



# Scoil an Linbh Íosa

## Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Scoil an Linbh Íosa 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.

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	02/05/2025 28/05/2025 - 06/06/2025	Half day closure meeting Staff survey via Aladdin
Students	28/05/2025 - 06/06/2025	Student survey on iPads 4 <sup>th</sup> -6 <sup>th</sup> Class
Parents	28/05/2025 - 06/06/2025	Parent survey via Aladdin
Board of management	21/05/2025	Board Meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	19/06/2025	Wider School Community Survey
Date policy was approved: 27/06/2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: NA		

## 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):

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.

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

The school leadership team influences the school culture and set the standards and expectations for the school community when 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. Schools should be safe environments where reporting of bullying behaviour is encouraged. In Scoil an Linbh Íosa we encourage this through:

- Termly anti-bullying survey
- Stay Safe Lessons: say "no", get away and tell

#### **A Trusted Adult**

- Staff support this strategy by letting students know that they can talk to them. This is taught during Stay Safe each year

## **Creating safe physical spaces in schools**

It is important that the school grounds are well maintained to promote a sense of ownership and respect in the school community.

- The proper upkeep of the PE Hall, Nurture Room, Library, Yard and Astro as well as the "chill out" rooms in the ALC Classrooms
- Student friendly "Bí Cineálta" posters displayed in the school
- The children are taught the school rules, class rules and yard rules around safely taking part in activities

## **Supervision**

Appropriate supervision is an important measure to help prevent and address bullying behaviour. Scoil an Linbh Íosa takes all reasonable measures to ensure the safety of our students and to supervise our students when they are attending school or attending school activities.

- Supervision from 8:50 - 9:00 before school
- Supervision during yard breaks and wet breaks
- Supervision during school activities

## **2 Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)**

Teaching and learning that is collaborative and respectful should be promoted. Students should 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. Schools are encouraged to provide opportunities for students to develop a sense of self-worth through both curricular and extra-curricular programmes:

- SPHE lessons on bullying
- RSE lessons
- Stay Safe lessons on bullying
- The Walk Tall program
- Promotion of the FRESH topics and the FRESH award. Fair Respect Equal Safe Honest
- Weaving Wellbeing lessons
- Integration between the autism classes into the mainstream classes
- Restorative Practices
- Incredible Years Program
- Friendship Week
- Wellbeing Week
- Neurodiversity Day
- Green Schools: Global Citizenship lessons
- Library books on the topics of friendship, diversity and inclusion
- Internet safety lessons

### 3 Policy and planning

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

Where appropriate, Scoil an Linbh Íosa supports the participation of students in the development and implementation of school policies and plans. This helps increase awareness and ensure effective implementation of the policies and plans.

There are a range of other policies that can support implementation of a school's Bí Cineálta policy:

- The Acceptable Use of the Internet in School Policy
- Supervision Policy
- Special Education Teaching Policy
- The Code of Behaviour
- Mobile Phone and Device Policy

### 4 Relationships and partnerships

Strong interpersonal connections are a vital part of effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

The following could be considered to strengthen relationships and partnerships between members of the school community:

- Reorganising the members of each class, each year, to ensure relationships are managed effectively
- Ongoing staff CPD in Restorative Practice
- The implementation of the Restorative Practice approach throughout the school
- Grandparents Day
- Student Council
- School Assemblies
- Supporting the local Youth Club
- Parent-Teacher Association

### 5 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.

Strategies to prevent cyberbullying behaviour include the following:

- Implementing the SPHE curriculum
- Implementing the Digital Media Literacy curriculum which teaches students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship
- Having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online

- Developing and communicating an acceptable use policy for technology
- Promoting or hosting online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online

## 6 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:

- Providing children with education in the area of homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour as part of our implementation of the SPHE curriculum and other curriculum areas
- Participation in the "Different Families, Same Love" program

## 7 Preventing racist bullying behaviour

Strategies to prevent racist bullying behaviour include the following:

- Fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students "see themselves" in their school environment
- Having the cultural diversity of the school visible and on display
- Encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour
- 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

Strategies to prevent sexist bullying behaviour include the following:

- Ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their gender
- Ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their gender
- Celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contributions of all students

## 9 Preventing 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
- Scoil an Linbh Íosa's Dignity in the Workplace Policy

## Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teacher with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour is as follows:

- the class teacher

### **Addressing Bullying Behaviour**

The whole school community has a responsibility to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

The following approach is 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.

### **Approach**

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 teachers should:

- 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

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 Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred**

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.

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour the investigating teacher will consider the following questions:

1. Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?
2. Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?
3. Is the behaviour repeated?

If the answer to each of the questions above is Yes, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour and the behaviour should be addressed using the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

Note: 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 to any of these questions is No, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour.

Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within Scoil an Linbh Íosa's Code of Behaviour.

**When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred teachers should consider 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 be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident(s)

## 2 Where bullying behaviour has occurred:

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 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.

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 (see Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the Bi Cineálta procedures), 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.

### **Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred:**

The teacher must 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 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.

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 the bullying behaviour has not ceased the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents. A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased.

If it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school consideration should be given to 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.

If a parent(s) is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 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 that the school's actions have had a negative effect on the student.

### **3 Requests to take no action**

A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than "look out" for them. The student may not want to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They may feel that telling someone might make things more difficult for them. Where this occurs, it is important that the member of staff shows empathy to the student, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the student to work out together what steps can be taken to address the matter and how their parents will be informed of the situation. It is important that the student who has experienced bullying behaviour feels safe.

Parents may also make schools aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action. Parents 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 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: 27/06/2025 (Chairperson of board of management)

Signed:  \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 27/06/2025 (Principal)