

## BALLYROAN BOYS NATIONAL SCHOOL



### Draft/Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Ballyroan BNS 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.

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 each person 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 all have an indispensable part to play in the school community, regardless of difference.

### Definition of bullying

Bullying is defined in *Cineálta: 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.

### **Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour**

A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards another student is not bullying behaviour.

- However, 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.
- Disagreement between two students, or instances where students don't want to be friends or to remain friends, is not considered bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others including deliberate manipulation of friendship groups.
- 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 their behaviours are not deliberate or planned, but, in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they can't control.

### **Bullying behaviour that occurs outside of school**

As per the Bí Cineálta Procedures, 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 bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved.

### **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	October – May 2024-2025	In person feedback, online survey, half day closure
Students	February 2025 May 2025	On line survey In person feedback
Parents	February 2025 May 2025	Online survey Invitation for feedback via email
Board of management	September to June 2025	In person meetings

Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	n/a	
Date policy was approved	17 <sup>th</sup> of June 2025	
Date policy was last reviewed		

Date policy was last reviewed: Approved on 17<sup>th</sup> of June 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 (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures).

In developing 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 the 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 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 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:**

- In accordance with our ethos, fostering an understanding of the uniqueness and dignity of each human being;
- Modelling respectful and inclusive interactions with all members of the school community;
- Staff are expected to abide by the Dignity at Work Charter and show a good example to children in all of their interactions;
- Building empathy, respect and resilience in all pupils;
- Encouraging children to resolve disagreements and restore their relationships;
- Encouraging children to view their actions from the other child's perspective;
- Emphasising the personal responsibility of pupils not to become involved in bullying behaviours and to respond appropriately if bullying incidents do occur;
- Creating a 'telling' environment and helping the children to understand that telling is the responsible thing to do;

- Class teachers (and other staff members as appropriate) to act as ‘trusted adults’ for bullying disclosures;
- Provide communication boxes in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Classes and other classes as deemed appropriate;
- Administer surveys to pupils when appropriate to help children tell;
- Ensuring the school is a safe physical space for pupils;
- Ensuring effective monitoring and supervision of pupils, to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible;
- Each member of the school staff has a responsibility to develop and maintain a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable;
- Maintaining high staff awareness of bullying and the importance of working proactively to prevent bullying incidents and resolving them effectively if they do occur;
- Maintaining awareness that bullying is not an inevitable part of school life and growing up and is rarely sorted out by itself;
- Dealing with unkind behaviour and words as soon as it arises;
- Rewarding kind behaviour at Assemblies;
- Annual Anti-bullying week and Safer Internet Day;
- Raising awareness of child friendly anti-bullying policy;
- The Student Council promotes ideas that foster inclusion and has achieved an Amber Flag;
- Annual Wellbeing Week;
- Playground helpers (older children) to help with games and positive interactions;
- Wet day helpers in younger classes

### **Curriculum:**

- Developing a shared understanding of what bullying is;
- Explicitly teaching pupils what kind and respectful language and behaviour looks like, sounds like and feels like;
- In the teaching of all subjects, fostering an attitude of respect for all, promoting the value of diversity, addressing prejudice and stereotyping and highlighting the unacceptability of bullying behaviour;
- Exploring topics such as belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships through the wide and varied SPHE curriculum;
- Teaching the Stay Safe programme at all class levels throughout the school;
- Participating in pilot projects such as Strand 2 of the Counselling in Primary Schools Pilot which supports schools to promote wellbeing;
- Modelling and teaching values such as respect, tolerance and love;
- Providing pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth;
- Emphasising inclusion, focusing on developing social skills and paying attention to key moments (transitioning between classes/schools etc);
- Teaching pupils to develop personal responsibility for behaviour;
- Ensure that the additional needs of pupils are addressed when developing skills and strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviours.

### **Policy and Planning:**

- Displaying our child friendly Bí Cineálta policy in all classrooms and around the school;

- Placing the wellbeing of the school community at the heart of all school policies and plans;
- Ensuring that other school policies support the implementation of the Bí Cineálta Policy;
- Encouraging the participation of pupils in the development and implementation of school policies and plans as appropriate;
- Ensuring that bullying prevention strategies are discussed at staff meetings;
- Encouraging staff to access professional development courses to support wellbeing in the school;
- Reviewing the Bí Cineálta policy at least annually as required.

### **Relationships and partners:**

- Fostering a sense of ownership, pride and participation among all members of the school community;
- Promoting co-operation and group enterprise through team sports, activities and group work;
- Implementing anti-bullying strategies and bullying awareness raising measures appropriate to the age of the pupils involved;
- Addressing school rules and expected behaviours at assemblies;
- Supporting the active involvement of pupils in school life through formal and informal structures such as the Student Council, yard buddies etc;
- Supporting a buddy system on yard between older and younger pupils;
- Supporting the active involvement of parents in school life;
- Teaching problem-solving approaches to inter-personal difficulties;
- Involving parents to help prevent and resolve bullying incidents;
- Accessing supports from suitable external agencies/personnel where appropriate and feasible.

