

Appendix A

School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Drumraney 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 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 | 13/3/2025 | School closure (1/2 day) |
| Students | 03/6 - 06/6 (incl) | Bí Cineálta Presentation Whole-school workshops and lessons. |
| Parents | 10/6/2025 | Distribution of 'Bí Cineálta' Procedures via email. |
| Board of Management | 11/6/2025 | B.O.M. Meeting |
| Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers | 13/3/2025 | 1/2 Day School Closure. |
| Date policy was approved: 11/6/2025 | | |
| 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):

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 to foster a collaborative approach and shared responsibilities in relation to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

Each member of school staff has a responsibility to develop and maintain a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and to take a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour. 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. Parents, as active partners in their child's education, can help foster an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated through promoting empathy and respect.

A Telling Environment

It is important that the school community supports a 'telling' environment.

The reasons why students may not report include the following:

- fear of retaliation from the student displaying the bullying behaviour or their friendship group
- concerns about being seen as a "telltale" for reporting bullying behaviour
- fear that the adult may make the situation worse
- fear that the adult doesn't have the knowledge and skills to deal appropriately with the bullying behaviour
- fear that the adult may deny access to their smart phone
- not knowing what will happen when they report bullying behaviour
- fear that they will not be believed
- concerns about "getting into trouble" for reporting bullying behaviour
- not having evidence to back up the allegation of bullying behaviour, this can be seen particularly with relational bullying behavior.

A Trusted Adult

The concept of "a trusted adult" can be an effective strategy to encourage students to report if they or another student is experiencing bullying behaviour. Staff could support this strategy by letting students know that they can talk to them.

- Students who witness bullying behaviour should be supported and encouraged to report the behaviour to a trusted adult in the school so that the behaviour can be addressed.
- The trusted adult should reassure the student that they have done the right thing by reporting the behaviour.
- The trusted adult should, without delay, inform the member of staff who has responsibility for addressing bullying behavior.
- The trusted adult should continue to support the student, as appropriate, while the behaviour is being addressed by the relevant member of staff.

Creating safe physical spaces in schools

The creation of safe physical spaces supports psychological safety and is an important measure to prevent bullying behaviour. Spaces that have a clear line of sight make it easier for school staff to supervise students. Hidden spaces in hallways, around staircases and in the schoolyard can be areas where there is a greater risk for bullying behaviour to occur.

- Schools could take the following measures to create safe physical spaces: ensure good lighting is present to avoid dark corners or spaces > remove visual barriers from windows such as posters
- install mirrors to improve visibility and reduce blind spots
- improve the visibility of school staff who are supervising at break times including

during yard duty

- murals, artwork and signage can help schools to promote the school's values such as equality, diversity, inclusion and respect

Students can feel a greater sense of belonging to a school community when they are given ownership of their own space through art and creativity²¹. This helps students to identify and to feel a sense of responsibility for their school environment. The inclusion of spaces within schools for collaborative learning can also play a part in fostering a sense of belonging. It is important that the school grounds are well maintained to promote a sense of ownership and respect in the school community.

Supervision

Appropriate supervision is an important measure to help prevent and address bullying behaviour. Two members of staff are always present during break times outside and in the event of inside breaks the children will be supervised by one staff member in each classroom.

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

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

The curricular subjects offered to students provide opportunities to foster inclusion and respect for diversity. We provide opportunities for students to develop a sense of self-worth through both curricular and extracurricular programmes.

The Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) curricula at primary level aim to foster students' wellbeing, self-confidence and sense of belonging and to develop students' sense of personal responsibility for their own behaviour and actions. Students' social and emotional learning (SEL) skills can be improved through the SPHE curriculum.

Policy and planning

The wellbeing of the school community is at the heart of our school policies and plans.

Supporting the participation of students in the development and implementation of school policies and plans can help increase awareness and ensure effective implementation.

Engaging in appropriate teacher professional learning courses can support school staff to prevent and address bullying behaviour. School staff should also share their experiences and examples of best practice. There is a range of training available for school staff which relates to promoting inclusion and diversity in schools.

