



## Dunshaughlin Community National School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

### **Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour**

The board of management of Dunshaughlin CNS 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 pupils who attend our school are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our pupils is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our pupils, 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 pupils 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. 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.

## 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                   | March 2025<br>March 2025 | Staff survey<br>Bí Cineálta In-School Consultation Day                                           |
| Pupils                         | March 2025               | Pupil Questionnaire – School snapshot                                                            |
| Parents/guardians              | March 2025<br>May 2025   | Parent Questionnaire – School snapshot<br>Policy shared with Parents/guardians for feedback      |
| Board of Management            | May 2025                 | Policy shared with BOM for feedback and approval                                                 |
| Wider School Community         | April 2025               | Policy shared for feedback: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cleaning operative</li> </ul> |
| 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 (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

- Staff members influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner through a range of curricular initiatives and positive, restorative language and modelling respectful practices.
- Staff and children use restorative language daily when dealing with smaller incidents and use check ins daily to determine pupil wellbeing. Where inappropriate behaviour occurs, discussions are facilitated with a focus on recognising the impact of the behaviour on others and identifying measures to restore the relationships and repair harm.
- The completion of a Bí Cineálta Risk Assessment to identify risk areas around the school, and strategies implemented to minimise the risks across the school.
- A “telling environment” is promoted. Telling a trusted adult is actively encouraged and facilitated.
- Trusted adult identified for all pupils. In most cases this is the class teacher, but for more vulnerable pupils this may be an SET or SNA.
- We proactively develop positive relationships and strong communication

links with parents/guardians using a variety of resources: Parents' Association, Aladdin, email, open-door practices, school gate, in-class volunteer etc

- Restorative Practice and respectful behaviour are at the core of class rules which are established at the beginning of the year in every classroom.
- SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the interrelated areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships.
- The Stay Safe programme is a personal safety skills programme which seeks to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying. Staff are required to complete a Stay Safe Declaration form at the end of each school year to confirm that the programme has been taught as per the whole school SPHE plan.
- The Relationships and Sexuality Education programme (part of SPHE curriculum) aims to provide opportunities for children to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way.
- The school uses other supportive resources and programmes including: PDST Anti-Bullying Support Material, Zippys Friends, Friends First, Walk Tall.
- The school places a focus on cyberbully during Internet Safey Week every year, incorporating Cyber Bullying packs from Webwise.
- The school actively celebrates Pride month and utilises the INTO's Different Families, Same Love programme.
- There is an Acceptable Use Policy in place and all members of the school community are required to sign up to it.
- Dignity in the Workplace policy in place to protect staff from inappropriate behaviours.

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):

- Code of Behaviour Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Safety Statement
- Protected Disclosures Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- SPHE Policy
- Supervision Policy
- Prevention Strategies Audit
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Dignity in the Workplace Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Staff Grievances Policy
- Special Education Policy
- Wellbeing Policy

## Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The personnel with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour are as follows:

- **Board of Management:** An anti-bullying report is presented to the BOM at every meeting. An overview of significant behaviours in line with the school code of behaviour are also reported.
- **Principal/Deputy Principal:** The Principal/Deputy Principal provide support for staff, parents/guardians and pupils in dealing with any incidences of bullying.
- **The School Leadership Team (SLT):** This team reviews the policy annually and monitors its implementation regularly, including the creation and implementation of annual Action Plans and support class teachers.
- **Teaching Staff.**
  - Model positive behaviour.
  - Proactively address bullying behaviour using restorative practices (see preventative strategies above)
  - Investigate and record incidents of bullying behaviour.
- **SNAs:**
  - Model positive behaviour.
  - Assist teachers in monitoring pupils and activities on the yard and around the school
  - Report any witnessed behaviours of concern to a teacher or member of the in-school management team.
- **Administrative and Ancillary Staff:** Report any witnessed behaviours of concern to the Principal.

**When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:**

- ensure that the pupil 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 pupil who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- act in a timely manner
- inform parents/guardians 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 and Appendix C of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

### **Determining Bullying Behaviour within a class**

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour the following steps will be taken:

- The class teacher will investigate the situation by gathering information and interviewing the pupils involved.
- The class teacher will assess whether the behaviour meets the definition of bullying as outlined in the Bí Cineálta procedures.
- The class teacher may consult with members of the School Leadership Team for advice.

- Once the threshold for bullying behaviour has been reached, the class teacher will inform the school Principal.

