

Bí Cineálta Policy



S.N. Cill Conla

B.1. Culture and Environment

A positive and inclusive school culture and environment is essential to prevent and address bullying behaviour. The school environment should be a space where pupils and school staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported.

Relationships between all members of the school community should be based on respect, care, integrity and trust. Open communication between the patron, boards of management, school staff, pupils and their parents help to foster a collaborative approach and shared responsibilities in relation to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

Each member of school staff has a responsibility to develop and maintain a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and to take a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.

Parents, as active partners in their child's education, can help foster an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated through promoting empathy and respect.

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.

In S.N. Cill Conla we strive to:

- Create a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and we use a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.
- Create an environment where staff and students feel safe, connected and supported.
- Promote kindness and inclusion among student body – peer support and positive environment
- 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 – Well-being plan/Stay safe – who to talk to
- 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.
- 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

Ways in which we work to achieve these goals are as follows:

- Staff are briefed on the uniform approach we must take to handle all reports of bullying – at staff meetings & during Croke park hours, copy of policy emailed to all staff & available in office.
- Anti-Bullying week activities such as Random acts of Kindness etc.
- Playground helpers – students in higher classes volunteer to support younger classes on yard to help with games and positive interactions at certain times of the year
- Child Friendly Anti- Bullying Policy on display on entry to each classroom
- Parents invited to give input into Bí Cineálta Anti Bullying policy by email
- Stay safe and SPHE lessons focusing on positive behaviour form part of curricular content in all classes
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils at all times.

“The dignity and the wellbeing of the individual person is of paramount concern in our Christian response. This school will listen closely to and dialogue with parents, thereby building a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, trust and confidence.”

In continuing to develop prevention strategies, this school will listen to young people and parents, to help establish their particular context and needs. Frequent periods of reflection and 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.

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- > **poverty bullying:** behaviour and language that intends to humiliate a student because of a lack of resources
- > **religious identity bullying:** behaviour and language that intends to harm a student because of their religion
- > **sexist bullying:** behaviour and language that intends to harm a student based on their sex, perpetuating stereotypes that a student or a group of students are inferior
- > **sexual harassment:** any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on sex which affects the dignity of the student.

The following are examples which are not bullying behaviour

A one off incident of negative behaviour towards another student.

Disagreements between students or instances where students don't want to be friends unless it causes deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress to a student.

Some students with special educational needs may have social communication difficulties, which may make them communicate their needs through behaviours that 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 cannot control.

Criminal Behaviour

Bullying behaviour may also be considered Criminal behaviour and legal consequences can apply. The age of criminal responsibility in Ireland is 12 years old. An Garda Síochána is the appropriate authority to investigate alleged criminal 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.

<u>Personnel</u>	<u>Date consulted</u>	<u>Method of consultation</u>
School Staff	19/2/25 14/3/25	Half day closure for staff meeting Follow up- policy formulation
Pupils	27/3/25 28/3/25	Student Council Meeting Senior Room discussion on personal safety, respect and bullying Design competition for policy poster
Parents	September 2025	Draft policy emailed to parents for parental input
BOM	September 2025	Draft policy emailed to BOM for parental input
School Community	9/4/25	Informal discussion with Bus driver and Cleaner Óide advisory visit
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 this school to address all forms of bullying behaviour, in whatever form and however motivated, including online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment.

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.

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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.

> 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 locker or bicycle.

- **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; for example, size or clothes worn or gender identity. 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 behaviour occurs where a student is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded or ignored by a student or group of students.

> 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. 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.

Types of bullying behaviour

There are many different types of bullying behaviour. These can include the following which is not an exhaustive list:

> **disablist bullying behaviour:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of a perceived or actual disability or additional need

> **exceptionally able bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their high academic ability or outstanding talents

> **gender identity bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual gender identity

> **homophobic/transphobic (LGBTQ+) bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual membership of the LGBTQ+ community

> **physical appearance bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their physical appearance. Students who "look different" can be mocked or criticised about the shape, size or appearance of their body

> **racist bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their race or ethnic origin which includes membership of the Traveller or Roma community.