Relationships and partnerships

Strong interpersonal connections are a vital part of effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. The following, which is not an exhaustive list, could be considered to strengthen relationships and partnerships between members of the school community: > age appropriate awareness initiatives that look at the causes and impacts of bullying behaviour including those dealing with navigating friendships, supporting the active participation of students in school life > supporting the active participation of parents in school life, notifying the school community of upcoming workshops/seminars on

bullying.> supporting activities that build empathy, respect and resilience > encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring > promoting acts of kindness > teaching problem solving

Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying recognises the importance of positive relationships across the whole education community to promote empathy, understanding and respect. The meaningful involvement of the board of management, staff, students and their parents in the development, implementation and review of our school's Bí Cineálta policy and student friendly version is essential to effectively prevent and address bullying behaviour

Preventing cyberbullying behaviour

Technology and social media have provided many positive opportunities for entertainment, social engagement and education. Technology is a part of life that can impact even the youngest members of society. However, the increase in the use of technology has led to students becoming increasingly vulnerable to cyberbullying or unacceptable online behaviour.

Our school proactively addresses these challenges by promoting digital literacy, digital citizenship, and fostering safe online environments. Strategies to prevent cyberbullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- implementing the SPHE curriculum
- having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- developing and communicating an acceptable use policy for technology
- referring to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour
- promoting online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online

The digital age of consent is the minimum age a user must be before a social media or internet company can collect, process and store their data. In Ireland the digital age of consent is 16. For the purposes of data collection, students between the age of 13 and 16 years old must have parental permission to sign up to social media services where companies use the legal basis of consent to collect process and store users' data. 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. *Resources have been developed to support parents and parent associations that wish to develop voluntary codes regarding smartphone use among primary school children. These are contained in the Resources Guide which accompanies these procedures.

Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour

All students including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students, have a right to feel safe and supported at school. Strategies to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- maintaining an inclusive physical environment

- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- challenging gender stereotypes
- encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic behavior.

Preventing racist bullying behaviour

Strategies to prevent racist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- 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
- ensuring that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds

Preventing sexist bullying behaviour

Our schools focuses on gender equality as part of the school’s measures to create a supportive and respectful environment.

Strategies to prevent sexist bullying behaviour include the following

- ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex 22 Schools should refer to Circular 0042/2018 and 0043/2018 for guidance on the use of programmes and external facilitators in the promotion of wellbeing
<https://circulars.gov.ie/pdf/circular/education/2018/42.pdf>
<https://circulars.gov.ie/pdf/circular/education/2018/43.pdf> Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and PostPrimary Schools 41
- ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex
- celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contributions of all students
- encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home

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):

Preventing sexual harassment

Preventing sexual harassment requires an approach that focuses on education, awareness and clear enforceable policies. Our School makes it clear that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment. Sexual harassment should never be dismissed as teasing or banter.

Strategies to prevent sexual harassment include the following,

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

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

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):

When identifying if bullying behavior has occurred the teacher should consider the following 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 also be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident.
- Incidents can occur where behaviour is unacceptable and hurtful but the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies that deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

Where bullying behaviour has occurred

School staff should know what to do when bullying behaviour is reported to them or when they witness bullying behaviour. Our school's Bí Cineálta policy prevents and address bullying behaviour and our student friendly policy clearly explains what actions will be taken when bullying behaviour is reported. Our school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of our school. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, our schools is required to support the students involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, our school will deal with it in accordance with our Bí Cineálta policy. Where the student displaying the bullying behaviour is not a student in the school, but the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour is a student in our school, our school will support the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as appropriate and engage with them and their parents to determine what steps can be taken. It is important for our school staff to be fair and consistent in their approach to address bullying behaviour. Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour need support. It is important that the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour is engaged with without delay so that they feel listened to, supported and reassured. Our school staff will identify the supports needed for the student who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties and ensure that their needs are met. A student's agency or sense of power can be decreased when they experience or witness bullying behaviour. When a student tells an adult that they feel that they are experiencing bullying behaviour they may feel that they are taking back some control over what is happening to them. It is very important that a student's agency is not decreased further by adults deciding what will happen next without listening to the student and involving them in deciding on the actions that will be taken.

The following principles must be adhered to when addressing bullying behaviour:

- 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 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* *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 parties involved will 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 as outlined in our school's Bí Cineálta policy. In circumstances where a student expresses concern about their parents being informed, the school should develop an appropriate plan to support the student and for how their parents will be informed. Our school will consider communication barriers that may exist when communicating with parents, for example, literacy, digital literacy or language barriers. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour it is generally acknowledged that that no one approach works in all situations. International and national research also continues to evolve in this area and the effectiveness of particular approaches continues to be reviewed..To ensure clarity among the school community about how instances of bullying behaviour will be dealt with, the approaches that will be used by the school are specified in our school's Bí Cineálta policy.