#### **Identified Bullying Behaviour within a class**

Once the threshold for bullying behaviour has been identified, the school will follow the steps below:

- The well-being of the pupil experiencing bullying will be prioritised by ensuring they are safe and feel supported.
- The class teacher will inform the parents/guardians of both the pupil experiencing bullying and the pupil engaging in bullying behaviour.
- The class teacher will request to meet with the parents/guardians of the pupil(s) involved in separate meetings. A member of the School Leadership Team will attend these meetings.
- Minutes of these meetings will be taken.
- The school will outline the results of their investigation.
- The school will address the impact of the actions and reinforce the school's expectations regarding behaviour.
- The school will apply appropriate consequences consistent with the school's code of behaviour.
- The school will implement interventions to support all pupils and families involved.
- The school will monitor the situation regularly by checking in with the pupils involved to ensure that the bullying behaviour has ceased and to provide continued support.
- The school will assess the outcomes of the interventions and determine if further actions are needed.
- The school will use insights from the incident to inform the annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta policy, ensuring continuous improvement in preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

#### **Determining Bullying Behaviour across classes.**

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour the following steps will be taken:

- The class teacher of each pupil involved will investigate the situation by gathering information and interviewing the pupils involved within their class.
- The relevant class teachers should liaise with each other and determine whether the behaviour meets the definition of bullying as outlined in the Bí Cineálta procedures.
- The teachers may consult with members of the School Leadership Team for advice.
- Once the threshold for bullying behaviour has been reached, the teachers will collectively meet with the school Principal.

#### **Identified Bullying Behaviour across classes**

Once the threshold for bullying behaviour has been identified, the school will follow the below steps:

- The well-being of the pupil experiencing bullying will be prioritised by

ensuring they are safe and feel supported.

- The relevant class teacher will inform the parents/guardians/guardians of the pupil experiencing bullying or the pupil engaging in bullying behaviour.
- The class teachers will request to meet with the parents/guardians of the pupils involved in separate meetings. A member of the School Leadership Team will attend these meetings.
- Minutes of these meetings will be taken.
- The school will outline the results of their investigation.
- The school will address the impact of the actions and reinforce the school's expectations regarding behaviour.
- The school will apply appropriate consequences consistent with the school's code of behaviour.
- The school will implement interventions to support all pupils and families involved.
- The school will monitor the situation regularly by checking in with the pupils involved to ensure that the bullying behaviour has ceased and to provide continued support.
- The school will assess the outcomes of the interventions and determine if further actions are needed.
- The school will use insights from the incident to inform the annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta policy, ensuring continuous improvement in preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

#### **Recording Bullying Behaviour:**

- All bullying behaviour will be recorded on our Aladdin system, using the approved form "Bullying Behaviour Incident Report Form" (Appendix 1). This will include the type of behaviour, names of pupils involved and impacted by the bullying behaviour, where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with pupils and parents/guardians, the actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour, engagement with external supports and the outcome.
- The Aladdin report will be made available to staff members where necessary to support pupils
- At each Board of Management meeting, the Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out:
  - The overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template) to the Principal since the previous report to the board.
  - Confirmation that all these cases have been or are being dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy.

#### **The following principles must be adhered to when addressing bullying behaviour:**

- ensure that the pupil 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 those involved

- listen to the views of the pupil who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- act in a timely manner
- inform parents/guardians of those involved at an early stage and work with parents/guardians throughout the process.

### **Important Notes**

- It is important for school staff to be fair and consistent in their approach to address bullying behaviour.
- Both the pupil who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the pupil who is displaying bullying behaviour need support.
- It is important that the pupil who is experiencing bullying behaviour is engaged with **without delay** so that they feel listened to, supported and reassured.
- School staff should identify the supports needed for the pupil who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties and ensure that their needs are met.
- Where bullying behaviour has occurred when pupils are not under the responsibility of the school, but the behaviour has an impact in the school, the school will support the pupils involved (see below).
- Where the pupil displaying the bullying behaviour is not a pupil in the school, but the pupil who is experiencing the bullying behaviour is a pupil in the school, the school will support the pupil who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as appropriate and engage with them and their parents/guardians to determine what steps can be taken.
- If 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 (2023)*.

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

A pupil reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than “look out” for them. Where this occurs, it is important that the member of staff shows empathy to the pupil, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the pupil to work out together what steps can be taken to address the matter and how their parents/guardians will be informed of the situation. It is important that the pupil who has experienced bullying behaviour feels safe.

Parents/guardians may also make schools aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action. Parents/guardians 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 may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

**Determining if Bullying Behaviour has Ceased:**

- The relevant class teacher(s) must engage with the pupils and parents/guardians involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress following the initial intervention. They should consider:
  - the nature of the bullying behaviour
  - the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour
  - the relationship between the pupils involved
- Even though the bullying behaviour may have ceased, ongoing supervision and support may be required for both the pupil who has experienced the bullying behaviour as well as the pupil who has displayed the behaviour. It can take time for relationships to settle and for supports to take effect. In some cases, relationships may never be restored to how they were before the bullying behaviour occurred.
- If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the pupils and parents/guardians and agree to meet again over an agreed timeframe until the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- Where it becomes clear that the pupil who is displaying the bullying behaviour continues 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 consequences are considered, this is a matter between the relevant pupil, their parents/guardians and the school. It is not appropriate to discuss these consequences with other children or parents/guardians.

**Complaint Process**

- If a parent/guardian is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with these procedures, they should be referred to the school's complaints procedure. The schools' complaint procedures can be accessed on the school website or by contacting the school office.
- If a pupil and/or parent/guardian is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, a pupil and/or parent/guardian may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions have had a negative effect on the pupil.
- The Office of the Ombudsman for Children can be contacted at [ococomplaint@oco.ie](mailto:ococomplaint@oco.ie)

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):

- A range of appropriate in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience. These may include:
  - Social skills groups
  - Buddy Programmes
  - Group work such as circle time
  - Revision of specific Stay Safe lessons with class groups
  - Individualised support with a trusted adult (SET, SNA...etc)
- If pupils require further supports, the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise the same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour. This may include:
  - NEPS psychologist
  - DCU Anti-Bullying Centre
  - CAMHS
  - GP
  - Education Welfare Service – TESS
  - National Parents Council
  - Oide
  - TUSLA

## 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 pupil-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: Gerry O' Connor

Date: 29/5/25

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: Yvonne Slevin

Date: 29/5/25

(Principal)

# BOM Ratification

|                                             |                                   |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>LMETB School/College:</b>                | <b>Dunshaughlin CNS</b>           |
| <b>Date of Board of Management Meeting:</b> | <b>29/5/25</b>                    |
| <b>Policy:</b>                              | Bí Cineálta Anti- Bullying Policy |
| <b>Proposed By:</b>                         | Jonathan Dunne                    |
| <b>Seconded By:</b>                         | Laura Murphy                      |
| <b>Signed by Chairperson BOM:</b>           | Gerry O' Connor                   |

## Appendix 1: Bullying Behaviour Incident Report Form

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Staff Member(s) involved: \_\_\_\_\_

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour you should consider the following questions:

1. Is the behaviour targeted at a specific pupil or group of pupils?
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.

1. Name of pupil(s) involved in engaging in bullying behaviour(s):  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Name of pupil(s) experiencing bullying behaviour(s):  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Person reporting / concerned about bullying behaviour (tick as appropriate)

|                                                      |  |
|------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Pupil involved in behaviour / experiencing behaviour |  |
| Other pupil (s)                                      |  |
| Staff member                                         |  |
| Parent/Guardian                                      |  |
| Other                                                |  |

4. Location of reported bullying behaviour (tick as appropriate)

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| School classroom |  |
| School yard      |  |
| School devices   |  |
| Other            |  |

5. Type of bullying behaviour reported (tick as appropriate)

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Physical                   |  |
| Verbal                     |  |
| Written bullying behaviour |  |
| Extortion                  |  |
| Exclusion / Isolation      |  |
| Cyber Bullying             |  |
| Relational                 |  |

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Other (please specify) |  |
|------------------------|--|

6. Brief description of bullying behaviour:

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

7. Impact of bullying behaviour:

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

8. Details of action taken (tick as appropriate)

|                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Parents/guardians/Guardians informed |  |
| Restorative Conversation             |  |
| Social skills group / SET support    |  |
| SPHE lessons                         |  |
| Social Stories                       |  |
| Close / specific observation         |  |
| Other (please specify)               |  |

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Staff member)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal)

Review date: \_\_\_\_\_

Bullying Behaviour ceased? Yes / no