

Scoil Asicus Naofa,

Strandhill,

Co Sligo.

Roll No. 15004P



office@strandhillnationalschool.ie

Phone: 071- 9168154

www.strandhillnationalschool.ie

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of 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.

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.

Our school has developed and implemented 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	28 th Nov 2024	Whole Staff Inservice (1/2 day)
Students	June 2024	Online Anti-Bullying Policy Consultation:
Parents	June 2024	Online Anti-Bullying Policy Consultation:
Board of Management	23 rd Sept 2025	Minuted item on BoM Meeting
Wider School Community as appropriate	26 th Sept 2025	Policy published on school website for comment.

Date policy was approved	23 rd Sept 2025
Date policy was reviewed	First BoM meeting school year 2026-2027

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):

Culture & Environment:

As per our schools' Mission Statement, we will promote a positive and inclusive school culture and an environment where everyone feels safe, supported and stimulated.

We do this through assembly at the start of each new school year with a focus at bullying prevention, a dedicated notice board in the front foyer of the school, mentioning it in school newsletters and undertaking student surveys.

Telling: Encouraging a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the role of bystanders / upstanders. This confidence factor is of vital importance, and it should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying, they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.

Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:

- Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
- Hand up note with homework.
- Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
- Anti-bully box
- Administer a confidential questionnaire to all pupils.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Reassure children that they need not fear if they tell someone about bullying.

Trusted Adults: Make children aware who are the trusted adults they should speak to about bullying – their class teacher, deputy principal, principal, Special Needs Assistant or secretary.

Physical Spaces in Schools: We will ensure that staff supervising will have a clear line of sight of children and be visible to the children so as to prevent bullying behaviour. Hidden areas on either side of the school are to be marked off with cones and children not allowed to go into them.

There are artwork and signage around the school raising awareness of bullying and promoting our vision of safety, nurturing and learning.

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

Students will have regular opportunities to work in small groups with their peers to help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy among students.

We acknowledge children's effort and success to develop their sense of self-worth through both curricular and extra-curricular programmes.

We full implement the *Social Personal and Health Education* and *Relationships and Sexuality Education* curricula to foster children's well-being, self-confidence and sense of belonging and to develop children's sense of personal responsibility for their own behaviour and actions.

We address online safety through lessons from Webwise taught to 2nd and 4th classes and from *My Selfie* the Webwise Primary Anti-Cyber Bullying Resource with 5th and 6th classes.

We ensure school-wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence-based programmes, e.g. *Stay Safe Programme*, *Weaving Wellbeing* and *The Walk Tall Programme*

We specifically consider the additional needs of pupils with SEN in how we implement programmes and consider the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to participate appropriately.

Policy and Planning

The wellbeing of the school community is at the heart of school policies and plans. This policy and the child-friendly Bí Cineálta policy aim to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

Other policies such as our Internet Acceptable Use policy, SET policy and Code of Behaviour can support the implementation of this policy.

With respect to cyber-bullying or bullying outside of school, 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, we will support the students involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, we will deal with it in accordance with our Bí Cineálta policy.

Availing of whole-staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff have an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts pupils' lives and the need to respond to it through prevention and intervention.

Relationships and Partnerships

Interpersonal connections which are an effective prevention measure are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as our Student Council, school teams and the Parents Association.

We aim to strengthen relationships and partnerships by supporting the active participation of students in school life.

The school community aims to prevent cyberbullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying, racist bullying, sexist bullying and sexual harassment as outlined in sections 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8 and 5.9 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

Among the strategies used are:

- implementing the SPHE curriculum
- having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- developing and communicating an acceptable use policy for technology.
- challenging gender stereotypes
- encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour
- fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students “see themselves” in their school environment
- having the cultural diversity of the school visible and on display
- encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour
- ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex
- ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex
- celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contributions of all students

November 2023 – Presentation to children and evening talk to parents on cyber safety and cyber-bullying by Jeremy Pagden of Lurtel.

Supervision

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):

We supervise children (one teacher and one SNA) from 8.45am to 8.55am as they assemble outside (inside on wet days) in the mornings.

We have appropriate levels of supervision at break times – outside or inside – to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

We use a playground incident book to log any accidents but also any serious incidents of misbehaviour which allow us track bullying behaviour.

