



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

The Board of Management of Rath NS has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

This policy fully complies with the requirements of *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2024*.

The Board of Management acknowledges that bullying behaviour interferes with the rights of the child as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We all, as a school community, have a responsibility to work together to prevent and address bullying behaviour and to deal with the negative impact of bullying behaviour.

We are committed to ensuring that all students who attend our school are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our students is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our students and we are fully committed to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

We confirm that we will, in accordance with our obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the harassment of students or staff on any of the nine grounds specified: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

## **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
Restorative Practice (Whole staff training)	Jan – June 2024	Facilitated by Oide – 10 hours RP training which is conducive to the Bí Cineálta Policy
Staff Training	28/11/2024	Maura Collins (Principal) Dee Griffiths (APII) attended training with Anton O' Callaghan, WCEC
School Staff	28/03/2025	Staff Meeting- staff provided with the opportunity to discuss the new Bí Cineálta action plan. Staff questionnaire completed (based on school wellbeing questionnaire) Sharing of draft policy with staff to discuss/consult and make any amendments.
Students	2024	Based on school wellbeing questionnaire
Parents	2024	Based on school wellbeing questionnaire
Board of management	19/06/2025	Board of Management meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	October 2025	Copy of new policy provided to all school staff.  Policy published on school website.
Date policy was approved:		
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.

### **Culture and Environment:** We Strive to:

- Create a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.
- Involve parents as active partners in fostering an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated.
- Support the idea that our school is a telling environment.
- Promote the concept of a trusted adult – Stay Safe linkage – who to tell.
- Create safe spaces in our school building and yards – visibility
- Encourage a sense of belonging with ownership over their own space through art and creativity.
- Ensure that Stay Safe and SPHE lessons focusing on positive behaviour form a part of curricular content in all classes.
- Create a positive school culture and climate which
  - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity
  - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment
  - promotes respectful relationships across the school community.

### **Curriculum (teaching and learning)** We strive to:

- Provide teaching and promote learning which is collaborative and respectful, fostering inclusion and respect for diversity.
- Display a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact.
- Teach SPHE and RSE content which fosters student's well-being and self-confidence as well as promoting personal responsibility for their own behaviours and actions.
- Model respectful behaviour towards colleagues, pupils and visitors in our school environment.
- Promote curricular and extracurricular activities that can help to develop a sense of self-worth, working together, inclusion and respect.
- Ensure that students are given regular opportunities to work in small groups with peers, which can help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy.
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils
- Ensure consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

### **Policy and planning**

The aim of our Bí Cinealta policy is

- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils, parents/guardians.
- To promote a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.

- To ensure appropriate supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
- To develop procedures for noting, investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To implement a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- To work with appropriate agencies in countering all forms of bullying and promoting anti bullying behaviour.

The Acceptable Use Policy, Supervision rota, Special Education Policy and Code of Behaviour all support the implementation of the Bí Cinealta policy.

Effective leadership is a key component with Principal, Deputy Principal, DLP, DDL, and all middle management focused on supporting the implementation of this policy.

### **Relationships and Partnerships**

- Interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as our parents' association and our various student committees and groups.
- Age and stage appropriate awareness initiatives that engage the student body in looking at their own behaviour – promoting acts of kindness and friendship, being an active help to others and looking at the causes of and impact of bullying during SPHE lessons.
- Conducting workshops and seminars for students, staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying.
- Supporting active participation of students in school life and active participation of parents in school life also.
- Engaging parents and students in actively contributing to the formation of a Child Friendly Anti Bullying Policy to make them active participants in the promotion of and discussion of useful ways to identify and reduce bullying behaviour and highlight procedure and how to deal with it if it does occur.

## **Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour**

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

- All teachers and senior management.

