

St Felim's NS

Bí Cineálta Policy to
prevent and address
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1 Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of **St Felim's NS Ballinagh** 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.

2 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.

3 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	14 th March 2025 8 th May	Half day closure for a whole staff workshop and consultation on Bí Cineálta procedures. Staff focus group meeting.
Students	May June	The student council worked with teacher rep. to produce a student friendly poster for Bí Cineálta. Poster was presented to all classes by Student council
Parents	May 2025	Information letter re. Bí Cineálta sent to parents. Survey monkey questions re bullying sent to parents
Board of Management	10 th March 2025 June 2025	Principal & teacher rep. updated the board on the publication of the Bí Cineálta procedures and the staff's ongoing engagement in policy development. Bí Cineálta policy to be ratified
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	Flag and posters ready for display in June 2025	The flag and the student friendly poster is visible to all visitors to reinforce our commitment to Bí Cineálta Bí Cineálta notice board in GP hall
Date policy was approved:		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

4 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 our school we are committed to preventing bullying behaviour through our implementation of the Bí Cineálta procedures. As a staff we have considered the four key areas that are essential for a holistic, whole school approach to wellbeing promotion as set out in *the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for practice* :

1. Culture and environment

- Our school promotes and supports a telling environment where reporting of bullying behaviour is encouraged.

- Our school encourages children to identify a trusted adult to whom they can report bullying behaviour.
- Our school is a safe place where every student has a right to feel safe.
- Our school rules encourage children to be kind and to show respect to each other
- The school values equality, diversity, inclusion and respect.
- Art work and displays in school spaces reflect these values.
- The school is a welcoming fun place where all students can enjoy whole school activities and performances which promote a sense of belonging to our school community. These activities include visits from the performing arts, sports activities, school tours, school concerts and whole school assemblies.
- The school has a strict supervision policy where pupils are supervised at all times by a staff member.
- Classes are allocated designated spaces on the school yard for break time.

2. Curriculum

- Teaching and learning which is collaborative and respectful is promoted in our school.
- Our curriculum subjects offer students opportunities to foster inclusion and respect for diversity.
- Our school encourages opportunities for students to work in small groups which can help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy among students.
- Our school encourages buddy reading sessions between classes which also helps to foster friendship and empathy among students.
- The teaching of the SPHE and the RSE curricula aim to foster students' wellbeing, self-confidence and sense of belonging and to develop students' responsibility for their own behaviour and actions in the prevention of different types of bullying (see appendix 1 & 2.7 Bí Cineálta procedures)
- Other SPHE programs taught in our school include Walk Tall, Grow in Love, Weaving Wellbeing and Zippy's Friends. These programs encourage students to take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour, to treat each other with respect, to develop self-confidence and a sense of belonging.
- The Stay Safe Program which teaches students about friendship and bullying behaviour is implemented in every class every year
- Social stories are used by teachers to support children's understanding of bullying behaviour and how to report any bullying behaviour to a trusted adult.
- Wellbeing week is held annually. Activities and events offer students opportunities to foster inclusion, diversity, equality and respect.
- Preventing cyber bullying: Stay safe and Webwise programmes are used in our school to promote digital citizenship and to help prevent cyber bullying. , We also hold a whole school event for internet safety day.

3. Policy and planning

- The wellbeing of our school community is at the heart of our school policies and plans
- All school plans and policies must support the implementation of our Bí Cineálta policy
- These policies and plans include the SPHE plan, the code of behaviour,

Acceptable use, Child safeguarding, Health and safety and the Supervision policy

- BÍ Cineálta policy is reflected in all curricula and extra curricula subjects taught in our school
- Staff will engage in CPD to support the implementation of the BÍ Cineálta policy especially courses focusing on the promotion of inclusion and diversity in our school.

4. Relationships and partnerships

Cineáltas Action plan recognises the importance of positive relationships across the whole education community to promote empathy, understanding and respect.

