

S.N. An Fhaithche - Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of S.N. An Fhaithche 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 in line with the four key areas of wellbeing promotion-culture, curriculum, policy and planning and relationships and partnerships. 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 practical 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.

We confirm that we will take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the 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 each person 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 all have an indispensable 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.

What is not Bullying?

1. A one-off incident
2. A disagreement between pupils/friends
3. Reckless or accidental behaviour
4. Bad manners or inappropriate behaviour (Refer to Code of Behaviour)

Each school is required to develop and implement a *Bí Cineálta* policy that sets out how the school community prevents and addresses bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

Section A: Development/review of our Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour

All members of our school community were provided with the opportunity to input into the development/review of this policy.

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	7 th March 2025	Questionnaire Collaborative staff discussion utilising the Bí Cineálta guidelines, along with relevant scenarios and provided resources.
Students	10 th March 2025	Pupil Questionnaires
Parents	March 2025	Questionnaire/Parents Association meetings
Board of Management	13 th May 2025	Discussion and ratification of policy
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	7 th March 2025	Questionnaire (Secretary & Caretaker)
Date policy was approved: _____		
Date policy was last reviewed: N/A		

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.
- Physical bullying behavior
- Verbal Bullying Behaviour
- Written Bullying Behaviour
- Extortion
- Exclusion

- Relational
- Disablist Bullying Behaviour

All procedures are aligned with the principles and guidance set out in **Chapter 5 of the *Bí Cineálta* procedures.**

In developing 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 the 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 board of management and staff meetings.

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 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

Education and Awareness-Raising Measures:

Promoting Empathy, Respect, and Resilience

- Age-appropriate activities and discussions will be conducted across all classes to develop empathy, mutual respect, and resilience in pupils.
- Pupils will be encouraged to report bullying behaviours and support peers in a safe and constructive manner.

Promoting Positive Identity and Self-Worth

- Pupils will be supported in developing a positive sense of self-worth through curricular activities, inclusive teaching strategies, and well-being programmes.

Preventing Cyberbullying

- Pupils will be educated on online safety, digital citizenship, and respectful online communication.
- Lessons will include topics such as protecting personal information, identifying cyberbullying behaviours, managing online relationships, and seeking help.

The Role of Teachers

- Teachers will positively influence pupils' attitudes and behaviours by modelling respectful interactions and fostering inclusive classroom environments.

Curriculum Integration:

The school will deliver targeted content through the following curricular programmes:

- **Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE)**

- **Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)**
- **Stay Safe Programme**
- **Friends For Life**

These programmes include topics such as belonging, friendship, communication, conflict resolution, personal safety, and respect for diversity and difference.

- Anti-bullying themes will be further reinforced through subjects such as **Art, Drama, Religious Education, and Physical Education.**

Whole-School Preventative Approaches:

Promoting a Positive School Culture

- Promote a whole-school culture of kindness, respect, and inclusion through:
 - Annual Anti-Bullying Week and awareness campaigns
 - Classroom-based friendship-building initiatives
 - Visible anti-bullying messages throughout the school environment

Emphasising Diversity and Inclusion

- Celebrate diversity through school events and the curriculum, including:
 - Representation of all backgrounds and identities in school resources

Promoting Healthy Relationships Through Sport

- Encourage cooperation, teamwork, and respectful competition through school sports and extracurricular activities.
- Pupils from all backgrounds will have access to inclusive GAA, soccer and athletics coaching by teachers and external providers.

