KILBRIDE NATIONAL SCHOOL

Ní neart go cur le Chéile

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Kilbride National School 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.

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.

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*.

Core Definition of Bullying Behaviour

Bullying is 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.

Targeted Behaviour

Bullying is **deliberate**, unwanted behaviour that causes harm to others, and where the student displaying bullying knows 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 a loss to 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 <u>unintended</u> 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 **systematic** pattern of behaviour which is **repeated** over time. Single offline 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, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, experience of the care system, disability or the receipt of special education. In incidents of online (or cyber) bullying, the imbalance of power may relate to online anonymity, technical proficiency and possession of information/images/video, and the inability of the targeted student to remove offensive online material or escape the bullying.

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 do not 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 to 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. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

How bullying behaviour occurs

Bullying behaviour can take many forms, which can occur separately or together. These can include the following, which is not an exhaustive list.

Direct bullying behaviour:

- **Physical bullying behaviour:**
  - ➤ Physical bullying behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping students. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While students can often engage in 'mess fights' they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.
  - ➤ Personal property can be a focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, schoolbooks and other learning material or interference with a student's bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

- **Verbal bullying behaviour:**
  - ➤ Continual name-calling directed at a student which hurts, insults or humiliates the student should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance. It can also refer to a student's accent, distinctive voice

characteristics, academic ability, race or ethnic origin.

- **Written bullying behaviour:**
  - ➢ Written bullying behaviour includes writing insulting remarks about a student in public places, passing around notes about or drawings of a student.

- **Extortion:**
  - ➢ Bullying behaviour can involve extortion. Extortion is where something is obtained through force or threats.

Indirect bullying behaviour:

- **Exclusion:**
  - ➢ Exclusion bullying occurs where a student is **deliberately** and **repeatedly** isolated, excluded or ignored by a student or group of students.

- **Relational:**
  - ➢ Relational bullying behaviour occurs when a student's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. Common forms include control: 'Do this or I won't be your friend anymore'; a group of students ganging up against one student; non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a student; giving a student the 'silent treatment'; and the deliberate manipulation of friendship groups to make someone unpopular.

Online bullying behaviour:

Online bullying behaviour (cyberbullying) is carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text or direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, e-mail, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chatrooms and other online technologies.

This form of bullying can include:

- ➢ Sending or sharing nasty, insulting, offensive, and/or intimidating messages or images via text messages, WhatsApp messages, emails, direct messages or other websites or apps.
- ➢ Posting information considered to be personal, private and sensitive without consent.
- ➢ Making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other students.
- ➢ Excluding or disrupting access to a student on purpose from online chat groups, access to accounts or from an online game.

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	4th March 2025 2nd May 2025	Consultation and staff survey at staff meetings.
Students	3rd April 4th April	Focus Group Survey
Parents	2nd April 2025 8th May 2025	Google Form Survey Focus Group with Parents' Association
Board of Management	28th May 2025	Consultation at Board of Management meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers		Consultation as deemed necessary
Date policy was approved: 28th May 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

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.

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 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.

Culture and Environment: Our goals are to:

- Create a positive and inclusive school culture and environment where students and school staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported.

- Ensure that relationships between all members of the school community are based on respect, care, integrity and trust.

- Foster a collaborative approach involving the Patron, Board of Management, school staff, students and parents/guardians in relation to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

- Effective school leadership that sets the standards and expectations for the school community when preventing and addressing all forms of bullying behaviour.

- Create and maintain a school culture and climate where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour is adhered to.

- Foster and sustain a school culture and environment in which parents clearly understand the definition of bullying and can distinguish it from non-bullying behaviour.

- Cultivate a positive school culture where parents feel confident in the professionalism of staff, approach concerns with openness and respect, and support their children's growth without the need for constant oversight or intervention in minor matters.

- Involve Parents/Guardians, as active partners in their child's education, to help foster

an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated through promoting empathy and respect.

