

# Oatlands Primary School



## Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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## Overview

The Board of Management of Oatlands Primary 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.

It is very important to note that this policy is fully aligned with the *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* and that it should be read in conjunction with the procedures. Schools are required to follow the procedures fully, as set out by the Department of Education.

## 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.

Harm can be:

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

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.

## Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour

- A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards another student is not bullying behaviour. However, 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.
- Disagreement between two students, or instances where students don't want to be friends or to remain friends, is not considered bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to

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cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others including deliberate manipulation of friendship groups.

- 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 their behaviours may not be deliberate or planned, but, in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they can't control.
- Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour, but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying but will be addressed under the school's Code of Behaviour.

## Bullying behaviour that occurs outside of school

As per the *Bí Cineálta* Procedures, 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 bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved.

Examples of prohibited bullying behaviours that can occur outside of school (non-exhaustive list):

- Bullying behaviour that occurs in the area immediately outside the school, the local shops and the wider local area.
  - Bullying behaviour that occurs on the journey to and from school.
  - Bullying behaviour that occurs in organised clubs and groups outside of school such as sports clubs.
- Online bullying (cyberbullying) behaviour, along with other types of bullying behaviour can cause significant harm and have a lasting impact on students who experience this behaviour. Access to technology means that online bullying behaviour can happen any time and that the student's home is no longer a safe place. The nature of these technologies means that digital content can be shared and seen by a very wide audience almost instantly and the content is almost impossible to delete permanently.

### **Requests to take no action**

A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than "look out" for them. The student may not want to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They may feel that telling someone might make things more difficult for them. Where this occurs, it is important that the member of staff shows empathy to the student, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the student to work out together what steps can be taken to address the matter and how their parents will be informed of the situation. It is important that the student who has experienced bullying behaviour feels safe.

Parents may also make schools aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action. Parents should put this request in writing to the school or be facilitated to do so where there are literacy, digital literacy or language barriers. However, while acknowledging the parent's request, schools have a right to act and may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying 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 provide input into the development of this policy.

**Date consulted    Method of consultation**

2 <sup>nd</sup> May 2025
May/June 2025
13 <sup>th</sup> June 2025
19 <sup>th</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup> June 2025
19 <sup>th</sup> – 23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2025
18 <sup>th</sup> June 2025
2 <sup>nd</sup> May 2025
June 2025
June 2025

School Staff **Stage 1:** Half-day closure for training and to gather staff input.

**Stage 2:** Staff Questionnaires completed and analysed.

**Stage 3:** Feedback sought on Draft Policy

Students **Stage 1:** Information on development of new policy shared at Assembly.

**Stage 2:** Student Well-being Committee established.

**Stage 3:** Questionnaires completed by 32 representatives from 3<sup>rd</sup><sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> class

Parents Link to Parent Questionnaire shared to all parents on Aladdin with invitation to contribute.

Board of Management	Information from training day shared with School Secretary.
Wider school community as appropriate	Newsletter
Meeting outlining new procedures Ratification of new policy	Website
Caretaker in attendance at staff training.	

Date policy was approved: 18<sup>th</sup> June 2025 Date policy was last

reviewed: N/A

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## Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by the school. **Culture and Environment**

- Oatlands Primary School is a Catholic school. Catholic education values respect and inclusiveness and seeks to enable pupils to act with integrity and justice.
- In line with our ERST values and our Catholic ethos, we seek to create a positive school culture where all
  - students feel safe, respected and valued.
- We promote diversity and inclusion in all aspects of school life.
- We promote a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and have a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.
- We promote a school wide awareness and understanding on all aspects of bullying and its impact. • We encourage a culture of 'telling', which includes emphasis on the importance of bystanders. Through
  - encouraging this culture of telling, pupils gain confidence in 'telling' which is of vital importance. It is made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying, they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly. This culture is reinforced by teachers through the SPHE programme.

### School Strategies:

- Whole school awareness on the prevention strategies aimed at preventing bullying behaviour. • Stay Safe and SPHE lessons focusing on positive behaviour form part of curricular content in all classes.

