

Boherbue Comprehensive School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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The Board of Management of Boherbue Comprehensive 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.

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.

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 (s) Consulted	Method of consultation
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School Staff	1/4/25, 11/4/24, 26/5/25	Survey, Face-to-face, Email feedback
Students	7/4/25, 9/4/25, 23/5/25	Survey, Face-to-face, Google Classroom
Parents	31/3/25, 23/5/25	Survey, Email feedback
Board of Management	12/6/25	Face-to-face
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 the school. These include strategies specifically aimed at preventing online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate:

The Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2019 provides the following four key areas that are essential for a holistic, whole school approach to wellbeing promotion: Culture and Environment; Curriculum (Teaching and Learning); Policy and Planning; and Relationships and Partnerships.

These four areas were considered by a school when developing measures to prevent bullying behaviour.

Culture and Environment

- The school imbues and exudes a positive and inclusive culture and environment through nurturing relationships whereby all in the school community experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported.
- The school builds, fosters and nurtures relationships between all members of the school community based on respect, care, integrity and trust.
- Open communication is embedded in the school culture and serves to foster a collaborative approach and shared responsibilities to preventing bullying behaviour.
- The school community in its interactions exhibits and promotes kindness and inclusion so as to maintain a positive and supportive school environment for all.
- The school actively engages with parents, as active partners in their child's education, to promote empathy and respect so as to prevent bullying behaviour; and to foster an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated.
- The School supports a 'telling' environment where students feel comfortable to talk about concerns regarding bullying behaviour.
- A Trusted Adult - The school uses the concept of "a trusted adult" as a strategy to encourage students to report if they or another student is experiencing bullying behaviour. Staff support this strategy by letting students know that they can talk to

them.

- Safe physical spaces exist in the school and its environs to support psychological safety and to prevent bullying behaviour.
- Appropriate supervision is an important measure used by the school to help prevent and address bullying behaviour. The school takes all reasonable measures to ensure the safety of its students; and supervises students when they are attending school or attending school activities. Staff on supervision duty are clearly visible in the morning before school begins, during breaks/lunchtimes, in between classes as students move from one class to another, and in the evening when students exit the school building to go home.
- The school offers a mix of organised activities during break/lunch -times to accommodate a range of preferences and interests. These activities are supervised at all times by staff.
- Murals, artwork, posters and signage are displayed around the school to promote the school's values of equality, diversity, inclusion and respect.

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

- Teaching and learning that is collaborative and respectful is promoted by the school.
- Students have regular opportunities to work in small groups with their peers, which serves to build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy among students.
- The curricular subjects offered to students provide opportunities to foster inclusion and respect for diversity.
- The school deploys Inclusive Pedagogical Practices such as • Differentiated Instruction • Team Teaching • Collaborative Learning • Accessible Technology • Culturally Responsive Practices • Inclusive Language and Communication • Flexible Assessment and Evaluation • The Continuum of Support Approach • Peer Support and Mentorship • Active and Hands-On Learning • Mindful Classroom Management. The use of these Inclusive pedagogical practices foster a positive, respectful, and supportive school culture where diversity is embraced and all students feel a sense of belonging. They actively promote empathy and inclusion, serving as proactive tools in preventing bullying in line with *Bi Cineáltas*
- The school provides opportunities for students to develop a sense of self worth through both curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular programmes and activities. At Junior Cycle, these opportunities are linked to the development of the Junior Cycle Key Skills as per [A Framework for the Junior Cycle](#); and reported on in the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement.
- The school's use of The Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) curricula aims to foster students' well-being, self confidence and sense of belonging and develops students' sense of personal responsibility for their own behaviour and actions. Students' social and emotional learning (SEL) skills are developed and improved through the school's use of the SPHE curriculum.
- The school's use of the updated SPHE specification aims to help students to feel empowered to create, nurture and maintain respectful and healthy relationships with themselves and others. The RSE strand of the specification also provides space for students to examine and consider relationships and human sexuality; and aims to foster an understanding of diversity so as to reduce gender and identity -based bullying as well as sexism and sexual harassment.
- The school's Religious Education Programme also provides students with opportunities to experience diversity and inclusion; the programme aims to encourage

- respect and understanding of different beliefs, perspectives and ways of living.
- In Civic Social and Political Education (CSPE), there is a focus on the interdependence of people in communities, at local as well as national and international levels.
 - Other subjects such as History and English explore and raise awareness of racism, prejudice, discrimination, stereotyping, bias, diversity, respect for difference, etc.
 - Each subject department deploys a wide and varied range of teaching, learning and assessment strategies to facilitate the development of [Key Skills](#) in Junior Cycle and [key competencies in senior cycle](#).
 - Subject departments support the implementation of *Bi Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying* by embedding inclusive teaching, learning, and assessment strategies that promote respect, empathy, and student wellbeing. The development of Junior Cycle Key Skills and Senior Cycle Key Competencies—such as *Working with Others*, *Communicating*, and *Being Personally Effective*—helps foster positive relationships, emotional resilience, and responsible behaviour. These approaches contribute to a whole-school culture where bullying is less likely to occur and more effectively addressed when it does, aligning closely with the Bi Cineáltas vision of a safe, respectful, and inclusive school environment.