When addressing bullying behaviour, 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 bullying behaviour as 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)

### Identify if bullying behaviour has occurred

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour you should consider the following questions:

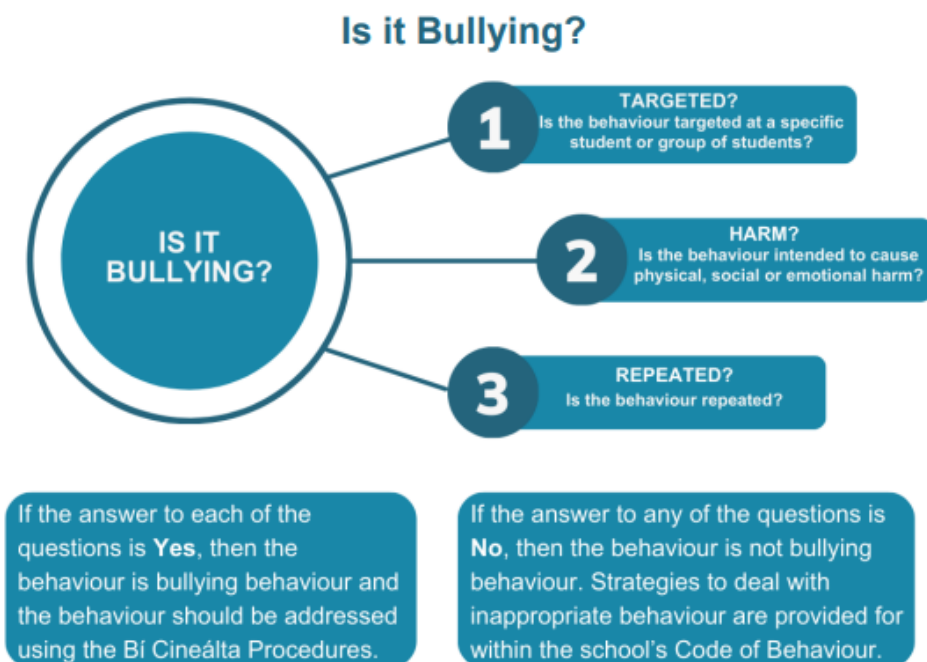
1. Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?
2. Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?
3. Is the behaviour repeated?

If the answer to each of the questions above is Yes, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour and the behaviour should be addressed using the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

Note: One -off incidents may be considered bullying in certain circumstances. A single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and thus becomes a repeated behaviour.

If the answer to any of these questions is **No**, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour.

Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.



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.

### **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.

Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

### **Where bullying behaviour has occurred**

A 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, schools should deal with it in accordance with their BÍ Cineálta policy.

Where the student displaying the bullying behaviour is not a student in the school, but the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour is a student in the school, the school should support the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as appropriate and engage with them and their parents to determine what steps can be taken.

Parents are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with schools, in addressing bullying behaviour. Where bullying behaviour has occurred

1. The parents of the students involved must 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
2. It is important to listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
3. A record should be kept of the engagement with all involved

4. This record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students involved and their parents (see Appendix A)

*A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than "look out" for them. The student may not want to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They may feel that telling someone might make things more difficult for them. Where this occurs, it is important that our member of staff will show empathy to the student, deal with the matter sensitively and speak with the student to work out together what steps can be taken to address the matter and how their parents will be informed of the situation. It is important that the student who has experienced bullying behaviour feels safe.*

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

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*.

- The school will give parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils.
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's Bí Cineálta Procedures and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school;
- In the event that they have been involved in bullying behaviour they are asked to sign a binding promise that they will treat all pupils fairly, equally and respectfully including the targeted pupil(s).
- The 'Relevant Teacher' does not apportion blame but rather treats bullying behaviour as a 'mistake' that can and must be remedied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter. Pupils who report bullying therefore are not getting others 'in trouble' so much as enabling them to get out of trouble into which they may ultimately get if the bullying continued.
- If a pupil has signed such a promise but then chooses to break that promise and continue the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer be considered a 'mistake.' In this event parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed and requested to countersign their daughter/son's promise. Breach of this additional promise by further bullying behaviour is regarded as a very



grave matter and a serious sanction may be imposed by the school authorities (See sanctions below).

### **Sanctions:**

Where a pupil has been found to be engaged in bullying behaviour, has formally promised to stop and has broken that promise, any of the following sanctions may be imposed:

- S/he may be required to sign another promise, this time countersigned by a parent/guardian;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be contacted by the 'Relevant Teacher' and informed of the nature and extent of the bullying behaviour with a view to agreeing a strategy whereby a promise to end the bullying behaviour would be honoured;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be invited to a meeting with the 'Relevant Teacher'.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s), the relevant teacher and the Principal meet in a final effort to resolve the situation.
- The pupil may be suspended from the school. (See school's Code of behaviour)
- The case may be referred to the Board of Management and the pupil may be expelled from the school.

