

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour



Scoil Íosagáin Ballybunion

The Board of Management of Scoil Íosagáin Ballybunion 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 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.

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	15.01.2025 15.01.2025	Aladdin correspondence Sought feedback on questionnaires
Students	20.01.2025 22.01.2025 23.01.2025 23.01.2025 21.01.2025 24.03.2025	Focus group with 4 th class Focus group with 4 th class to finalise student questionnaires Questionnaires for 2 nd to 6 th class Informal class discussion with Juniors to 1 st class (assembly) Whole class discussion with 5 th class Poster development with 3 rd class
Parents	Various dates (weekly Aladdin messages + BOM agreed reports) 26.02.2025 26.03.2025	Survey sent to parents Results of survey emailed
Board of Management	21.01.2025 12.02.2025 07.05.2025	Email (questionnaire)+ feedback Meeting Ratification of policy
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	12.11.2024 18.11.2024 19.11.2024 20.11.2024	Discussion with Laura Bennett (manager) in relation to after school incidents. Meeting held on 19.11.24 Email sent to parents in relation to after schools
Date policy was approved: 07.05.2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: N/A (YEAR 1)		

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 (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

Based on the guidelines outlined in Chapter 5 of the **Bí Cineálta Procedures, Scoil Íosagáin Ballybunion**, intends to use some of the following strategies to address various forms of bullying, including online, homophobic, transphobic, racist, sexist bullying, and sexual harassment.

Whole-School Prevention Strategies

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.

Scoil Íosagáin takes positive steps to ensure that the culture of our 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, our 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.

Our whole-school prevention strategies include (but are not limited to) the following:

- **Positive School Culture:** In our school we always aim to foster an inclusive environment that celebrates diversity and promotes respect for all individuals.
- **Staff Training:** Staff are encouraged to continually engage in continuous professional development particular in the area of bullying prevention.
- **Student Engagement:** With an active Student Council as well as a specific Bí Cineálta committee in place, student participation in developing anti-bullying initiatives and policies is actively encouraged to ensure they are relevant and effective. The children of 3rd and 4th class (24/25) in conjunction with the Bí Cineálta committee have developed their own 'child friendly' policy which takes the form of a poster (See attached) which focuses on the message of 'being kind' 'being respectful' 'helping others' 'it's nice to be nice' and finally 'don't be afraid to say no'
- **Parental Involvement:** Our school ethos reflects a core message of 'together we make a difference'. We actively engage with parents to reinforce anti-bullying messages at home. (See SPHE policy for further information)

Targeted Prevention Strategies

In Scoil Íosagáin we use the following strategies:

In Scoil Íosagáin we aim, at all times, to create a positive and inclusive school culture, a school environment that allows everyone to experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported.

Through the use of education and the curriculum as well as our Bí Cineálta committee we aim to create 'a telling environment' where students and staff feel listened to, respected and valued and where bullying behaviour is not tolerated.

The foundation of any prevention strategy in a school lies in comprehensive planning by staff and by ensuring that the SPHE curriculum is implemented. Individual school policies will also serve to work in conjunction with this Bí Cineálta policy (e.g. supervision policy, code of behaviour, health and safety policy etc)

Below is a list of ways that we help to prevent bullying behaviour in our school (this list is not exhaustive)

Online Bullying (Cyberbullying)

- **Digital Literacy Education:** Integrate lessons on responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship into the curriculum (www.webwise.ie)
- **Acceptable Use Policy (AUP):** Enforce the school's AUP, which outlines appropriate online conduct and consequences for violations www.ballybunionprimary.ie
- **Monitoring and Reporting:** Utilise monitoring tools to detect inappropriate online activities and establish clear reporting mechanisms for students.

Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying

- **Zero Tolerance Policy:** Staff clearly communicate that homophobic and transphobic behaviours are unacceptable and will be addressed promptly.

Racist Bullying

- **Cultural Awareness Programs:** As appropriate, staff will organise events and activities that celebrate different cultures and ethnic backgrounds.
- **Inclusive Materials:** Where possible we try to ensure that teaching materials reflect diverse cultures and perspectives.

Sexist Bullying and Sexual Harassment

At an age and stage appropriate lesson children are taught, through the SPHE curriculum about gender. Some ways are included below:

- **Gender Equality Education:** Teach students about gender equality and challenge traditional gender roles and stereotypes.
- **Clear Reporting Channels:** Establish confidential reporting systems for incidents of sexual harassment, ensuring students feel safe to come forward.

- **Consistent Enforcement:** Apply disciplinary measures consistently to all forms of sexist behaviour and harassment.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- **Regular Surveys (as necessary):** Conduct anonymous surveys to assess the prevalence of bullying and the effectiveness of prevention strategies.
- **Policy Reviews:** Review and update anti-bullying policies annually to reflect new challenges and feedback from the school community. Our Bí Cineálta policy will be reviewed and updated annually.
- **Incident Tracking:** Maintain records of reported incidents to identify patterns and areas needing additional focus

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):

See school supervision policy for more information.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

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 (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

In order to establish if bullying behavior has occurred the teacher should consider the following: 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 also be helpful to ask students to write down their account of the incident (this is at the discretion of the teacher in question. A copy of this should be kept on the student(s) file if it has been written down.)

