

Broadford & Kilbane National School

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour



The Board of Management of Broadford & Kilbane 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.

We confirm that we will take all steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent all bullying or harassment of our students in whatever form and however motivated.

Catholic schools have a distinctive understanding of the human person, recognising that every person is created in God's image and likeness and has inherent dignity as a child of God. This is the basis for ensuring that everybody in our school is treated with respect and care, in accordance with the Catholic Schedule.

As a Catholic school, we are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual. No human person is to be devalued and everybody has a part to play in the school community, regardless of difference.

Definition of bullying

- Bullying is **targeted** behaviour, online or offline, that causes harm.
- The **harm caused** can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature and can have lasting effects on the child experiencing the behaviour.
- Bullying behaviour is **repeated over time** and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society.
- It is behaviour which is **deliberate** in nature and is unwanted. It is not accidental or reckless behavior.

The harm can be :

- Physical (eg: personal injury, damage to or loss of property)
- Social: (eg: withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion)
- Emotional: (eg: low self esteem, depression, anxiety)

Notes on Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour:

1. A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards a student is not bullying behaviour. However, a single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be

visible to a wide audience and has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and so becomes a repeated behaviour.

2. If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour, but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying, but, importantly, must be addressed under the school 's code of behaviour.
3. Some students with special educational needs, may have social communication difficulties which may make them communicate their needs through behaviours that can hurt themselves or others. It is important to note that these behaviours are not deliberate or planned, but in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they cannot control.
4. Disagreement between students is not considered bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Types of Bullying:

There are many different types of bullying behaviour. These can include directing bullying at someone focused on the following: disability, exceptional ability, gender identity, LGBTQ+ , physical appearance, racism, poverty status, religious identity, sexism and sexual harassment. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list.

Bullying can be...

Direct:

- Physical: pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping students. Physical assault.
- Destruction of personal property.
- Verbal: continual name calling which insults, humiliates the student – this may refer to physical appearance, size, clothes, gender, accent, academic ability, race or ethnic origin.
- Written: Writing insulting remarks in public places, passing notes or drawings about the student.
- Extortion: where something is obtained through force or threats.

Indirect:

- Exclusion: where a student is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded or ignored by a student or group of students.
- Relational: Where a student's attempts to form friendships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined, threats, non-verbal gesturing, malicious gossip, spreading rumours, silent treatment and manipulation of friend groups etc can all form relational bullying for a student.

Online bullying behaviour:

- Cyber bullying is carried out via text, direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, email, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chatrooms and other online technologies. This can include:
 - Sending or sharing of insulting and offensive or intimidating messages or images via online means as mentioned above.
 - Posting information which is personal, private or sensitive without consent.
 - Making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other students.
 - Exclude/disrupt access to a student on purpose on online chat groups/access to accounts/from an online game.

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	February 2025	Staff Meeting/Discussion following training. Feedback invited from Principal who has developed the Draft Policy.
Students	April 2025	Focus Group with Student Council. Results guided the Drafting of the Policy including the Child Friendly Version.
Parents	April 2025	Parent Questionnaire. Results guided the Drafting of the Policy. Draft Policy shared with Parents for review and comment.
Board of Management	April 2025	Review of Draft Policy followed by Ratification & Communication.
Wider school community i.e., Bus driver, Taxi Driver	April 2025	Email and informal conversations
Date policy was approved: April 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: 3 rd of October 2025		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by this school to address all forms of bullying behaviour, in whatever form and however motivated, including online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment. In developing the preventative strategies which this school will use to prevent all forms of bullying behaviour, we come from the context of our Catholic ethos, where inclusivity permeates our school in a real way. This school takes positive steps to ensure that the culture of the school is one which welcomes a respectful dialogue and encounter with diversity and difference by ensuring that prevention and inclusivity strategies are given priority and discussed regularly at our board of management and staff meetings. The dignity and the wellbeing of the individual person is of paramount concern in our Christian response. This school will listen closely to and dialogue with parents, thereby building a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, trust and confidence. In continuing to develop prevention strategies, this school will listen to young people and parents, to help establish their particular context and needs. Frequent periods of reflection and further engagement by the school, young people and parents, will be used to discern appropriate supports for young people in this school and to help inform future prevention strategies.

Culture and Environment:

- Promote our School Motto 'Obair go Dian, Bí go Deas'
- Positive and inclusive school culture
- Positive Relationships
- Effective Leadership
- Positive Culture and Environment
- A Telling Environment
- Consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour
- Having a Trusted Adult
- Safe Physical Access and Playing Areas
- Adequate Supervision
- Termly Anti-Bullying Surveys (see Appendix)
- Opportunities to participate in class and whole school activities to raise self-esteem

Curriculum:

- Teaching and Learning in SPHE
- RSE Curriculum
- Student Participation
- SPHE Methodologies
- Promoting Inclusion and Diversity
- Extra-Curricular activities to develop positive Self-Worth
- Group Work/ Collaboration
- Role-Play, acting out scenarios
- Circle time
- Morning Meetings
- Talk About & Weaving Wellbeing Programmes

Policy and Planning:

- Bí Cineálta Policy
- Student friendly Bí Cineálta Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Agree to Agree Agreement
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Supervision
- RSE Policy
- SEN policy
- School Self Evaluation-Wellbeing in Education
- Appropriate Teacher Professional Learning

Relationships and partnerships:

- Strong interpersonal connections
- Bullying awareness initiatives
- Student and parent participation
- TPL (Teacher Professional Learning)
- Critical thinking skills
- Promoting peer support
- Supporting activities that build empathy, respect and resilience

Preventing Cyber Bullying Behaviour:

- Agree to Agree Agreement
- Promoting digital citizenship
- Implementing SPHE curriculum

- Open conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- 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
- Holding internet safety day
- Preventing homophobic bullying behaviour
- Maintaining an inclusive physical environment such as displaying relevant posters
- Encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- Challenging gender-stereotypes
- Preventing racist bullying behaviour
- 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
- Encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour
- Providing supports to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities
- 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/sexual harassment behaviour

- Ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally
- Ensuring all student have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex
- Celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contribution of all students
- Encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home
- Promoting positive role models within the school community
- Challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment.