### **Preventing cyberbullying behaviour:**

- Implementing the Internet Acceptable Use Policy;
- Referring to appropriate online behaviour as part of the Code of Behaviour;
- Preventing children from having unsupervised access to the internet while in school and ensuring the school's internet is filtered to prevent access to inappropriate sites;
- Educating pupils about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship via the SPHE curriculum;
- Regularly emphasising that values such as kindness and respect are as applicable in the online world as elsewhere;
- Facilitating workshops for pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe online and how to report any concerns;
- Promoting online safety events or material for parents and children;
- Encouraging children to use the Online Safety Charter;
- Encouraging parents to reinforce values of respect whilst online at home.

### **Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour:**

- Challenging gender and sexual orientation based stereotypes via literature choices, school materials etc;

- Maintaining an inclusive physical environment;
- Encouraging critical thinking skills so as to challenge gender and other stereotypes;
- Encouraging parents to reinforce values of respect at home.

#### **Preventing racist bullying behaviour:**

- Encouraging critical thinking skills so as to challenge racist and other stereotypes;
- Celebrating the diversity of the school community;
- Ensuring that library books, text books and other school materials represent appropriate lived experience of people from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds;
- Ensuring that there are effective means of communication with pupils and parents who may not have English language proficiency;
- Encouraging parents to reinforce values of respect at home.

#### **Preventing sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment:**

- Modelling of respectful behaviour and fair treatment of all pupils
- Clarifying that sexual harassment should never be dismissed as teasing or banter;
- Promotion of positive role models within the school community;
- Encouraging critical thinking skills so as to challenge sexist and other stereotypes;
- Encouraging parents to reinforce 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):**

- Supervision Policy
- Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment

### **Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour**

#### **The teachers with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour are as follows:**

\*The class teacher of the child making the bullying accusation.

\*Any other teacher that may be delegated by the principal to address a particular bullying issue.

\*All staff members are responsible for assisting in the prevention of and monitoring of bullying behaviour.

\*The Principal/Deputy Principal will provide support and advice and will become involved where appropriate.

#### **Approach to be adopted**

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 (as appropriate)
- 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. Determining if bullying behaviour has occurred:**

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour the following questions should be considered:

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.

If the answer to any of these questions is No, then the behaviour is unlikely to be 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 may 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);
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement in line with the Bí Cineálta procedures to determine whether bullying has occurred.

### **2. Where bullying behaviour has occurred:**

- The primary aim for the relevant teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying is to stop the bullying and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved;
- 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;
- 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 will be contacted at an early stage

- Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as appropriate the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her (and his/her parents) how s/he is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;
- If deemed appropriate, sanctions may be applied with reference to the school's Code of Behaviour.
- 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*.

### **3. Reviewing progress 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 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 consideration should be given to using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour. The application of disciplinary sanctions is a matter for the pupil being disciplined, 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, and after the complaint process has concluded, 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.

**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):**

- Each instance of bullying behaviour must be dealt with on an individual basis. Professional discretion will be required, therefore, to determine the best approach, depending on factors including the age and understanding of the pupils involved, the circumstances of the incident(s) and the supports available.

Approaches to be adopted include:

- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil and commending them for telling, reassuring them and offering them support;
- Praising and supporting pupils who are remorseful about their behaviour and willing to work towards a resolution of the issues involved;
- Helping affected pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help them develop friendships and social skills (e.g. group work in class, team sports, extra-curricular activities);
- Ongoing work related to curricular objectives regarding friendships, communications, tolerance, diversity, individual uniqueness etc. (SPHE, Religion);
- Supporting the child to develop preventative strategies to avoid similar incidences recurring (e.g. telling relevant adult, keeping a diary, appropriate response to emotions, friendships etc.);
- Working with parents in helping them to support their children;
- Checking-in with children and parents periodically to ensure that the resolution of the problem is successful in the long-term;
- Ensuring that relevant staff are aware of particular children's experiences so that they can provide extra support or supervision as appropriate;
- Co-operating with relevant professionals/outside agencies etc. to ensure that children can access the necessary help (in accordance with data protection considerations);
- When necessary, additional support may be sought from external agencies such as NEPS, Tusla, NPC, Oide etc;
- Resources such as those provided by Webwise and the DCU Anti-Bullying Centre (FUSE programme), may prove helpful in supporting pupils impacted by bullying behaviour.

**Recording of bullying behaviour:**

All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include

- The form and type of behaviour,
- Where and when it took place,
- The date of the initial engagement with students and parents,
- The views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken,
- The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour,
- The review with students and parents including the views of the pupils and parents as to whether the bullying has ceased,
- The dates of all engagements including the date the bullying ceased,
- Any engagement with external sources.

#### **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: 17<sup>th</sup> of June 2025

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed:



Date: 17<sup>th</sup> of June 2025

(Principal)