Staff Training and Capacity Building:

- All staff will engage in ongoing professional development on:
 - Recognising and responding to all forms of bullying
 - Supporting students from minority ethnic or marginalised backgrounds
 - Addressing homophobic, transphobic, racist, sexist, and sexually inappropriate language or behaviour

Targeted Prevention Strategies:

Digital Safety

- A digital literacy curriculum will teach pupils about:
 - Safe and responsible technology use

- Managing privacy settings and reporting harmful content
- Recognising and responding to cyberbullying

Support Structures

- Pupils will have access to trusted adults and clear channels for reporting bullying, including:
 - Staff members
 - Safe spaces

Clear Expectations

- The school maintains a **zero-tolerance** stance towards all forms of bullying, clearly communicated through:
 - The Code of Behaviour
 - School assemblies and classroom discussions
 - Visible staff leadership and consistent rule enforcement

Student and Parental Involvement:

Student Voice

- Students will be active participants in developing and reviewing bullying prevention strategies through:
 - Student councils
 - Buddy system
 - Wellbeing surveys

Parental Engagement

- Parents and guardians will be informed and supported through:
 - policy updates
 - Anti-bullying and digital safety workshops
 - Resources from SPHE/Stay Safe/RSE/FLL programmes

Through these proactive and inclusive prevention strategies, the school commits to creating a safe, respectful, and supportive environment for every pupil. These measures will be reviewed annually and adapted in consultation with pupils, parents, and staff, ensuring a whole-school approach to the prevention of bullying behaviour.

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policy along with a yard supervision policy in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour (see Chapter 5 of the *Bí Cineálta* procedures):

In alignment with the *Bí Cineálta* procedures and our commitment to fostering a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for all students, this policy outlines the supervision and monitoring strategies implemented at **S.N. An Fhaithche** to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

Effective supervision and monitoring are essential for promoting a positive school climate where every student feels safe, valued, and supported.

Morning Supervision:

Yard Supervision

- From **9:20 AM** each morning, designated staff members will supervise the students prior to the start of the school day.
- Staff are expected to engage actively with students, monitoring interactions and intervening promptly in the event of any inappropriate behaviour.

Supervision During Transition Times:

Arrival and Dismissal

- Teachers will supervise student arrivals and departures:
 - **Morning supervision** begins at **9:20 AM**
 - **Afternoon dismissal** supervision begins at **3 PM**
- Any observed incidents or emerging patterns of concern will be documented and reported to the relevant staff member for appropriate follow-up.

Corridor Supervision (Wet Days)

- On wet days, supervision will be provided in classrooms to ensure students remain in designated indoor areas.
- Staff will monitor for signs of exclusion, intimidation, or inappropriate behaviour and intervene as required to maintain a positive environment.

Classroom and Break Time Supervision:

- Teachers will remain **vigilant and proactive** during class time and break periods to monitor student interactions.
- Supervision will extend to **communal areas** such as:
 - The school yard
 - Play areas
 - Bathrooms (as appropriate)
- Teachers must not leave their classrooms unattended except in the case of toilet breaks or medical emergencies. In such instances:
 - The teacher in the **adjoining classroom** must keep their door open and provide **visual supervision** of both rooms.

Monitoring Tools and Practices:

Incident Logs

- A **written record** of all reported bullying incidents will be maintained, including:
 - Date and time
 - Location
 - Individuals involved
 - Nature of the behaviour
 - Actions taken
- These logs will be **reviewed periodically** to identify patterns and inform preventative measures and interventions.

Student Surveys and Feedback

- **Anonymous student surveys** may be conducted at regular intervals to assess the student experience and identify areas of concern.
- Student feedback will be used to **improve and adapt** supervision practices and identify any gaps in current monitoring strategies.

Staff Training and Awareness:

All staff will receive **ongoing professional development** in the following areas:

- Identifying both **overt and subtle signs** of bullying behaviour
- Using **effective intervention strategies** to address and de-escalate incidents
- Promoting a culture of **inclusion, respect, and empathy** among students

Parental and Community Involvement:

- Parents and guardians will be **encouraged to report** any concerns regarding bullying, whether directly observed or disclosed by their children.
- The school will maintain open and **accessible communication channels** with families.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

All teaching staff are responsible for addressing bullying behaviour.

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

- ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour is heard and reassured
- seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- consider the age and ability of those involved
- listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- take action in a timely manner
- inform parents of those involved

The steps that will be taken by the school to determine if bullying behaviour has occurred, the approaches taken to address the bullying behaviour and to review progress are as follows (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

Steps to Determine if Bullying Behaviour Has Occurred

1. **Initial Inquiry**
 - Teachers consider **what, where, when, and why** during the investigation.
 - Interview individuals separately if multiple students are involved.
2. **Group Discussion (Where applicable)**
 - After individual interviews, hold a group meeting to clarify everyone's perspective.
 - Encourage each student to share their account to foster mutual understanding.
3. **Written Accounts**
 - Request students to write down their accounts to ensure clarity and provide documentation.
4. **Defining Bullying**
 - Refer to the definition of bullying in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures to and use the questions in Appendix C of the Bí Cineálta procedures to assess if the behaviour meets the criteria.
5. **Consideration of Context**
 - Distinguish between hurtful or unacceptable behaviour and bullying, referencing the school's **Code of Behaviour** for non-bullying issues.

Approaches to Address Bullying Behaviour

1. **Engagement with Students**
 - Meet promptly with students involved to ensure they feel **listened to, supported, and reassured**.
 - Maintain privacy and conduct sensitive conversations appropriate to the age and ability of the students.
2. **Support Mechanisms**
 - **For the student experiencing bullying:** Provide emotional support and involve them in deciding the next steps.
 - **For the student displaying bullying behaviour:** Address underlying relational issues and provide strategies for improved behaviour.
3. **Involvement of Parents**
 - Notify and consult parents at an early stage while addressing communication barriers (e.g., literacy or language challenges).
 - Acknowledge requests for no action, but balance these with the need to address behaviour appropriately.
4. **Timely and Tailored Actions**
 - Take prompt action, ensuring measures align with the **Bí Cineálta** policy.
 - Avoid actions that diminish the student's agency.
5. **Strategies and Training**
 - Utilise restorative practices, mediation, or other approaches where staff have been trained, and students consent to the process.
 - Refer to external supports like NEPS, Webwise, or the DCU Anti-Bullying Centre for guidance and training.
6. **Addressing Complex Cases**
 - Handle cases involving external parties or off-campus bullying impacting school life through supportive interventions.
 - Use the school's **Code of Behaviour** for ongoing or severe issues requiring disciplinary action.

Steps to Review Progress

1. Follow-Up Review

- Engage with students and parents within **20 school days** of the initial intervention.
- Assess the nature of the bullying, effectiveness of strategies, and current relationships.

2. Continuous Monitoring

- Supervise both the student experiencing bullying and the student displaying the behaviour to ensure ongoing support.
- Address lingering relational difficulties proactively.

3. Adjustments as Needed

- If bullying persists, revise strategies with input from students and parents and schedule further reviews.
- Apply the school's **Code of Behaviour** where necessary.

4. Documentation

- Maintain detailed records of incidents, actions taken, and follow-ups.
- Update Student Support Files or Plans as applicable, ensuring consistency in addressing the issue.

5. Final Assessment

- Confirm if the behaviour has ceased.
- Document all engagements, including dates of resolution and any consultations with external services.

6. Complaint and Support Resources

- If parents are dissatisfied, guide them to the school's complaint process or external bodies like the Ombudsman for Children.
- Highlight supports available through NEPS, Oide, Webwise, NPC, and the DCU Anti-Bullying Centre for long-term resolution and prevention.

This approach ensures fairness, sensitivity, and clarity while addressing bullying effectively and promoting a safe school environment.

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

1. Supporting Students Who Experience Bullying Behaviour

- **Empowering Through Trusted Adults:** Encourage students to report incidents of bullying to a trusted adult within the school. Trusted adults will provide reassurance, listen attentively, and validate the student's experience.
- **Engagement and Emotional Support:** Offer immediate support to help the student feel safe, listened to, and reassured. Tailored strategies will be developed based on their individual needs, including ongoing emotional support.
- **National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS):** Utilise NEPS, where appropriate, for direct and indirect casework to support the student's social, emotional, and psychological wellbeing. NEPS can also assist in addressing the impact of bullying through resilience-building and social skills training.
- **Parental Involvement:** Engage parents early to ensure a supportive environment both at home and school. Parents will be consulted in creating a plan to address the situation while considering the student's preferences and concerns.
- **Ongoing Monitoring and Follow-Up:** Maintain consistent communication with the student to ensure the effectiveness of interventions and adjust support strategies as needed.