- Create and maintain a school culture that supports a **telling** environment.

- Create a safe environment where reporting of bullying behaviour is encouraged.

Strategies to achieve these goals:

- The Board of Management and the School Leadership team will inform the adult members of the school community of the standards and expectations required from them when preventing, addressing and investigating bullying behaviours. This includes staff members, parents and guardians. The Board of Management and the School Leadership team will inform staff members and parents/guardians of the behavioural expectations of all adults when preventing, addressing and investigating bullying behaviours.

- The Board of Management and the School Leadership team will inform parents/guardians that they are not permitted to attend meetings at the investigation stage and are to support staff in leading the investigation.

- The Board of Management and the School Leadership team will inform parents/guardians of the procedures involved when preventing and addressing Adult to Child bullying.

- The Board of Management and the School Leadership team will inform parents/guardians of the procedures involved when preventing and addressing Adult to Adult bullying.

- A Bí Cineálta focus group consisting of members of the school leadership team and parents will be formed to monitor the implementation of the Bí Cineálta policy.

- The Board of Management and the School Leadership team will inform parents/guardians of the procedures involved if staff are verbally or physically assaulted when addressing and investigating bullying behaviours.

- The Board of Management and the School Leadership Team will communicate the procedures to parents/guardians in cases where children, of staff members conducting investigations, are targeted by parents who are dissatisfied with those staff members.

- The Board of Management, the School Leadership team and the Bí Cineálta focus group will establish a clear, well communicated Bí Cineálta policy that clearly

outlines the definition of what bullying is and what bullying is not, the process for reporting allegations of bullying and how it will be dealt with, within the parameters of the policy.

- The Board of Management, the School Leadership Team, members of staff, Student Council, the Parent's Association and the parent body will model respectful, inclusive and kind behaviour always. This model of leadership will set the tone for the overall culture in the school.

- The school's Code of Behaviour will be reviewed and revised to reflect the Bí Cineálta policy, guidelines and procedures. The school's Code of Behaviour and Bí Cineálta policies will be communicated to all members of the school community regularly ensuring everyone understands the rules and consequences.

- The School Leadership Team and staff members will recognise and reward positive behaviour, cooperation and kindness thus reinforcing positive behaviour and discouraging negative behaviours.

- The concept of a **'trusted adult'** will be used as a strategy to encourage students to talk to staff if they or another student is experiencing bullying behaviour. Students will be regularly reminded of the strategy of the 'trusted adult' during Bí Cineálta Week and Friendship and Inclusion Week, when using the Stay Safe Programme, during Assembly, through Peer Support programmes, and on anchor charts visual throughout the school.

- Child Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy devised by the students, staff members and parents will be distributed to all members of our school community. This child friendly Bí Cineálta policy will educate the students on what bullying is, of ways to tell and the important role of the **trusted adult**.

- Peer mentors will be used as a strategy to support students to understand what bullying is and ways to tell. Students in the older classes will be trained to act as peer mentors to the younger students. These students will act as mentors to support the students with positive interactions and play. These students will support the students to develop an understanding as to what behaviours constitute bullying and what behaviours do not. Peer mentors will support the students to know when to tell and who to tell.

- The creation of safe physical spaces in the school to support psychological safety and

prevent bullying behaviour. The yard is divided into game sections for students to play on. These designated areas are rotated daily for students to have opportunities to play different games and are visible to staff. All incidences observed and communicated to yard supervision staff are recorded in the yard duty book. The relevant class teacher is informed, and parents are informed when deemed necessary.

- Murals, artwork and signage promoting our school's values of equality, diversity, inclusion and respect will be visible throughout the school.

- Effective and adequate supervision accommodating a range of preferences and interests during break times.

- Effective and adequate supervision in the classroom and on the corridors.

- The parent body will be regularly informed and educated on the Bí Cineálta policy.