Policy and planning

- The school's *Bi Cineálta* policy and student -friendly *Bi Cineálta* policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour is employed as a measure to prevent bullying behaviour. The student friendly *Bi Cineálta* policy will be placed in the students' school diary, displayed in every classroom and in the corridors.
- Other school policies such as the school's acceptable use policy, special education needs policy and Code of Behaviour will be reviewed in light of the requirements of *Bi Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2024* with one of the aims being to prevent bullying behaviour; and to support the implementation of a school's *Bi Cineálta* policy.
- The school supports the participation of students in the development and implementation of school policies and plans so as to increase awareness and ensure effective implementation.
- Teachers engage in appropriate teacher professional learning courses to prevent and address bullying behaviour.
- School staff share their experiences and examples of best practice. There is a range of training available for school staff which relates to promoting inclusion and diversity in schools.
- The school will use the School Self-Evaluation (SSE) process to review the effectiveness of the *Bi Cineálta* policy and its implementation by gathering feedback from students, staff, parents and other key stakeholders, and analysing relevant data (e.g. Wellbeing surveys, incident records). Ongoing monitoring, and findings will inform action planning, and ensure that the policy remains effective, responsive and aligned with the school's overall wellbeing and inclusion priorities.

Relationships and partnerships

- Boherbue Comprehensive School prides itself on developing and nurturing strong interpersonal connections which it sees as a vital part of effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. These interpersonal connections are supported by the school through a range of formal and informal structures such as student voice, student councils, school clubs, parental involvement/engagement (parents' associations) and student support teams.

→ The following strategies and initiatives are deployed to strengthen relationships and partnerships between members of the school community:

- > age appropriate awareness initiatives that look at the causes and impacts of bullying behaviour including those dealing with navigating friendships, identity based bullying, racist bullying, homophobic/transphobic bullying, sexism and sexual harassment
- > supporting the active participation of students in school life
- > supporting the active 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
- > conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying
- > supporting activities that build empathy, respect and resilience
- > encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring
- > promoting acts of kindness
- > teaching problem solving
- > hosting debates (In-class/out of class/extra curricular)
- > dialogue and engagement with other relevant stakeholders such as the caretakers, bus drivers, local businesses close to the school, education welfare officers.

Strategies Preventing Online Bullying Behaviour

The school employs the following list of strategies to prevent online/cyberbullying -

- > implementation of the SPHE curriculum
- > implementation of the Digital Media Literacy curriculum which teaches students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship
- > has regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- > Implementation and continuous review of the acceptable use policy for technology
- > refers to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour
- > promotes and hosts online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online
- > holds an Internet safety day to reinforce awareness around appropriate online Behaviour
- > Sends an email to parents with information with regard to the digital age of consent and their child's safety when using technology including smartphones and gaming consoles.

Strategies Preventing Homophobic/Transphobic Bullying Behaviour

The school employs the following strategies to prevent homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour -

- > maintains an inclusive physical environment by displaying relevant posters
- > encourages peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- > challenges gender stereotypes
- > conducts workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour
- > encourages students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour
- > Stand up Awareness Week initiatives

Strategies Preventing Racist Bullying Behaviour

The school employs the following strategies to prevent racist bullying behaviour -

- > fosters a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students "see themselves" in their school environment

- > has the cultural diversity of the school visible and on display
- > conducts workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of racism
- > encourages peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- > encourages bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour
- > provides supports to school staff to respond to the needs of students for whom English is an additional language and for communicating with their parents
- > provides supports to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma students, and to encourage communication with their parents
- > invites speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds
- > ensuring that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural Backgrounds.

Strategies Preventing Sexist Bullying behaviour

Strategies used by the school to prevent sexist bullying behaviour include the following -

- > The school focuses on gender equality as part of the school's measures to create a supportive and respectful environment
- > members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex
- > ensures all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex
- > celebrates diversity at school and acknowledges the contributions of all students
- > organises awareness campaigns, workshops and presentations on gender equality and respect
- > encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home

Strategies Preventing sexual harassment

Strategies employed by the school to prevent sexual harassment include the following -

- > the use of the updated SPHE specifications at post primary level to teach students about healthy relationships and how to treat each other with respect and kindness
- > promotes positive role models within the school community
- > challenges gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour in line with Department of Education Guidelines and relevant circulars.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

All members of staff have responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour; and will take a proactive approach to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. The overall person with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour is the principal.

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):

Steps to be taken to determine if bullying has occurred

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. The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour the school 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 will 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 will consider what, where, when and why?

> if a group of students is involved, each student will be engaged with individually at first

- > thereafter, all students involved will be met as a group
- > at the group meeting, each student will be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views
- > each student will be supported as appropriate, following the group meeting
- > Students involved may be asked to write down their account of the incident(s)

Approaches taken to address bullying Behaviour and to review progress

Where bullying behaviour has occurred

- > parents are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with the school, in addressing bullying behaviour. Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the students involved will 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
- > The school will listen carefully to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- > a record will be kept of the engagement with all involved
- > this record will document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known (see Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the *Bi Cineálta* procedures), where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students involved and their parents
- > the record will include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour

Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred

- > the teacher will engage with the students involved and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement
- > important factors considered as part of this engagement include 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 will 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 will be recorded
- > any engagement with external services/supports will 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 will review the strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents. A timeframe will 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 the school consideration will be given to 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
- > 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 will be referred to the [Schools' Complaint 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

1. Supporting Students Who Experience Bullying

- **Counselling Services:** Provide access to school counsellors for emotional support and coping strategies.
- **Safe Spaces:** Create safe zones where students can go to feel secure and talk to trusted adults.
- **Peer Support Programs:** Implement buddy systems or peer mentoring where students can share their experiences with trained peers.
- **Reporting Mechanisms:** Establish anonymous reporting systems for students to report bullying without fear of retaliation.
- **Parental Involvement:** Engage parents in conversations about their child's experiences and collaborate on supportive strategies.
- **Restorative Justice:** Offer restorative practices where victims can express their feelings in a controlled environment and seek resolution.
- **Regular Check-ins:** Conduct regular follow-ups with students who have experienced bullying to ensure their well-being.
- **Educational Workshops:** Organize workshops on self-esteem, assertiveness, and resilience building.

2. Supporting Students Who Witness Bullying

- **Bystander Training:** Educate students on how to safely intervene, support victims, or report incidents.
- **Encouragement to Report:** Promote a culture where reporting bullying is seen as a responsibility and a positive action.
- **Empathy Development:** Include activities that foster empathy and understanding of the impact of bullying.
- **Recognition of Positive Behaviour:** Reward students who take constructive actions when they witness bullying.
- **Confidential Reporting:** Ensure that students who report bullying as witnesses can do so confidentially.
- **Classroom Discussions:** Facilitate open discussions in class about the role of bystanders and the importance of standing against bullying.
- **Engagement in Anti-Bullying Campaigns:** Encourage students to participate in or lead school-wide anti-bullying initiatives.
- **Provide Information:** Educate students on the signs of bullying and the importance of supporting peers.

3. Supporting Students Who Display Bullying Behaviour

- **Behavioural Interventions:** Implement individualized behaviour management plans

- focusing on the root causes of the bullying.
- **Counselling and Therapy:** Offer counselling services to address underlying issues such as anger management or low self-esteem.
 - **Parental Collaboration:** Work closely with parents to ensure consistent behaviour management and support at home.
 - **Restorative Justice:** Involve the student in restorative practices that require them to understand the impact of their actions and make amends.
 - **Social Skills Training:** Provide training in social skills, empathy, and positive communication to replace aggressive behaviours.
 - **Positive Reinforcement:** Use positive reinforcement to encourage desirable behaviour changes.
 - **Peer Mediation:** Engage the student in peer mediation programs to help them resolve conflicts constructively.
 - **Clear Consequences:** Establish and communicate clear consequences for bullying behaviour while emphasizing opportunities for change and growth.
 - **Mentorship Programs:** Pair the student with a mentor who can model positive behaviours and provide guidance.

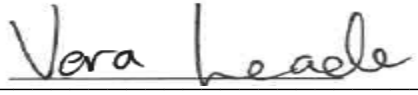
All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with students and parents. The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented. If the bullying behaviour is a child protection concern 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. 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: 12th June 2025
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed:  Date: 12th June 2025
(Principal)