Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

April 2025

The Board of Management of Scoil Naomh Naille 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](#)

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.

A student friendly version of this policy is available as Appendix A.

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 2024 March 2025	Questionnaire – online Staff meetings School half day closure for Staff to discuss and plan the new procedures.
Students	February 2024	Questionnaire – printed
Parents	February 2024	Questionnaire - online
Board of Management	Each Meeting	New policy and procedures discussed at BOM meetings.

Date policy was approved: 15th May 2025

Date policy was last reviewed: April 2025

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:

Our school's strategies to prevent bullying behaviour are set out under the headings in the *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice:*

1. Culture and Environment

Relationships between all members of the school community should be based on respect, care, integrity and trust. Open collaboration between the patron, board of management, school staff, students, and their parents and guardians will help to foster a collaborative approach and shared responsibilities in relation to the prevention and addressing of bullying behaviour.

The school leadership team influences the school culture and set standards and expectations for the school community when preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. Each member of the 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.

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

Our school community will endeavour to ensure that our school is a "telling" school, where students feel comfortable to talk about concerns regarding bullying behaviour.

2. Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

We provide opportunities for students to develop a sense of self-worth across all curricular subjects. The Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum is taught every year to every class level, including the Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) module and the Stay Safe and Walk Tall modules. Students also learn about diversity and inclusion as part of the Grow In Love Patron's programme.

3. Policy and Planning

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

Wellbeing promotion is addressed in school policies and plans including, but not limited to:

- SPHE and other curricular subjects
- Code of Behaviour Policy
- Supervision Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Critical Incident Policy
- Health and Safety Statement
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy

In addition, we will continue to ensure that appropriate professional development is available for school staff to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

4. Relationships and Partnerships

Scoil Naomh Naille continues to develop strong relationships and partnerships with parents and guardians and the wider school community, to effectively prevent and address bullying behaviour. These interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures, including committees with parental and student input (Green School Committee, Active School Committee, Student Council), and Parent's Association.

The following, which is not an exhaustive list, are ways in which we strengthen relationships and partnerships between members of our school community:

- Age appropriate awareness initiatives that look at the causes and impacts of bullying

- Behaviour including those dealing with navigating friendships, identity based bullying, racist bullying, homophobic/transphobic bullying, sexism and sexual harassment

- Supporting the active participation of students in school life

- Supporting the active participation of parents in school life, including those who may find it difficult or daunting to engage with the school due to being unfamiliar with the education system or due to language or cultural barriers

- Conducting workshops and seminars for students and school staff to raise awareness of the impact of bullying

- Supporting activities that build empathy, respect and resilience

- Encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring, e.g. buddy system.

- Promoting acts of kindness

- Teaching problem solving

Scoil Naomh Naille has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour:

- Our school constantly works towards creating safe, engaging spaces in our school environment for students to engage with each other in.

- Our school has a supervision policy in place to ensure the appropriate supervision of students and we also offer a mix of organised activities during breaks (sports coaching, outdoor play space, senior class games with younger pupils etc.) to accommodate a range of interests and preferences.

- We also have created safe physical spaces in our school for students to learn and play in. This provides psychological safety for children in the school. The students have also had a voice in the creation of new spaces, including a sensory garden and planting spaces, giving them ownership of their play spaces and responsibility in relation to their maintenance and upkeep. The provision of an outdoor classroom and polytunnel have provided collaborative outdoor spaces for learning and engagement, providing opportunities for the students to increase their sense of belonging in our school.

- Staff in our school build positive relationships with students, including letting them know that they can talk to them. This builds the concept of a "trusted adult", an effective strategy to encourage students to report bullying behaviour relating to themselves or others.

To prevent cyber-bullying behaviour, our school:

- Implements the SPHE curriculum

- Have regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online

- Have developed and communicated an acceptable use policy for technology

- Refer to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour

- Promote online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online

- Provide workshops on digital literacy and online engagement to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour.

To prevent homophobic and transphobic behaviour, our school:

- Maintains an inclusive physical environment

- Encourages peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities

- Challenges gender stereotypes

- Provides a dialogical space for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour

- Encourages students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour.

To prevent racist bullying behaviour, our school:

- Fosters a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students "see themselves" in their school environment

- Has the cultural diversity of the school visible and on display

- Creates dialogical spaces for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of racism

- Encourages peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities

- Encourages bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour

- Provides supports to school staff to respond to the needs of students for whom English is a second language

- Provides supports to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma students

- Invites speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds

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

To prevent sexist bullying behaviour, our school:

- Ensures staff members model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of sex

- Ensures students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of sex

- Celebrates diversity at school and acknowledging the contributions of all students

- Provides information to parents before aspects such as the 'Busy Bodies' program are covered.