- The parent body will be regularly reminded that the students are children and therefore their emotional intelligence is still developing and differs significantly from an adult. The parent body will be regularly reminded that children must not be demonised if it is determined that they have engaged in bullying behaviours.

- The Board of Management, the School Leadership Team, members of staff, Student Council, the Parent's Association will remind the parent body to include the relevant class when organising school related events such as a communion / confirmation / graduation trip or party. If parents choose to do otherwise, it will be communicated to the parent body that the school must not be used as a collection or drop off point.

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning): Our goals are to:

- Promote teaching and learning that is collaborative and respectful.

- Provide students with regular opportunities to work in small groups with their peers thus supporting them to build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy.

- Provide students with opportunities to develop a sense of self-worth through curricular and extra-curricular programmes.

- Through curricular and extra-curricular programmes, support all members of the school community to foster a deeper understanding of what bullying is and how to prevent and address it.

Strategies to achieve these goals:

- The Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Relationships and Sexuality

Education (RSE) curricula will be taught to all students. The teaching of these programmes aims to foster students' well-being, self-confidence and sense of belonging and to develop students' sense of personal responsibility for their own behaviour and actions.

- Social Emotional Learning Programmes (SEL) will support students to recognise and cope with feelings of anger, frustration, and loneliness in healthy ways, which can help reduce the likelihood of bullying behaviours.

- Diversity and inclusion can be experienced via the Patron's curricula which aims to encourage respect and understanding of different beliefs, perspectives and ways of living.

- The celebration of diversity and culture in our school through art, anchor charts, photographs, and commemorative days.

- Providing students with opportunities to work collaboratively in small groups supports them to foster relationships, belonging and empathy.

- Curriculum-based activities that promote teamwork and friendship can help students build positive peer relationships. Activities like group projects, cooperative games, and class discussions can encourage students to work together and understand each other's perspectives.

- The implementation of the **buddy** system where older students can help younger students to adjust to school and feel supported.

- The curriculum can emphasise the importance of bystander intervention - teaching students not to stand by when they witness bullying but to speak up or seek help from a trusted adult.

- Discussions around the power of kindness and speaking out against unfair treatment can empower students to become allies to those being bullied.

- Teachers can use the curriculum to promote positive values such as kindness, respect, and fairness throughout the day, from the weekly assembly to classroom routines.

- Encouraging school-wide activities such as Friendship and Inclusion Day, kindness days, celebrating differences, and school projects centred around compassion can reinforce these positive messages.

Policy and Planning: Our goals are to:

- Ensure that the wellbeing of the school community is at the heart of school policies and plans.

- Ensure effective school leadership with the Board of Management, Principal, Deputy Principal, In-school Management team supporting the implementation of the Bí Cineálta Policy.

- Raise awareness of the Bí Cineálta Policy with all members of the school community.

- Develop procedures for recording, investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviours.

- Support the participation of students in the development, implementation of the Bí Cineálta Policy and relevant school policies and plans, with the aim of increasing awareness and ensure effective implementation.

- Ensure that the school's Acceptable Usage Policy, Supervision Policy, Inclusive Education, Learning Support and Special Educational Needs Policy, Code of Behaviour, Child Safeguarding Statement and Assaults on Staff Policy, support the implementation of our school's Bí Cineálta Policy.

- Raise awareness of what bullying is and what bullying is not with all members of the school community.

- Raise awareness among parents of the importance of supporting all students when investigating allegations of bullying.

- When dealing with allegations of bullying, inform parents of acceptable conduct towards students, the children of staff, staff and parents. Aggressive behaviour towards students, staff and parents is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

- Raise awareness that while the school is committed to maintaining a positive, inclusive, and respectful learning environment for all students, classroom management, including decisions about seating arrangements and student interactions, falls under the professional responsibility of the class teacher. In upholding fairness and inclusivity in the classroom, parents are asked not to request that their child be moved away from another specific student. Should a parent or guardian have concerns about their child's experience in the classroom, they are

encouraged to raise the issue with the class teacher. The teacher will address the matter using their professional judgment, prioritising the well-being and development of all students involved.

