Bí Cineálta Policy

Anti- Bullying Behaviour Policy

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Document Version Control

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Mission Statement:

Scoil na Tríonóide Naofa is a Catholic School that provides an inclusive education which strives to enable students to achieve their potential. We seek to promote the wellbeing of all members of the school community in a respectful, safe and caring environment which values the dignity of each individual.

Aims:

1. To provide education in the Catholic tradition characterised by faith, hope and love.
2. To recognise the needs and rights of all partners in the school community, through fostering respect and promoting Christian values.
3. To encourage the intellectual, social, physical and spiritual development of each student.
4. To create an environment which enables students to develop positive self-esteem.
5. To recognise and develop our school's role as an integral part of the wider community.

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Scoil na Tríonóide Naofa has developed 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

In accordance with the Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2024 page 17 the core definition of Bullying Behaviour is:

Bullying is 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 following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying,
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

In summary, the definition of bullying can be simplified into three words: **Deliberate** (targeted), **Repeated, Hurtful** (causing harm)

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful (or harmful) public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Section A: Development/review of our Bi 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.

	Consulted	Method of Consultation
School Staff	28/2/25 21/3/25 22/5/25	Procedures Document disseminated. Survey. Staff Presentation and discussion of Procedures.
Students	29/4/25	Discussion of Procedures with Student Council. Questionnaire issued to all students.
Parents	11/4/25	Information on Procedures disseminated. Questionnaire issued with this information.
Board of Management	To be confirmed	
Policy Approval Date:	To be confirmed	
Policy Review Date:	8/9/26	

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

The Education and Prevention Strategies:

The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows:

- Steps being taken by the school community to create a positive culture that encourages only appropriate behaviour.
- The school aims to take a proactive, preventative role in the first instance. This involves a multi-disciplinary approach on the part of management, staff, parents/guardians and students. In keeping with the school's ethos there is a strong emphasis on the concept of mutual respect in all relationships within the school community.

Pastoral Care

There is a strong emphasis on pastoral care within the school. Each year is assigned a Year Head. All students are encouraged to visit the Guidance Counsellor, Counsellor or Pastoral Care Team, when they need to. Students may be referred to other counselling services.

SPHE

From first to sixth year our SPHE programme builds on the work started in first year to teach students about the importance of mutual respect and innate dignity.

Student Council

Through the Student Council students are enabled to take on leadership roles and assume ownership of and responsibility for school policies that apply particularly to them e.g., Bí Cineálta Policy.

Peer instruction and education through the Student Council takes many forms e.g. speaking to individual class groups, announcements on intercom from the Student Council. During the school year the Students Council also supports various relevant themed days and weeks (e.g. Ceiliúradh CEIST Day, Wellbeing Week, Open Nights).

Teachers

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

Teachers on a daily basis, foster a safe environment for learning by knowing and using their students' names, by managing class-room dynamics using seating plans and identifying grouping arrangements, by being mindful of methodologies that suit varying abilities, by being mindful of the many different personalities ranging from shy to dominant, by being friendly but always maintaining an appropriate professional distance and where practicable incorporating anti-bullying themes in their classes.

The implementation and effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy is included as an agenda item for staff meetings where necessary to ensure that concerns about the policy or the welfare of individual pupils can be shared and effectively addressed. Teachers of SPHE may work with Student Council to highlight the adverse effects of bullying.

Non-Teaching Staff

All staff are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them to any member of the teaching staff, or to the Deputy Principal or the Principal.

Preventing Cyberbullying Behaviour

The promotion of digital literacy, digital citizenship and fostering safe online environments. Strategies to prevent cyberbullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

· Implementing the SPHE curriculum.
· Implementing the Digital Media Literacy curriculum which teaches students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship
· Having regular conversations / assemblies with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online through.
· Developing and communicating an acceptable use policy for technology.
· Referring to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour.
· Promoting or hosting online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online.
· Holding an Internet Safety Awareness event to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour

Supervision of Students

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policy in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour. Teachers on supervision in assigned areas are required to be vigilant and pro-active. Supervisors should disperse students clustering around toilet areas. Supervisors should be alert to and monitor students who are frequently alone and refer to Pastoral Care Team if necessary.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

Those with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour are as follows:

· Class Teachers
· Year Head
· Deputy Principal
· Principal

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

- Ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour is heard and reassured.
- Act with discretion.
- 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.
- Act in a timely manner.
- Inform the parents of those involved.

Procedures: The process must be completed within 20 days of initial report.

Step 1

· Alleged/perceived bullying behaviour should be reported (by any member of the school community, parents/guardian, a by-stander, ancillary staff, SNAs, bus driver) initially to any member of the teaching staff.

Step 2

· The staff member who receives the report liaises directly with the Year Head to complete the *Bí Cineálta Appendix C Form for Reporting Bullying Behaviour.* This form is a working document whilst the Year Head investigates the allegation of bullying. This important document must be filed carefully by the Year Head in compliance with GDPR and shared directly with Senior Management.

Step 3

· The Year Head investigates the concerns using the definition of bullying from Chapter 2 *(Bí Cineálta Procedures)*. Students will be interviewed by the Year Head as appropriate. Details of the reported allegation of bullying will be written down and read back to the student/students for confirmation. The student may write down their account of the situation. The Year Head will document the investigation in *Bí Cineálta Appendix C Record of Bullying Investigation.*

Step 4

· If the incident(s) is deemed bullying:
  - Record all steps in **Bí Cineálta Appendix C Record of Bullying Investigation** referred to in Step 3.
  - Notify parents/guardians of both the target and the perpetrator (as appropriate).