We operate a system of Lunchtime Buddies for Junior Classes to help and support pupils, and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.

We are conscious of adequately supervising and monitoring classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers.

Our 2024 survey of children and parents has highlighted the playground as a hot-spot for bullying with 81% of respondents saying it was most likely to occur there.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour is (are) as follows: Class teachers of the relevant children with support from school management as required.

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

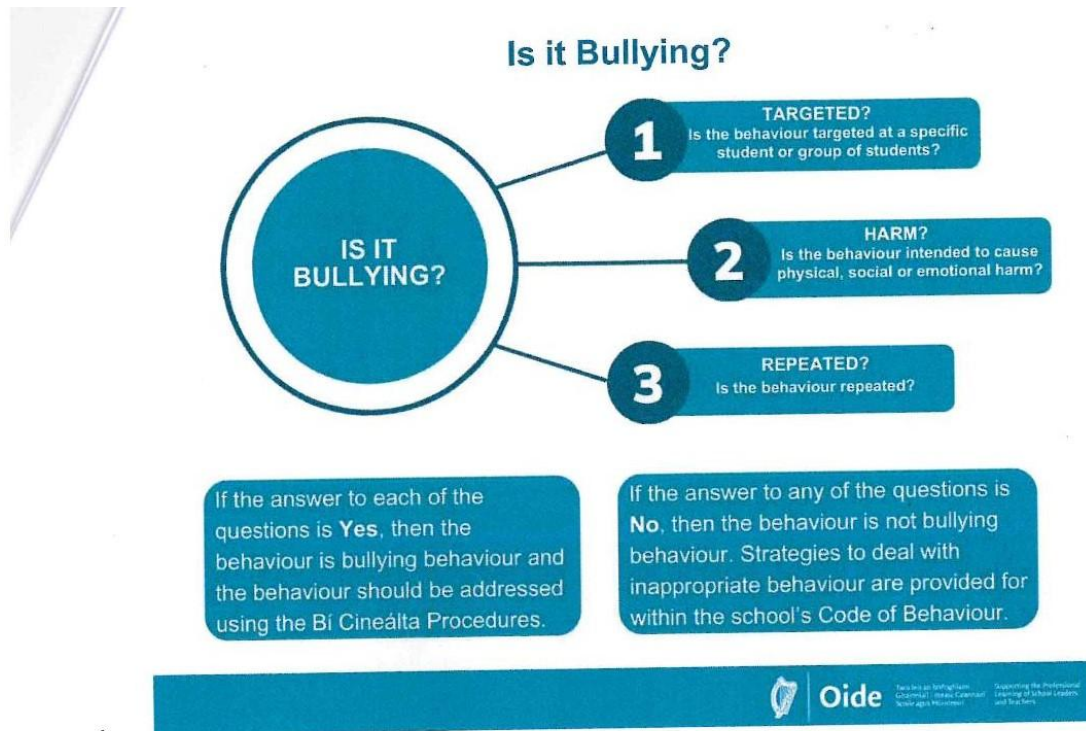
- > ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour is heard and reassured
- > seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- > conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- > consider the age and ability of those involved
- > listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying 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):

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour we consider the following questions:

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?