- Promote a school ethos which encourages students to tell a trusted adult and disclose incidents of bullying behaviour.

- Implement a support system for those students affected by bullying behaviour.

- Promote a school ethos of forgiveness for those students deemed to engage in bullying behaviours and ensure that these students are provided with a support system to ensure they do not further engage in bullying behaviours.

- Engage with appropriate agencies and professionals in countering all forms of bullying and in promoting anti-bullying behaviour.

- Support and engage school staff in appropriate teacher professional learning to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

- Support school staff to share their experiences and examples of best practice when addressing bullying behaviour.

Relationships and Partnerships: Our goals are to:

- Ensure clear protocols are in place to encourage parents/guardians on how to approach the school in the event they suspect their child is being bullied.

- Strengthen relationships and partnerships by involving parents and students in the formation and promotion of a Child Friendly Bí Cineálta Anti-Bullying Policy.

- Support strong interpersonal connections through a range of formal and informal structures such as our student council, parents' association, Green School's committee, Active School's committee, and buddy club.

- Implementation of education and prevention strategies including awareness raising measure that build empathy, respect and resilience in students.

- Strengthen relationships and partnerships by encompassing age-appropriate awareness initiatives that support the students to examine their own behaviour and to look at the causes and impacts of bullying behaviour.

- Collaborate with community organisations to provide additional support and resources.

- Strengthen relationships and partnerships by supporting the active participation of

students in school life.

- Strengthen relationships and partnerships by supporting activities that build empathy, respect, resilience and problem-solving skills.

- Strengthen relationships and partnerships by supporting activities that promote acts of kindness.

- Strengthen relationships and partnerships by encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring.

- Strengthen relationships and partnerships by supporting the participation of parents in school life.

- Collaborate with parents and students to educate them about the dangers of cyberbullying by facilitating outside speakers. The programme Webwise will be taught on a regular basis.

Preventing Cyberbullying Behaviour: Our goals are to:

- Fully implement and teach the SPHE curriculum and ensure that all parents/guardians are aware of the content and reinforce the content at home.

- Implement the Digital Media Literacy curriculum which teaches students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship.

- Explicitly teach the issues of cyberbullying and the importance of using technology safely.

- Ensure that students do not have access to personal devices such as mobile phones, smartwatches, or other technology capable of recording audio or video, in order to protect the privacy of students and staff and prevent unauthorised sharing of content online.

- Have regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online.

- Ensure that all parents are aware that discussing the school, its staff, or students on WhatsApp or similar group messaging platforms is strongly discouraged, as such discussions may lead to misunderstandings, incite hostility, and pose potential safeguarding concerns for both children and staff.

- Regularly review and communicate our school's acceptable use policy to all members of our school community.

- Include and refer to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in our school's Code of Behaviour.

- Develop a social media policy for students.

- Promote or host online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online.

- Hold an internet safety day to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour.

Preventing Homophobic /Transphobic Bullying Behaviour: Our goals are to:

- Create a safe and inclusive environment for all students, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

- Educate students about the importance of respecting all people, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

- Encourage peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities.

Preventing Racist Bullying Behaviour: Our goals are to:

- Foster a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students see themselves in their school environment.

- Conduct seminars and workshops for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of racism.

- Encourage peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities.

- Provide support to students who have been the victims of racist bullying.

- 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 and for communicating with their parents.

- Ensure that library reading material represents appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour

- Teach students the importance of gender equality.

- Celebrate diversity at school and acknowledge the contributions of all students.

- Encourage parents to reinforce the values of respect at home.

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):

Supervision

- **Staff Supervision:** All staff members are trained to recognise and respond to bullying behaviour. Staff will be present and visible in common areas and playgrounds during break times.