- Increased focus via student Wellbeing Committee, Wellbeing Week and Safer Internet Day. • A focus on positive behaviour and relevant strategies via school newsletters/ website/ meetings; occasional displays; guest speakers (e.g. Garda talk on cyberbullying and internet safety); Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for staff; discussions with children at Assembly time, in class and on an informal occasional basis. This list is neither exhaustive nor prescriptive - school wide awareness raising will take a variety of forms as opportunities and needs present themselves. • The Child Friendly Anti-Bullying Policy was formed with pupil input and is distributed to parents, children and staff to discuss. This policy outlines various ways to tell.
- Activities such as Random acts of Kindness homework, Poster making, slogan making. • Effective supervision and monitoring of all pupils especially during break times and other unstructured times during the school day.
- Involve parents as active partners in fostering an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated.
- Promote the concept of a 'Trusted adult' which is linked to Stay Safe lessons. • Cineáltas flag visible in our school.
- Teach SPHE content which fosters student's well-being and self-confidence as well as promoting personal responsibility for their own behaviours and actions.

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- Model respectful behaviour towards colleagues, pupils and visitors in our school environment. • Emphasis on nurturing children's talents through provision of a diverse range of co-curricular and extra-curricular opportunities and pursuits which can help to develop a sense of self-worth, working together, inclusion and respect.
- A bank of anti-bullying resources for teacher use in preventing and addressing bullying. • Use of Wellbeing programmes; Charity Partnerships; Sensory Circuits; Digital Citizenship etc. • Staff are particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of bullying/ being bullied.
- Involvement of pupils in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Wellbeing Committee, Wellbeing Week, Safer Internet Day and other activities that can encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Students are given regular opportunities to work in small groups with peers, which can help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy.
- Staff CPD
- Buddy Bench in the playground

## Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

- Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and the Stay Safe Programme taught in all classes every second year.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to develop social and emotional skills. Focus on building self esteem, resilience, overall emotional wellbeing, self-respect and respect for others through the three strands of the SPHE programme - Me; Myself and Others; Myself and the Wider World.
- The Grow in Love programme, the core resource for the teaching of Religious Education in our school, includes teaching in moral formation. From learning that they are loved as individuals, i.e. accepted and respected, they move on to learning about loving others within their home, school and wider community.
- Teachers may use other curricular subjects, such as Art, Literacy, Drama, to explore related themes. •



Inclusive approach re Special Educational Needs. Strong emphasis on an atmosphere of mutual respect. Supplementary programmes may be used with children with SEN - according to need e.g. social groups, social stories, 'Friends for Life', Talkabout programme. The school will specifically consider the additional needs of pupils with SEN regarding programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately. •

Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that :

- ☐ Build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils
- ☐ Explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying, including homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- ☐ Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils
- ☐ Supports for staff
- ☐ Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour
- ☐ On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy

• Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell:

- ☐ Speaking directly to teacher
- ☐ Handing a note up with homework
- ☐ Getting a parent to tell on your behalf

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- ☐ Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling regarding any bullying behaviour

## Policy and Planning

- Develop a clear and consistent Anti-Bullying Policy that is understood by all in our school community and regularly reviewed.
- The Child Safeguarding Policy, Acceptable Use Policy, Special Education Policy and Code of Behaviour all support the implementation of the Bi Cineálta policy.
- Establish clear procedures for noting, investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour. • Work with appropriate agencies in countering all forms of bullying and promoting anti-bullying behaviour.
- Encourage Pupil voice – Wellbeing Committee and ERST Student Council.
- Clear protocols around supervision of access to technology in the school (Internet Acceptable Usage Policy).
- On an annual basis, parents are reminded of protocols around social media eg: the importance of parental supervision re their child/ren's use of social media; the legal age; the importance of familiarizing themselves with any anti-bullying material/information made available by the school. • Parent-led 'No Smart Phone Policy'
- Wellbeing Week
- Safer Internet Day
- Transition from primary to post-primary school – annual workshop for 6<sup>th</sup> class facilitated by an external facilitator.
- Emphasis on generating positive self-worth through formal and informal interactions. Positive reinforcement of participation and achievements through e.g. displays, postings on websites and general recognition.
- Create safe spaces in our school buildings and yards.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors and school in general, school tours and extracurricular activities. Non-teaching, ancillary and support staff will be expected to report

issues to relevant teachers.

- BoM oversight role.
- Engaging in appropriate teacher professional learning courses can support school staff to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

## Relationships and Partnerships

- Catch the children being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- At assemblies, school rules are reinforced on a regular basis. Raise awareness of the definition of bullying behaviour and how the school deals with such behaviour.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Encourage parents/guardians to sign up to the voluntary agreements to defer smartphone/device ownership during the primary school years.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.

