Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Ballygarvan National School 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 such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the 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 each person 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 all have an indispensable part to play in the school community, regardless of difference

Definition of bullying

Bullying is defined in *Bí Cineálta: 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	11th May 2026	Survey & Discussion
Students	18th May 2026	Wellbeing Committee & Student Council Survey
Parents	11th – 18th May 2026	Online Survey via Forms
Board of Management	25th May 2026	Meetings
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	June and September 2026	Informed by Principal and given link to policy online.
Date policy was approved: 25/05/2026		
Date policy was last reviewed: 25/05/2025		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by our 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.
In developing 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 the school in a real way. This school takes positive steps to ensure that the culture of the 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 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, this school will listen to young people and parents, to help establish their particular context and needs. Frequent periods of reflection and 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.

Culture and Environment
We strive to create an inclusive school environment where diversity and difference are celebrated. We do this by:

- The motto "Be Safe, Be Kind, Be Helpful" will be explicitly taught throughout the school
- Giving students a voice in committees
- Age-appropriate class rules displayed on walls
- Promoting the concept of a trusted adult e.g. from the Stay Safe programme
- Encouraging pupils to disclose and discuss instances of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment
- Pupil of the week/ Principal Awards
- Encourage a sense of belonging with ownership over their space through art and displays
- Not allowing the use of personal digital devices in class
- Promoting positive parent communication and respecting and encouraging parental involvement in school
- Behaviour rules and expectations agreed throughout the school and a common language used to promote positive behaviour i.e. "Be safe, be Kind, be Helpful"
- A "What would you like me to know today?" box in classrooms and/or common areas
- Supporting a Student Council
- Supporting a Wellbeing Committee
- Displaying signs that promote kindness, empathy, inclusion and gentle hands around the school.
- Designating quiet corners on yard
- Introducing Yard star cards for younger classes
- Promoting Empathy/Kindness Week
- Identifying and promoting a Value of the Month in line with Wellbeing Policy
- Ensuring library materials represent diversity and inclusion
- Communication book for each yard including positive observations by yard supervisor
- Inclusive integration of all pupils where appropriate.

Curriculum
We strive to provide teaching and promote learning which is collaborative and respectful, fostering inclusion and diversity throughout the curriculum. We do this by employing some of the following resources:

- Anti-Bullying Programme
- Social, personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E)
- Relationships and Sexuality Education (R.S.E.)
- Stay Safe
- Friends for Life
- Religious Curriculum
- Roots of Empathy Programme

- Zones of Regulation
- Social Stories
- Webwise – online safety programme
- Outside agencies (Community Guard, Cyber Safety)
- Drama - Role play/ acting out scenarios
- Circle time
- Meditation
- P.E. e.g. Co-operative Games
- Movement breaks in and out of class
- Morning meetings

Relationships and Partnerships
Interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures that give staff, parents and pupils agency and a voice. This is done through:

- Student Council
- Parents Association
- Well-Being Committee
- Morning meetings
- Peer/Team teaching in S.E.T.
- Workshops and seminars for students, staff and parents to raise awareness of impact or bullying and online behaviour
- Giving pupils regular Class Surveys
- Respectful interactions
- Critical thinking skills
- Supporting active participation in a wide range of activities that build empathy, respect and resilience.
- Thinking time/talking time
- Promoting peer collaboration and support
- Positive parent communication
- Encouraging a self-compassionate outlook
- Engaging parents and students in actively contributing to the formation of a child friendly anti-bullying policy.

Policy and Planning

The aims of Ballygarvan N.S. Bí Cineálta policy are:

- To raise awareness of Bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with pupils, teachers, parents, guardians and school management.
- To promote a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour
- To ensure appropriate supervision and monitoring measures, by staff, during all school activities.
- To develop procedures for noting, investigating, supporting and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour for all parties.

The following are policies which support this:

- Student friendly Bi Cinealta Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding statement
- Acceptable Use Policy for digital devices
- Supervision Policy/ Rota
- School Self-Evaluation (Ongoing)
- Relationships Sexuality Education Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Communication Policy
- Special Education Needs Policy

Effective leadership is a key component, with the Principal, Deputy Principal and all the management team focused on the implementation and support of this policy. All staff members will implement the policy and model positive behaviour for the pupils and parents.

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour

All staff members are trained to recognize and respond to Bullying behaviour. During the school day staff members will be present and visible within the school building and while moving around the school environment.