- **Student Supervision:** Class teachers supervise students during class time and breaktimes. Class teachers should be aware of what is happening in their classrooms and on the playground.

- **Visitor Supervision:** Visitors to the school will be always supervised. Visitors will not be left alone with students. All visitors must sign in and sign out of the school. Visitors can only enter the school via a buzzer door entry system.

Monitoring

- **Incident reporting:** The class teacher investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour with a view to establishing the facts and records on an incident report form.

- **Incident investigation:** All reports of bullying will be investigated promptly and thoroughly. The investigation will include interviews with the student who reported the allegations, the student who allegedly bullied, and all witnesses (if any).

- **Follow-up:** The school will take appropriate actions to address bullying behaviour when determined. The school will take appropriate actions to support all students involved.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Class Teacher/In-School Management Team

When bullying 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):

Approach

The primary aim in addressing reports of bullying behaviour should be to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved rather than to apportion blame.

When addressing bullying behaviour teachers should:

- 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 all students 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.

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

- The class teacher(s) will investigate all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour with a view to establishing the facts and managing the behaviour. Parents/Guardians are not permitted to attend the investigative meetings.

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the class teacher(s) will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.

- Non-teaching staff such as Special Needs Assistants (SNAs), caretakers, secretary, cleaners are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the class teacher.

- When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred, the teacher will consider what, where, when and why?

- The class teacher will be fair and consistent in their approach when addressing bullying behaviour reported by students, staff or parents.

- Interviews will be conducted outside the classroom in a fair and consistent way.

  - If a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first.

  - Thereafter, all students involved will be met as a group.

  - At the group meeting, each student will be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views.

  - Each student will be supported as appropriate, following the group meeting.

  - It may be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incidents.

  - The class teacher will keep a record of all meetings.

Where bullying behaviour has occurred

- Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour will be supported.

- Where it has been established that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the students involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to consult with them on the actions to be taken to address the behaviour.

- It will be made clear to all parents/guardians and students that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this a private matter under GDPR between the student being disciplined, the student's parents and the school.

- A record will be kept of the engagement with all involved.

- This record will document the form and type of bullying, where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students involved and their parents/guardians.

- All records including behaviour reflection sheets will be stored in a file in a secure location.

- **Parents may make schools aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no actions. Parents must put this request in writing to the school or be facilitated to do so where there are literacy, digital literacy or language barriers. However, while acknowledging the parent's request, the school may decide based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.**

Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred

- The class teacher will engage with the students involved and their parents/guardians again no more than **20 school days** after the initial engagement to review progress.

- Important factors to consider as part of this engagement 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.

- The teacher will document the review with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of the students and their parents in relation to this.

- The date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased will be recorded.

- Any engagements with external services/supports will also be noted.

- Ongoing supervision and support may be needed for the students involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased.

- If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the class teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents. A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased.

- If it becomes clear that the student who is displaying bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then consideration by the school should be given to 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 individual student, their parents/guardians and the school.

- If a parent(s) is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, they should be referred to the school's complaints procedures.

- If a parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions have had a negative effect on the student.

The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

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

- Create and maintain a school culture and climate where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour is adhered to.

- Support students who have experienced bullying behaviours raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills.

- If required, involve the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) in supporting all students impacted by bullying behaviour.

- Support students who have displayed bullying behaviour and ensure the demonisation of these students is avoided. Make it clear that once these students cease the bullying behaviour they should be afforded the right to redeem themselves.

- Support students who witnessed bullying behaviour.

- Support students by ensuring that all staff engage in Continuous Professional Development in the Bí Cineálta procedures.

- Support all students by ensuring due process and fair procedure. If it is found that there no evidence of bullying behaviour, this must be accepted by students, parents/guardians and staff.

- Support all students by ensuring that all parents/guardians remain calm and respectful. If any parents/guardians become aggressive to students or staff, the consequences for this will be clearly outlined and communicated to them.

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: _____
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Principal)