· If the incident(s) is not determined to be bullying, the bullying case is closed, and the matter is dealt with under the Code of Behaviour and recorded by the Year Head. The relevant sections of the **Bí Cineálta Appendix C Record of Bullying Investigation** should be completed, filed appropriately and submitted to Senior Management.

Step 5

When the investigation is complete, all records should be submitted to Senior Management and resolution strategies must be put in place.

Appropriate action will be taken by the Year Head, Deputy Principal, Principal as required.

The views of the students and parents must be recorded considering the actions to be taken.

If a parent 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 in Post-Primary Schools, they should be referred to the school's complaints procedure.

Procedure for Recording 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.** Records are kept in accordance with the Data Protection legislation. It is advisable to keep and maintain proper records in the event of repeat occurrence of the bullying behaviour or where there is a pattern of a continuum of behaviour.

Programme of Support for Those Affected

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

The school has a Pastoral Care Team which meets every week at a set time and includes the Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor, SEN Co-ordinator and other staff members.

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):

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

- The Year Head will develop an appropriate plan to support the student affected by bullying.

- The school will listen to the views of the parents involved as to how best to address the situation.

- Referral to the school Guidance Counsellor where appropriate.

- The school will address the attitudes of bullying within the school community through assemblies, pastoral care, SPHE, Religion and/or any opportunity that may arise.

- In a case where sanctions need to be imposed, they will be enforced, as per the school's Code of Behaviour.

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 (at the next Board of Management meeting nearest to the date of the last review) 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)

Appendix C: Record of Investigation into Bullying behaviour conducted by Year Head

Name of pupil	
Name(s) of student(s) involved in bullying incidents	
Year Group of student(s)	
The form and type of bullying behaviour	
Where and when it took place	
Name of Year Head	
Date investigation commenced	
Date of the initial engagement with the students involved	
Brief description of bullying and its impact (please provide as much detail as possible including dates) **(Who, Why, What, When, Where)**	
Has Bullying Behaviour occurred? (Please circle as appropriate)	Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students? Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm? 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 not bullying behaviour.* *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 bullying behaviour <u>has taken place</u> the remainder of this document should be completed and submitted to the Principal <u>and</u> Deputy Principal.	

If bullying behaviour has not taken place, the remainder of this form does not need to be completed. The Year head should record that the investigation has been completed, and bullying behaviour has not occurred as well as other relevant information. The Year Head should submit this document to the Deputy Principal.

Details of contact made with both sets of parents. (Date/Method/Reply)	
Details of the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour	
Details of action taken: (Sanctions Recommended/Applied Strategies employed)	
Contact with outside agencies if appropriate.	
Date of Check in after 20 days	
The effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the students involved **The views of student(s) The views of the parent(s)**	
Has the bullying behaviour ceased? **The views of student(s) The views of the parent(s)**	
Date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased	
Further Comment/Recommendation	
Signed: **Date:**	

Scoil na Tríonóide Naofa – Bí Cineálta: Student Summary.

Purpose of this Policy

This policy outlines our commitment to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour within the school community. It aims to ensure that all students feel safe, respected, and valued.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined as **deliberate**, **repeated** and **harmful** behaviour that causes physical, social, or emotional harm. It involves an imbalance of power between individuals or groups.

Examples of bullying include:

- Intentional exclusion of others.
- Spreading rumours or malicious gossip.
- Cyberbullying (using online platforms to hurt others).
- Targeting someone based on their race, religion, gender, disability, or any other personal characteristic.

Isolated or one-off incidents of negative behaviour are not considered bullying unless they involve deliberate harm and a clear power imbalance that is repeated over time.

Reporting Bullying

If you experience or witness bullying behaviour, you are encouraged to:

- Inform a teacher, Year Head, or any trusted staff member.
- Speak to the Guidance Counsellor or another member of the Pastoral Care Team.
- Ask a friend, parent, or guardian to help you report the behaviour if you feel uncomfortable reporting it alone.

How the School Responds

1. **Initial Report**
   A report can be made by any member of the school community, including students, parents, or staff.

2. **Investigation**
   The Year Head will investigate the report, ensuring that everyone involved is treated fairly and with respect. Notes will be taken and the process will be explained clearly to those involved.

3. **Determining Bullying Behaviour**
   If the behaviour meets the definition of bullying, appropriate action will be taken to support the student affected and to address the behaviour of the student who has engaged in bullying. Parents/guardians will be informed.

4. **Follow-Up**
   Support measures will be put in place, and the situation will be monitored to ensure that the bullying behaviour has ceased.

Supports Available

- **Pastoral Care Team**: a team dedicated to student wellbeing.

- **SPHE Programme**: lessons that promote mutual respect and responsible online behaviour.

- **Guidance Counsellor**: available to support students in a confidential setting.

- **Student Council**: representing student voice and helping to promote a positive school environment.

Preventing Cyberbullying

The school promotes digital citizenship and safe online behaviour through:

- SPHE and Digital Media Literacy lessons.

- Regular assemblies or class discussions on online respect.

- Clear guidelines on appropriate technology use.

Recording and Oversight

- All bullying incidents are recorded in line with school procedures and data protection laws.

- The Principal reports on bullying incidents (without personal details) at each Board of Management meeting.

- The policy is reviewed regularly with input from the school community.

Summary

Our school community is built on respect, dignity, and care for every student. Bullying behaviour is not tolerated, and all reports are taken seriously. We all share the responsibility to promote a safe, respectful, and positive learning environment.