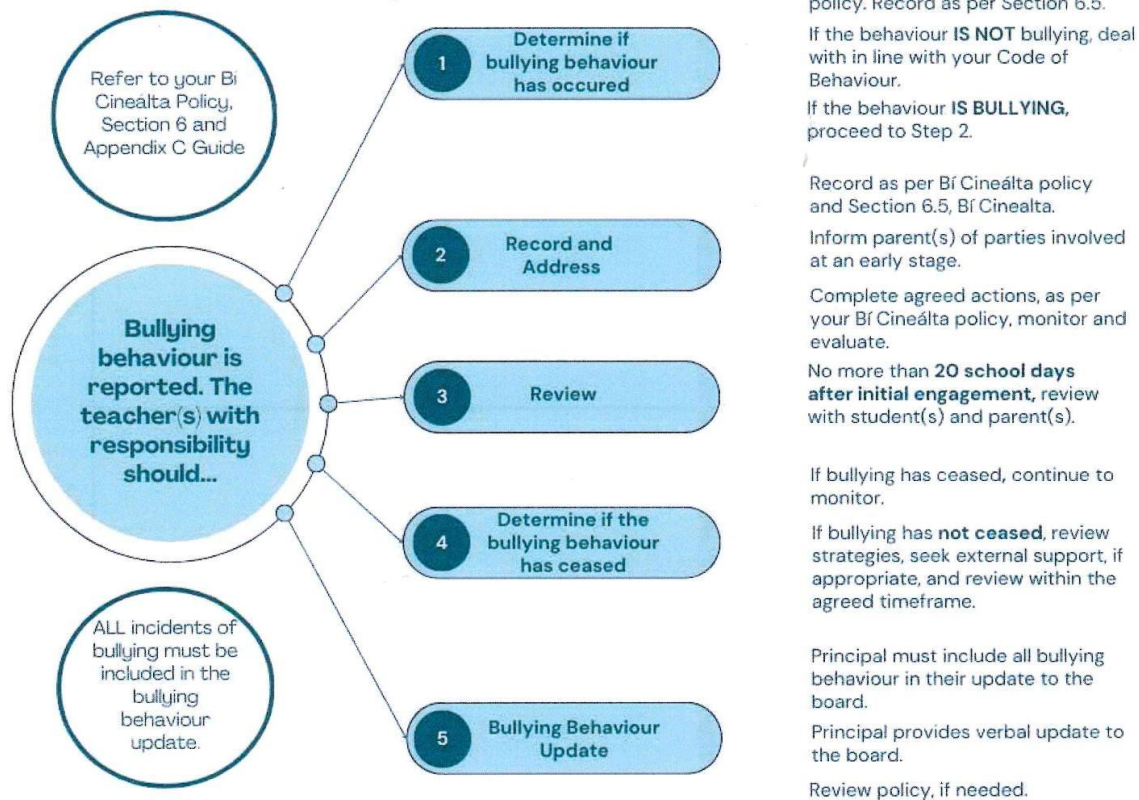
If the answer to each of the questions above is **Yes**, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour and the behaviour should be addressed using the Bí Cineálta Procedures



If the answer to any of these questions is No, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Positive 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.

Bí Cineálta: Addressing Bullying Behaviour



When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred teachers should consider what, where, when and why?

- ✓ Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff, or parents;
- ✓ Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- ✓ 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 be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident(s)

Teachers should use the template 'Anti-Bullying Procedure Stage 1' to record these conversations in an objective and factual manner and the evidence for their decision that Bullying Behaviour was / was not taking place.

Where Bullying Behaviour Has Occurred

- ✓ 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 must be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to explain to them the actions to be taken to address the behaviour
- ✓ the school is obliged to fully investigate any alleged incidents of bullying which are reported by parents.
- ✓ 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
- ✓ a record should be kept of the engagement with all involved including the initial. It is imperative that recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.
- ✓ this record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known (see Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the Bi Cineálta procedures), where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students involved and their parents
- ✓ the record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour
- ✓ Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she 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;

Follow-Up 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, whether the bullying behaviour has stopped, the relationship between the students involved and feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal.
- ✓ 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 timeframe 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 the school consideration should be given to using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Positive Behaviour. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, 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 Schools* they should be referred to the school's complaints procedures

✓ if a parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, 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

In cases where the school has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil, advice from the National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS) will be sought. The school will refer serious incidents, where the behaviour is regarded as abusive, to the HSE Children & Family Services and/or Gardai as deemed appropriate. This may be done through the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) – which is the school Principal.

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

- **Pupils who have been Bullied:**

✓ Committing to ending the bullying behaviour

✓ Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolutions of bullying situations.

✓ Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school)

✓ Improving the school culture to foster greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils.

- **Pupils who have engaged in Bullying Behaviour:**

✓ Making it clear that bullying behaviour will not be tolerated

✓ Making it clear that pupils who have previously engaged in bullying behaviour but have reformed are not blamed and will get a "clean sheet".

✓ Providing support to those who need to learn other ways of meeting their needs besides violating the rights of others.

✓ Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school)

- **Overall**

✓ Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth. In dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on challenging and correcting the behaviour while supporting the child.

✓ In dealing with bullying behaviour, seeking resolution, and offering a fresh start in return for a commitment to reform.

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: 
(Chairperson of board of management)

Date: 23rd Sept 2025

Signed: 
(Principal)

Date: 23rd Sept 2025