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Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of S.N. Cill Conla 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 pupils who attend our school, are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our pupils is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our pupils 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 pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

“We confirm that we will take all steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent all bullying or harassment of our students in whatever form and however motivated.

Catholic schools have a distinctive understanding of the human person, recognising that every person is created in God's image and likeness and has inherent dignity as a child of God. This is the basis for ensuring that 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* 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.

How bullying behaviour occurs

Bullying behaviour can take many forms, which can occur separately or together. These can include the following

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B.2. Curriculum teaching and learning

Teaching and learning is collaborative and respectful. Pupils have regular opportunities to work in small groups with their peers, which helps build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy among pupils. The curricular subjects offered to pupils provide opportunities to foster inclusion and respect for diversity and activities provide opportunities for pupils to develop a sense of self-worth.

The Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) curricula at primary level aim to foster students' wellbeing, self-confidence and sense of belonging and to develop students' sense of personal responsibility for their own behaviour and actions. Students' social and emotional learning (SEL) skills can be improved through the SPHE curriculum.

B.3. Policy and Planning

The wellbeing of the school community is at the heart of school policies and plans. There are a range of other policies such as the school's acceptable use policy, supervision policy, special education teaching policy and Code of Behaviour that can support implementation of a school's Bí Cineálta policy. Supporting the participation of students in the development and implementation of school policies and plans can help increase awareness and ensure effective implementation. See child friendly Bí Cineálta policy. *See Appendix A*

B.4. Relationships and Partnership

Strong interpersonal connections are a vital part of effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. These interpersonal connections are supported through our range of formal and informal structures such as student councils, school clubs, parents' associations and student support teams. This approach is enhanced by:

- Age 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.
- Encouraging peer mentoring and peer support e.g. reading buddies
- Supporting active participation of students in school life and active participation of parents in school life also. We want to encourage empathy, understanding & respect
- Engaging parents and students in actively contributing to the formation of a Child Friendly Anti Bullying Policy, to make them active participants in 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.

The meaningful involvement of the board of management, staff, students and their parents in the development, implementation and review of their school's Bí Cineálta policy and student friendly version is essential to effectively prevent and address bullying behaviour.

B.5. Preventing cyberbullying behavior

We address the challenges associated with technology and social media by promoting digital literacy, digital citizenship, and fostering safe online environments. Strategies to prevent cyberbullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

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

The digital age of consent is the minimum age a user must be before a Social Media or Internet Company can collect, process and store their data. In Ireland, the digital age of consent is 16.

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B.6. Preventing homophobic/transphobic/racist/sexist bullying behaviour

Our school has become much more culturally diverse over the last number of decades. Students attending school come from many different cultures and backgrounds. All students including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students, have a right to feel safe and supported at school, and pupils are encouraged to speak up if they witness homophobic/transphobic/racist bullying behavior. Our school focuses on gender equality as part of the school's measures to create a supportive and respectful environment.

Preventing sexual harassment requires an approach that focuses on education, awareness and clear enforceable policies. Our school makes it clear that there is a zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment.

B.7. Supervision

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 and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extracurricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- Involvement of pupils in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Friendship week, and other activities that can help pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way, pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Refer to appropriate online behaviour when using devices and in SPHE lessons.
- Promote online safety events or material for parents
- The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school www.webwise.ie
- Raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour and encourage students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour.
- Modelling of respectful behaviour by staff
- Ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of sex.
- Making clear that our school has a zero tolerance approach to bullying of any type.

