

St. Brendan's N.S.

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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The Board of Management of St. Brendan's N.S. has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

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

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

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

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

Definition of bullying

Bullying is defined in *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying* and *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* as targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society. The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

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

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

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

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	March 2025	Bí Cineálta half day/Croke Park hours
Students	February 2025	Online Survey
Parents	February 2025	Online Survey
Board of Management	September 2024 – June 2025	Board meetings
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	January – April 2025	Informal consultation
Date policy was approved:		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out a menu of the prevention strategies that may be used by the school. These include strategies specifically aimed at preventing online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

1. Culture and Environment

- Muckalee NS is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
- We encourage pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment.
- We promote respectful relationships across the school community;

This is achieved with the following strategies

- Mission Statement on display

- Ethos
- High expectations
- Welcoming environment/visual welcome
- Morning Welcome
- Positive signage
- Wellbeing Week
- Classroom/School Rules
- Restorative Practice
- School assemblies
- Parental involvement
- Home school links
- Active learning
- Camogie/Gaelic Football
- Active Week
- School tours and excursions
- Play areas

2. Curriculum - Teaching and Learning

- SPHE- wellbeing week, weaving wellbeing, internet safety day
- RSE
- StaySafe
- Walk Tall
- P.E.-team work
- Music
- Drama
- Visiting coaches
- Move Well, Move Often (P.E programme)
- Religion
- Outdoor learning
- Classroom learning
- Online resources
- Friends for Life
- Free Play
- Collaborative/ Group work
- Mindfulness

3. Policy and Planning

- Other policies that support Bi Cineálta e.g. Supervision, Special Ed, Code of Behaviour, ICT, AUP, SPHE, Wellbeing, SSE, Child Safeguarding policy, , Parental Complaints Procedures
- Child's voice in policy planning/ Student council
- Staff CPD
- Recording system for incidents of bullying behaviour
- Cuntas Míósúil to reflect SPHE
- Bi Cineálta Policy for each teacher
- Child friendly Bi Cineálta Policy displayed in each classroom and throughout the school.
- Annual review and reporting to BOM at every meeting
- DEIS plan

4. Relationships and Partnerships

- Student council
- Internet safety speaker - for parents and students
- Garda speaker
- Inviting parents and grandparents to participate in school occasions
- Buddy systems
- Shared reading among classes
- Social stories
- BOM
- Sports partnerships
- NEPS/ Oide/ PDST
- Random acts of Kindness

5. Preventing Cyberbullying Behaviour

- Internet Safety Day
- Stay Safe, FUSE, WebWise
- Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.
- Smarter Charter

6. Preventing Homophobic/Transphobic Bullying Behaviour

- Staysafe
- Empathy building exercises
- Encourage pupils to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour
- Challenge gender stereotypes, encourage peer support.
- School documents reflect diverse family structures.

7. Preventing Racist Bullying Behaviour

- Staysafe
- Fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students “see themselves” in their school environment
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour
- providing supports to school staff to respond to the needs of students for whom English is an additional language and for communicating with their parents
- providing supports to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma students, and to encourage communication with their parents
- ensuring that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds

8. Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour

- celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contributions of all students
- organising awareness campaigns, workshops and presentations on gender equality and respect
- encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home

9. Preventing Sexual Harassment

- promoting positive role models within the school community
- challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment.

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):

- The BOM has an overall responsibility to ensure that this policy is effective, sustainable and measured. The BOM must ensure that accountability is of the highest standard and frequently appraise the outcomes of the strategies and measures contained within the policy
- ISM Team - have a clear role to act in a leadership capacity within the school community, stimulating a whole school approach to preventing and tackling bullying – and modelling best practice
- The principal as key leader strongly influences attitudes and sets standards in relation to dealing with bullying
- Teachers must act as good role models and not misuse authority, but be fair, clear and consistent in their implementation of the Code of Behaviour.
- There are agreed supervision and monitoring practices in the school
- Mobile phones may not be brought to school unless parents have written to the Board of Management to request permission. In the event of this permission being granted the phone must be given to the relevant staff member at the beginning of the school day.
- Mobile phones are not permitted on school tours/outings except in special circumstances
- Bullying danger spots have been identified as the playground,
- Pupils will be involved as a resource to assist in counteracting bullying through the Student Council.
- In relation to Acceptable Use Policy in the school the following issues are addressed:
 - All Internet sessions are supervised by a teacher
 - Pupils been instructed to access only those discussion forums and messaging or other electronic communication fora that have been approved by the school.
- Note that the School's Broadband Programme has blocked all social networking sites on the basis that they waste time and take up too much of the bandwidth which is been provided for educational purposes only

