



# Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

## POLICY TIMELINE:

<b>Ratified by the Board of Management on:</b>	15th September, 2025
<b>Next Review Date:</b>	September 2026

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## INTRODUCTION

The Board of Management of St. Brigid's Boys 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 these kinds of behaviours.

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 steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent all 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 everybody 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 everybody has a part to play in the school community, regardless of difference.

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 (AS OUTLINED IN CINEÁLTAS: ACTION PLAN ON BULLYING):

### Core definition of Bullying Behaviour

Bullying is 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 core elements of this definition are further described below:

#### 1. TARGETED BEHAVIOUR

Bullying is deliberate, unwanted behaviour that causes harm to others, and where the student displaying bullying behavior knows that their behaviour is or will be perceived as harmful by the child or young person experiencing the behaviour. Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. The harm can be physical (for example, personal injury, damage to or loss of property), social (for example, withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion) and/or emotional (for example, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety) and can have a serious and longterm negative impact on the student experiencing the 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 still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour.

#### 2. REPEATED BEHAVIOUR

Bullying takes the form of a systematic pattern of behaviour which is repeated over time. Single offline incidents of intentional negative behaviour involving an imbalance of power are not considered bullying but must still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour. Posting a single harmful message/image/video online, and which is highly likely to be reposted or shared with others can therefore be seen as bullying behaviour.

#### 3. IMBALANCE OF POWER

In incidents of bullying, the student experiencing the bullying behaviour finds it hard to defend themselves as a result of the abuse of a real or perceived imbalance of power. This imbalance of power may manifest itself through differences in size, strength, age, ability, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, race, ethnic origin including membership of the Traveller and/or Roma communities, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, experience of the care system, disability or the receipt of special education. In incidents of online (or cyber) bullying, the imbalance of power may relate to online anonymity, technical proficiency and possession of information/images/video, and the inability of the targeted student to remove offensive online material or escape the bullying.

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

Disagreement between students, or instances where students don't want to be friends or to remain friends, is not considered bullying behaviour unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to 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 these behaviours are not deliberate or planned but, in certain situations, they are an automatic response, which they can't control. Bullying is not accidental behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying. These behaviours, while not defined as bullying, can be distressing. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

## BULLYING BEHAVIOUR THAT OCCURS OUTSIDE OF THE SCHOOL

Our 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. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, St. Brigid's BNS will deal with it in accordance with this B' Cineálta policy.

Where the student displaying the bullying behaviour is not a student in the school, but the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour is a student in the school, the school will support the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as appropriate and engage with them and their parents to determine what steps can be taken.

## CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR

Bullying behaviour can be considered criminal behaviour under certain circumstances and legal consequences can apply:

- Some online behaviour may be illegal, and students need to be aware of the far-reaching consequences of posting or sharing inappropriate or harmful content online.
- If bullying behaviour involves physical violence or threats of violence, it may be considered assault.
- If bullying behaviour involves discrimination or hate speech, it may be considered a hate crime.
- If bullying behaviour involves sexual harassment or sexual assault, this may also be considered criminal behaviour.

The age of criminal responsibility in Ireland is 12 years. An Garda Síochána is the appropriate authority to investigate alleged criminal behaviour.

## SECTION A: DEVELOPING AND REVIEW OF BÍ CINEÁLTA POLICY TO PREVENT AND ADDRESS BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

	<b>Date consulted</b>	<b>Method of consultation</b>
<b>School Staff</b>	04/12/2025	Principal attended leadership seminar
	10/02/2025	Half-Day School Closure
	27/03/2025	Staff Survey completed
	19/05/2025	Shared policy draft with ISL
	23/05/2025	Sharing of draft policy with staff to discuss / consult and make any amendments
	29/05/2025	Policy finalised and agreed by staff.
<b>Students</b>	27/11/2023	Introductory Assembly and Flag Raising Ceremony
	03/03/2025	Student Friendly Appendix A displayed
	08/05/2025	Student Survey Completed
<b>Parents</b>	08/05/2025	Parent Survey Completed
<b>Board of Management</b>	August 2025	Review of policy draft
	15/09/2025	Ratification of Policy at BOM meeting
<b>Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers</b>	24/09/2025	Website update accordingly
	06/10/2025	Copy shared with our school's PA and external after School providers.
<b>Date policy was approved:</b> 15th September 2025		
<b>Date policy was last reviewed:</b> N/A		

All members of our school community were provided with the opportunity to input into the development/review of this policy.

## SECTION B : PREVENTING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Cineáltas is grounded in UNESCO's Whole Education Approach to prevent and address bullying and provides a collective vision and clear roadmap for how the whole education community and society can work together to prevent and address bullying in our schools.