- The following list outlines some of the partnerships in our school, the initiatives and activities offered through these partnerships help to build a stronger school community.
- BOM support the school's anti bullying procedures
- Student council is actively involved in promoting anti bullying message among all classes in the school.
- Parents' association supports inclusive school events for example our annual Christmas concert/ carol service.
- School and church events: Sacraments of First Confession, first Holy Communion and Confirmation
- School events; Christmas concert, sports fixtures and school tours
- Children in 3rd, 4th and SEN classes attend organised school swimming lessons in Cavan Leisure centre.
- Organised visitors to the school provide inclusive activities which support our anti bullying policy. These visitors include
 - Lego and art therapists, sports coaches, musicians, entertainers
 - Ballinagh GAA & Cornafean GAA
 - Cumann na mBunscoil supports anti bullying
 - Cavan Sports Partnership

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):

- The principal welcomes the children in the morning at the school gate
- Teachers receive the children in their classrooms when the bell rings at 9.10am.
- Children arriving late for school must report to the school office
- Children are always supervised in their classrooms
- Children are supervised leaving and entering the school at break times and at home time.
- Children who are collected early must be collected at the school office
- Children are supervised on the yards during break times
- Classes are allocated specific yard spaces for play time
- Children are always accompanied by staff on outdoor learning activities
- A minimum of two staff members always accompany children walking to the church, the local playground or the community centre.
- School tours and school outings are always supervised by adequate numbers of staff.
- Children take turns using the toilets in the classrooms
- All staff are responsible for monitoring behaviour during supervision duty, incidents of bullying behaviour are promptly reported to the class teacher
- The pupil friendly Bí Cineálta anti bullying poster will be displayed at the entrance to the school, in all classrooms and will be communicated to all pupils on a regular basis. .

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. Identify if bullying behaviour has occurred

- When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the teacher should consider the following: what, where, when and why?
 - First meet each student individually
 - Thereafter all students should be met as a group, each student should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure everyone in the group is clear about what happened.
 - Older students may be asked to write down their account of the incident.
 - Each student should be supported as appropriate following the group meeting
 - Next the teacher will consider the definition of bullying to determine if bullying has occurred:
 - 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 these questions is YES , then the behaviour is bullying behaviour and the behaviour should be addressed by the Bí Cineálta procedures

2. Where bullying behaviour has occurred

- Listen to the views of the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- Record this conversation using the template in the appendix 2
- Report the bullying incident to the parents and consult with them regarding the actions to be taken to address the behaviour as outlined in the School's Bí Cineálta policy.
- The record should include the views of students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour
- Identify the supports needed for the student who is displaying bullying behaviour.

3. Requests to take no action

- A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask the member of staff to take no action other than look out for them. It is important that the staff member shows empathy to the student and speaks to the student to organise what steps can be taken to address the matter and how their parents will be informed of the matter.
It is important that the student who experiences bullying feels safe.
- Parents may also request that the school takes no action, parents should put this request in writing to the school. However while acknowledging

parent's requests, schools may decide, based on circumstances, it is appropriate to address bullying behaviour.

4. **Determining if bullying behaviour has ceased**

- The teacher will meet the students involved and their parents no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement.
- The review should address
 - the **nature of the bullying behaviour**,
 - the **effectiveness of the strategies used** to address the bullying behaviour
 - the **relationship between the students** involved.
- If bullying has ceased, continue to monitor those involved.
- If bullying has not ceased, review strategies, seek external support, if appropriate, and review within the agreed timeframe.

5. **Recording bullying behaviour.**

All incidents of bullying should be recorded. The following details should be included on the record.

- date of initial engagement,
- form (section 2.5 Bi Cineálta procedures)
- type (section 2.7 Bi Cineálta procedures)
- where and when
- the views of students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour
- At the review, record the date the bullying behaviour ceased and the views of parents and students in relation to this.
- If bullying has not ceased, review strategies, seek external support, if appropriate, and review within the agreed timeframe.
- any engagement with external services and supports
- Retain all records in line with school policy (e.g. on Aladdin) and data protection regulations
- Where a student support file exists for a student, a copy of the record will be added to the SSF

6. **Complaints process**

- If a parent is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with these procedures, they should be referred to the school complaints procedure.
- In the event that a student and/or parent is dissatisfied following the complaints procedure, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for children.
- INTO complaints procedure

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):

- NEPS can support schools with issues around bullying through the direct or indirect casework service
- Oide provides continuing professional development to support the implementation of these procedures.
- Webwise promotes safer, better internet use through education initiatives. Webwise develops and disseminates resources that help teachers integrate digital citizenship and online safety into teaching and learning in school.
- National Parents Council delivers online and in personal courses to support parents to prevent and address bullying behaviour
- DCU anti-bullying centre provides anti bullying information and support.
- Tusla should be contacted if the school consider that bullying behaviour is a child protection concern.
- The school will organise the local community guard to visit the children to talk about online safety.

Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools

5 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: Marie In
(Chairperson of board of management)

Date: 3/7/25

Signed: Brian Doyle
(Principal)

Date: 3/7/25

Appendix 1 Types of bullying behaviour

2.7 There are many different types of bullying behaviour. These can include the following which is not an exhaustive list:

- disablist bullying behaviour: behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of a perceived or actual disability or additional need
- exceptionally able bullying: behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their high academic ability or outstanding talents
- gender identity bullying: behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual gender identity
- homophobic/transphobic (LGBTQ+) bullying: behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual membership of the LGBTQ+ community
- physical appearance bullying: behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their physical appearance. Students who “look different” can be mocked or criticised about the shape, size or appearance of their body
- racist bullying: behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their race or ethnic origin which includes membership of the Traveller or Roma community. Racism is defined in the National Action Plan Against Racism¹³ as “a form of domination which manifests through those power dynamics present in structural and institutional arrangements, practices, policies and cultural norms, which have the effect of excluding or discriminating against individuals or groups, based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin”
- poverty bullying: behaviour and language that intends to humiliate a student because of a lack of resources
- religious identity bullying: behaviour and language that intends to harm a student because of their religion or religious identity
- sexist bullying: behaviour and language that intends to harm a student based on their sex, perpetuating stereotypes that a student or a group of students are inferior because of their sex
- sexual harassment: any form of unwanted verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a

Appendix 2: Reporting Template

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name Class Date

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

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3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))

Pupil concerned	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))

Playground	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corridor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toilets	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Bus	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

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6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es))

Physical Aggression	Isolation/Exclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Damage to Property	Relational	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name Calling	Cyber-bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Written remarks	Malicious Gossip	<input type="checkbox"/>
Extortion	Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Disability /SEN related	Homophobic / transphobic	Physical appearance	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Sexist	religious	Other (specify)

8. Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

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Appendix 3: Sociogram Questionnaire A

Name:	Class:	Date:
Do you want to talk to someone about bullying?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Do you know someone who is having a hard time?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Any other comments?		

A copy of all completed questionnaires will be given to the Principal.

Appendix 4: Sociogram Questionnaire B

Name	Class	Date
Is there anyone in class having a hard time or being picked on?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Is anyone being left out, being unfairly treated or ignored?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Is anyone spreading rumours, gossip, using notes, phone calls, text messages or emails to make others feel bad about themselves?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, tell me more please.		
Have you been bullying anyone?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Who are your friends?		
Are you being bullied in any way?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, tell me more please.		
Is there a group of pupils making life difficult for others?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, tell me more please.		
Are pupils from other classes giving anyone in this class a hard time?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, tell me more please.		

A copy of all completed questionnaires will be given to the Principal

Appendix 5: Review of the Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual (calendar) review of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and its implementation in consultation with the school community. As part of the review, this document must be completed.

Bí Cineálta Policy Review

1. When did the Board formally adopt its Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour in accordance with the *Bí Cineálta Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*? Insert date when the Bí Cineálta policy was last adopted by the school.

____/____/20____

2. Where in the school is the student-friendly Bí Cineálta policy displayed?

3. What date did the Board publish the Bí Cineálta policy and the student-friendly policy on the school website? ____/____/20____

4. How has the student-friendly policy been communicated to students?

5. How has the Bí Cineálta policy and student-friendly policy been communicated to parents

6. Have all school staff been made aware of the, school's Bí Cineálta policy and the *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post- Primary Schools*? Yes No

7. Does the Bí Cineálta policy document the strategies that the school uses to prevent bullying behaviour? Yes No

8. Has the Board received and minuted the Bullying Behaviour Update presented by the principal at every ordinary board meeting Yes No

over the last calendar year?

9. Has the Board discussed how the school is addressing all reports of bullying behaviour? Yes No

10. Is the Board satisfied that all incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed in accordance with the school's Bí Cineálta Policy? Yes No

11. Have the prevention strategies in the Bí Cineálta policy been implemented? Yes No

12. Has the Board discussed the effectiveness of the strategies used to prevent bullying behaviour? Yes No

13. How have (a) parents, (b) students and (c) school staff been consulted with as part of the review of the Bí Cineálta Policy?

14. Outline any aspects of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and/or its implementation that have been identified as requiring further improvement as part of this review:

15. Where areas for improvement have been identified, outline how these will be addressed and whether an action plan with timeframes has been developed?

16. Does the student-friendly policy need to be updated as a result of this review and if so why?

17. Does the school refer parents to the complaints procedures if they have a complaint about how the school has addressed bullying behaviour? Yes No

18. Has a parent informed the school that a student has left the school due to reported bullying behaviour? Yes No

19. Has the Office of the Ombudsman for Children initiated or completed an investigation into how the school has addressed an incident of bullying behaviour? Yes No