can include forms of sexual exploitation, such as sextortion and the non-consensual sharing of intimate images, which may be a criminal offence.

When and Where Schools Should Address Bullying Behaviour

Bullying behaviour can happen anywhere, online or offline, and at any time. The school's responsibility to address bullying behaviour using the Bí Cineálta procedures depends on where and when the behaviour occurs.

When the School Must Address Bullying Behaviour

Inside School: Schools must address all bullying behaviour that occurs within the school environment.

When Bullying Behaviour Continues in School:

If bullying behaviour occurs outside of school but continues in school, the school is required to address it using the Bí Cineálta procedures.

Outside School:

The school is not required to manage incidents of bullying behaviour that occur outside of school and do not continue or impact the school environment.

Supporting Students Impacted by Bullying Outside of School:

While schools are not expected to address bullying behaviour that occurs entirely outside of school, they are required to support students if this behaviour has an impact in school. This support may include listening to concerns, providing reassurance, and helping students manage the situation.

Special Case: Online Bullying (Cyberbullying)

When to Act: If cyberbullying behaviour is accessed, shared, or continues in school, the school must address the behaviour using the Bí Cineálta procedures.

When Not to Act: If the cyberbullying behaviour occurs entirely outside of school and does not continue or impact the school environment, the school is not required to address it.

This approach ensures that schools maintain a safe and supportive learning environment while recognising the limits of their responsibility.

Impact of Bullying Behaviour

Impact on Students Experiencing Bullying

Bullying behaviour can have severe short- and long-term effects on students, including stress, anxiety, low self-esteem, and potential mental health difficulties. Students may show changes in mood or behaviour, a drop in academic performance, and physical symptoms such as headaches or stomach aches.

Signs a Student May Be Experiencing Bullying

Indicators of bullying may include refusal to attend school, changes in academic performance, physical symptoms, unexplained injuries, and reluctance to talk about what is troubling them. These signs may not always mean bullying is occurring, but when they persist or appear together, they could indicate a problem.

Students at Higher Risk of Experiencing Bullying

All students can experience bullying, but some may be more vulnerable, including:

- Students with additional learning needs or disabilities.
- Students from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma communities.
- LGBTQ+ students.
- Students practicing or displaying a religious faith.
- Students experiencing homelessness or health and mental health issues.
- Impact on Students Who Witness Bullying

Witnessing bullying can also affect students, causing fear, guilt, or anxiety. They may worry about repercussions if they report the behaviour or feel vulnerable if they share similarities with the student being bullied.

Impact on Students Who Engage in Bullying

Students who display bullying behaviour may struggle with aggression, anti-social behaviour, and lower academic achievement. They may also have difficulty forming healthy long-term relationships and experience isolation or depression. Some may engage in bullying due to their own lived experiences, low self-esteem, or a lack of understanding of the impact of their actions.

Section A: Development/review of our Bi 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	10th March	Staff Meeting
Students	Week of 19th May	Form Assembly
Parents	Week of 19th May	App post & webpage
Board of management	Monday 26th May	Meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	Week of 19th May	Conversation
Date policy was approved:	16/6/2025	
Date policy was last reviewed:	16/6/2025	

Student consultation can include direct input from the Student Council and the use of anonymous student questionnaires, with findings used to inform policy content. The school is committed to engaging students annually in review and reflection processes on bullying prevention, including through SPHE and student-led initiatives.

Communication of the Policy

The school's Bí Cineálta Policy is communicated to the Board of Management, all staff, students, parents, and the wider school community through multiple channels. These include:

- Publication on the school's website.

- Inclusion in staff induction materials and annual CPD briefings.

- Presentation to the Board of Management early each academic year.

- Notice of review completion using the Department of Education's official template (Appendix F), shared via app notifications and school newsletters.

- Availability in hard copy at the school reception and upon request.

- A student-friendly version displayed in key areas of the school and available online.

