



Bandonbridge NS

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Ratified by the Board of Management: 12/05/2025

Reviewed annually in May

Introduction and Rationale

The Board of Management of Bandonbridge NS 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.

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	14/03/2025 02/04/2025	Half-day closure: information on <i>Bí Cineálta</i> Procedures, discussion, questionnaire, drafting policy document Staff meeting to complete draft policy
Students		Student Council Drafting pupil friendly <i>Bí Cineálta</i> policy in consultation with other pupils
Parents		PA given a copy for discussion and feedback at a meeting Completed document circulated to all parents/guardians and uploaded to the school website
Board of Management	24/03/2025 12/05/2025	Initial consultation with Board members and circulation of 1 st draft of the policy Discussion of the completed policy and ratification

Wider school community as appropriate		Copies of the policy will be given to extra-curricular teachers/coaches for 2025/26 i.e. rugby coach, 3 rd language teacher, visiting clergy etc.
Date policy was approved:		
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):

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- Encouraging a culture of reporting bullying behaviour, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders/ witnesses. 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 bullying behaviour, they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
 - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
 - Hand note up with homework.
 - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
 - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying behaviour is taking place.
- Whole staff professional development on bullying behaviour to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying behaviour is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it – prevention and intervention.
- School wide awareness raising on all aspects of bullying behaviour, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s), and the wider school community.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring pupil use of digital learning and assistive technology within the school.
- Involvement of the pupil population in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Buddy Bench, to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Development and promotion of a Bí Cineálta Pupil Friendly Policy for the school – to be displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school. This will be part of the Student Council remit.
- The school's Bí Cineálta policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given access to a copy, along with the Code of Behaviour on enrolment of a pupil. At beginning of each year parents/guardians are directed to the policy on the school website.
- Class teachers and pupils will engage with termly lessons relating to the promotion of kindness and awareness of bullying behaviour prevention, including cyberbullying.
- The Wellbeing committee circulates wellbeing initiatives in line with the School Self Evaluation Wellbeing targets. Teachers may maintain a Well Wall.

- Encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the class teacher if there has been bullying behaviour by their child, witnessed by their child or directed towards their child.
 - The Acceptable Use Policy includes the necessary steps to ensure that the access to digital technology within the school is monitored by the relevant staff.
 - Supports currently being used in the school to support awareness of bullying behaviour and strategies to address and prevent bullying behaviour in the school:
 - *The SALT Programme (Stop, Ask, Listen, Talk) deals with strategies for conflict resolution – 2nd class*
 - *Stay Safe Programme*
 - *Webwise resources for Internet safety, netiquette, cyberbullying*
 - *The LEANS Programme (Learning about Neurodiversity at School)*
 - *Get Up, Stand Up – 6th class*
 - *Friends for Life – 5th class*
 - *Weaving Wellbeing programme*
 - *SPHE curriculum, including RSE resources*
 - *Follow Me religious education programme*
 - *Walk Tall programme*
 - *Visits by Community Garda to cover personal safety and cyberbullying in the wider world*
 - *HSE mental health talk for 6th class*
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- **Parents/guardians are responsible for decisions relating to when they allow their children unsupervised access to devices with Internet in the home**
 - **Parents/guardians are responsible for permitting their children to access social media and games which allow communication online with others**
 - **Parents/guardians are responsible for knowing the age classification for social media platforms and games which they have permitted their child to use e.g. Snapchat, TikTok, Roblox**

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):

Our school is committed to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour through our positive school culture and safe environment; through curriculum teaching and learning; through policy and planning; and through our relationships and partnerships.

- Code of Behaviour
- Supervision Policy
- School Tours Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Equality and Dignity at Work Policy
- Safety, Health and Welfare Policy
- Attendance Policy and Strategies
- Our SEN policies: Inclusion of Pupils with Additional Educational Needs, SNA policy, English as an Additional Language policy
- Our Wellbeing committee and Student Council are involved in supporting and contributing to our whole-school approach to the promotion of wellbeing in our school
- Our RE programme and SPHE whole-school plan
- Our Digital Learning Plan

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

Bullying behaviour can happen anywhere, online and offline and at any time. The school is **not** expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when pupils are not under the care or responsibility of the school i.e. online bullying behaviour on social media like Snapchat, TikTok etc. However, if this bullying behaviour continues in school or has an impact on pupil wellbeing in school, the children involved will be supported.

The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour is (are) as follows: class teachers, support teachers and Principal. The relevant SNA may be consulted where there is an Additional Care Plan or Behaviour Plan in place or where necessary.

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):

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

- Is the bullying targeted at a specific pupil or group of pupils?
- Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?
- Is the behaviour repeated?

N.B. 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 is No, then strategies to deal with the inappropriate behaviour are provided in the school Code of Behaviour.

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred, the following should be considered:

- If a group of pupils is involved each pupil should be engaged with individually initially
- Thereafter, all pupils involved should be met as a group
- At the group meeting, each pupil should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear about each other's views
- Each pupil will be supported during and following the group meeting
- Where relevant pupils might write down their account of the incident

Where bullying behaviour has occurred

- Parents/guardians will be contacted to inform them of the matter and to consult with them on actions to be taken to address what has occurred
- Listen to the views of the pupil experiencing bullying as how best to address the situation
- Keep a record of the engagement with all involved using Appendix A: form/type of bullying, where and when it took place, date of initial engagement with pupils and parent, views of pupil and parents/guardians regarding actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour

- Inform the Principal of the bullying behaviour: the number of new and ongoing incidents of bullying behaviour is reported to the Board of Management at each meeting

Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred

- The teacher must engage with the pupils involved and their parents/ guardians again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement
- Consider the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the pupils involved
- The teacher will document the review with the pupils and their parents/guardians to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased & the views of the pupils and parents/guardians in relation to this
- Record the date when the bullying behaviour has ceased
- Record any engagement with external services/supports
- Ongoing supervision and support may be needed even if bullying behaviour has ceased
- If bullying behaviour has not ceased, the strategies should be reviewed with pupils and parents/guardians and a timeframe agreed for further engagement until the bullying has ceased.
- If it becomes clear that the pupil displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school should consider the strategies and disciplinary sanctions outlined in the school Code of Behaviour, in consultation with the relevant pupil & their parents/guardians.
- If a parent/guardian is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, they should refer to the school's complaints procedures (this is available to view on the school website).
- If a parent/guardian 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 pupil.

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):

The school will use a consistent and holistic response to support the wellbeing of the pupils. The following principles will be adhered to when addressing bullying behaviour:

- Ensure that the pupil experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured
- Ensure that pupils who witness bullying behaviour or display bullying behaviour are heard and supported
- 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 pupil who is experiencing bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- Take action in a timely manner
- Inform parents/guardians of those involved
- Follow-up with parents after 20 days or sooner as necessary

Additional supports available to help prevent and address bullying behaviour:

- National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)
- Oide
- Webwise
- National Parents Council
- Dublin City University (DCU) Anti-Bullying Centre
- Tusla

All bullying behaviour will be recorded (using Appendix A). 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 pupil 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)

Appendix A

Form and type of bullying behaviour	
Where and when behaviour	
Date of initial engagement with pupil/s and parents/guardians	
Views of pupil(s) and parent(s)/guardian(s) regarding the actions to be taken	
Date of review with pupil(s) and parent(s)/guardian(s) to determine if behaviour has ceased	
Views of pupil(s) and their parent(s)/ guardian(s) in relation to this	
Engagement with external services and/or supports (if any)	