2. Supporting Students Who Witness Bullying Behaviour

- **Fostering Reporting Culture:** Encourage witnesses to report bullying incidents by emphasising their critical role in addressing such behaviour. Reinforce the concept of trusted adults as approachable and supportive figures.
- **Education and Awareness:** Use resources from Webwise and other programmes to educate students on the importance of standing against bullying and safe reporting methods, including online incidents.
- **Recognition and Validation:** Ensure that students who report bullying are acknowledged for their courage and supported throughout the process.
- **Building Empathy and Responsibility:** Conduct workshops and activities to promote empathy and a sense of collective responsibility within the school community, fostering a proactive stance against bullying.

3. Supporting Students Who Display Bullying Behaviour

- **Individualised Support Plans:** Identify the underlying causes of the behaviour and implement targeted interventions to address relational difficulties. Use NEPS resources to develop social and emotional skills, self-regulation, and conflict resolution.
- **Parental Collaboration:** Involve parents in understanding the behaviour, its impact, and the steps required to encourage positive change.
- **Ongoing Supervision and Support:** Provide consistent oversight to ensure the student's progress in managing their behaviour and adapting to healthier interpersonal interactions.

4. School-Wide Supports

- **Professional Development:** Leverage Oide to train teachers and staff on strategies to prevent and address bullying, including restorative practices and effective intervention methods.
- **Promotion of Digital Citizenship:** Use Webwise resources to teach students about responsible online behaviour, cyberbullying prevention, and digital wellbeing.
- **Community Collaboration:** Partner with external organizations, such as the National Parents Council (NPC), DCU Anti-Bullying Centre, and Tusla, to access additional training, resources, and

expert guidance.

- **Inclusive and Safe Environment:** Actively promote a positive school culture where respect, empathy, and kindness are valued and encouraged across all interactions.

By implementing these approaches, the school aims to create a supportive environment where every student—whether they experience, witness, or display bullying behaviour—receives the necessary guidance and resources to thrive and contribute positively to the school community.

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 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: _____

Stiofán Ó Mearáin

Date: _____

13/5/25

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: _____

Phil

Date: _____

13/5/25

(Principal)

Appendix 1: Bullying Behaviour Report Template

S.N. An Fhaithche

Aligned with the Bí Cineálta Guidelines (2023)

1. Pupil Details

Name of pupil being bullied: _____ Class group: _____

2. Alleged Pupil(s) Engaged in Bullying Behaviour

Name(s): _____

Class group(s): _____

3. Source of Bullying Concern / Report (Tick all that apply)

☐ Pupil directly involved ☐ Other pupil(s) ☐ Parent/Guardian ☐ School staff ☐ Anonymous report ☐ Other: _____

4. Location(s) of Incident(s) (Tick all that apply)

☐ Classroom ☐ Playground ☐ Corridor ☐ Toilets ☐ Online ☐ School event/tour ☐ Other: _____

5. Reporting Party

Name of person(s) reporting the concern (if applicable): _____

6. Type(s) of Bullying Behaviour (Tick all that apply)

☐ Physical aggression ☐ Damage to property ☐ Name-calling/verbal abuse
☐ Malicious gossip ☐ Isolation/exclusion ☐ Intimidation
☐ Cyberbullying ☐ Homophobic bullying ☐ Transphobic bullying
☐ Racist bullying ☐ Sexist bullying/sexual harassment ☐ Other: _____

7. Description of Incident(s)

Brief description, including impact and frequency: _____

Brief description, including impact and frequency: _____

8. Actions Taken by School

9. Signatures

Relevant Teacher 1: Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Relevant Teacher 2: Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

10. Follow-Up and Referral

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal: _____

Referred for further action/support: ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, specify: ☐ Support Team ☐ Principal/Deputy ☐ External agency ☐ Other: _____