

# Gaelscoil Uileog de Búrca



**Polasaí Bí Cineálta Scoile chun Iompraíocht  
Bhulaíochta a Chosc agus Dul i nGleic léi**

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

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

The Board of Management of Gaelscoil Uileog de Búrca 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.

### **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	Bealtaine 2025	Discussion at staff meeting Staff survey
Students	Bealtaine 2025	Discussion Student survey
Parents	Bealtaine 2025	Parents survey
Board of Management	Meitheamh 2025	CPSMA video Meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	Meitheamh 2025	Discussion
Date policy was approved:	06/06/25	
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.

This school takes positive steps to ensure that the culture of the school is one which welcomes a respectful dialogue and encounter with diversity and difference by ensuring that prevention and inclusivity strategies are given priority and discussed regularly at our board of management and staff meetings.

The dignity and 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.

### Positive School Culture and Climate/ Telling Environment and Trusted Adults/ Safe Physical Spaces

In Gaelscoil Uileog de Búrca we.....

- **Foster belonging and respect** through consistent, respectful relationships among students, staff, and parents.
- **Promote empathy and care** in all school interactions.
- **Encourage student voice** in policy development and school life (e.g., via Coiste na nDaltaí).
- **Ensure school values** (respect, inclusion, integrity) are visible in all interactions.
  
- **Promote a "telling" culture** where students feel safe and supported to report bullying.
- **Identify and promote trusted adults** within the school – pupils should know who they can go to.
- **Reassure and support pupils** who report bullying and ensure consistent follow-up.
- **Educate pupils on what happens after a report** to reduce fear or uncertainty.
  
- **Create inclusive and inviting environments** using murals, signage, and student artwork.
- **Ensure effective supervision** during break times and around hidden areas in yard or corridors.
- **Increase visibility** in risk areas (e.g., removing visual barriers, good lighting).
- **Maintain school grounds** to promote pride and ownership.

### Curriculum-Based Prevention/ Whole-School Policies and Planning

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- **Implement SPHE and RSE effectively**, focusing on relationships, self-worth, empathy, and inclusion.
- **Promote collaborative learning**, group work, and peer interaction to build empathy and connection.
- **Use other subjects** (e.g. RE & History) to teach diversity, human rights, and anti-racism.
- **Incorporate Traveller culture and history** across subjects
  
- **Integrate the Bí Cineálta policy** with other school policies (e.g., Code of Behaviour, AUP, Supervision, Special Education, Child Safeguarding).

- Engage students and parents in policy creation and review.
- Support staff CPD on bullying prevention, inclusion, and diversity.
- Promote sharing of good practices among staff.

### Strong Relationships and Partnerships

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- Build strong interpersonal connections through Coiste na nDaltaí and parent engagement.
- Promote age-appropriate awareness initiatives on bullying and empathy.
- Run workshops/seminars for pupils, staff, and parents.
- Encourage peer mentoring, kindness campaigns, and problem-solving activities.
- Involve the wider school community, e.g., bus drivers, local businesses, etc.

### Cyberbullying Prevention

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- Teach digital literacy and citizenship (via SPHE).
- Hold Internet Safety events and communicate online expectations clearly.
- Develop a strong Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) and reference it in behaviour standards.
- Ensure parents understand social media age requirements and how to monitor usage.

Most social media platforms and services have a minimum age requirement and for the majority of these services it is 13 years' old. Therefore technically, children under the age of 13 should not have a social media account. It is important for their child's safety, that parents are aware of their children's use of technology including smartphones and gaming consoles.

### Prevention of Specific Types of Bullying

In Gaelscoil Uileog de Búrca we .....

- **Homophobic/Transphobic Bullying:**
  - Encourage respect and understanding of different beliefs, perspectives and ways of living, promote empathy and peer support.
- **Racist Bullying:**
  - Celebrate diversity visibly, host awareness sessions, ensure inclusive resources.
- **Sexist Bullying:**
  - Model gender-equal behaviour, offer equal opportunities, and promote gender respect.
- **Sexual Harassment:**
  - Implement SPHE thoroughly, use positive role models, and challenge harmful norms/stereotypes.

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour:

- Code of Behaviour
- Supervision Policy
- Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy
- Social Personal & Health Education
- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment

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

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

All Mainstream class teachers and SETs (where appropriate).

The Principal/Deputy Principal will provide support and advice and will become involved where appropriate.

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):

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.

### **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

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.

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.

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred teachers should consider 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
- 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 *Bí 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 (**Appendix 3**)

## 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 will:

- 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
- record the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased
- make a note of any engagement with external services/supports
- make a decision and record whether 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, consideration will 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 will be referred to the school's complaints procedures.

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

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

### Supporting Students Who Experience Bullying Behaviour

- Ensure safety and wellbeing
- Rebuild self-esteem and confidence
- Empower the student to seek support
- **Listen carefully and validate** their experience.
- **Reassure them** that telling was the right thing to do.

- Provide **ongoing emotional support**
- Develop a **support plan** if needed.
- Offer **restorative conversations**, if appropriate and safe, to rebuild peer relationships.
- Monitor their wellbeing **over time**, not just immediately after the incident.
- **Keep communication open with parents/guardians.**

### Supporting Students Who Witness Bullying Behaviour

- Empower bystanders to report and act responsibly
- Prevent passive reinforcement of bullying
- Support students who may feel guilt or anxiety after witnessing bullying
- Teach students the **importance of speaking up** and reporting.
- Reinforce that **reporting is not telling tales**—it's taking responsible action.
- Provide opportunities to talk about their feelings and any fear or worry.
- Encourage **peer mentoring and leadership roles** to promote kindness.
- **Educate all students** on the power of bystanders and their role in creating a safe environment.

### Supporting Students Who Display Bullying Behaviour

- Help the student understand the impact of their behaviour
- Address underlying causes or needs
- Encourage empathy, accountability, and behaviour change
- **Avoid labelling** the student as a "bully"—focus on the **behaviour**, not the person.
- Use a **restorative approach**:
  - Help the student recognise the harm caused.
  - Guide them in taking responsibility and making amends.
- **Identify underlying issues** (e.g., social, emotional, or behavioural needs) and refer to: SET, Counsellor or external supports if needed.
- Work on **developing empathy, self-regulation, and conflict resolution** skills.
- **Involve parents/guardians** early and constructively in the process.
- Monitor their behaviour going forward and provide **consistent boundaries** and positive reinforcement.

### Whole-School Follow-Up and Monitoring

- All three groups benefit from:
  - **Ongoing monitoring and check-ins** with a trusted adult
  - Opportunities to **rebuild positive peer connections**
  - **Age-appropriate social emotional learning** lessons that promote kindness, respect, and inclusion.

We may also use resources from outside agencies, including those developed by:

- NEPS: advice on best practice to prevent and address bullying when issues arise in schools and/or training in preventative initiatives. Counselling for those affected may be arranged
- Oide: provide Professional Learning to all teachers
- Webwise: online safety awareness raising and education initiative for students and parents
- National Parents Council: online and in person courses to support parents to prevent and address bullying
- DCU Anti Bullying Centre: FUSE programme that can be used to promote a positive school culture and assist in preventing and addressing bullying behaviours
- Tusla: for cases where it is considered that bullying behaviour becomes a child protection concern.

All bullying behaviour will be recorded (Appendix 3) 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.

Síniú: Seán de Búrca Dáta: 06-06-25  
Cathaoirleach an Bhoird Bainistíochta

Síniú: Maire Uí Dhinneide Dáta: 6-6-25  
Príomhoide