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):

Determining if bullying behaviour has ceased

The teacher will engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress following the initial intervention. Important factors to consider as part of the review 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. Even though the bullying behaviour may have ceased, ongoing supervision and support may be required for both the student who has experienced the bullying behaviour as well as the student who has displayed the behaviour. It can take time for relationships to settle and for supports to take effect. In some cases, relationships may never be restored to how they were before the bullying behaviour occurred. If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the teacher will review the strategies used in consultation with the students and parents and agree to meet again over an agreed timeframe until the bullying behaviour has ceased. Where it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, our school will consider 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.

Recording bullying behavior

All incidents of bullying behaviour should be recorded. The 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 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. It should 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. It is important to document the date of each of these engagements and the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour

Any engagement with external services/supports will also be noted. These records will be retained in accordance with the school's record keeping policy and in line with data protection regulations. When a Student Support File exists for a student, our school will place a copy of the record on the student's support file. This will assist our school's student support team, in providing a consistent and holistic response to support the wellbeing of the student involved. Where a Student Support Plan exists, the plan will be updated to incorporate response strategies and associated supports.

Complaints process

If a parent is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by our school, in accordance with these procedures, they will be referred to the school's complaints procedure. Additional Information relating to schools' complaint procedures are available at the following link:

Complaint Procedures for Schools.

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. The Office of the Ombudsman for Children can be contacted at ococomplaint@oco.ie.

Supports

Supports are available to help prevent and address bullying behaviour. These include the following: National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) of the Department of Education provides a comprehensive, school based psychological service to all primary schools to support the wellbeing, academic, social and emotional development of all students. The NEPS model of service is a consultative, capacity building model, in which there is a balance between casework and support and development work. The psychological services which NEPS provides for students are differentiated in terms of whether the service involves the psychologist's direct involvement with the student, known as Direct Casework, or involves the psychologist working through teachers or teachers/parents to provide a psychological service for a student, known as Indirect Casework. NEPS staff can support schools with issues around bullying through this direct or indirect case work service. In relation to bullying, NEPS psychologists often advise schools on best practice to prevent and address bullying when issues arise in schools and/or provide training in preventative initiatives, such as developing social and emotion skills, social skills, executive function skills, promoting resilience and skills in relationship repair between peers as appropriate.

Oide

Oide is the Department of Education's support service for schools, and it supports professional learning for primary and post primary school leaders and teachers in recognised schools and centres for education. Oide fosters a culture of continuing professional learning among school leaders and teachers encouraging lifelong learning, reflective and enquiry based practices. The work of Oide contributes to school improvement by providing high quality professional learning experiences, supports and resources relating to curricular developments, broader educational goals and national priorities, such as wellbeing which includes preventing and addressing bullying. Oide provides continuing professional learning support to schools to support implementation of these procedures.

Webwise

Webwise is the online safety initiative of the Department of Education and is co-funded by the European Commission. Webwise promotes safer, better internet use through awareness raising and education initiatives targeting teachers, students and parents. Webwise develops and disseminates resources that help teachers integrate digital citizenship and online safety into teaching and learning in their schools. Webwise also provides information, advice, and tools to parents to support their engagement in their children's online lives. With the help of the Webwise Youth Advisory Panel, Webwise develops youth oriented awareness raising resources and training programmes that promote digital citizenship and address topics such as online wellbeing and cyberbullying.


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: 
(Chairperson of board of management)

Date: 11/6/2025

Signed: Laura Silke
(Principal)

Date: 11TH June '25

Appendix F

Notification regarding the board of management's annual review of the school's BÍ Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management of _____ confirms that the board of management's annual review of the school's BÍ Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour and its implementation was completed at the board of management meeting of _____ [date].

This review was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Education's *BÍ Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed: 
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: 
(Principal)

Date: 11/6/2025

Date: 11/6/2025

Date of next review:

Bí Cineálta!

We want everyone at our school to feel safe and happy.

If you think that you are being bullied or someone else is being bullied, you want to tell a teacher or another adult that you trust if they will know what to do to help.

Get Help!

- talk with the student
- ask the student what they want to happen
- work out a plan together
- talk to their parents
- talk to the other student(s) involved
- talk with the other student's parents

Tell someone!

Please tell someone if you think that you are being bullied or someone else is being bullied.

Our school has a Bí Cineálta policy to try to stop bullying behaviour. We look at this policy every year to see what is working well or what could work better. We will ask you what you think.



Bullying behaviour is when someone keeps being mean or hurtful to others on purpose over and over again. When it happens a lot. Not just once.