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by this school to address all forms of bullying behaviour, in whatever form and however motivated, including online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment. These are aligned with the four key areas that are essential for a holistic, whole-school, based approach to wellbeing promotion as outlined in the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice. These are: Culture and Environment; Curriculum; Policy and Planning and Relationships and Partnerships.



Figure 1: Whole School Approach - Four Key Areas Wellbeing Promotion

In developing the 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 our 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 our 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 further 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.

## 1. CULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

A positive and inclusive school culture and environment is essential to prevent and address bullying behaviour. We strive to have a school culture & environment where:

- Students and school staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported.
- Relationships between all members of the school community are based on respect, care, integrity and trust.
- Open communication between our Patron, Boards of Management, School Staff, Students and their Parents help to foster a collaborative approach and share responsibilities in relation to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.
- The school leadership team influences the school culture and sets the standards and expectations for the school community when preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.
- Each member of school staff has a responsibility to develop and maintain a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and to take a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.
- Students can shape the school culture by promoting kindness and inclusion within their peer group and maintain a positive and supportive school environment for all.
- Students, in collaboration with the class teacher, devise a Class Contract at the beginning of each Academic Year. The aim of these Class Contracts is to ensure clarity in the expectations and encourage positive behaviour.
- Parents/Guardians, as active partners in their child's education, can help foster an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated through promoting empathy and respect.

### STRATEGIES AND PROCEDURES IN PLACE:

- High expectations of behaviour for all
- Adult Modelling of respectful relationships
- School/classroom/playground rules and routines, promoting Good Communication'
- A 'Sharing School''
- Trusted Adult
- Buddy Systems
- Safe physical spaces
- Appropriate supervision in classrooms and the yard
- Morning meets and greets and parents/family/friends mornings

- Informal & formal parent teacher meetings
- Collaborative learning
- 'Golden Time'
- Play, play spaces and equipment
- Playground mural, nature area, social opportunities
- Student voice, student council & student questionnaires
- Children's work displayed & achievements celebrated
- Cineáltas Flag & Boards
- Extra-curricular activities
- Weekly Principal's Raffle

## 2. CURRICULUM (TEACHING & LEARNING)

Teaching and learning that is collaborative and respectful should be promoted. We strive to have regular opportunities for our pupils to:

- Work in small groups with their peers, which can help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy among students.
- Provide opportunities to foster inclusion and respect for diversity through curricular subjects.
- Provide opportunities for students to develop a sense of self-worth through both curricular and extracurricular programmes.

### STRATEGIES AND PROCEDURES IN PLACE:

- The Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) curricula aim to foster students' wellbeing, self-confidence and sense of belonging and to develop students' sense of personal responsibility for their own behaviour and actions.
- Activities included in events such as 'Wellbeing' and 'Active Week' and all aspects of inclusion promote a sense of connection and support peer relationships.

## 3. POLICY & PLANNING

The wellbeing of our school community is at the heart of school policies and plans. At St. Brigid's we strive to:

- Have a range of policies and procedures that support and compliment the development and implementation of our schools Bí Cineálta Policy and student friendly Bí Cíneláta policy.
- Support the participation of students in the development and implementation of school policies and plans, which help increase awareness and ensure effective implementation.
- Engaging in appropriate teacher professional learning courses can support school staff to prevent and address bullying behaviour. Effective leadership is a key component with Principal, Deputy

Principal, DLP, DDLP, and all middle management focused on supporting the implementation of this policy.

#### STRATEGIES AND PROCEDURES IN PLACE

- Code of Behaviour
- Smart Device Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Supervision Policy
- Special Education Teaching Policy
- SPHE Planning
- Wellbeing Plans
- First Aid training & procedures
- Medical Board
- Ongoing teacher professional development and sharing of expertise.

#### 4. RELATIONSHIPS & PARTNERSHIPS

Relationships, partnerships and strong interpersonal connections are a vital part of effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. We strive to support these interpersonal connections through:

- Age-appropriate awareness initiatives that look at the causes and impacts of bullying behaviour including those dealing with navigating friendships
- Active participation / honouring the student's voice in school
- Participation of parents in school life, including those who may find it difficult or daunting to engage with the school due to being unfamiliar with the education system or due to language or cultural barriers
- Supporting activities that build empathy, respect and resilience
- Encouraging peer support by engaging in peer mentoring

#### STRATEGIES & PROCEDURES IN PLACE:

- Our Student Council
- Parents/Teacher Association
- Workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying.
- Building links and visiting areas participating in local events e.g. the Library and contributing to Newsletters, and local fundraising events and charities.
- Links with external agencies such as the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), HSE Community Psychology Services, the National Council for Special Education (NCSE), and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

- Ensuring the meaningful involvement of the board of management, staff, students and their parents in the development, implementation and review of their school's Bí Cineálta policy.
- A student friendly version is essential to effectively prevent and address bullying behaviour.