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- Support the active participation of students in school life through formal and informal structures, e.g. circle-time activities, assemblies, sports' teams, ERST Student Council, Sports Committee, Creative Arts Council, Green Schools Committee, Wellbeing Committee and 6<sup>th</sup> Class & Junior Infant Buddies Scheme.
- Support the active participation of parents in school life, e.g. being a member of the Parents' Council, volunteering at school events and on the school tour to Germany.

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):

Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy

Code of Behaviour

Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment

## Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

1. Class teachers and relevant Special Education Teachers (where appropriate).
2. The Principal/Deputy Principal will provide support and advice and will become involved where appropriate.

The Class Teacher / relevant Special Education Teacher will follow up after 20 days to investigate if bullying has ceased.

The primary aim in addressing reports of bullying behaviour should be to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the students involved.

When addressing bullying behaviour, the teachers with responsibility will:

- ☐ ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured
- ☐ seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- ☐ conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- ☐ consider the age and ability of the students 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:**

The primary aim in addressing reports of bullying behaviour should be to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the students involved.

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## **Stage 1 - Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred**

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.

Where bullying behaviour is suspected, parents/guardians should report it to the **class teacher**.

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour we will 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.

**Note:** *One-off incidents may be considered bullying behaviour 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.*

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 Behaviour.

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred (Stage 1), teachers should consider what, where, when and why? as follows: (Note that these steps are required – as outlined in the Procedures):

- ☐ Where one student is reported to be involved, the student should be engaged with individually at first.
- ☐ Thereafter, this student and the student who is reported to be experiencing the bullying behaviour should be met together.
- ☐ If a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first.
- ☐ Thereafter, all students involved and the student who is reported to be experiencing the bullying behaviour 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).

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- ☐ Parents will be supported by the school, if needed, with recommendations for useful resources/guides to help them support their children.

## Stage 2: 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 consult with them on the actions to be taken to address the behaviour.
- ☐ 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.

- All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the form and type of behaviour if known (see pages 20-24, Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the *Bí Cineálta* procedures for descriptions/examples of the forms and types of bullying 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*.
- The record should be shared with the Principal.

### Stage 3: 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 and the relationship between the students involved.
- 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 consideration should be given to using the strategies to deal with

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inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of 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 and Post-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.

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):

We take all instances of bullying behaviour on a case-by-case basis, but we may use the following approaches generally:

- All students involved will be checked-in with regularly and behaviour will be monitored carefully. The teacher will check-in with parents too and will look for their ongoing support to monitor their child at home and to communicate with the school if needed.
- We will use resources, as appropriate – including those developed by NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service), Oide (support service for schools) and from programmes/sites such as Webwise and FUSE (DCU Anti-Bullying Programme). □ Teachers will be encouraged to attend CPD in Restorative Practices.