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:

Culture & Environment
- Promote an inclusive environment through visual cues, such as displaying the LGBTQ+ flag and flags representing the nationalities in the school community.
- Celebrate cultural diversity within the school environment, including Black History Week, Spanish Evening, and India Night.
- Embed Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in daily operations and the school culture.
- Engage students in shaping an inclusive environment through student-led initiatives and EDI projects.
- Promote positive role models within the school community who exemplify respectful and kind behaviour.
- Maintain a 'telling' environment where students feel safe to report bullying behaviour without fear of retaliation or not being believed.
- Ensure that the school leadership sets clear standards for a respectful and supportive school culture.
- Provide safe physical spaces with good lighting, clear sightlines, and supervision to reduce opportunities for bullying behaviour.
- Use murals, artwork, and signage to reinforce the school's values of equality, diversity, inclusion, and respect.
- Facilitate open communication between staff, students, parents, and the wider school community to foster a collaborative approach to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.
- Support a 'trusted adult' approach, encouraging students to speak to a designated adult when they experience or witness bullying behaviour.
- Ensure that staff maintain a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour and model respectful interactions at all times.
- Promote ownership and responsibility among students by allowing them to contribute to the school environment through creative projects and collaborative spaces.

Staff Role in Policy Implementation:
- All staff are expected to proactively implement the school's Mobile Phone Policy and Uniform Policy. The uniform plays an important role in fostering equality and reducing visible signs of economic difference among students. Active supervision and consistent messaging around these policies help to reinforce a respectful, inclusive school culture.

Seating and Social Space Improvements:
- The school is committed to improving seating areas and shared communal spaces to support student wellbeing and inclusion during social times, particularly before school, at break, and during lunch.

Student-Led Anti-Bullying Initiatives:
- Anti-bullying education is embedded into SPHE, and students will also contribute to the implementation of the Bí Cineálta policy through structured discussions and reflection during SPHE lessons and designated wellbeing time across the year.

<u>LIFT Leadership Programme:</u>
- All Form I students participate in the LIFT (Leading Ireland's Future Together) programme, facilitated by senior student mentors. This programme supports personal leadership, empathy, and responsibility, and forms part of the school's strategy to build an inclusive, respectful culture.

<u>Peer Mentoring:</u>
- A Peer Mentoring programme is in place linking Form V students with Form I students to provide guidance, support and friendship as students transition into secondary school.

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)
- Implement the SPHE (Social Personal and Health Education) curriculum, including responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship.
- Include lessons on diversity, respect for gender identities, and anti-racism education across all subject areas.
- Use the updated SPHE curriculum to cover healthy relationships, consent, and personal boundaries through Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE).
- Engage Transition Year students in the Bystander Awareness course with University College Cork (UCC) to build skills in addressing and reporting sexual harassment and bullying.
- Promote gender equality through all school activities, ensuring equal participation opportunities for all genders.

Policy and Planning
- Develop and maintain a clear Acceptable Use Policy for technology, promoting respectful online interactions.
- Maintain and communicate a zero-tolerance policy on sexual harassment, ensuring it is understood by staff and students.
- Ensure staff model respectful behaviour and respond appropriately to instances of sexism.
- Align all school policies, including Code of Behaviour, Supervision Policy, and Special Education Teaching Policy, with the Bí Cineálta procedures.
- Regularly review and update policies to ensure they reflect the best practices for preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.
- Actively involve the school community, including students, staff, and parents, in the development and review of school policies.
- Provide professional development for staff on inclusion, diversity, and anti-bullying strategies.

<u>Accessible Student Policy:</u>
- In addition to the full policy, the school will produce an accessible, student-friendly version of the Bí Cineálta policy. This will use clear and age-appropriate language and be made available in print, online, and displayed in student areas of the school.

<u>Seating Plans and Group Composition:</u>
- Teachers are encouraged to plan seating arrangements and group activities intentionally, with the aim of promoting inclusion and reducing the risk of exclusion or bullying behaviour.

