



Scoil Náisiúnta na mBuachaillí

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Newport Boys National School
JUNE 2025

The Board of Management of Newport 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.

Ireland ratified the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child in September 1992. In doing this we are 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 of 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)

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 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.

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.

- 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 group 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 (e.g.: personal injury, damage to or loss of property)
- Social (e.g.: withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion)
- Emotional (e.g.: 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 appearance, size, clothes, gender, accent, academic ability, race and 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.

Bullying can be: 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 from 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 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.

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	February 2025	Stage 1: Staff meeting-staff provided with the opportunity to discuss the new Bí Cineálta action plan and stemming from this discussion, staff were informed of the important points in dealing with an incidence or report of bullying-notice board in the staffroom with information displayed as well as resources and the record form. Staff given time to discuss and relay feedback. Sharing of draft policy with staff to discuss/consult and make any amendments.
Students	February 2025 March 2025 May 2025	<p>Student council had a meeting with the principal to discuss appropriate questions for a questionnaire.</p> <p>On completion of the questionnaire by all students, input will be used to develop an Anti-Bullying policy in Child Friendly Format-their wording, examples and suggestions will be taken into account when drafting this policy.</p> <p>Friendship February – Whole school participated in Friendship February, including organising a fundraiser for Special Olympics Ireland</p> <p>This policy will be distributed to all households and read with their parents as part of their homework.</p> <p>“I can’t do anything about them, without them”</p> <p>Student council met, discussed the policy and created a pupil friendly version on Canva. This was distributed to the whole school and given as homework to read and discuss at home.</p>
Parents	October 2025 November 2025	<p>Parents Association AGM – New Procedures presented to parents and advised that at next meeting they would be addressed</p> <p>Parents Focus group set up to discuss and create Bi Cinealta policy</p>

	January 2025	Information evening on Internet Safety and Cyberbullying. Local Gardaí in attendance. Bí Cineálta was highlighted and parents encouraged to take a look at the procedures.
	Feb/March 2025	Parents were sent a questionnaire via Aladdin to complete on anti-bullying policy. This will be used to inform development and communication of our Bí Cineálta Policy.
	May / June 2025	<p>Policy created with this information and sent out to parents/children to review together with information on same in terms of how to contact the school if needed.</p> <p>Attention drawn to our policy and Child Friendly Policy, resources and initiatives in the school sent out via Aladdin, school website and social media.</p> <p>Bí Cineálta policy draft shared with parent body and parent association for feedback.</p>
Board of Management	December 2024	Attention of Bí Cineálta Policy brought to Board
	March 2025	Updated at each meeting as to what stage of development we were at.
	June 2025	Policy was reviewed and ratified
School staff	April 2025	School staff reviewed the policy and suggestions made
	June 2025	<p>Facilitator from Oide helped work through some areas of uncertainty</p> <p>Reporting template completed</p> <p>Policy distributed</p>
Wider School Community	January 2025	Local Gardaí gave information to parents on cyberbullying and the implications under the Bí Cineálta procedures
St. Senan's Education Office	June 2025	St. Senan's Education Office issued a letter with wording which must be included in the policy. This wording reflects the catholic ethos in our school.

Date policy was approved:

Date policy was last reviewed:

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

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.

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 a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.
- Involve parents as active partners in fostering an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated.
- Support the idea that our school is a telling environment.
- Promote the concept of a trusted adult-stay safe linkage-who to tell
- Create safe spaces in our school building and yards-visibility

- Incorporate artwork and signs to promote our school values-creation of a school charter promoting rights-equality, inclusion and respect.
- Encourage a sense of belonging with ownership over their own space through art and creativity.
- Create a positive school culture and climate which-
- Is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity
- Encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment: and
- Promotes respectful relationships across the school community:

Ways in which we work to achieve these goals are as follows:

- Staff are briefed on the uniform approach we must take to handle all reports of bullying-this is distributed to staff and a copy is displayed on the staffroom noticeboard for ease of access also.
- Anti-bullying week activities such as Friendship February, Random Acts of Kindness homework, Poster making, slogan making etc.
- Buddy System-6th class students are buddied up with 2nd class students to support transition from previous school to ours. They are also on yard to help with games and positive interactions.
- Child Friendly Anti-Bullying Policy was formed with pupil and parent input and is distributed to parents, children and staff to discuss. This policy outlines various ways to tell.
- Parents receive information at times regarding useful information on Anti-Bullying.
- Stay safe and SPHE lessons focusing on positive behaviour from part of curricular content in all classes.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils.
- Class and School Charter development as well as notice board to promote kindness and build responsibility amongst pupils.

