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Kilcummin N.S. Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Kilcummin 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. The Irish government ratified the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child in September 1992. In doing so, we committed to promote, protect and fulfil the rights of children. Bullying is a children's rights issue. Bullying interferes with the following rights of the child:

- The right to freedom of expression (Article 13)
- The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 14)
- The right to freedom of association and freedom of peaceful assembly (Article 15)
- The right to privacy (Article 16)
- The right to be protected from all forms of abuse and neglect (Article 19)
- The right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health (Article 24)
- The right to education (Article 28)
- The right to enjoy their own culture, religion or language (Article 30)
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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.

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.

As a Catholic school, we are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual. No human person is to be diminished or devalued, and all have an indispensable part to play in the school community, regardless of difference.

As a school, we have developed and implemented a Bí Cineálta policy that sets out how the school community prevents and addresses bullying behavior. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behavior that is not bullying behavior are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

Definition of bullying

- Bullying is **targeted** behaviour, online or offline that causes harm.
- The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature and can have lasting effects on the child experiencing the behaviour.
- Bullying behaviour is **repeated** over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society.
 - It is behaviour which is **deliberate** in nature and is unwanted. It is not accidental or reckless behaviour.

The harm can be:

- Physical (eg: personal injury, damage to or loss of property)
- Social: (eg: withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion)
- Emotional: (eg: low self-esteem, depression, anxiety)

- A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards a student is not bullying behaviour. However, a single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be visible to a wide audience and has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and so becomes a repeated behaviour.

Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour:

- If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour, but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying, but, importantly, must be addressed under the school's code of behaviour.
- Some students with special educational needs, may have social communication difficulties which may make them communicate their needs through behaviours that can hurt themselves or others. It is important to note that these behaviours are not deliberate or planned, but in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they cannot control.

- Disagreement between students is not considered bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Types of Bullying:

There are many different types of bullying behaviour. These can include directing bullying at someone focused on the following: disability, exceptional ability, gender identity, LGBTQ+ , physical appearance, racism, poverty status, religious identity, sexism and sexual harassment. This is not an exhaustive list. Bullying can be:

Direct:

- Physical: pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping students. Physical assault. Destruction of personal property.
- Verbal: continual name calling which insults, humiliates the student – this may refer to physical appearance, clothes, gender, accent, academic ability, race or ethnic origin.
- Written: Writing insulting remarks in public places, passing notes or drawings about the student.
- Extortion: where something is obtained through force or threats

Indirect:

- Exclusion: where a student is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded or ignored by a student or group of students.
- Relational: Where a student's attempts to form friendships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined, threats, non-verbal gesturing, malicious gossip, spreading rumours, silent treatment and manipulation of friend groups etc. can all form relational bullying for a student.

Online bullying behaviour

Cyber bullying is carried out via text, direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, email, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chatrooms and other online technologies.

This can include:

- Sending or sharing of insulting and offensive or intimidating messages or images via online means as mentioned above.
- Posting information which is personal, private or sensitive without consent.
- Making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other students.
- Exclude/disrupt access to a student on purpose on online chat groups/access to accounts/from an online game.

Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour:

- If repeated harm is experienced by a student, however it is deemed as 'unintended' by the other student- this is not bullying, but, importantly, it must be addressed under the school 's code of behaviour.
- Disagreement between students is not considered bullying **unless** it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.
- A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards a student is not bullying behaviour.

However, a single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour

as it may be visible to a wide audience and has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and so becomes a repeated behaviour.

- Some students with special educational needs, may have social communication difficulties which may make them communicate their needs through behaviours that can hurt themselves or others. It is important to note that these behaviours are not deliberate or planned, but in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they cannot control.

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 Sta	9 th April 2025	Half Day Closure. April 2025 • Staff Meetings: During a half day closure all staff attended a Bí Cineálta presentation where they were provided with the opportunity to examine and discuss the new Bí Cineálta anti-bullying procedures. • Staff members explored best practices in promoting a culture of kindness and respect.
Students	21 st May 2025	21 st May 2025: Student Council Meeting: Student Council Meeting: The Student Council was consulted to gather pupil voice on bullying and promoting kindness within the school. Their feedback helped to establish a pupil-friendly Bí Cineálta document.
Parents	May 2025	Circulated to all parent body and staff.
Board of Management	11 th June 2025	Board of Management Meeting: The Board of Management was consulted on the development of the Anti-Bullying Policy in line with the Bí Cineálta guidelines. Their input ensured the policy reflected the school's ethos and complies with statutory requirements.
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	May 2025	Circulated to all parent body and staff
Date policy was approved:		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

In addition to our strategies to address general bullying behaviours, these prevention strategies include strategies 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 developing preventative strategies which Kilcummin N.S. 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 in dialogue with parents, and thereby build a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, trust and confidence.

In continuing to develop prevention strategies, this school will take as much time as is practicable listening to young persons and parents, to help establish their particular context and needs. Frequent periods of reflection and further engagement, by the school, young persons and parents, will be used to discern appropriate supports for young people in this school and will help inform future prevention strategies.

Culture and Environment:

- Positive and inclusive school culture and environment- signage/displays
- Promotion of positive peer relationships- peer mentoring, buddy systems, playground leaders.
- Positive relationships between staff and pupils
- Open communication
- Effective leadership and consistent staff approach
- Promotion of a telling environment
- Enable each child to identify a trusted adult
- Safe physical spaces
- Effective and consistent Supervision
- Celebration of Diversity and Inclusion- Intercultural Week, Mad Hair Day (Autism Awareness) and Odd Socks Day (World Down Syndrome Day).
- Visits from the Community Garda

Curriculum

- Collaborative and Respectful Teaching
- Teaching and learning in SPHE- Mindful Matters
- RSE Curriculum
- Stay Safe Programme
- Promotion of Diversity and Inclusion
- Student participation
- Extra - curricular activities to develop positive self - worth
- Group work/ Collaboration
- Drama- Role - play, acting out scenarios
- Implementation of Programmes to promote empathy, social skills, wellbeing and emotional regulation: Weaving Wellbeing, Friends for Life, Zippy's Friends
- Implementation of Anti-bullying programmes

Policy and Planning:

- Bí Cineálta policy
- Student friendly Bí Cineálta policy
- Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- SPHE Policy
- RSE Policy
- Supervision
- SSE Wellbeing in education
- Staff Meetings and PL (Professional Learning)
- Tracking of Behaviour by Teachers/SNAs
- Log of Actions
- Student Council
- School Newsletter
- Workshops on Internet Safety and Cyberbullying

Relationships and partnerships:

- Positive student & staff relationships
- Positive peer relationships
- Partnership with parents, the wider community and other schools
- Partnerships with local community groups
- Partnership with Local Community Garda Unit- school visits.
- Bullying awareness initiatives-Friends for Life, Stay Safe
- Student and parent voice and participation
- Critical thinking Skills
- Promotion of peer support
- Support of collaborative activities that build empathy, respect and resilience

Strategies to prevent Bullying Behaviour

- **Staff:** Kilcummin N.S. staff collaborates with the wider school community to develop and review bullying prevention strategies (Outside agencies: NEPS, TUSLA and the Tralee Education Centre).
- **Cyberbullying Prevention:** The school endeavours to foster digital citizenship amongst students- through specific SPHE lessons, extra-curricular initiatives and Internet Safety Talks with external facilitators, eg. An Garda Síochána. The school implements an Internet Acceptable Use policy and teaches Online Safety to educate students and parents about responsible online behaviour.
- **Homophobic/Transphobic Bullying:** Strategies include promoting inclusive environments, peer support, and raising awareness about the impact of homophobic behaviour.
- **Racist Bullying:** The school will focus on celebrating cultural diversity, encouraging peer support, and they will provide resources for staff to support students from diverse backgrounds, including those with English as an additional language. Kilcummin N.S. celebrates Global Citizenship (Green Schools) annually and also promotes the 'Show Racism the Red Card' initiative.
- **Sexist Bullying:** The school will promote gender equality through staff role models, equal opportunities for all students, and awareness campaigns.
- **Sexual Harassment:** A zero-tolerance policy is enforced through SPHE lessons, positive role models, and challenging gender stereotypes.

- The school has the following supervision and monitoring practices in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour:
- 2 teachers and the appropriate SNAs at each class level supervise the yards during break times.
- Students are always accompanied by staff on school trips.
- Clear guidance is given on safe play areas and restricted zones.

Teachers consider recent conflicts when forming groups to support positive peer relationships.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Class Teachers, SET teachers, Principal, Deputy Principal, Designated Liaison Person, Deputy Designated Liaison Person

Non-teaching staff members, such as secretary, SNAs, caretaker and cleaner are encouraged to report any incidences of bullying behavior witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the child's Class Teacher.

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):

1. Identifying and Assessing the Behaviour

- Staff will investigate all reports of bullying by considering **what happened, where, when, and why**.
- If multiple students are involved, each child will be spoken to **individually first**, followed by a **group meeting**, where appropriate. The children will be asked to give an account of the incident.
- Students may be asked to give a written account, to ensure clarity.
- Staff will use the **definition of bullying** outlined in the school's Bí Cineálta policy and they will refer to guiding questions to determine if bullying has occurred.
- The following three questions should be considered to determine if bullying has occurred.
 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 all three questions is 'yes' then the behaviour meets the definition of bullying and it will be addressed following the school's **Bí Cineálta Policy**.
- If the answer to any of these questions is 'no' then the behaviour does not meet the definition of bullying. Incidents can occur where behaviour is unacceptable and hurtful, but the behaviour is not deemed as bullying behaviour. These incidents should be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

2. Taking Prompt and Supportive Action

- Action is taken **without delay** to make the student experiencing bullying feel **heard, supported, and safe**.
- Staff will approach the situation with **sensitivity, fairness, and consistency**, considering the **age and ability** of all involved.
- The **privacy** of those involved is respected throughout the process.
- Both the student experiencing bullying and the student displaying the behaviour will be **supported** to manage their emotions and relational difficulties.

3. Involving Parents and Guardians

- The **parents/guardians of all parties** are contacted at an early stage and involved in discussions about how the behaviour will be addressed.
- Where a student expresses fear or concern about informing their parents, staff will create a **support plan** and agree on how and when parents will be contacted.
- Staff will be mindful of any **barriers to communication**, such as literacy or language needs.

4. Agreeing on and Implementing Interventions

- The views of the student who experienced bullying are central in planning the next steps.
- A tailored plan of action is created with input from **students, parents, and staff**.
- Interventions may include **restorative practices or mediation**.
- Any incidents of Bullying-which occurs while the children are under the care or responsibility of the school, will be dealt with appropriately and without delay.
- 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.

5. Reviewing and Monitoring Progress

- Within **20 school days**, the staff member will re-engage with the students and parents to review the situation.
- Progress is evaluated based on:
 - Whether the bullying behaviour has stopped,
 - The effectiveness of the actions taken,
 - The current relationship between students involved.
- **Ongoing Support:** Even if bullying has stopped, continued monitoring and support may be needed for both the student affected and the student who engaged in the behaviour, as it can take time for relationships to heal.
- If Bullying persists, the teacher should **reassess and adjust strategies** with input from the students and parents, agreeing to another review within a set timeframe.
- **Escalation:** If the student displaying the bullying behaviour continues, despite interventions, the school may need to apply the Code of Behaviour.

6. Recording and Documentation

- All incidents of bullying will be **formally recorded** on the Kilcummin N.S. Bullying Behaviour Record Form. The form will include:
 - The type and location of the behaviour,
 - Dates of engagement with students and parents,
 - Actions taken and follow-up outcomes.
- Records are stored in accordance with **data protection laws** and the school's **record-keeping policy**.
- If a **Student Support File** exists, the bullying record will be included and the **Support Plan/Log of Actions** will be updated as needed.

7. Handling Requests for No Action

- If a student asks that staff take no action and simply "keep an eye," staff will:
 - Show empathy,
 - Discuss options with the student,

- Work together to agree on appropriate steps while prioritising the student's **sense of safety and agency**.
- Parents may also request that no action be taken. This request must be **put in writing**, though the school may still decide to act based on the circumstances.

8. Complaints Process

- If a parent is not satisfied with how bullying has been addressed by the school, in accordance with these procedures, they should be referred to the school's **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.

9. Accessing Support Services

- The school may engage with the **National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)** for:
 - o Advice and support for students,
 - o Training in emotional/social skills and resilience,
 - o Development of relationship repair strategies.
- The school may engage with **Oide** for:
 - o Professional Learning for staff,
 - o Support in implementing wellbeing and anti-bullying initiatives,
 - o Promotion of reflective and inquiry-based practices.
- The school may engage with **Webwise** for:
 - o Resources on online safety and cyberbullying,
 - o Training for teachers, students, and parents on digital citizenship,
 - o Promotion of online wellbeing.
- The school may engage with the **National Parents Council (NPC)** for:
 - o Support in involving parents in bullying prevention,
 - o Delivery of online and in-person courses for parents,
 - o Strengthening school-parent partnerships.
- The school may engage with **anti-bullyingcampaign.ie**
 - o Participation in the anti-bullying programme,
 - o Access to resources for schools,
 - o Promotion of a positive school culture.
- The school may engage with **Tusla** for:
 - o Advice in cases of bullying linked to child protection concerns,
 - o Support for safeguarding and wellbeing,
 - o Direct engagement with schools when required.

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):

Support for Students Who Experience Bullying Behaviour:

- Listen and validate the student's experience.
- Provide reassurance and emotional support.
- Offer external counselling services/ SET Support to help rebuild confidence.
- Ensure the student feels safe and supported within the school.
- Address the bullying promptly and take action to resolve it.
- Involve parents in supporting the student's wellbeing.
- Encourage engagement in activities that build friendships and social skills.
- Promote a sense of belonging and empower the student to speak up.

Supporting Pupils Who Witness Bullying:

- Foster a 'telling environment'
- Encourage reporting and reassure witnesses of support.
- Promote empathy and understanding of the impact of bullying.
- Teach safe ways to intervene or seek help.
- Emphasize the role of witnesses in creating a positive school environment.
- Ensure witnesses feel confident and safe if standing up for peers.
- Offer support for distressed witnesses.
- Foster a culture of respect, encouraging witnesses to be active allies.

Support for Students Who Display Bullying Behaviour:

- Focus on understanding the reasons behind the behaviour.
- Offer guidance on alternative ways to meet emotional or social needs.
- Provide external counselling/ SET support to address underlying issues.
- Encourage positive behaviour and personal growth.
- Promote self-reflection and responsibility for actions.
- Reinforce that reforming behaviour leads to a fresh start, without blame.
- Create opportunities for building empathy and social skills.
- Involve parents in supporting behaviour change.

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: Shane O'Donoghue Date: June 11th 2025
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: Gillian Sheehan Date: June 11th 2025
(Principal)

Student Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy

Kilcummin N.S.

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour



We want everyone at our school to feel safe and happy.

If you think that you are being bullied or someone else is being bullied, you need to tell a teacher or another adult that you trust. They will know what to do to help.

Get help!

Tell someone!

- If a student tells a staff member that they think they are being bullied, we will:
- > talk with the student
 - > ask the student what they want to happen
 - > work out a plan together
 - > talk to their parents
 - > talk to the other student(s) involved
 - > talk with the other student's parents

Tell someone if you think that you are being bullied or someone else is being bullied.

Our school has a Bí Cineálta policy to try to stop bullying behaviour. We look at this policy every year to see what is working well or what could work better. We will ask you what you think.

When it happens at all. Not just once.

Bullying behaviour is when someone keeps being mean or hurtful to others on purpose over and over again.