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

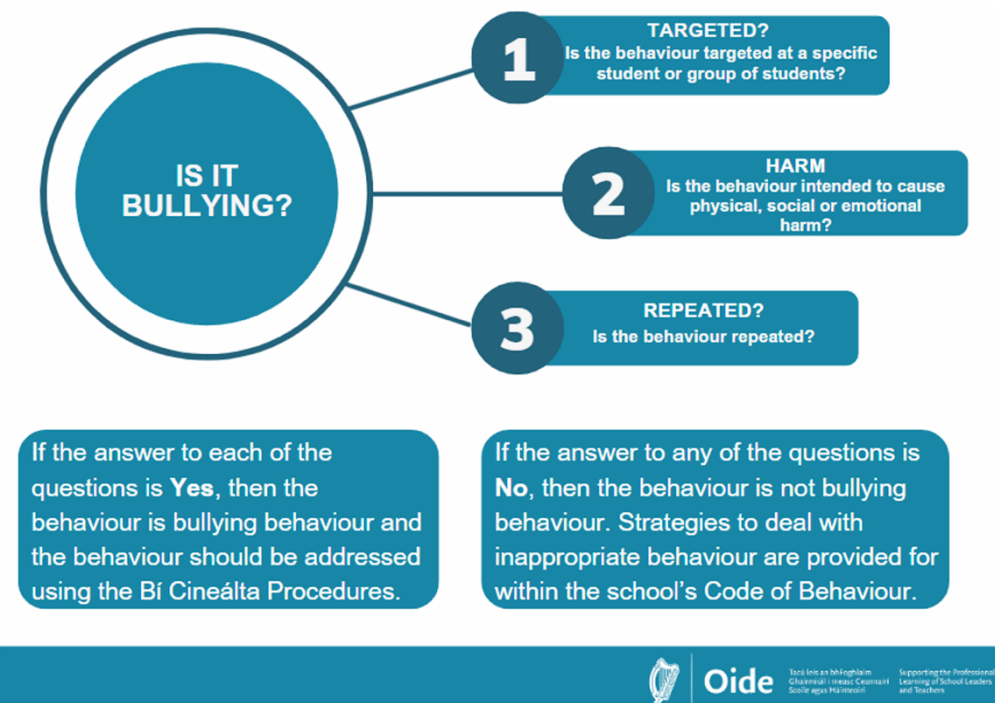
Class Teacher, Principal, Post Holders

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):

1. Each student should be engaged with individually.
2. All students should be met with together.
 - Each student should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views.
 - Each student should be supported, as appropriate, following the group meeting.
 - It may also be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident.
 - The definition of bullying provided on Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures book sets out clear criteria to help schools to identify bullying behaviour. The questions included in Appendix C can further assist in this regard.



If bullying is not determined, then inappropriate behaviour is dealt with within the school's Code of Behaviour.

Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the following steps will be taken

- the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken to address the behaviour as outlined in this policy. The school will give parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils;

Possible Actions May Include:

- 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, the school will support the students involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, it will be dealt with in accordance with our Bí Cineálta policy.
- Parents who specifically request that the school take no action 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.
- All incidents of bullying behaviour should be recorded and stored on the Databiz software. The record will document
 1. the form (Section 2.5)
 2. type (See Section 2.7) of bullying behaviour,
 3. location
 4. date and time and when it took place
 5. date of the initial and subsequent engagements with the students and their parents.
 6. views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour.
 7. review with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased, views of students and their parents in relation to this.
 8. Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted.
 9. These records should be retained in accordance with the school's record-keeping policy and in line with data protection regulations.
- 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.
- If a parent is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with these procedures, they should be referred to the school's complaints procedure.
- In the event that a student and/or parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, a student and/or parent 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.
- 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*.

Possible Consequences for Bullying Behaviour

- To engage with restorative practices with staff and other pupils involved
- Temporary separation from peers/friends or others.
- Separation in class zones and lines
- Explicit lessons to resolve bullying behavior
- Meeting with parents & school management to discuss bullying behaviour & liaising with agencies
- Not allowed to attend school outings with their class/school
- Not allowed to attend in school events eg (Cake Sale)
- Sit outside principal's office during breaktime.
- Severe cases – Suspension/Expulsion - refer to schools Code of Behaviour.

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):

- Revisit Staysafe/Wellbeing lessons as appropriate
- Refer to the following services as appropriate - National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), OIDE, Webwise, DCU Antibullying Centre, National Parents Council, TUSLA

Section D: Oversight

The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting. This update will include the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting, the number of ongoing incidents and the total number of incidents since the beginning of the school year. Where incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred, the principal will also provide a verbal update which will include where relevant, information relating to trends and patterns identified, strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant. This update does not contain personal or identifying information. See Chapter 7 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

This policy is available to our school community on the school's website and in hard copy on request. A student friendly version of this policy is displayed in the school and is also available on our website and in hard copy on request.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed, following input from our school community, each calendar year or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this policy refers.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Principal)