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

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Junior Room Class Teacher: Aoife McMahon

Senior Room Teacher: Laura Horgan

C.1. 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

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C.2. The steps that will be taken by S.N. Cill Conla to determine if bullying behaviour has occurred

The approaches taken to address the bullying behaviour and to review progress are as follows (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour the teacher should seek answers to questions of **what, where, who, when and why.**
- This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- Teacher should ask the following 3 Questions to determine if the behaviour reported is bullying
 1. **Is the behaviour targeted at a particular student or a group of students?**
 2. **Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?**
 3. **Is the behaviour repeated?** (*Has the person experiencing bullying behaviour made the person displaying bullying behaviour aware that they do not want it to continue*)
- If a group is involved each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be interviewed as a group.
- At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about the other's statements.
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.

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 behavior.

C.3. Approaches taken to address the bullying behavior

Where the 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 anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the perspective of the pupil being bullied.

- The Teacher does not apportion blame but should make an effort to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil *experiencing bullying behaviour*. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish pupils *displaying bullying behaviour* but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek an agreement that it will stop.
- If that agreement is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter.
- When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved, the teacher will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information. This will be filed in the incident book in the school office.
- If a pupil chooses to continue the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer be considered a once off occurrence. In this event parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted. The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for the pupil.
- Repeated incidents of bullying behaviour will be dealt with in line with our Code of Behaviour. It must be made clear to all involved that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required that this is a private matter between the pupil in question, his or her parents and the school.
- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent must be referred to the school's complaints procedure.
- In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their rights to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.
- The School will maintain care for the pupil experiencing bullying behaviour over time. This will be done by speaking to the child no more than 20 school days after the incident to check on their continuing welfare. The child's parents will also be contacted and updated.
- 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 when bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved.

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- 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. *See Section 6.2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.*

C.4. Requests to take no action

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 the member of staff shows empathy to the student, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks 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 the 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.

C.5. Determining if bullying behaviour has ceased

The teacher must engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress following the initial intervention. Important factors to consider as part of the review are the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the students involved.

Even though the bullying behaviour may have ceased, ongoing supervision and support may be required for both the student who has experienced the bullying behaviour as well as the student who has displayed the behaviour. It can take time for relationships to settle and for supports to take effect. In some cases, relationships may never be restored to how they were before the bullying behaviour occurred.

If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students and parents and agree to meet again over an agreed timeframe until the bullying behaviour has ceased. Where it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school should consider using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school’s Code of Behaviour. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school.

C.6. Recording bullying behaviour

All incidents of bullying behaviour should be recorded. The record should document the form (Section 2.5) and type (See Section 2.7) of bullying behaviour, if known, where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students and their parents. The record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour. It 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. It is important to document the date of each of these engagements and the date that it has been determined that the bullying behavior has ceased. Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted. These records should be retained in accordance with the school’s record keeping policy and in line with data protection regulations. Where a Student Support File exists for a student, schools are encouraged to place a copy of the record on the student’s support file. This will assist the school’s student support team, where they exist, in providing a consistent and holistic response to support the wellbeing of the students involved. Where a Student Support Plan exists, the plan should be updated to incorporate response strategies and associated supports.

C.7. Supporting those impacted by bullying behavior

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):

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The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves a whole school approach. The NEPS Psychologist may be contacted for advice. Óide is the Dept. of Education support service for schools and may provide professional learning for school staff. Webwise is an online safety website and may be used in the classroom. Tusla will be contacted, if the bullying is a child welfare concern.

Both the person experiencing the bullying behaviour and the person displaying bullying behaviour need support

Supporting the *person experiencing the bullying behaviour*:

- Ending the bullying behaviour,
- Fostering respect for pupils experiencing the bullying behaviour and all pupils,
- Fostering greater empathy towards and support for pupils experiencing the bullying behaviour,
- Indicating clearly that the bullying behaviour is not the fault of the pupils experiencing the bullying behavior,
- Making adequate counselling facilities available to pupils who need it in a timely manner, subject to available funding/resources
- Helping pupils experiencing the bullying behaviour raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).

Supporting the *pupil displaying bullying behaviour*:

- Making it clear that pupils displaying bullying behaviour who reform are not blamed or punished and get a 'clean sheet,'
- Making it clear that pupils displaying bullying behaviour who reform are doing the right and honourable thing and giving them praise for this
- Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school)
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth
- In dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child & praise good behaviour
- In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a 'clean sheet' and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.