Curriculum (teaching and learning) We strive to:

- Provide teaching and promote learning which is collaborative and respectful, fostering inclusion and respect for diversity.
- Display a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact.

Ways in which we work to achieve this:

- Teach SPHE and RSE content which fosters student's well-being and self-confidence as well as promoting personal responsibility for their own behaviours and actions.
- Model respectful behaviour towards colleagues, pupils and visitors in our school environment.

- Curricular and Extra-curricular activities can help to develop a sense of self-worth, working together, inclusion and respect.
- Students are given regular opportunities to small groups with peers, which can help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy.
- Acknowledgement of our diverse school population-celebrating diversity and culture in our school through, art, displays, photographs, international events.
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies(including awareness raising measures) that-
 - Build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils and
 - Explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- Supports for staff
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies): and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

Policy and Planning

The aim of Newport BNS School's Bí Cineálta policy is

- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils, parents/guardians.
- To promote a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To ensure appropriate supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under supervision.
- To develop procedures for noting, investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To implement a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- To work with appropriate agencies in countering all forms of bullying and promoting anti bullying behaviour.
- The Acceptable use policy, Supervision Policy, Special Education Policy and Code of Behaviour as well as the Agree-to-Agree policy all support the implementation of the Bí Cineálta Policy.
- Effective leadership is a key component with Principal, Deputy Principal, DLP, DDLP and all the middle management focused on supporting the implementation of this policy.

Relationships and Partnerships

- Interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as our parents' association and student council.
- Age and stage appropriate awareness initiatives that engage the student body in looking at their own behaviour-promoting acts of kindness and friendship, being an active help to others and looking at the causes of and impact of bullying during SPHE lessons.
- Conducting workshops and seminars for students, staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying.
- Encouraging peer mentoring and peer support.
- Supporting active participation of students in school life and active participation of parents in school life also.
- Engaging parents and students in actively contributing to the formation of the Child Friendly Anti Bullying Policy to make them active participants in promotion of and discussion of useful ways to identify and reduce bullying behaviour and highlight procedure and how to deal with it if it does occur.

Preventing Cyber Bullying, Homophobic/Transphobic Bullying, Racist Bullying, Sexual Harassment and sexist bullying

In addition to above mentioned strategies, the school has the following in place to prevent and address bullying:

- Staff at all times endeavor to encourage pupils to show respect for each other.
- Implementation of the SPHE curriculum
- Positive self-esteem is fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences by acknowledging good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success-Student of the week, monthly draw.
- Digital media Policy includes learning about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship. AUP also developed for technology in our school.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed regularly with the pupils.
- Staff are particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of bullying/being bullied.
- All disclosed incidents of bullying are investigated thoroughly and consistently by following the correct procedure as outlined to staff and recorded on Aladdin using the template for this.
- School wide awareness raising on all aspects of bullying, supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities.
- Involvement of pupils in contributing to a safe school environment, e.g. Kindness/Friendship Week, and other activities that can help the pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell.

- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Refer to appropriate online behaviour when using devices and in SPHE lessons.
- Promote online safety events or material for parents.
- The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school, e.g www.tacklebullying.ie, www.antibullying.ie>fuse, www.webwise.ie
- Shared folder of resources for teaching of bullying including lessons from above websites-shared Google drive for all teachers to access.
- Challenge gender-stereotypes-equal participation of all. Equal recognition.
- Raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour and encourage students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour.
- Foster a culture where diversity is celebrated and students, 'see themselves', in the school environment.
- Ensuring the library has material which reflects our diverse school population from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
- Modelling of respectful behaviour by staff of all irrespective of gender.
- Ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of gender.
- Making clear that our school has a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment of any kind with enforceable policy-See code of behaviour.