## 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.

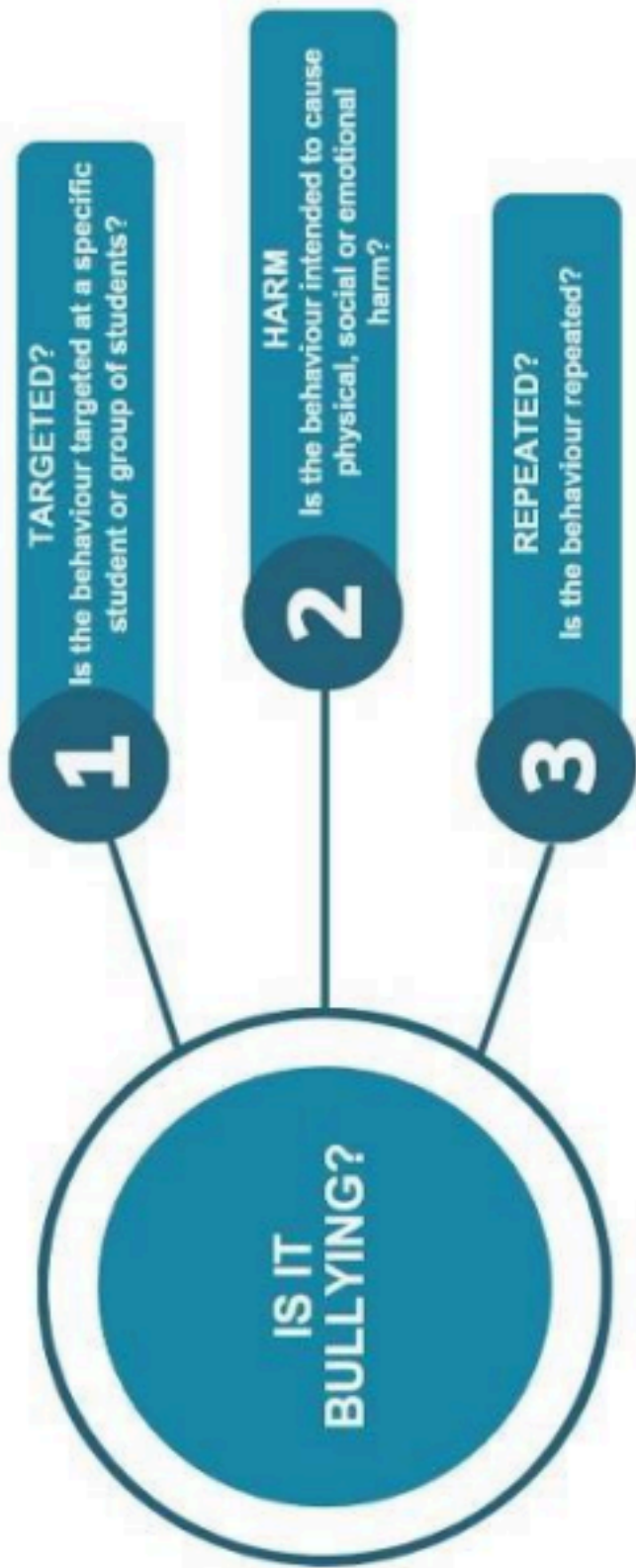
Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 18/06/2025

Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 18/06/2025

Principal

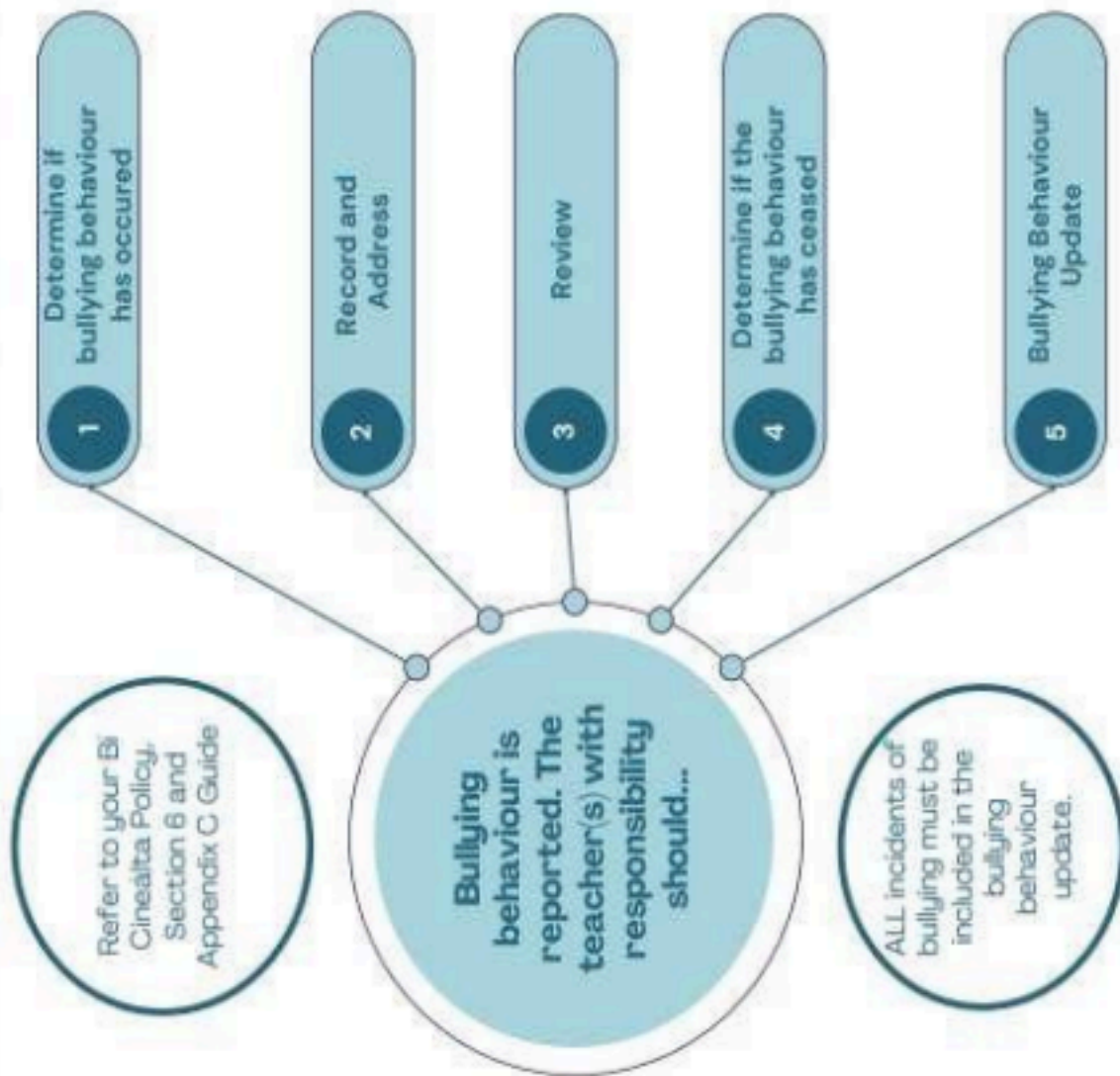




If the answer to each of the questions is **Yes**, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour and the behaviour should be addressed using the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

If the answer to any of the 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 Behaviour.

# Bí Cineálta: Addressing Bullying Behaviour



Teacher(s) investigate as per school policy. Record as per Section 6.5.

If the behaviour **IS NOT** bullying, deal with in line with your Code of Behaviour.

If the behaviour **IS BULLYING**, proceed to Step 2.

Record as per BÍ Cineálta policy and Section 6.5, BÍ Cineálta.

Inform parent(s) of parties involved at an early stage.

Complete agreed actions, as per your BÍ Cineálta policy, monitor and evaluate.

No more than **20 school days** after **initial engagement**, review with student(s) and parent(s).

If bullying has ceased, continue to monitor.

If bullying has **not ceased**, review strategies, seek external support, if appropriate, and review within the agreed timeframe.

Principal must include all bullying behaviour in their update to the board.

Principal provides verbal update to the board.

Review policy, if needed.

## APPENDIX A: Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour

*This template is only to be used when bullying behaviour has been identified, in line with the Bí Cineálta Procedures.*

1. Date of initial engagement with pupil(s) and parent(s)

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Initials of pupil who has experienced bullying behaviour and class group

Initials: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ 3.

Initials and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

Initials:

Class:

4. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))*		5. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))*	
Pupil concerned		Yard	
Other Pupil		Classroom	
Parent		Corridor	
Teacher		Toilets	
Other		Other (specify)	

6. Initials of person(s) who reported the bullying concern and/or relationship to the pupil(s)

\_\_\_\_\_

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7. Dates of when the bullying behaviour occurred

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Form of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box/boxes) See page 21

Physical Bullying Behaviour		Exclusion Bullying Behaviour	
Verbal Bullying Behaviour		Relational Bullying Behaviour	

Written Bullying Behaviour		Online Bullying Behaviour	
Extortion		Other (specify)	

**9. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box/boxes)**

Disablist Bullying Behaviour		Homophobic/Transphobic (LGBTQ+) Bullying Behaviour	
Exceptionally Bullying Behaviour		Physical Appearance Sexual Harassment	
Gender Identity Bullying Behaviour		Racist Bullying Behaviour	
Sexist Bullying Behaviour Sexual Harassment		Religious Identity Bullying Behaviour	
Poverty Bullying Behaviour		Other (specify)	

**10. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact**

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**11. Views of pupil(s) and parent(s) regarding the actions to be taken**

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<b>12. Date of review with pupil(s) and parent(s) (within 20 days)</b>	
<b>13. Has bullying behaviour ceased?</b>	
<b>14. Views of pupil(s) and parents in relation to this</b>	
<b>15. If bullying behaviour has not ceased, set an agreed timeframe to meet again and review strategies</b>	

<b>16. Engagement with external services or supports (if any)</b>	
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*If bullying behaviour continues beyond the review timeframes, the school's Code of Behaviour is to be used.*

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ (Relevant Teacher)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Relevant Special Ed Teacher, if necessary)

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal \_\_\_\_\_