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.

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Chairperson B.O.M. John Dalton Date: 2-2-26

Principal/Secretary to B.O.M. Joe McMahon Date: 4/2/26

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Appendix A: Child Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy

Our school has a Bí Cineálta policy to try to stop bullying behaviour.

We look at this policy every year to see what is working well or what could work better.

We will ask you what you think.



Please tell someone if you think that you are being bullied or someone else is being bullied.

1. Say No 2. Get Away 3. Tell Someone

If a student tells a staff member that they think they are being bullied,
We will:

- Listen to you & talk to you
- Ask you what you want to happen
- Work out a plan together
- Talk to your parents
- Talk to the other children involved
- Talk with the other child's parents

Bullying behaviour is;
When someone keeps being mean or hurtful
to others on purpose,
over and over again.

1. Say No 2. Get Away 3. Tell Someone

We want everyone at S.N. Cill Conla to feel safe and happy. If you think that you are being bullied or someone else is being bullied, stand up for what is right. You need to tell a teacher or SNA or another adult that you trust. They will know what to do to help.



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Appendix B : Guide to Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The whole school community has a responsibility to prevent and address bullying behaviour. Schools should work in partnership with their patron, board of management, staff, students and their parents to develop and implement their Bí Cineálta policy.

This appendix is intended as a guide to addressing bullying behaviour.

It is based on the information contained in Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

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 students 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 the 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

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.

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.

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred teachers should consider who, what, where, when and why?

- if a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first
- thereafter, all students involved should be met as a group

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- 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 be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident(s)

Where bullying behaviour has occurred

- 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, 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
- 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
- A record should be kept of the engagement with all involved
- This record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known
(see Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the Bi Cineálta procedures), where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students involved and their parents
- The record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour

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 the school 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.

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Appendix C: Guide to Providing Bullying Behaviour Update

Guide to providing Bullying Behaviour Update for Board of Management meeting of S.N. Cill Conla.

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.

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Appendix D

Review of the Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management of SN Cill Conla must undertake an annual 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.

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 schools?	
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 the student friendly policy on the school website?	
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 Schools?	
7. Does the Bí Cineálta policy document the strategies that the school uses to prevent bullying behaviour?	
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?	
9. Has the Board discussed how the school is addressing all reports of bullying behaviour?	
10. Is the Board satisfied that all incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed in accordance with the school's Bí Cineálta Policy?	
11. Have the prevention strategies in the Bí Cineálta policy been implemented?	
12. Has the Board discussed the effectiveness of the strategies used to prevent bullying behaviour?	
13. How have (a) parents, (b) students and (c) school staff been consulted with as part of the review of the Bí Cineálta Policy?	
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:	
15. Where areas for improvement have been identified, outline how these will be addressed and whether an action plan with timeframes has been developed?	
16. Does the student-friendly policy need to be updated as a result of this review and if so why?	
17. Does the school refer parents to the complaints procedures if they have a complaint about how the school has addressed bullying behaviour?	
18. Has a parent informed the school that a student has left the school due to reported bullying behaviour?	
19. Has the Office of the Ombudsman for Children initiated or completed an investigation into how the school has addressed an incident of bullying behaviour?	

This Board review will be completed annually at the end of each school year.

Chairperson B.O.M. _____

Date: _____

Principal/Secretary to B.O.M. _____

Date: _____

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Appendix E

Notification regarding the board of management's annual review of S.N. Cill Conla's Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management of S.N. Cill Conla 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 on _____

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 schools.

This Board review will be completed annually at the end of each school year.

Chairperson B.O.M. _____ Date: _____

Principal/Secretary to B.O.M. _____ Date: _____

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Appendix F

Overview of the Bí Cineálta Procedures for Preventing and Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The following is a guide to the main changes between the requirements of the 2013 Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools and the requirements of the 2024 Bí Cineálta procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, which replace the 2013 procedures. This is not an exhaustive list.