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):

- In Newport BNS appropriate supervision is an important measure to help prevent and address bullying behaviour. We take all reasonable measures to ensure the safety of our students and to supervise students when they are attending school or attending school activities.
- We offer a mix of organised activities during break times with a view to accommodating a range of preferences and interests as per action under key are 1 Culture and Environment Wellbeing SIP
- We have a supervision policy and a supervision rota to ensure effective supervision of our students.

- We prioritise the creating of safe physical spaces as an important measure to prevent bullying behaviour.
- Staff are particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of bullying/being bullied.
- School wide awareness raising on all aspects of bullying, supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

- The class teacher will oversee recording of bullying reports for students in their class- this includes using the procedure guidelines to investigate reports of bullying and recording bullying behaviour on the correct form on Aladdin.
- The DLP will follow up after twenty days to investigate if bullying has ceased.
- All staff will be vigilant to bullying behaviour
- Principal will inform Board of Management of incidences of Bullying
- Assistant Principal 2 Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator available to provide up to date information and supports if needed to assist class teacher in addressing concern.

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:

To determine if bullying behaviour has occurred.

Staff 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 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 teachers should consider what, where, when and why?

The school's procedures for investigation.

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying behaviour is to resolve any issues and to restore as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame). With this in mind the school's procedures are as follows:

- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying behaviour will be investigated by the 'Relevant Teacher(s)'. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report instances of bullying behaviour they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, SNA's, caretakers and cleaners are encouraged to report any incidences of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them to the class teacher.
- Teachers will take a *calm, unemotional problem solving approach* when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour, the teacher dealing with the report will first meet with the child who has experienced the alleged bullying behaviour and listen to their account of events.
- Initial investigations of bullying behaviour will be done in class where possible but some incidents might be best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure privacy of all involved.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' will seek answers to questions of what, where, who, when and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict.
- If a group is involved each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved will be meet as a group where appropriate. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for his account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about the other's statements.
- Each member of the group will be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the ground after the interview by the teacher.
- Once it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, parents will be informed in a timely manner.

Approaches to address bullying behaviour.

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
- Where the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' has/have determined that a pupil has engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him how he is in breach of the school's Bí Cineálta/Anti-bullying Policy and efforts will be made to try to get him to see the perspective of the pupil who has experienced the bullying behaviour.
- She/he emphasizes that the intention is not to punish the child who has displayed bullying behaviour but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying behaviour is and to seek a promise that it will stop.
- A follow-up meeting where the pupils involved are brought together may be arranged where appropriate to develop a deeper understanding of each other's perspective.

To review progress.

- The teacher must engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress following the initial intervention. Important factors to consider as part of the review 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
- If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students and parents and agree to meet again over an agreed timeframe until the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- Where it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school should consider using the strategies to deal with 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.

Complaints procedure.

- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures the parent must be referred to the school's complaints procedure.
- In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their rights to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

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

The school's programme of support for working with all pupils who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour involves a whole school approach. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, *no one intervention/support programme works in all situations. Some of the strategies used to support pupils involved may include but are not limited to the following.*

- √ Ending the bullying behaviour.
- √ Fostering respect and empathy for all pupils.
- √ Indicating clearly that the bullying behaviour is not the fault of the targeted pupil through SPHE lessons and Friendship Week.
- √ Making adequate counselling facilities available to pupils who need it in a timely manner (subject to available funding and human resources)
- √ Helping pupils involved to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school)
- √ Support all the pupils involved over time, which may include regular, informal check-ins.
- √ Offer appropriate opportunities to the pupils who display bullying behaviour to learn other ways of meeting their needs besides violating the rights of others.
- √ Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth.
- √ In dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child.
- √ In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a 'clean sheet' and no blame in return for keeping a promise to cease the bullying behaviour.

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: _____ (Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: _____ Date: _____ (Principal)