



SN Tulach Uí Chadhain

Bí Cineálta Policy **To Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour**

Introduction:

The Board of Management of Scoil Náisiúnta Tulach Uí Chadhain has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behavior.

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

The board of management acknowledges that bullying behavior 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 behavior and to deal with the negative impact of bullying behavior.

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

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 of this policy.

	Date Consulted	Method of Consultation
School Staff		Staff meeting
Students		Students Council Meeting
Parents		Emailed to parents for feedback
Board of Management		BOM meeting
Date Policy was approved		
Date policy was last reviewed		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

The *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice* provides the following four key areas that are essential for a holistic, whole-school approach to wellbeing promotion: Culture and Environment; Curriculum (Teaching and Learning); Policy and Planning; and Relationships and Partnerships.

These four areas have been considered when developing measures to prevent bullying behavior:

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 students 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, students and their parents help foster a collaborative approach and shared responsibilities in relation to preventing and addressing bullying behavior.

The school leadership team influence the school culture and set the standards and expectations for the school community when preventing and addressing bullying behavior.

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

Students can shape the school culture by promoting kindness and inclusion within their peer group and maintain a positive and supportive school environment for all. The school's Student Council will be an important voice in this process

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

In order to help prevent incidents of bullying we will:

- Create a telling environment where students feel comfortable talking about concerns regarding bullying behaviour

- Emphasise the availability of a trusted adult as a member of school staff who children can speak with and report incidents of bullying behaviour.
- Create safe and inviting physical spaces to support psychological safety
- Ensure appropriate supervision is in place to help address and prevent bullying behaviour

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

Teaching and Learning that is collaborative and respectful will be promoted. Students will have regular opportunities to work in small groups with their peers which can help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy among students.

Scoil Naomh Bríde will provide opportunities for students to develop a sense of self-worth through a wide variety of both curricular and extra-curricular programmes including the following:

- GAA, Olympic Handball, soccer and other sports
- Swimming
- Chess
- Lego
- Violin classes
- Art projects
- Drama- school plays etc
- Gardening

SPHE and RSE curricula will aim to foster students' well-being, self-confidence and sense of belonging and to develop students' sense of personal responsibility for their own behavior and actions. The Friends For Life programme being used within the school helps children in navigating their emotions and manage their own wellbeing

Policy & Planning

The wellbeing of the school community will be at the heart of school policies and plans. Our Bí Cineálta policy will be reviewed annually along with the range of other policies that contribute and support the implementation of our Bí Cineálta policy.

Student voice will be an important element of school policy and planning. This will help increase awareness and ensure effective implementation.

Teachers and school staff will engage in appropriate professional learning courses to support us in preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

Relationships and Partnerships

Strong personal connections are a vital part of effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. These interpersonal connections will be supported through a range of formal and informal structures such our student council and parents' association.

Each year through our student council children celebrate Friendship Week and Anti Bullying Week which help reinforce positive relationships and highlight the causes and impacts of

bullying behaviour.

Scoil Naomh Bríde operates peer support programmes such as Fun Fridays and our Buddy Bench which encourages children to model good behaviour and look after each other when at play and at school.

Types of bullying behaviour

Scoil Naomh Bríde recognizes the importance of addressing the 5 main types of bullying behaviour as outlined in the *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*; cyberbullying, homophobic bullying, racist bullying, sexist bullying and sexual harassment.

The following steps are taken by the school to help prevent these types of bullying:

- Implementation in full of our SPHE curriculum
- Implementation of additional programmes such as Webwise
- Regular review and communication of the school's Acceptable Use Policy
- Promoting and hosting events for parents around areas such as internet safety
- Holding regular workshops for students on positive behaviour and the impact of negative behaviour
- Having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships both online and in person
- Hosting events that celebrate diversity and inclusion of all kinds
- Modelling good behaviour by promoting good role models within the school
- Challenge stereotypes of race, and gender through SPHE curriculum and when they may occur incidentally.

Supervision and Monitoring

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

- Children are supervised at break times and on school outings per the school's supervision policy.
- Children are encouraged by class teachers to tell when they see something happen or if something happens to them
- School assemblies are used to emphasise the importance of positive behaviour and looking after one another
- The student council is an important student voice and can be used to identify problematic elements of school practice or procedures as it pertains to student wellbeing
- SPHE lessons are an important element in highlighting positive behaviour and how to deal with negative behaviour when it occurs

- Student Council initiatives such as the worry wall/box, suggestion box, fun Fridays are used as a means for students to report difficulties they are having and for older students to model positive behaviour to younger students

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour are as follows: Class teacher, Múinteoir Majella (Deputy Principal) and Múinteoir Brian (Principal). At the initial stage reports of bullying behaviour will be addressed by the class teacher. If interventions are not successful in stopping further negative behaviour then the matter may be escalated to the Deputy Principal and/or Principal.