Chapter 1	Responsibilities of the school community	All members of the school community must work together in partnership to prevent and address bullying behaviour at school.
	Legal basis	Legislation underpinning Bí Cineálta: Children First Act 2015. Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020 also known as Coco's Law.
Chapter 2	What is bullying behaviour?	Updated definition of bullying behaviour based on Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying (2022).
	Criminal behaviour	Updated information on when bullying behaviour can be considered criminal behaviour.
	Child protection concerns	Updated information relating to when bullying behaviour becomes a child protection concern.
Chapter 3	Impact of bullying behaviour	Updated information on how bullying behaviour can impact students who experience bullying behaviour, students who witness the behaviour and students who engage in bullying behaviour.
Chapter 4	Bí Cineálta Policy	Schools must engage with the whole school community to develop their Bí Cineálta policy, using the template in Appendix A. The policy must list preventative strategies that are used including those to specifically prevent cyberbullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate. Schools must list specific support strategies for individuals experiencing bullying behaviour, those who witness bullying behaviour and those displaying bullying behaviour. All incidents of bullying behaviour must be recorded. The school principal is required to provide a bullying behaviour update at each ordinary board of management meeting. The school's Bí Cineálta policy must be reviewed in collaboration with the whole school community once each calendar year and sooner if a serious incident occurs and the board of management determines an urgent review is required.

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Chapter 4	Appendix A Bí Cineálta Policy	This template document must be used as a basis for each school's Bí Cineálta Policy.
	Student-Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy	Every school must develop a student-friendly version of its Bí Cineálta policy and display it where students and the school community can see it.
	Appendix B Student-Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy	This template document can be used by schools as a basis for their student-friendly policy.
Chapter 5	Preventing Bullying Behaviour	<p>Prevention measures are linked to the four areas of Wellbeing Promotion.</p> <p>Importance of fostering a "telling environment" in schools and the role of the trusted adult.</p> <p>Prevention strategies must be provided relating to specific types of bullying behaviour including cyberbullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment, as appropriate.</p>
Chapter 6	Appendix C Guide to Addressing Bullying Behaviour	Guide can be used to address bullying behaviour.
	Remit of the school in addressing bullying behaviour	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.
	Requests to take no action	Guidance for schools on how requests by students and parents to "take no action" should be addressed.
	Engagement with students involved in bullying behaviour and their parents	<p>Schools must engage with students who have experienced bullying behaviour to decide the actions to be taken to address the incident of bullying behaviour.</p> <p>Schools must also engage with their parents.</p> <p>Schools must engage with students who have displayed bullying behaviour as well as their parents when deciding actions to be taken.</p> <p>Schools must engage with all involved when reviewing progress and determining whether bullying behaviour has ceased.</p>
	Recording Incidents of Bullying Behaviour	All incidents of bullying behaviour must be recorded by the teacher addressing the behaviour.

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Chapter 7	Update to the board of management	<p>Principal must provide an update to the board of management at each ordinary board meeting. This report includes the number of incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the last board meeting, the number of incidents ongoing and the total number reported since the beginning of the school year.</p> <p>The principal must provide a verbal update which will include, where relevant, trends and patterns, the strategies used to address the incidents and whether an urgent review of the policy is needed.</p> <p>The update is to inform discussion at each ordinary board of management meeting regarding the effectiveness of the preventative strategies used by the school and the overall effectiveness of the Bí Cineálta Policy.</p>
	Appendix D Guide to providing bullying behaviour update to the board of management	Guide can be used to assist principals in providing bullying behaviour update to board of management.
	Review of Bí Cineálta Policy	The Bí Cineálta policy must be reviewed once each calendar year, in collaboration with the whole school community, and earlier if the Board determines an urgent review is warranted.
	Appendix E Review of the Bí Cineálta policy.	The Review template must be completed when the Bí Cineálta policy is reviewed.
	Appendix F Notification of Annual Review	The template can be used to notify the school community that the annual review has been completed.