- Encourages parents to reinforce these values of respect at home.

To prevent sexual harassment, our school:

- Teaches students about healthy relationships and how to treat each other with respect and kindness

- Promotes positive role models within the school community

- Challenges gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Principal Rory O'Donnell, Deputy Principal Maura Gavigan, and all class teachers.

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

(a) ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour is heard and reassured
(b) seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
(c) conduct all conversations with sensitivity
(d) consider the age and ability of those involved
(e) listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
(f) take action in a timely manner
(g) 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:

The whole school community has a responsibility to prevent and address bullying behaviour. Schools should work in partnership with their patron, board of management, staff, students and their parents to develop and implement their Bí Cineálta policy.

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.

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 you should 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 the school'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).

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
- Given the complexity of bullying behaviour it is generally acknowledged that no one approach works in all situations. Each school must therefore decide on an approach that is best suited to its own circumstances
- 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 if this is known
- Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted
- Ongoing supervision and support may be needed for students, 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 time frame 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

Requests to take no action

A student reporting bullying may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than "look out" for them. In such circumstances, staff members should show empathy for the student and speak to the student to work out together how parents will be informed about the situation.

Parents may also make staff aware of bullying behaviour 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 required. However, the school may still decide to address the bullying behaviour, based on the circumstances.

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

Support for children who experience bullying:

1. **Follow up:** a crucial component to support students who have experienced bullying is regular follow up with them and their parents to ensure that the pattern of bullying has stopped. This is an important first step for the student to feel secure and to build confidence levels.
2. **Social group intervention:** if considered appropriate, we design and implement social groups for victims to share their experiences, build confidence levels and to teach strategies to mitigate

against bullying behaviour reoccurring. Where appropriate, this group would include the perpetrator of the bullying.

3. **Safe reporting mechanisms:** we encourage pupils to approach a staff member with any concerns or to report bullying without fear of retaliation.
4. **One trusted adult:** we also encourage victims to identify a trusted adult to whom they can go with concerns or fears in relation to the reoccurrence of bullying behaviour.
5. **Professional support:** Our school has access to the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS). We can therefore ask for advice from a NEPS psychologist to support victims of bullying.

Support for students who witness bullying

1. **Positive reinforcement:** A crucial component when following up with children who report bullying not involving themselves is to reinforce the point that they did the right thing. This follow up also involves ensuring that there has been no negative impact on the bystander for reporting the bullying behaviour. If this has occurred, follow up interventions take place to mitigate against any such negativity.
2. **Bystander training:** Through our 'Stay Safe' Program we teach students how to safely intervene or report bullying when they witness it, promoting a culture of collective responsibility. Testimonies from bystanders who reported such behaviour is a powerful component of this training.
3. **Encourage kindness:** We also promote initiatives that reward acts of kindness and support among peers.

Support for students who engage in bullying behaviour

1. **Follow up:** a crucial component to support students who have engaged in bullying behaviour is regular follow up with them and their victim/s to ensure that the pattern of bullying has stopped. This is an important first step to break the pattern of bullying behaviour.
2. **Social group intervention:** if considered appropriate, we design and implement social groups for students who engage in bullying behaviour to understand the impact of their behaviour on others, identify reasons for the behaviour and improve their social skills, emotional regulation, and conflict resolution to help them develop healthier interactions with others. Where appropriate, this group would include the perpetrator of the bullying.
3. **Engage parents:** Inform and involve parents of students who engage in bullying behaviour in discussions about their child's behavior and the steps being taken to address it. This also involves parents being asked to monitor and evaluate their child's behaviour at home to ensure consistency of approach.

Professional Support

Our school has access to the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), Oide. the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and Tusla. We can, therefore, seek advice from any or all of these bodies to support perpetrators, victims and bystanders of bullying, as required

Record of Incidents

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: *Teresa Gallagher*   Date: 15th May 2025
     Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: *Rory O'Donnell*   Date: 15th May 2025
     Principal

Appendix A Student friendly Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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 need to tell a teacher or another adult that you trust. They will know what to do to help.

Get help!

Tell someone!

If a student tells a staff member that they think they are being bullied, we will:
> 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

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.

Be Kind

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.