Relationships & Partnerships

- Peer support programs, including mentoring, LIFT, and empathy-building activities.
- Workshops for staff, students, and parents on challenging homophobic, transphobic, and racist behaviour.
- Encourage students to speak up when they witness inappropriate behaviour.
- Engage with external partners such as the FUSE Anti-Bullying Program and BeLonG To's 'Stand Up Awareness Week'.
- Implement the **BRAVE** Positive Behaviour Management Strategy:
  - **B**e Respectful: Promote respect in all interactions.
  - **R**esponsible: Encourage students to take ownership of their actions.
  - **A**ctive: Foster proactive involvement in creating a positive school environment.
  - **V**alue Inclusivity: Celebrate diversity and ensure everyone feels valued.
  - **E**mbrace Kindness: Model and reward kind behaviours in the school.

Preventing Cyberbullying Behaviour

- Hold regular discussions on digital etiquette and the consequences of cyberbullying.
- Host workshops for parents and students on safe internet practices and monitoring online activities.
- Participate in events like Internet Safety Day to promote awareness of appropriate online conduct.
- Engage with Dublin City University's FUSE Anti-Bullying Program, which focuses on building awareness and strategies to prevent bullying, including cyberbullying.
- Preventing Homophobic/Transphobic Bullying Behaviour
- Promote an inclusive environment with visual cues such as the LGBTQ+ flag.
- Conduct workshops to challenge homophobic and transphobic behaviour.
- Include respect for gender identities within the curriculum.
- Participate in BeLonG To's 'Stand Up Awareness Week' against transphobic and homophobic bullying.

Preventing Racist Bullying Behaviour

- Celebrate cultural diversity through events like Black History Week, Spanish Evening, and India Night.
- Support anti-racism education and facilitate discussions on the impact of racism in society and schools.
- Provide training for staff to support students with English as an additional language.
- Include diverse voices and perspectives in teaching materials and library resources.

Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour

- Promote gender equality through all school activities, ensuring equal opportunities for participation.
- Organise awareness campaigns and workshops that focus on challenging gender stereotypes and promoting respect, e.g., Gender Apartheid talk.
- Ensure staff model respectful behaviour and address sexism promptly.

Preventing Sexual Harassment

- Use the SPHE curriculum to teach about healthy relationships, consent, and personal boundaries.
- Provide Bystander Awareness training through UCC to empower students to address and report sexual harassment.
- Maintain a zero-tolerance policy on sexual harassment and ensure staff and students understand it.
- Conduct training sessions for staff on handling reports of sexual harassment sensitively and effectively.
- Encourage students to report incidents and assure them of support and confidentiality.

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent bullying behaviour (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

Active Supervision During School Hours:

Staff are strategically positioned during unstructured times such as breaks, lunchtimes, and transition periods to monitor student interactions.

High-traffic areas and known hotspots for bullying behaviour, such as corridors, the canteen, and recreational spaces, receive particular attention.

Structured Supervision in Boarding Environment:

Boarding staff maintain a strong presence, offering a "home away from home" and providing pastoral care.

Regular check-ins and informal interactions with boarders help identify and address potential issues early.

Monitoring Through Scheduled Programs and Initiatives:

The school conducts regular anti-bullying awareness initiatives as part of the SPHE (Social Personal and Health Education) curriculum and broader well-being programmes.

Specific programs, such as bystander awareness training and digital safety workshops, empower students to identify and report bullying behaviour, including online and identity-based bullying.

Use of Reporting and Documentation Tools:

Incidents of bullying behaviour are documented using the structured forms and processes outlined in the Bí Cineálta procedures.

Reports are reviewed regularly by the designated staff member responsible for addressing bullying behaviour, ensuring timely intervention.

Proactive Engagement with Students and Staff:

Regular assemblies and class meetings include reminders about respectful behaviour and the importance of reporting bullying.

Staff receive ongoing professional development to recognise signs of bullying and effectively monitor student interactions.

Community and Parental Involvement:

The school works closely with parents through information sessions and open communication channels.

Parents are encouraged to report concerns, and the school provides clear guidance on how to report bullying incidents.

Continuous Evaluation and Feedback Loops:

The school uses surveys and feedback tools to monitor the effectiveness of supervision strategies.

Data collected is used to adjust supervision practices and ensure a safe and inclusive school environment.

Support Services for Students and Families:

The following organisations offer resources, advice, and help: Childline – 24/7 support for young people, Webwise – Internet safety and cyberbullying advice, BeLonG To – Support for LGBTI+ youth, Jigsaw – Mental health support for young people, SpunOut.ie – Youth information and wellbeing support, TackleBullying.ie – Information and practical tools to understand and respond to bullying.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Form Teacher: Provides support within specific class to manage and resolve bullying incidents.

Head of Year: Provides oversight and support within specific year groups, ensuring a consistent approach to managing and resolving bullying incidents.

Member of the Student Support Team: Offers targeted support to students involved in bullying situations, focusing on well-being and restorative practices.

Head of Boarding: Plays a crucial role in addressing bullying behaviour in the boarding environment, maintaining a safe and supportive residential community.

School Management (Principal or Deputy Principal): Involved in more serious cases, ensuring that all incidents are managed in accordance with the Bí Cineálta procedures and that records are maintained accurately.

Designated Staff Member for Anti-Bullying: Acts as a dedicated point of contact for bullying concerns, ensuring consistency and clarity in handling reports and supporting both victims and those displaying bullying behaviour

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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):

1. Determining if Bullying Behaviour Has Occurred

a. Initial Reporting and Assessment

- **Students, parents, or staff** can report bullying behaviour to any staff member, including the **Head of Year**, **Student Support Team**, **Head of Boarding**, or the **Designated Anti-Bullying Staff Member**.

- The staff member receiving the report will conduct an **initial assessment** to gather basic information and ensure the **safety and well-being** of the student experiencing bullying behaviour.

- The student experiencing bullying behaviour is engaged with **without delay**, ensuring they feel **listened to, supported, and reassured**.

- **What, Where, When, and Why?**

  o The **Bí Cineálta procedures** emphasize that teachers should consider **what happened, where it happened, when it happened, and why it happened** during the assessment.

  o This structured questioning will be used to gain a **clear and accurate understanding** of the situation.

b. Information Gathering

- Interviews are conducted individually with:

    o The student experiencing bullying behaviour.

    o The student displaying bullying behaviour.

    o Any witnesses to the behaviour.

- Assessing Group Involvement:

    o If multiple students are involved, they are **interviewed individually first** before being brought together as a group, if appropriate.

    o This ensures **fairness, clarity, and accuracy** in establishing facts.

- Students are given the opportunity to **write down their accounts** of the incident to ensure **clarity and accuracy**.

- Maintain **confidentiality and sensitivity** during all interactions.

c. Applying the Three Key Questions

To assess whether bullying behaviour has occurred, staff will consider:

1. **Is the behaviour targeted and harmful**, either physically, socially, or emotionally?

2. **Is the behaviour repeated over time** or does it have a high likelihood of being repeated (e.g., in cases of online bullying)?

3. **Does the behaviour involve an imbalance of power** between individuals or groups?

2. Approaches to Address Bullying Behaviour

a. Fair and Consistent Approach

- **The school ensures that bullying behaviour is addressed fairly and consistently,** ensuring that:

    o The student experiencing bullying behaviour feels **heard and supported**.

    o The student displaying bullying behaviour is also given **appropriate guidance and intervention**.

- Staff will apply **clear and structured responses** to bullying behaviour, treating all students **with fairness and respect**.

b. Restorative and Supportive Approach

- The primary aim is to **stop the bullying behaviour** and **restore relationships** as far as practicable.

- Where appropriate, a **restorative practice approach** is used, involving **mediated discussions** with trained staff to help rebuild **positive relationships**.

- Restorative practices are **only used if the students involved agree** to participate.

c. Supporting the Student Displaying Bullying Behaviour

The **Bí Cineálta procedures** emphasize that students displaying bullying behaviour should also receive **appropriate support** to address their **relational difficulties**.

- Support measures may include:

    o Guidance on managing relationships and emotions.

    o Social skills training or targeted interventions.

    o Referral to counselling or student support services if needed.

d. Intervention Strategies

1. Level 1: Preventive and Early Interventions

    o Engage in discussions to clarify expectations and resolve misunderstandings.

    o Reemphasise the BRAVE Positive Behaviour Management Strategy, promoting respect, responsibility, active engagement, inclusivity, and kindness.

    o Use informal mediation or peer support to address minor issues early.

2. Level 2: Formal Interventions

    o Develop behavioural contracts for students displaying bullying behaviour.

    o Establish support plans for students experiencing bullying behaviour.

    o Schedule formal meetings with parents to discuss the situation, actions being taken, and available supports.

3. Level 3: Disciplinary Measures

    o Apply consequences aligned with the school's Code of Behaviour, including potential disciplinary measures such as suspension.

    o If the behaviour involves criminal elements, the school may contact An Garda Síochána in accordance with Bí Cineálta procedures.

3. Parental Involvement

- Parents of all students involved are informed at an early stage and engaged throughout the process.

- The school ensures that parents understand the process and the actions being taken.

- If a student is concerned about informing their parents, the school will work with the student to develop an appropriate plan to support them and communicate effectively with parents.

- Where barriers exist (e.g., literacy, language), the school will adapt its communication methods to ensure clarity and understanding.

4. Reviewing Progress and Monitoring Behaviour

a. Monitoring and Follow-Up

- Conduct regular check-ins with the students involved and their parents to assess if the bullying behaviour has ceased.

- Implement check-in mechanisms, such as scheduled meetings or informal conversations, to ensure continued support.

- Engage with students to determine how well the restorative practices or interventions have worked in rebuilding relationships.

- Progress will be formally reviewed with the student(s) and parent(s) no later than 20 school days after the initial report of bullying behaviour.

b. Ongoing Supervision Even After Bullying Has Ceased

- The Bí Cineálta procedures acknowledge that even **after bullying behaviour stops**, students may still require ongoing supervision and support.

- The school will **continue to monitor both students involved** to ensure a safe and positive school environment.

c. Documentation and Reporting

- Keep **comprehensive records** of all actions taken, the following must be recorded when a report of bullying behaviour is made:

  - Form and type of bullying behaviour (e.g. physical, verbal, relational, cyber)

  - Where and when the behaviour took place

  - Date of initial engagement with students and parents

  - Views of students and parents on the actions to be taken

  - Actions taken by the responsible teacher to determine and address bullying behaviour

  - Date of review with students and parents to determine if the behaviour has ceased

  - Any further views of students and parents

  - Any external supports or services engaged

- All records of bullying behaviour will be maintained in accordance with the school's **Record Retention Policy** and in compliance with the **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)** and the **Data Protection Acts**.

5. Evaluating Effectiveness and Adjusting Strategies

a. Evaluating Effectiveness

- The responsible teacher(s) will review progress with the students and parents, assessing whether the bullying behaviour has stopped and if relationships have improved.

- The **Principal** or **Designated Anti-Bullying Lead** will report regularly to the **Board of Management**, providing **anonymised data** on bullying incidents and outcomes.

b. Timelines for Review

- The teacher must engage with students and parents **no more than 20 school days** after the initial discussion to assess progress.

- If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the teacher will **review the strategies used** and consult with students and parents to agree on further actions.

6. Requests to Take No Action

a. Decision-Making Criteria

- The school has the **final decision** on whether to proceed with action, ensuring alignment with the **Bí Cineálta** procedures and the school's **duty of care** to all students.

- When parents request that no action is taken, the school will consider:

  o The **severity and nature** of the reported bullying behaviour.

  o Whether the behaviour presents a **risk to the safety or well-being** of the student or others.

  o The potential **impact of inaction** on the school environment.

- Despite a request for no action, the school may determine that proceeding is necessary to fulfil its **obligations under the Bí Cineálta procedures**.

- If the decision is to take no action, this request must be **made in writing**, and the school will ensure that **supportive measures** are still offered to the student.

7. Complaints Process

- If a parent is not satisfied with how the school has addressed a report of bullying behaviour, they will be encouraged to discuss their concerns with the **relevant staff member** (e.g., Head of Year, Student Support Team, or Deputy Principal) to seek a resolution.

- If the matter remains unresolved, parents may follow the **school's complaints procedure**, which provides a structured approach for escalating concerns.

