



# Lecarrow CNS Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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

The Board of Management of Lecarrow Community 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 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. 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	1 <sup>st</sup> May 2025	Online questionnaire
Students	27 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	Online questionnaire, discussion groups
Parents	1 <sup>st</sup> May 2025	Online questionnaire
Board of Management	14 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	Discussion at Board of Management meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	May 2025	Discussion with bus drivers
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):

- The school endeavours to create an environment where students and school staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported.
- The school community supports a “telling” environment.
- Relationships are at the centre of bullying behaviour prevention, and students are encouraged to talk to trusted adults within the school if they, or another student, is experiencing bullying behaviour.
- The school ensures the school is a safe physical space by:
  - Providing appropriate supervision at all times
  - Ensuring staff are visible at break times
  - Visibly displaying artwork to promote the school’s values.
- The school promotes teaching and learning that is collaborative and respectful.



- Curricular subjects offered to students provide opportunities to foster inclusion and respect for diversity.
- The SPHE curriculum and related learning programmes are taught to foster students' well-being, self-confidence and sense of belonging and to develop students' sense of personal responsibility for their own behaviour and actions.
- Students are supported to participate in the development and implementation of school policies and plans.

#### Preventing cyberbullying behaviour:

- Implementing the SPHE curriculum
- Implementing the Digital Media Literacy curriculum which teaches students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship
- Having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- Developing and communicating an acceptable use policy for technology
- Referring to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour
- Promoting or hosting online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online\*
- Holding an Internet safety day to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour

\* The digital age of consent is the minimum age a user must be before a social media or Internet company can collect, process and store their data. In Ireland the digital age of Consent is 16.

For the purposes of data collection, students between the age of 13 and 16 years old must have parental permission to sign up to social media services where companies use the legal basis of consent to collect, process and store users' data. Most social media platforms and services have a minimum age requirement and for the majority of these services it is 13 years' old. Therefore technically, children under the age of 13 should not have a social media account. It is important for their child's safety, that parents are aware of their children's use of Technology including smartphones and gaming consoles.

#### Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour:

- Implementing the SPHE curriculum
- Maintaining an inclusive physical environment such as by displaying relevant posters
- Encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- Challenging gender stereotypes
- Conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour, as appropriate
- Encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour

#### Preventing racist bullying behaviour:

- Implementing the SPHE curriculum
- Fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students "see themselves" in their school environment
- Having the cultural diversity of the school visible and on display
- Conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise

awareness of racism

- Encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- Encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour
- Providing supports to school staff to respond to the needs of students for whom English is an additional language and for communicating with their parents
- Providing supports to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma students, and to encourage communication with their parents
- Inviting 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

Preventing sexist bullying behaviour:

- Implementing the SPHE curriculum
- Ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex
- Ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex
- Celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contributions of all students
- Organising awareness campaigns, workshops and presentations on gender equality and respect
- Encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home

Preventing sexual harassment:

- Implementing the SPHE curriculum
- Using SPHE to teach students about healthy relationships and how to treat each other with respect and kindness
- Promoting positive role models within the school community
- Challenging 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 (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

Students are supervised at all times in the school, in as much as is possible. When using devices (e.g. tablets, chromebooks, etc.) children's internet use is monitored and safe-search restrictions are in place (see Acceptable Use Policy). Appropriate levels of supervision are provided when the children are outside at break times (see Child Safeguarding Statement). Appropriate levels of supervision are provided when the children attend events/experiences off-site (see Child Safeguarding Statement).



## Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Tracy Kilgannon (Principal), Marie Murray (Deputy 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):

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred:

- Interview each child individually
- Meet all students involved as a group
- Each student will retell their account of what happened to clarify each other's views at this group meeting
- Each student will be supported, as appropriate, following the meeting
- Interviewing teacher will use supporting documentation to determine whether bullying has occurred

If it is determined that bullying behaviour has occurred:

- Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour need support.
- Inform parents of those involved – consult on appropriate further actions
- Implement relevant strategies and supports to address the bullying behaviour
- Engage with students and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress
- Review the effectiveness of strategies used to date in consultation with students and parents
- Provide ongoing supervision and support
- If the student displaying bullying behaviour is continuing to do so, the school may refer to its Code of Behaviour to identify further strategies/actions to use/take.

*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.*

*A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved.*

*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 should 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.*

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):

Supportive approaches may include (not exhaustive):

- Teach relevant SPHE lessons
- Build classroom community through circle time and team-building activities
- Teach relevant GMGY lessons
- Provide individual/ small group support to build self-esteem
- Friends for Life
- Restorative circles
- Monitor and review the situation regularly and adapt strategies used if needed
- Regularly monitor the efficacy of strategies and supports used and review/ adapt as necessary



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## Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools

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: *P. O'Sullivan* Date: 11/6/2025  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: *Tracy Kilgannon* Date: 11/6/2025  
(Principal)

# Appendix C

## Guide to Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The whole school community has a responsibility to prevent and address bullying behaviour. Schools should work in partnership with their patron, board of management, staff, students and their parents to develop and implement their *Bí Cineálta* policy.

This appendix is intended as a guide to addressing bullying behaviour. It is 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

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

When addressing bullying behaviour teachers should:

- > ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured
- > seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- > conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- > consider the age and ability of the students involved
- > listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- > take action in a timely manner
- > inform parents of those involved

### 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 you should 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?

- > if a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with 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 be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident(s)

### **Where bullying behaviour has occurred**

- > parents are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with schools, in addressing bullying behaviour. Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the students involved must be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to consult with them on the actions to be taken to address the behaviour
- > it is important to listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- > a record should be kept of the engagement with all involved
- > this record should 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 should 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 must engage with the students involved and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement
- > important factors to consider as part of this engagement are the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the students involved
- > the teacher should document the review with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and their parents in relation to this

- > the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased should also be recorded
- > any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted
- > ongoing supervision and support may be needed for the students involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased
- > if the bullying behaviour has not ceased the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents. A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased
- > if it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school consideration should 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 should be referred to the school's complaints procedures
- > if a parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions have had a negative effect on the student