When investigating any incident of possible bullying behaviour teachers must firstly look at the core definition of bullying behaviour:

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.

1. Determining if Bullying Behaviour Has Occurred

To assess whether reported behaviour constitutes bullying, the following questions will be considered:

- **Targeted Behaviour:** Is the behaviour directed at a specific student or group?
- **Intent to Harm:** Is there an intention to cause physical, social, or emotional harm?
- **Repetition:** Has the behaviour occurred repeatedly over time?

If the answer to all three questions is "Yes," the behaviour is classified as bullying and will be addressed accordingly. It's important to note that certain one-off incidents, such as a single hurtful message posted online, may also be considered bullying due to their potential for widespread impact.

2. Approaches to Address Bullying Behaviour

When bullying behaviour is identified, the school will undertake the following actions:

- **Listening and Reassurance:** Ensure the student experiencing bullying feels heard and supported.
- **Privacy:** Maintain confidentiality for all parties involved.
- **Sensitivity:** Conduct all discussions with care, considering the age and abilities of the students.
- **Student Input:** Consider the affected student's views on how best to address the situation.
- **Timely Action:** Address the issue promptly to prevent escalation.
- **Parental Involvement:** Inform the parents or guardians of all students involved.

- **Documentation:** Record all incidents, including the nature of the behaviour, location, timing, and actions taken. (see template for recording attached)

These steps aim to stop the bullying behaviour and restore relationships, focusing on resolution rather than assigning blame.

3. Reviewing Progress

To ensure the effectiveness of interventions:

- **Monitoring:** Regularly check in with the students involved to assess the situation.
- **Follow-Up:** Schedule follow-up meetings to review the outcomes of the interventions. (follow recording template timeline)
- **Adjustments:** Modify strategies as necessary based on feedback and observed progress.
- **Reporting:** Provide updates to the Board of Management, including the number of incidents and the effectiveness of measures taken, while maintaining confidentiality.
- **Annual Review:** Conduct a yearly evaluation of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation, involving the school community in the process.

By adhering to these procedures, Scoil Íosagáin aims to create a safe and supportive environment for all students, effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

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):

Based on **Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures**, here are the core approaches that the staff of Scoil Íosagáin should use to support those who **experience, witness, and display** bullying behaviour:

Teachers will endeavour to:

1. Supporting Students Who Experience Bullying

- **Listen carefully** and take all reports seriously.
- **Provide reassurance** and involve parents/guardians.
- **Focus on safety**, emotional support, and restoring confidence.
- **Offer follow-up meetings** and monitor well-being.
- **Refer to NEPS or other support services** where appropriate (giving due consideration to the fact that in 2024/25 we do not have access to a NEPS psychologist)

2. Supporting Students Who Witness Bullying

- Encourage **open reporting** and remind them of their power to help (we are a telling school)
- Reinforce that speaking up is **brave and necessary**.
- Involve them in **peer-support initiatives** or kindness campaigns (encourage them to become part of the school's Bí Cineálta committee)
- Teach empathy and the importance of **bystander intervention**.

3. Supporting Students Who Display Bullying Behaviour

- Help them understand the **impact of their actions**.
- Try to teach them how to repair any harm that has been caused
- Involve parents early and regularly
- Set clear expectations and provide **positive reinforcement** (use strategies from our IY training)
- Support ongoing reflection and development of **social/emotional skills**.

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: 3/12/25
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed:  Date: 3/12/25
(Principal)

Bullying Behaviour Record for Scoil Iosagáin Ballybunion



Form of bullying behaviour	Direct <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect <input type="checkbox"/> Online <input type="checkbox"/>
Type of Bullying Behaviour	(10 forms) Disablist <input type="checkbox"/> Exceptionally able <input type="checkbox"/> Gender identity <input type="checkbox"/> Homophobic <input type="checkbox"/> Racist <input type="checkbox"/> Poverty <input type="checkbox"/> Religious identity <input type="checkbox"/> Sexist <input type="checkbox"/> Physical <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual harassment <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>
When did the bullying behaviour occur	
Where did the bullying behaviour occur	Inside the school grounds <input type="checkbox"/> Outside of school <input type="checkbox"/> Online <input type="checkbox"/>
Date initial student engagement took place	

Date initial parent engagement took place	
Views of student(s) regarding actions to be taken/next steps	
Views of parent(s) regarding actions to be taken/next steps	
Date of any engagement with other services:	
Review date with students/parents: (review should take place no more than 20 days after initial engagement)	
Has the bullying ceased?	
Date the bullying has ceased:	

- Please attach a copy of this form to the student's support file
- Please note that the GDPR/Retention schedule is applicable