## SECTION C : ADDRESSING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

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

- The class teacher & Principal will oversee recording of bullying reports for students in their class/school – this includes using the procedure guidelines to investigate reports of bullying behaviour and recording bullying behaviour (see Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour).
- The Class Teacher/Principal will follow up after twenty days to investigate if bullying has ceased.
- All staff will be vigilant to bullying behaviour in the school community.
- The principal will inform the Board of Management of incidences of Bullying behaviour.
- Principal / Deputy principal / Assistant Principals available to provide up to date information and support if needed to assist class teacher/school community in addressing concerns.

The following approach and stages are based on the information contained in Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

### *Approach:*

When bullying behaviour occurs, our school will strive to:

- 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 concerns of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- Take action in a timely manner and inform parents of those involved

### *Informing Parents:*

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 parties 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 as outlined in this policy. In circumstances where a student expresses concern about their parents being informed, the school should develop an appropriate plan to support the student and how their parents will be informed.

### *Requests to take no action:*

### Stage 1: Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

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 is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the teacher will consider the following:

- The what, where, when and why?
- If a group of students is involved, each student should be met 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 also be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident.

To determine if bullying behaviour has occurred, the following 3 questions will be considered:

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 any of the questions is **NO**, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour.

Incidents can occur where behaviour is unacceptable and hurtful but the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies that deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour

If the answer to each of the questions is **YES**, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour and the behaviour should be addressed using this policy and appendices.

It is important that the student who has experienced bullying behaviour feels safe. Where bullying behaviour has been established to have occurred the parents of the victim may 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.

### Stage 2 : Where bullying behaviour has occurred

The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour:

We recognise that it is important for school staff to be fair and consistent in their approach to address bullying behaviour. Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour need support.

It is important that the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour is met without delay so that they feel listened to, supported and reassured. School staff should also identify the support needed for the student who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties and ensure that their needs are met.

The following principles must be adhered to when addressing bullying behaviour, for those that have experienced, witness or display bullying behaviour:

- 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 considering 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

### Stage 3 : Follow-up and Recording Bullying Behaviour

All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include:

- The type of behaviour
- Where and when it took place
- 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

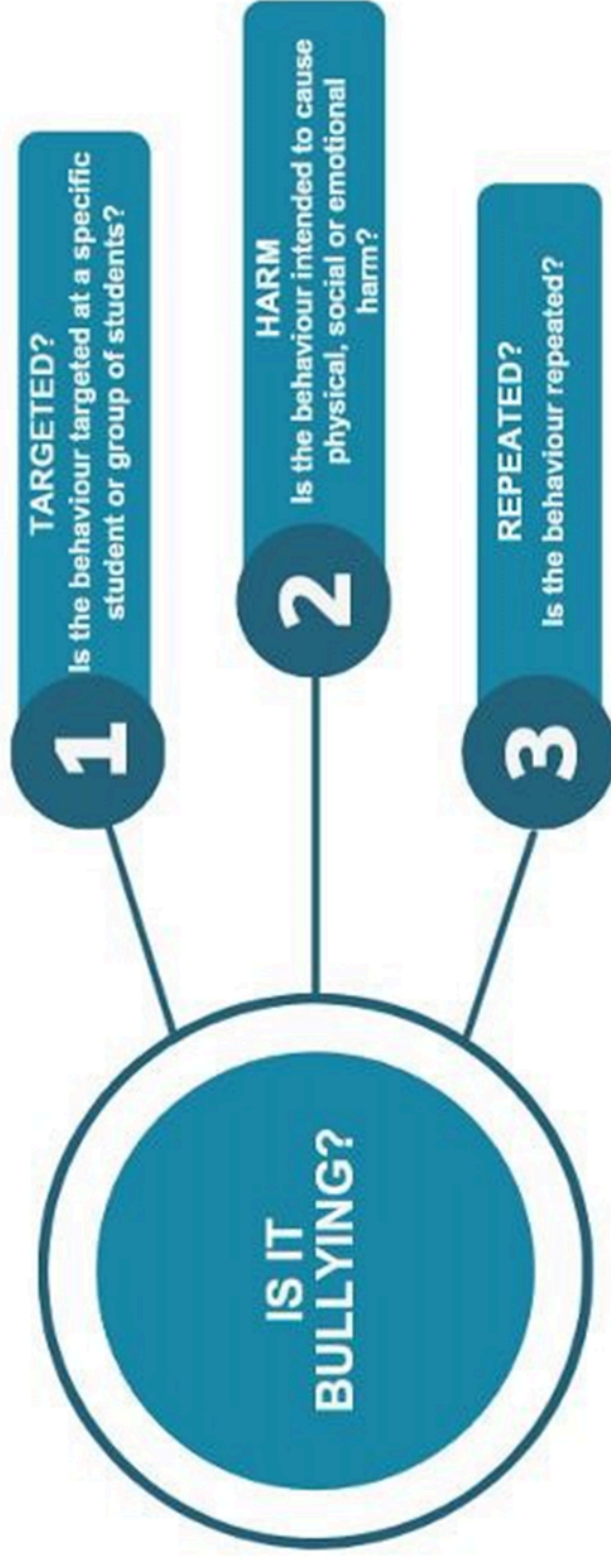
- The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each Board of Management meeting.
- This update will include the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting, the number of ongoing incidents and the total number of incidents since the beginning 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 upon request. A student-friendly version of this policy is displayed in the school and is also available on our website and in hard copy upon 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.