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behavior.

- One teacher and four SNAs present to supervise at small break and lunch time
- Children are accompanied by at least one staff member on school trips
- Children are told where to play when out at yard and what spaces to avoid
- Children have adequate resources to facilitate collaborative, engaging play at break times
- Teachers bear in mind children who may have recently clashed when organising groups for collaborative work/ teams etc with a view to giving space to the children involved to heal.
- The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

- The class teacher will oversee recording of bullying reports for students in their class – this includes using the procedure guidelines to investigate reports of bullying and recording bullying behaviour on the correct form on Aladdin
- The Principal will follow up after twenty days to investigate if bullying has ceased
- All staff will be vigilant to bullying behaviour.
- Principal will inform Board of Management of incidences of Bullying.
- Deputy principal /SENCO
- Assistant Principal 2 Anti- Bullying Policy coordinator is available to provide up to date information and supports if needed to assist class teacher in addressing concern

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:

Procedure Guidelines:

Identify if bullying behaviour has occurred:

The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

1. While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the 'Relevant Teacher(s)', the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' will use his/her/their professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
2. If it is established by the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' that bullying has occurred, the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
3. 'Relevant Teacher(s)' must record the bullying incident on the school information management system (Aladdin) by filling out a 'Bí Cineálta Report'.
4. The 'Relevant Teacher' must inform the Principal.

The following three questions should be considered to determine if bullying has occurred.

A. Is the behaviour **targeted** at a specific student or group of students?

B. Is the behaviour **intended to cause** physical, social or emotional **harm**?

C. Is the behaviour **repeated**?

If the answer to each of the questions above is Yes, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour and a Bí Cineálta Report Form should be filled out on Aladdin.

The primary aim 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). With this in mind the school's procedures are as follows:

- In investigating and dealing with bullying the teacher(s) will exercise his/her/their judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type if it has and how best the situation might be resolved.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the 'Relevant Teacher(s)'. 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 instances of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, SNAs, caretakers and cleaners are encouraged to report any incidences of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them to the Class Teacher.
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
- On being informed of an alleged incident of bullying, the teacher dealing with the report will first interview the victim(s) and discuss the feelings which the victim(s) experienced because of the bullying behaviour.
- Where suitable, initial investigations of bullying will be done in class using the 'Whole Class Survey Sheet' but some incidents might be best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' should seek answers to questions of what, where, who, when and why. This should be done in a clam manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non- aggressive manner.
- If a group is involved each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about the other's statements.
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.
- Where the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' has/have determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the perspective of the pupil being bullied. **Parents must be notified at this early stage.**
- The 'Relevant Teacher' does not apportion blame but should make an effort to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter. However, depending on the seriousness of the bullying, the schools Code of Behaviour may need to be consulted.

Determining if the bullying behaviour has ceased:

The teacher must engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress.

- When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the 'Relevant Teacher' will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information. This will be recorded on the original Bí Cineálta Form on Aladdin.
- Ongoing supervision of both the child experiencing bullying behaviour and the child displaying bullying behavior may be required as well as continued support. 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. Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may be arranged separately with a view to bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
- If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the teacher should 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, then the school should 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 school.
- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent must be referred to the school's Complaints Procedures.
- In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's Complaints Procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their rights to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.
- The School will maintain care for the victim over time. This will be done by speaking to the child a number of weeks after the incident to check on their continuing welfare. The child's parents will also be consulted.
- A student who reports bullying behaviour may ask a member of staff not to do anything and just "look out" for them due to not wanting to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They might 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 behaviour. It must be made clear to the pupil that other parties may need to be informed for their welfare. Parents may also make the school aware of bullying behaviour and specifically request that no action is to be taken by the school. Parents should put this in writing to the school. However, schools may decide that based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour through the Bí Cineálta procedures and/or the Code of Behaviour where appropriate.

Recording bullying behaviour:

All incidents of bullying behaviour must be recorded on the Bí Cineálta Report Form on Aladdin.

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

The schools programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves a whole school approach. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, no one intervention/support programme works in all situations.

Supporting Bullied pupils:

- > Ending the bullying behaviour,
- > Fostering respect for bullied pupils and all pupils,
- > Fostering greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils
- > Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through annual awareness-raising programmes
- > Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations
- > Making adequate counselling facilities available to pupils who need it in a timely manner (subject to available funding)
- > Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).

Supporting Bullying pupils:

- > Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a 'clean sheet,'
- > Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honorable thing and giving them praise for this
- > Making adequate counseling facilities available to help those who need it learn other ways of meeting their needs besides violating the rights of others,
- > Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school),
- > Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth,
- > In dealing with negative behavior in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child,
- > In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a 'clean sheet' and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.

Note: A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved.

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)