- 10 minutes Morning and afternoon supervision before and after school hours provided by In School Management team (ISM)
- Monthly Supervision Rota for Teachers and SNAs for yard and wet days.
- Individual class “Wet Day Expectations” will be clearly displayed on the door of each classroom for supervising teachers aligning with the rules already agreed.
- Teachers and SNAS monitor ingress and egress to the school at the beginning and end of the school day.
- Visitors are issued with a lanyard or sticker at reception, and are escorted around the school building.
- A visitor’s log is maintained by the school office.
- Supervising teacher has an Observation book to monitor and communicate positive and negative behaviour on yard
- Class Teachers will remain with the class when there are any external trainers/teachers working with the group.
- Staff check observation yardbook for patterns of behaviour regularly.
- Anti-Bullying surveys are completed termly.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

It is the responsibility of the Class Teacher to investigate any reported behaviours which may fall under either the Code of Behaviour or the Bí Cineálta Policy

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

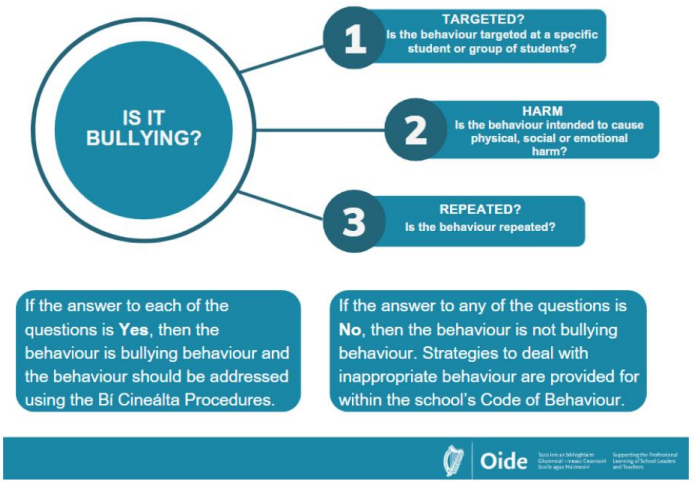
- ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour is heard and reassured
- seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- consider the age and ability of those involved
- listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- take action in a timely manner
- inform parents of those involved

The school prioritises the safety and wellbeing of all pupils. If bullying behaviour has occurred the teacher will support the pupil who has been bullied and reassure them that this behaviour will be addressed.

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:

The school's procedures for investigation, follow up, and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of Bullying behaviour are as follows:

1. The class teacher investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour to establish that it has occurred using an Online Decision-Making Flow Chart developed in the school.
2. The Class teacher will establish whether the reported behavior is in fact bullying using the flowchart mentioned. The flowchart is based on the graphic below.



3. This is done by
   Speaking to all parties
   Or/and
   Monitoring Observation book

Or/and

Reviewing results of regular Class surveys or giving a Class Survey.

In circumstances where it has been established that it is not bullying behaviour, then the incident can be dealt with under the Code of Behaviour

The school also takes into account the concept of “Intention to cause harm”, as it relates to younger children and children with special educational needs.

4. If established that Bullying Behaviour has occurred, the pupil(s) involved will be asked to write an apology letter and undertake an agreement that they will not engage in this behaviour again.

   This is recorded by the teacher

   In the case of pupils with Student Support File, this should be updated to reflect incident.

   Parents of all parties involved are contacted to alert them of the situation, via phone. This is undertaken as soon as possible after the incident has been investigated.

   Parents will be assured that the school will endeavour to support the child or children who are engaging in bullying behaviour, to understand how their behaviour has impacted on others and how they might behave differently in future. Parents will be encouraged to reinforce and support the actions being taken by the school at home.

   It may be necessary to put sanctions in place, in line with the Code of Behaviour, and/or an Individual Behaviour Plan.

5. The situation will be closely monitored by relevant staff members and reviewed no more than 20 school days after a plan has been put in place. Parents will be updated.
6. If the negative behaviour does not cease during this 20-day period, the Class Teacher and Principal will invite parents to an in-person meeting to discuss strategies for an improvement of behaviour. A clear timeframe will be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased. Any relevant sanctions will be introduced and communicated to the parents under the Code of Behaviour. All actions will be recorded.
7. If the parent/guardian is not satisfied with how the Bullying Behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with the Bí Cineálta procedures, they should be referred to the school’s complaint procedure.
8. In the event that the parent is not satisfied with the school’s complaint procedure, the school must advise the parents of their rights to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

If a child makes a report of Bullying but asks that nothing be done about it, the relevant teacher will support the child appropriately, to explore how it will be handled and to advise them that their parents will be informed. This will be recorded.

If an adult makes a report of Bullying but asks no action be taken, this request must be submitted in writing and saved by the school.

However, if the school deems it necessary, the incident may be investigated further.

All incidents will be dealt with in a sensitive and fair manner.

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 and p.9 of the School Policy):
The schools programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves a whole-school approach. Given the complexity of Bullying Behaviour, no one intervention/support programme works in all situations. Age and attainment level of the pupil should be taken into consideration. Where needed students involved may get one to one support from an SNA or special education teacher. Many of the Prevention Programmes mentioned in earlier in this policy will be relevant and employed here too. Any intervention undertaken should align with the positive school culture of inclusion, diversity and respect. The approach will encompass, apologies, restitution and a focus on repairing relationships, if at all possible.

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

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: 25/05/2026

Willie O'Callaghan

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: _____ Date: 25/05/2026

Nan Wyndham

(Principal)