### **Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred**

- the teacher must engage with the students involved and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement
- 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 should document the review with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and their parents in relation to this
- the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased should also be recorded
- any engagement with external services/supports should 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 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 the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then consideration 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 relevant student, their parents 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.

## **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: David Sheehy Date: 13/10/2025 (Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: Maura Collins Date: 13/10/2025 (Principal)

# Appendix A

## Bullying Incident Report Form

### **Bullying Incident Report Form**

1. Name of student experiencing bullying: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name(s) and class(es) of student (s) engaging in bullying behaviour:

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3. Other witnesses (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

4. Source of bullying concern/report (tick as relevant):

Student concerned	
Other student(s)	
Teacher	
Parent	
Other	

5. Type of bullying behaviour (tick as relevant):

Physical (e.g hitting, kicking, pushing)	
Verbal (e.g name calling, teasing, insulting)	
Psychological (intimidation, exclusion, extortion)	
Written (e.g writing insulting remarks in public places, passing notes, drawings)	
Cyberbullying (harmful messages, social media misuse)	
Relational- regarding peers (excluding, ignoring, spreading rumours)	

6. Location and time of incident (if known):

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7. Brief description of bullying behaviour:

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8. Impact of bullying behaviour:

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9. Details of action taken:

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10. Recording Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

11. Review:

Review Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Outcome:

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Recording Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix B

## Guide to Providing Bullying Behaviour Update

### Guide to providing Bullying Behaviour Update for board of management meeting of \_\_\_\_\_ (date).

Having reviewed the details of the incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the previous board of management meeting, the principal must provide the following information at each ordinary meeting of the board of management:

Total number of new incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the last board of management meeting.	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour currently ongoing.	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the beginning of this school year.	

Where incidents of bullying behaviour have been reported since the last meeting, the update must include a verbal report which should include the following information where relevant:

- the trends and patterns identified such as the form of bullying behaviour, type of bullying behaviour if known, location of bullying behaviour, when it occurred etc.
- the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour
- any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour
- if any serious incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred which have had a serious adverse impact on a student
- if a parent has informed the school that a student has left the school because of reported bullying behaviour
- if any additional support is needed from the board of management
- if the school's Bí Cineálta policy requires urgent review in advance of the annual review

This update should not include any personal information or information that could identify the students involved.

# Appendix C

## Review of the Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual (calendar) review of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and its implementation in consultation with the school community. As part of the review, this document must be completed.

### Bí Cineálta Policy Review

1. When did the Board formally adopt its Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour in accordance with the *Bí Cineálta Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*? Insert data when the Bí Cineálta policy was last adopted by the school. \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/20\_\_

2. Where in the school is the student -friendly Bí Cineálta policy displayed?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What date did the Board publish the Bí Cineálta policy and student friendly policy on the school website? \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/20\_\_

4. How has the student friendly policy been communicated to students?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. How has the Bí Cineálta policy and student -friendly policy been communicated to parents?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Have all school staff been made aware of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and the *Bí Cineálta Procedures To Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*?

☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Does the Bí Cineálta policy document the strategies that the school uses to prevent bullying behaviour?

☐ Yes    ☐ No

8. Has the Board received and minuted the Bullying Behaviour Update presented by the principal at every ordinary board meeting over the last calendar year?

☐ Yes    ☐ No

9. Has the Board discussed how the school is addressing all reports of bullying behaviour.

☐ Yes    ☐ No

10. Is the Board satisfied that all incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed in accordance with the school's Bí Cineálta Policy?

☐ Yes    ☐ No

11. Have the prevention strategies in the Bí Cineálta policy been implemented?

☐ Yes ☐ No

12. Has the Board discussed the effectiveness of the strategies used to prevent bullying behaviour?

☐ Yes    ☐ No

13. How have (a) parents, (b) students and (c) school staff been consulted with as part of the review of the Bí Cineálta Policy?

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14. Outline any aspects of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and/or its implementation that have been identified as requiring further improvement as part of this review:

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15. Where areas for improvement have been identified, outline how these will be addressed and whether an action plan with timeframes has been developed?

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chairperson of board of management)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of next review: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Principal)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix D

# Notification regarding the board of management's annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management of Rath National School confirms that the board of management's annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour and its implementation was completed at the board of management meeting of \_\_\_\_\_ [date].

This review was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Education's *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chairperson of Board of management)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Principal)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_