**POLICY SIGN OFF:**

Signed:  Chairperson	
Date:	15/09/2025
Signed:  Principal	
Date:	15/09/2025



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.

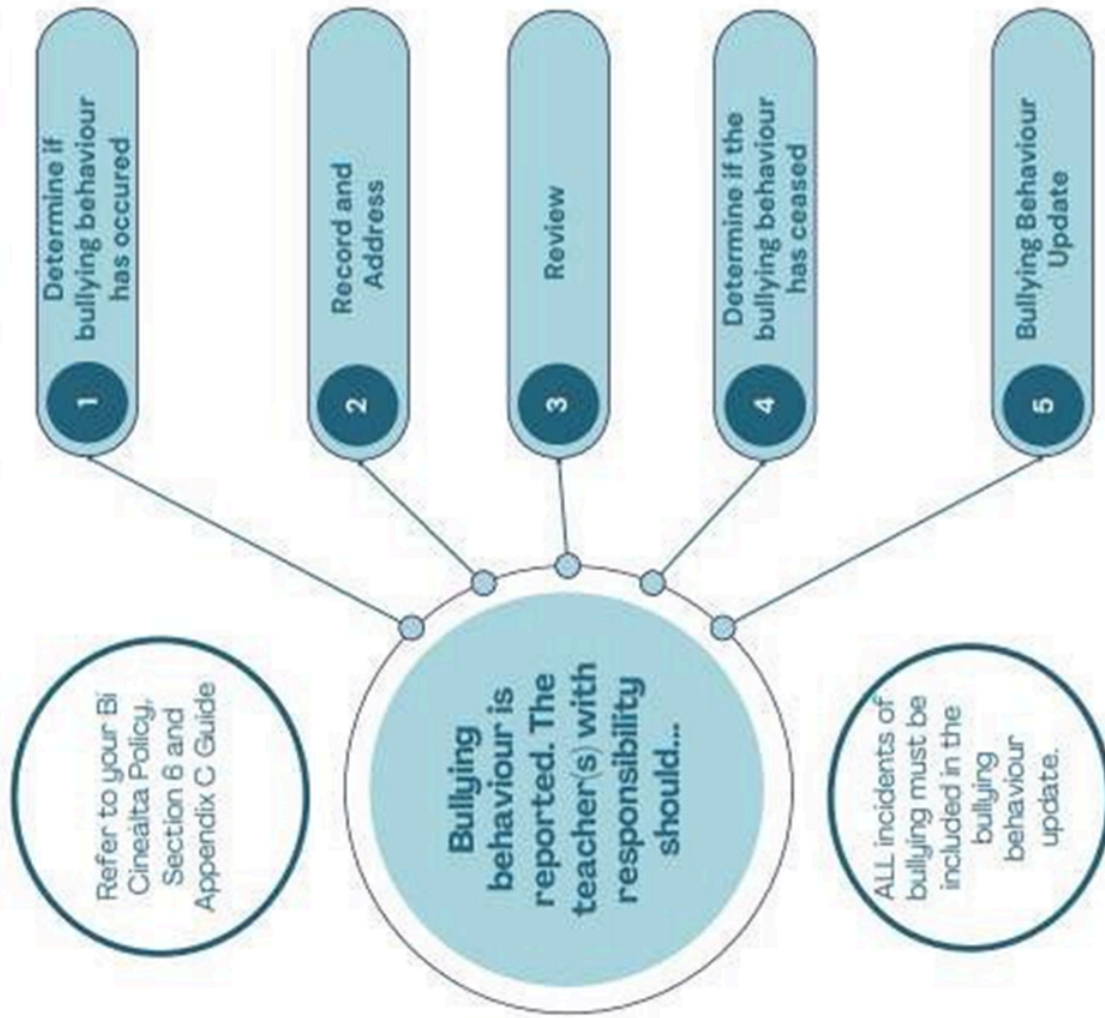


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Clairníosa / níos Ceartúil  
Scoil agus Harúil

Supporting the Professional  
Learning of School Leaders  
and Teachers

# 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, Bf 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.



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