School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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The Board of Management of Scoil Naomh Bríde has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

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

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

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

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

Definition of bullying

Bullying is defined in *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying* and *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* as targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in

relationships between two people or groups of people in society. The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

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

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

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

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	21/04/2025 28/04/2025	½ day closure Google Forms Survey
Students	22/05/2025	Google Forms Survey
Parents	04/04/2025	Google Forms Survey
Board of Management	11/06/2025	Meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	24/09/2025	Published on school website Shared via Aladdin

Date policy was approved: 23/09/2025
Date policy was last reviewed:

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

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

Culture and Environment
- Create a positive school climate where all students feel safe, valued and respected.
- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Display respect to ourselves and others at all times.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with additional needs and/or differences.
- Systems of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines may be used where appropriate.
- All staff will actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Promote acts of kindness
- Involve Parents as active partners in fostering a positive environment

where bullying behaviour is not tolerated.

- Encourage open communication between students, staff and parents.
- Encourage a culture of students reporting bullying behaviour.
- Ingrain clear expectations for behaviour and then promote and maintain them.
- Encourage a sense of belonging and ownership in the school.
- Incorporate Art and posters to promote our school values.
- Create safe areas in our school that are supervised and allow a feeling of safety and support.

Curriculum

- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- The implementation of the Social Physical and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum, according to our school plan, including the Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) and Stay Safe Programmes.
- School–wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence–based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme, programmes to teach about cyberbullying (e.g. Webwise teachers' resources and lessons from (www.cybersafekids.ie)
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Organise seminars/workshops given by relevant professionals to older pupils and to parents/guardians, focusing on educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while online and also on developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber–bullying. The school–wide approach and the role of parents is of great importance in this regard.
- Use of programmes such as Friends for Life (which looks at social skills and resilience)
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.

Policy and Planning

- The aims of Scoil Naomh Bríde's Bí Cineálta policy are:
- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, children, parents/guardians.
- Have our child-friendly BÌ Cinealta Policy on display prominently around the school.
- To promote a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To ensure appropriate supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
- To develop procedures for noting, investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To implement a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and

for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- To work with appropriate agencies in countering all forms of bullying and promoting anti bullying behaviour. The Acceptable Use Policy, Supervision policy, Special Education Policy, Mobile Phone Policy, Attendance Policy, Supervision Policy and Code of Behaviour all support the implementation of the Bí Cineálta policy.
- If pupils bring mobile phones or other smart devices to school, they should be switched off at all times and handed to a teacher.
- School staff and pupils can identify hot spots and hot times for bullying in the school.

Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, toilet areas, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.

Hot times tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard, arriving into the classroom or moving classrooms.

Relationships and Partnerships
- Catch the children being good – notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- At assemblies, school rules are reinforced on a regular basis. Raise awareness of the definition of bullying behaviour and how the school deals with such behaviour.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Support the active participation of students in school life through formal and informal structures, e.g. circle–time activities, assemblies, sports' teams, student council, playground pals and paired readers.
- Support the active participation of parents in school life, e.g. being a member of the Parents' Association

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 Policy

Acceptable Use of the lnternet

Code of Behaviour

Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment

Bí Cinealta Policy

Student Friendly Bí Cinealta Policy

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

1. Mainstream class teachers and SETs.

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

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):

The whole school community has a responsibility to prevent and address bullying behaviour. The following approach and steps are *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.*

<u>Approach</u>

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, the teachers with responsibility will:
- 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.

In-Class:

- Where an alleged incident of bullying takes place during class the teacher will use his/her professional judgement to investigate it by speaking to the parties involved and when necessary looking for witnesses to the incident.

- The investigation may involve individual conversations with each party and/or a group discussion in order to clarify exactly what happened. On occasion a teacher may ask the principal or a colleague to sit in on these meetings to observe.

- These meetings will be conducted outside of the classroom in a fair and consistent manner. If a group is involved then these children may be interviewed individually at first and then in a group setting. The children may be asked to write down their account of what has happened.

- To be deemed bullying it must meet the criteria as laid out in the Bí Cineálta guidelines:

"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 following principles are adhered to when investigating:

1. Ensure that the student who may have experienced bullying is listened to and feels heard and reassured.

2. Seek to ensure the privacy of those involved.

3. Conduct all conversations with sensitivity.

4. Consider the age and ability of those involved.

5. Take action in a timely manner

6. Inform the parents of those involved.

- If the incident is verified then the teacher will write up a report, including as many relevant facts as possible (Appendix 1). This report will be kept on file by the teacher and added to the log of actions on Aladdin.

- Class teacher records are kept for 1 year. Office copies and digital copies are kept until the child is 18, in line with the school policy on "Assessment and Record Keeping".

Outside the Class.

- Where an alleged bullying incident takes place on the school grounds the supervising teacher will be the first person to try to establish the facts by following the procedures outlined above. It is the responsibility of the class teacher, in consultation with the supervising teacher to write up a report, if it is deemed necessary. Where the incident involves children from more than one class the class teachers will agree on which one writes the report and copies should be given to all teachers concerned.

The actions taken will follow those described under "In-Class" above.

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):

We take all instances of bullying behaviour on a case–by–case basis, but we may use the following approaches generally:

1. The primary aim for the relevant teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame);
2. In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
3. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with appropriately by the relevant teacher. 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;
4. Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners will be required to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;
5. Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible;
6. It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;
7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

Supporting Children:
- Ending the bullying behaviour
- Supporting the children who have experienced bullying behaviour and witnessed bullying behaviour. Brief referrals to SCP can be used. Counselling can be made available if required and funds are available
- Use programmes that focus on social skills, empathy and self-esteem..
- Promote a positive culture where pupils feel safe, respected and heard.
- Encourage pupils who have experienced bullying to become part of activities that facilitate developing friendships and social skills. These activities can also raise self-esteem.
- When dealing with challenging behaviour, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on positive reinforcement.
- Maintaining strong links and communications between school and home.
- Using "Circle Time", SPHE lessons and SALT where appropriate.
- Accessing counselling and/or "Play-Therapy" when appropriate and available.
- Strong communication between all staff members.
- Online resources that the school will use: https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/publications/resources-for-primary-schools/
- Teachers will be encouraged to attend training in Restorative Practices.

Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools

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.

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

Signed: _____   Date: _____
(Principal)

Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour

This template is only to be used when bullying behaviour has been identified, in line with the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

1. Date of initial engagement with pupil(s) and parent(s)
_____

2. Initials of pupil who has experienced bullying behaviour and class group Initials
_____Class_____

3. Initials and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour Initials
_____Class(es)_____

4. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es)*		5. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es)*	
Pupil concerned		Yard	
Other Pupil		Classroom	
Parent		Corridor	
Teacher		Toilets	
Other		Other(specify)	

6. Initials of person(s) who reported the bullying concern and/or relationship to the pupil(s)
_____

7. Dates of when the bullying behaviour occurred _____

8. Form of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box/boxes) See page 21of Bí Cineálta

Physical Bullying Behaviour		Exclusion Bullying Behaviour	
Verbal Bullying Behaviour		Relational Bullying Behaviour	
Written Bullying Behaviour		Online Bullying Behaviour	
Extortion		Other (specify)	

9.Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box/boxes)

Disablist Bullying Behaviour		Homophobic/Transphobic (LGBTQ+) Bullying Behaviour	
Exceptionally Bullying Behaviour		Physical Appearance Sexual Harassment	
Gender Identity Bullying Behaviour		Racist Bullying Behaviour	
Sexist Bullying Behaviour		Sexual Harassment	
Religious Identity Bullying Behaviour		Poverty Bullying Behaviour	
Other (specify			

10. Brief Description of bullying behaviour

11.Views of pupil(s) and parent(s) regarding the actions to be taken.

12. Date of review with pupil(s) and parent(s) (within 20 days)	
13. Has bullying behaviour ceased?	
14. Views of pupil(s) and parents in relation to this	
15. If bullying behaviour has not ceased, set an agreed timeframe to meet again and review strategies	
16. Engagement with external services or supports (if any)	

*If bullying behaviour continues beyond the review timeframes, the school's Code of Behaviour is to be used.

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher)

Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____