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

- Ensure that the student experiencing the 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

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred:

A detailed definition of bullying is outlined earlier in this document and in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures. When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred teachers should consider what, where, when and why? The steps that will be taken by the school to determine if bullying behaviour has occurred are as follows:

- If a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually 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 will be supported, as appropriate, following the group meeting.
- Children may be asked to write down their account of an incident
- When determining if bullying behaviour has occurred the following questions should be considered:
 - **Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?**
 - **Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?**
 - **Is the behaviour repeated?**
- **If the answer to each question above is YES, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour and the behaviour will be addressed using the procedure laid out below. If the answer to any of the above questions is no then the behaviour may**

be negative behaviour but is not considered bullying behaviour and will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

POINTS TO NOTE: Having consulted with stakeholders the following clarifications have been agreed:

Targeted: Targeted behaviour means negative behaviour specifically towards one or a small number of other children only. While generally poor behaviour towards most others or towards a large group is considered negative and will be dealt with under the school's Code of Behaviour, it is not considered bullying behaviour

Intentional: In determining intentionality teacher judgement will be used on whether it is reasonable to assume that the child in question was or should have been aware that their behaviour would cause upset or harm. While children often say that they were 'only messing' this does not constitute unintentionality. If the behaviour is targeted and repeated then it can be assumed to be intentional.

Repeated: If negative behaviour is repeated 4 or more occasions in a month (once per week on average) then it is considered repeated. Negative behaviour less often than this but still on a semi regular basis may not be immediately considered bullying but will be monitored closely and if it persists over a period of time may then be considered bullying.

Bullying behaviour outside school: Where an allegation of bullying behaviour is made about behaviour outside of school (online or in another setting) the school does not have a role in investigating or taking corrective action. The school does however have a role in helping to support those affected where possible and helping to restore relationships as necessary.

Where Bullying has occurred

The approaches taken to address the bullying behaviour are as follows:

- The primary objective at this first stage should be to restore the relationship between parties involved
- It is explained to the alleged bully how hurtful their behaviour is and attempts are made to encourage them to empathise with the alleged victim.
- The child/ children involved will be asked to assure the teacher and the victim that further incidents will not take place.
- At this initial stage a restorative non-punitive approach is appropriate.
- Ongoing extra supervision should be arranged where possible
- 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, 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.
- Parents are an integral part of the school community and should 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
- While the views of all stakeholders will be taken into account, teachers will use their professional judgement in determining how best to resolve the situation.

Reviewing Progress

The approach taken to review progress is as follows:

- The teacher will 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 the student 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 there has been no bullying behaviour for a period of 3 months then the bullying is considered to have ceased.
- If the bullying behaviour has not ceased the teacher will review strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents. A timeframe will be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased. This should not be more than a further 20 school days
- If it becomes clear that the student who is displaying bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour then relevant strategies as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour will be considered.
- If parents are not satisfied with how the bullying has been addressed by the school 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 the school's actions have had a negative effect on the student

Supports

The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour:

- Teachers in the school are trained in the Fun Friends and Friends for Life resilience programs and these are taught to select classes each year. This can be extended to include those affected if necessary
- The school wellbeing programs such as Fun Fridays, school assemblies, Wellbeing displays, School garden, extra-curricular activities, SPHE lessons, the patron's programme among others are aimed at supporting children's wellbeing.
- The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) provides a comprehensive range of supports including both direct support; working with affected children, and indirect support in the form of CPD and advice
- The NCSE has a range of supports available to schools in the form of advisors to visit the school and provide advice and support as well as providing a range of CPD opportunities for teachers and staff
- Oide is the Department of Education support service for schools and it supports professional learning for primary teachers and school leaders.
- Webwise is the online safety initiative of the Department of Education and is used in the classes to help support the promotion of safer, better internet use through awareness raising and education initiatives targeting teachers students and parents.

Record Keeping

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*. The template in appendix A should be used for the purposes of record keeping.

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.

This policy is available to out 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

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

Signed

Date:

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed

School Principal

Date: