

St. Declan's National School

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Bí Cineálta 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 policy was ratified by the Board of Management, made available to parents and circulated to staff.

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1. Introduction

The Board of Management of St. Declan's NS 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.

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.

2. 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.

3. Review of our Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour (Section A)

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

Members of School Community	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	14/01/26 21/01/26	ISLM Meeting Staff Meeting
Students	January 19th - 21st 2026	Survey completed by all the children from 3rd - 6th Class
Parents	January 2026	Survey sent to all Parents Parents' Association meeting
Board of Management	28th January 2026 3rd February 2026	BOM review BOM meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	N/A	N/A
Date policy was approved: 3rd February 2026		
Date policy was last reviewed: 17/06/2025		

4. Preventing Bullying Behaviour (Section B)

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.

St. Declan's N.S. aims to prevent bullying behaviour through the following list of approaches and activities which are set under the four areas of the Department of Education's *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice*

4.1 Culture and Environment

- We promote a telling environment
- We value positive student-teacher relationships
- Teachers may use Worry Boxes in classrooms
- We survey children in senior classes regularly
- We ensure that supervision policy is implemented and regularly reviewed

4.2 Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

- Particular programmes may be used to prevent bullying behaviour such as Friends for Life, Weaving Wellbeing, FUSE, Anti-bullying Initiative etc. as determined by the need/resources where appropriate.
- We encourage peers to work in small groups which can help build a sense of connection, empathy and belonging among students

- We implement the Social Personal Health Education policy in full
- Curricular subjects offered to students provide opportunities to foster inclusion and respect for diversity

4.3 Policy and Planning:

- We acknowledge and are aware that school policies play an important role in supporting the wellbeing of the school community. There are a range of policies such as the school's Code of Behaviour, Special and Inclusive Education policy, Supervision and Acceptable Use policy which support the school community to prevent bullying behaviour
- We value the voice of the child and regularly consult with students in the development/review of policies and plans, where appropriate e.g. through student council, assemblies, surveys and class meetings

4.4 Relationships and Partnerships:

- We recognise the role of the whole school community in preventing bullying behaviour.
- Engagement with the Board of Management, students, staff and parents is valued and encouraged through Board meetings, staff meetings, parent-association meetings, parent-teacher meetings, student councils, assemblies, newsletters, school website/social media accounts etc.

Specific school strategies and approaches are outlined below to prevent cyberbullying, homophobic/transphobic, racist and sexist bullying behaviour.

4.5 Preventing cyberbullying behaviour

The increase in the use of technology has led to students becoming increasingly vulnerable to cyberbullying or unacceptable online behaviour.

Schools should proactively address these challenges by promoting digital literacy, digital citizenship, and fostering safe online environments. Strategies to prevent cyberbullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- Implementing the SPHE curriculum in full, including the Stay Safe programme
- Holding a Safer Internet Day which teaches students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship

- Having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- Regular/frequent communication with parents regarding safety online and how to monitor their child's safety
- Implementing and reviewing the school's 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
- Liaising with the community Garda to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour
- Children's mobile phones may not be used or seen in school or on school based activities. See Code of Behaviour for further information.

4.6 Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour

Strategies to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- 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
- events/information to raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour for students, school staff and parents
- encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour
- ensuring that library reading material and texts represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults
- Professional development for staff

4.7 Preventing racist bullying behaviour

Strategies to prevent racist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- 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
- events/information to raise awareness of racism for students, school staff and

parents

- 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
- Consider resources available to students e.g. variety of skin colour crayons
- Multi-cultural celebrations and awareness-raising events

4.8 Preventing sexist bullying behaviour

Strategies to prevent sexist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- 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

4.9 Supervision and Monitoring policies in place

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):

- Supervision Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Code of Behaviour

- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment
- Safety, Health and Welfare statement

5. Addressing Bullying Behaviour (Section C)

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

The relevant Class Teacher

(Where the Class Teacher is unavailable/absent for a period of time, an alternative staff member may be assigned responsibility for addressing the 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

5.1 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):

5.1 (a) Approaches to addressing bullying behaviour

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:

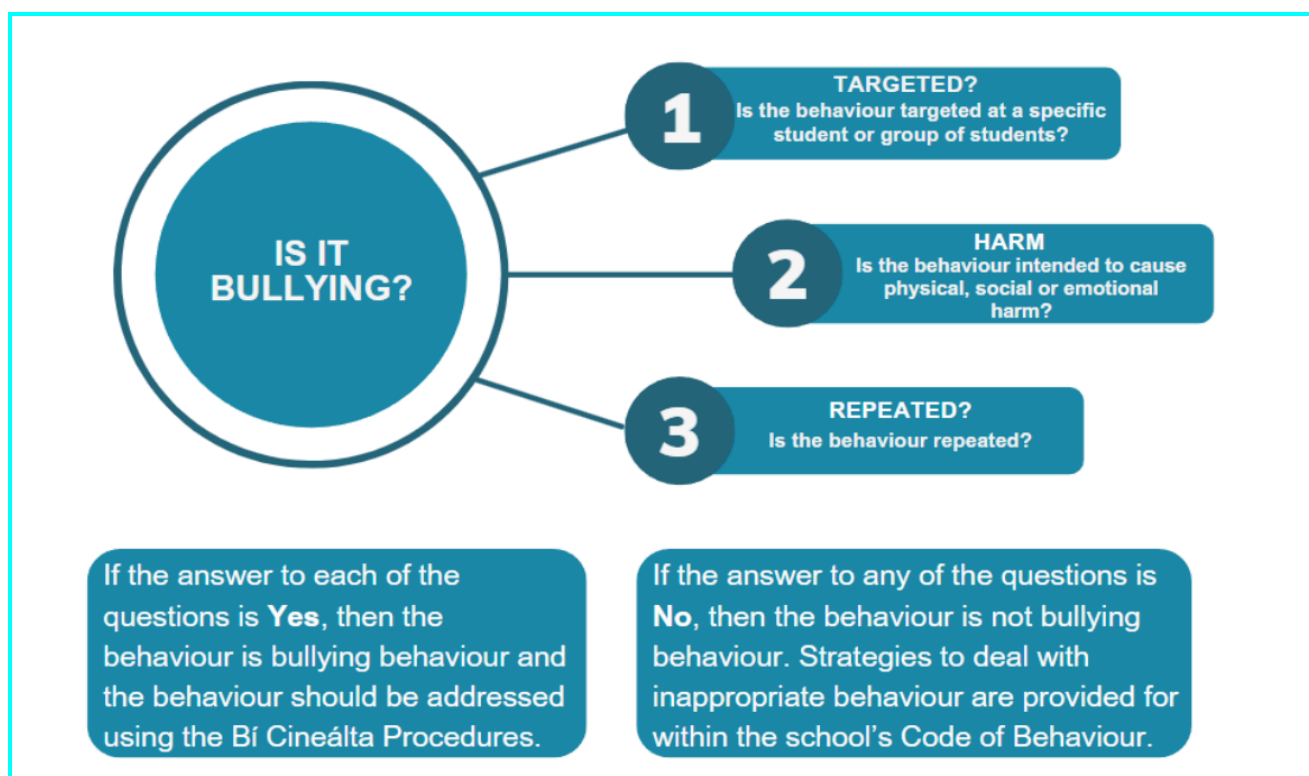
- ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured
- seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- consider the age and ability of the students involved
- listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying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

5.1 (b) 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.

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)

5.1 (c) 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
- the school generally employs a restorative practice approach to address bullying 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

(See appendix for Addressing Bullying Behaviour flow chart summarising the above steps)

5.1 (d) 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 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

5.2 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):

The school's programme of support for working with those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour involves may include but is not limited to the following;

5.2 (a) Supports for those who experience bullying behaviour may include:

- Listened to, supported and reassured
- Indicating clearly that the bullying behaviour is not the fault of the child who has experienced bullying behaviour
- Check-ins
- Helping students develop their self-esteem
- In certain situations, where warranted and resources allow, a student may access additional support from teachers/SNAs in the school (including through the Continuum of Support)

5.2 (b) Supports for those who display bullying behaviour may include:

- Helping students to understand the effects of their behaviour and develop empathy towards those affected
- Check-ins
- Helping students develop their self-esteem
- To allow a "fresh start" once an issue has been resolved
- In certain situations, where warranted and resources allow, a student may access additional support from teachers/SNAs in the school (including through the Continuum of Support)

5.2 (c) Supports for those who witness bullying behaviour may include:

- Listened to, supported and reassured
- Praised for reporting the bullying behaviour, where applicable
- Check-ins

We will use resources, as appropriate, including those developed by National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), Oide (Department of Education's support service for schools) and Webwise (online safety initiative) to support children affected by bullying behaviour.

5.3 Recording 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.



6. Oversight (Section D)

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 and dated:

	
Ms. Geraldine Boylan	Mr. Cian Kearins
Chairperson of the Board of Management	Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management
Date: 3/2/2026	Date: 3/2/2026

Bí Cineálta!

We want everyone at our school to feel safe and happy.

If you think that you are being bullied or someone else is being bullied, you need to tell a teacher or another adult that you trust. They will know what to do to help.

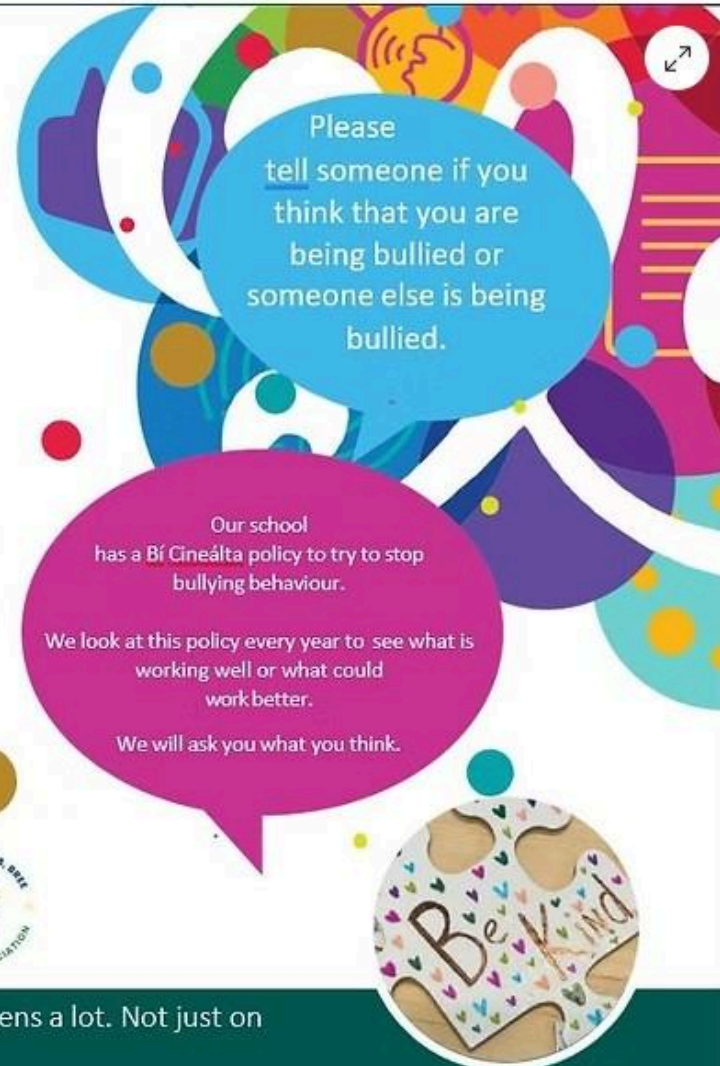


If a student tells a staff member that they think they are being bullied, we will:

- > talk with the student
- > work out a plan together

If it is bullying, we will:

- > talk to their parents
- > talk to the other student(s) involved
- > talk with the other student's parents



Please tell someone if you think that you are being bullied or someone else is being bullied.

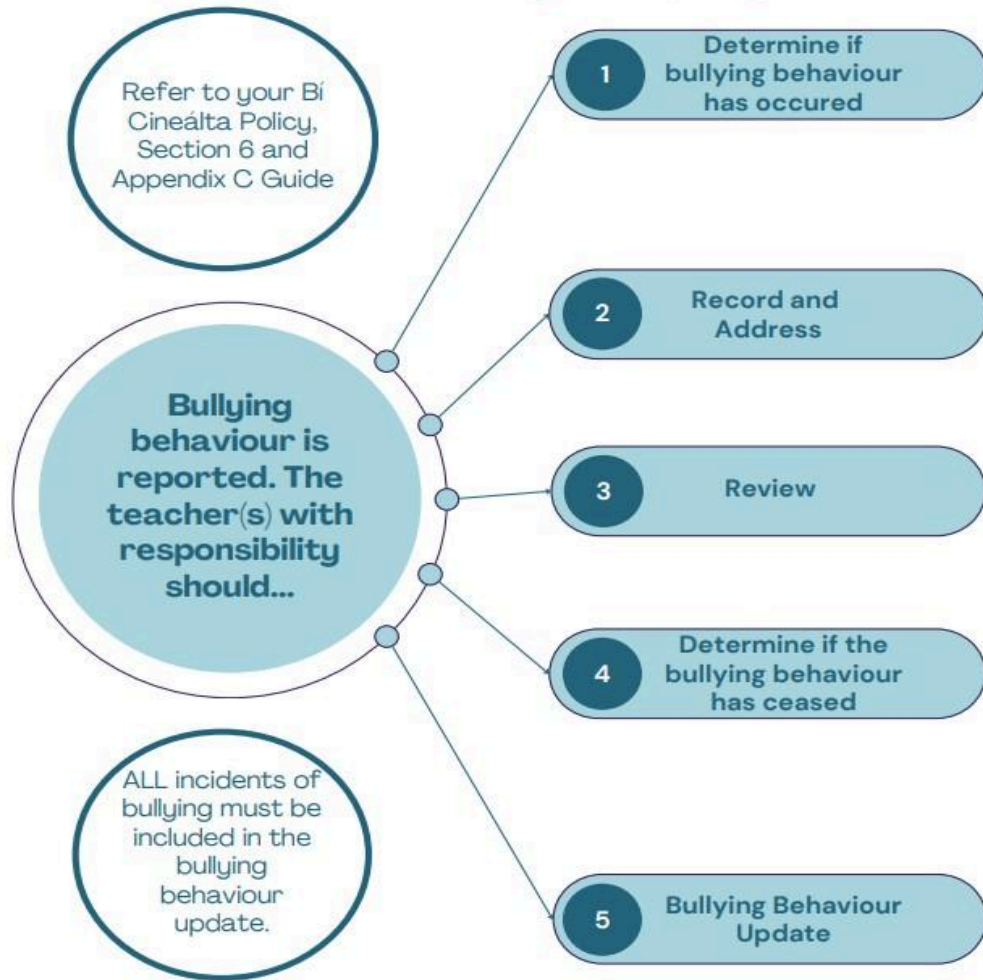
Our school has a Bí Cineálta policy to try to stop bullying behaviour.
We look at this policy every year to see what is working well or what could work better.
We will ask you what you think.

Bullying behaviour is when someone keeps being mean or hurtful to others on purpose over and over again.

When it happens a lot. Not just on

Appendix: Student- Teacher Flowchart

Bí Cineálta: Addressing Bullying Behaviour



Teacher(s) investigate as per school policy. Record as per Section 6.5.

If the behaviour **IS NOT** bullying, deal with in line with your Code of Behaviour.

If the behaviour **IS BULLYING**, proceed to Step 2.

Record as per Bí Cineálta policy and Section 6.5, Bí Cineálta.

Inform parent(s) of parties involved at an early stage.

Complete agreed actions, as per your Bí Cineálta policy, monitor and evaluate.

No more than **20 school days after initial engagement**, review with student(s) and parent(s).

If bullying has ceased, continue to monitor.

If bullying has **not ceased**, review strategies, seek external support, if appropriate, and review within the agreed timeframe.

Principal must include all bullying behaviour in their update to the board.

Principal provides verbal update to the board.

Review policy, if needed.



Oide

Tarló leis an bhFoghlaim Ghairmiúil i meais Ceannairí Scoile agus Múinteoirí

Supporting the Professional Learning of School Leaders and Teachers

Appendix: Is it Bullying? Flowchart

