Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Contents

Introduction

The Board of Management of Faughart Community National School has adopted this 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.

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As a DCU Changemaker School, we are dedicated to fostering an innovative and inclusive learning environment that encourages students to be proactive, creative, and socially responsible. Our patron, Louth Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB), supports our mission to provide high-quality education and ensure every child reaches their full potential.

Our school values play a key role in shaping our approach to the Bí Cineálta Policy:

- **We care about our own wellbeing and the wellbeing of others**: Promoting a positive and caring school environment where every child's welfare, wellbeing, and health are prioritised.

- **We strive for excellence in learning**: Encouraging high expectations for effort and performance, fostering creativity, and instilling a passion for lifelong learning.

- **We are active members of our local and global communities**: Creating a respectful, inclusive culture where pupils engage positively with their teachers, peers, and wider society.

- **We show respect and act responsibly**: Ensuring that all students contribute to a school community where kindness, respect, and responsibility are fundamental values.

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.

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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 – April 2025	Discussion at staff meetings Survey
Students	February 2025	Focus Groups led by 6th class pupils
Parents	February – May 2025	Focus Groups Questionnaire
Board of Management	June 2025	Board of Management Meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	April 2025	Discussions with bus drivers
Date policy was approved:		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

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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):

Preventing Bullying Behaviour

Our school implements the following prevention strategies:

- **Positive School Culture**: Promoting respect, inclusion, and kindness through the curriculum and daily interactions.

- **Monthly Assemblies**: Recognising kindness and positive behaviour in our school community.

- **Caring Citizen Award**: Celebrating students who consistently show kindness and respect.

- **Changemaker Nominee Stickers**: Awarded to students nominated by their peers for demonstrating changemaker values.

- **SPHE and Wellbeing Programmes:** Educating students on friendships, empathy, and conflict resolution.

- **Stay Safe & RSE Programmes:** Structured lessons on personal safety, relationships, and making informed decisions.

- **Supervision & Safe Spaces**: Ensuring students feel safe in all areas of the school, including playgrounds and online spaces.

- **Digital Citizenship Education**: Teaching responsible technology use and online safety.

- Developing and communicating an **acceptable use policy for technology**

- **Peer Support & Student Voice:** Establishing children advisory panels and buddy systems to foster peer-led initiatives.

- **Collaboration with the DCU Changemaker Schools Network:** Engaging in research, professional development, and initiatives that enhance school practice.

- Referring to expected behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the **Code of Behaviour.**

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Supervision and Monitoring Policies

In line with Chapter 5 of the *Bí Cineálta: Anti-Bullying Procedures*, our school implements a comprehensive approach to supervision and monitoring that supports the four key areas of wellbeing promotion—**Culture and Environment; Curriculum; Policy and Planning; and Relationships and Partnerships**. These measures are designed to ensure that bullying behaviour is effectively prevented, identified, and addressed in a consistent and supportive manner.

Culture and Environment

Our school fosters a positive, inclusive environment where respect, kindness, and belonging are promoted through daily interactions, school values, and leadership. We actively support a **'telling' culture** where students feel safe and encouraged to report concerns about bullying behaviour without fear of retaliation or judgement. All staff promote the concept of the **"trusted adult"**, ensuring that students know they have someone to talk to and that their concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon promptly.

We prioritise **safe physical spaces** by:

- Supervising key areas such as corridors, stairwells, and schoolyards with clear visibility.

- Removing visual obstructions (e.g. unnecessary posters) from windows and installing mirrors to reduce blind spots.

- Promoting positive messages through displays, murals and signage that reinforce inclusion and respect.

- Encouraging student-led art and ownership of school spaces to strengthen belonging and shared responsibility.

Supervision

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all pupils, staff implement structured supervision throughout the school day, particularly during arrival, break times, and dismissal. Key supervision measures include:

- Clear rotas for yard duty, ensuring high visibility of staff at all times.

- Active supervision strategies (e.g. moving around, interacting with students) to detect and prevent incidents.

- Monitoring of high-risk areas identified through staff consultation and student voice.

- Ongoing professional learning to support staff in identifying and responding to bullying behaviour.

Where feasible, break-time activities are organised to offer students a variety of choices, encouraging positive peer engagement and reducing unstructured time that may give rise to negative behaviour.

Through these practices, our school takes all reasonable steps to create a safe, respectful environment where bullying is not tolerated, and where students and staff work in partnership to uphold our *Bí Cineálta* values.

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Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

The class teacher, in the first instance, regardless of who the bullying behaviour is initially witnessed by/reported to, with the support of the principal and in-school management team.

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)

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred:

- Interview each child individually
- Meet all students involved as a group
- Each student will retell their account of what happened to clarify each other's views at this group meeting
- Each student will be supported, as appropriate, following the meeting
- Interviewing teacher will use supporting documentation* to determine whether bullying has occurred

If it is determined that bullying behaviour has occurred:

- Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour need support.
- Inform parents of those involved – consult on appropriate further actions
- Implement relevant strategies and supports to address the bullying behaviour
- Engage with students and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress
- Review the effectiveness of strategies used to date in consultation with students and parents
- Provide ongoing supervision and support
- If the student displaying bullying behaviour is continuing to do so, the school may refer to its Code of Behaviour to identify further strategies/actions to use/take.

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Incidents can occur where behaviour is unacceptable and hurtful but the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies that deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

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.

Where the student displaying the bullying behaviour is not a student in the school, but the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour is a student in the school, the school should support the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as appropriate and engage with them and their parents to determine what steps can be taken.

Supportive Approaches

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):

Supportive approaches may include (not exhaustive):

- Teach relevant SPHE lessons
- Build classroom community through circle time and team-building activities
- Teach relevant GMGY lessons
- Provide individual/ small group support to build self-esteem
- Restorative circles
- Monitor and review the situation regularly and adapt strategies used if needed
- Regularly monitor the efficacy of strategies and supports used and review/ adapt as necessary

Recording Bullying Behaviour

All bullying behaviour will be recorded using template added to Aladdin Documents. 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.

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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: _Nancy H Jackson_ (*Chairperson, Board of Management*) Date: _10/6/2025_

Signed: _Julie Ince_ (*Principal*)　　　　　　　　Date: _10/6/2025_