- The school is committed to **open communication and collaboration** with parents to address any concerns in a fair and timely manner.

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

a. Providing a Safe Space:
Students who experience bullying are offered a safe and supportive environment to discuss their experiences confidentially.
The Guidance Team, and other pastoral staff are available for individual support.

b. Restorative Practices:
Where appropriate, restorative conversations are facilitated to help students express their feelings and rebuild trust.
Mediation sessions may be held to address relational issues and promote reconciliation.

c. Counselling and Wellbeing Initiatives:
Students have access to counselling services within the school or they may access external agencies, if needed.
Wellbeing programs, such as resilience workshops and peer support groups, are part of the school's broader strategy to build confidence and self-esteem.

d. Ongoing Monitoring and Check-Ins:
Designated staff regularly check in with students who have experienced bullying to ensure that the situation has improved.
Students are encouraged to report any further issues promptly, with assurances of confidentiality and support.

2. Supporting Students Who Witness Bullying Behaviour

a. Empowering Bystanders:
The school promotes the role of active bystanders through specific training and awareness campaigns.
Students are taught how to safely intervene or seek help when they witness bullying.

b. Encouraging Reporting:
Witnesses are encouraged to report incidents without fear of retaliation. Anonymous reporting mechanisms are available.
Education on the importance of reporting and supporting peers is integrated into the SPHE (Social Personal and Health Education) curriculum.

c. Peer Support Programs:
The school utilises peer mentors and Diversity Ambassadors to support students who witness bullying, helping them process what they have seen and understand how to respond constructively.

3. Supporting Students Who Display Bullying Behaviour

a. Restorative and Educational Interventions:
Students who display bullying behaviour are engaged in restorative practices, helping them understand the impact of their actions and develop empathy.
Behavioural support plans may be developed to guide students in changing their behaviour.

b. Individual and Group Support:
Counselling services are available to address underlying issues that may contribute to bullying behaviour, such as low self-esteem or difficulties with relationships.
The school may involve external support services where necessary to provide targeted interventions.

c. Teaching Positive Behavioural Strategies:
Students are guided in developing social skills, conflict resolution techniques, and strategies for managing emotions.
Programmes such as 'Bystander Awareness' and 'Friends for Life' are used to build self-awareness and promote positive behavioural change.

d. Monitoring and Behavioural Contracts:
A structured approach is taken to monitor progress, including setting specific behavioural goals and reviewing these regularly with the student, parents, and relevant staff members.

4. Engaging Parents and the Wider Community

a. Communication and Collaboration:
The school works closely with parents of all students involved in bullying incidents, keeping them informed and involved in support plans.
Workshops and information sessions are offered to help parents support their children at home.

b. Utilising External Resources:
The school may collaborate with external professionals, such as counsellors or community organisations, to provide additional support to students and families.

c. Staff Training and CPD:
All staff will be encouraged to engage in professional learning related to bullying prevention, inclusion, and restorative approaches through Oide and NEPS-supported CPD. Training may include sessions on cyberbullying, identity-based bullying, restorative practices, and supporting student voice. Staff will also receive updates during staff meetings as part of the school's commitment to a whole-education approach to wellbeing and student safety.
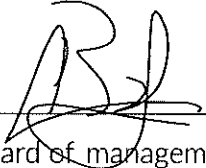
All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with students and parents. The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented. If the bullying behaviour is a child protection concern the matter will be addressed without delay in accordance with *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.*

Section D: Oversight

The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting. This update will include the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting, the number of ongoing incidents and the total number of incidents since the beginning of the school year. Where incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred, the principal will also provide a verbal update which will include where relevant, information relating to trends and patterns identified, strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant. This update does not contain personal or identifying information. See Chapter 7 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

This policy is available to our school community on the school's website and in hard copy on request. A student friendly version of this policy is displayed in the school and is also available on our website and in hard copy on request.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed, following input from our school community, each calendar year or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this policy refers.

Signed:_____ Date: __16/1/25__

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed:_____ Date: __16/6/25__

(Principal)