



DERRYQUAY  
NATIONAL SCHOOL

# Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Derryquay N.S 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 steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent all 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 everybody 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 everybody has a part to play in the school community, regardless of difference.

### **Definition of bullying**

Bullying is defined in *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying* and *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* as targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society. The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the *Bí Cineálta* procedures.

Each school is required to develop and implement a *Bí Cineálta* policy that sets out how the school community prevents and addresses bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

## 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	03/04/2025  30/4/25 staff meeting  15/05/25 half day closure	Microsoft Forms Questionnaire  Bí Cineálta was discussed.  Staff half day closure – staff provided with the opportunity to discuss the new Bi Cinealta action plan and stemming from this discussion, staff were informed of the important points in dealing with an incidence or report of bullying – notice board in staff room with the relevant information displayed as well as resources and record form. Staff given time to discuss and relay feedback. Sharing of draft policy with staff to discuss / consult and make any amendments
Students	03/04/25 May '25	Microsoft Forms Questionnaire Design a Bí Cineálta Poster Competition
Parents	03/04/25	Microsoft Forms Questionnaire
Shared proposed policy	12/05/25	Email to parents
Board of Management	08/10/2024  19/05/25	Board Meeting to adopt the new procedures.  Ratify new policy draft – leading to consultation and final ratification after amendments made where necessary
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	May '25	Available on the school website.
Date policy was approved:		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

## Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by this school to address all forms of bullying behaviour, in whatever form and however motivated, including online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment.

In developing the preventative strategies which Derryquay National School will use to prevent all forms of bullying behaviour, we come from the context of our Catholic ethos, where inclusivity permeates our 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 our 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 further engagement by the school, young people and parents, will be used to discern appropriate supports for young people in this school and to help inform future prevention strategies.

### **Culture and Environment: We strive to :**

- Create a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.
- Involve parents as active partners in fostering an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated.
- Support the idea that our school is a telling environment.
- Promote the concept of a trusted adult – stay safe linkage – who to tell.
- Create safe spaces in our school building and yards – visibility
- Incorporate artwork and signs to promote our school values – equality, inclusion and respect.
- Encourage a sense of belonging with ownership over their own space through art and creativity.

Create a positive school culture and climate which is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity; one which encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and promotes respectful relationships across the school community; Ways in which we work to achieve

these goals are as follows:

- Staff are briefed on the uniform approach we must take to handle all reports of bullying – this is distributed to staff and a copy is displayed on the Staff Room notice board for ease of access also.
- Anti Bullying week activities such as Random acts of Kindness homework, Poster making, slogan making, etc
- Playground helpers – students in older classes volunteer to support younger classes on yard to help with games and positive interactions.
- Child Friendly Anti- Bullying Policy was formed with pupil and parent input and is distributed to parents, children and staff to discuss. This policy outlines various ways to tell.
- Parents receive information at times regarding useful information on Anti Bullying.
- Stay safe and SPHE lessons focusing on positive behaviour form part of curricular content in all classes.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils.
- Notice board to promote kindness and build responsibility amongst pupils.

**Curriculum ( teaching and learning) We strive to :**

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

Ways in which we work to achieve this:

- Teach SPHE and RSE content which fosters student’s well-being and self-confidence as well as promoting personal responsibility for their own behaviours and actions.
- Model respectful behaviour towards colleagues, pupils and visitors in our school environment.
- Curricular and Extra-curricular activities can help to develop a sense of self-worth, working together, inclusion and respect.
- Students are given regular opportunities to work in small groups with peers, which can help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy.
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and to explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.

Supports for staff;

- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

**Policy and planning**

The aim of Derryquay National School’s Bi Cinealta policy is :

- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school

management, teachers, pupils, parents/guardians.

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

### **Relationships and Partnerships**

-Interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as our parents' association, our various student committees and groups.

-Age and stage appropriate awareness initiatives that engage the student body in looking at their own behaviour – promoting acts of kindness and friendship, being an active help to others and looking at the causes of and impact of bullying during SPHE lessons.

-Conducting workshops and seminars for students, staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying.

Encouraging peer mentoring and peer support

-Supporting active participation of students in school life and active participation of parents in school life also.

-Engaging parents and students in actively contributing to the formation of a Child Friendly Anti Bullying Policy to make them active participants in promotion of and discussion of useful ways to identify and reduce bullying behaviour and highlight procedure and how to deal with it if it does occur.

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 of the Internet Policy

Code of Behaviour

Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment

### Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

All teachers have the responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour. The Principal/Deputy Principal will provide support and will become involved where appropriate.

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):

The whole school community has a responsibility to prevent and address bullying behaviour. The following approach and steps are 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, the teachers with responsibility will:

- > 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.

**Stage 1 - 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. Where bullying behaviour is suspected, parents/guardians report it to the class teacher. To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour we will consider the following questions:

1. Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?
2. Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?
3. Is the behaviour repeated?

If the answer to each of the questions above is Yes, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour, and the behaviour should be addressed using the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

**Note:** One-off incidents may be considered bullying behaviour 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 (Stage 1), teachers should consider what, where, when and why? as follows: (Note that these steps are required – as outlined in the Procedures):

> Where one student is reported to be involved, the student should be engaged with individually at first.

> Thereafter, this student and the student who is reported to be experiencing the bullying behaviour should be met together.

> If a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first.

> Thereafter, all students involved and the student who is reported to be experiencing the bullying behaviour 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).

> Parents will be supported by the school, if needed, with recommendations for useful resources/guides to help them support their children.

Stage 2: 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.

> All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the form and type of behaviour if known (see pages 20-24, Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the Bí Cineálta procedures for descriptions/examples of the forms and types of bullying 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.

> The record should be shared with the Principal.

Stage 3: 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 (available on our website).

> 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 (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

We take all instances of bullying behaviour on a case-by-case basis, but we may use the following approaches generally: All students involved will be checked-in with regularly and behaviour will be monitored carefully.

The teacher will check-in with parents too and will look for their ongoing support to monitor their child at home and to communicate with the school if needed.

We will use resources, as appropriate – including those developed by NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service), Oide (support service for schools) and from programmes/sites such as Webwise and FUSE.

All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with students and parents. The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented. If the bullying behaviour is a child protection concern the matter will be addressed without delay in accordance with *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

#### **Section D: Oversight**

The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting. This update will include the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting, the number of ongoing incidents and the total number of incidents since the beginning of the school year. Where incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred, the principal will also provide a verbal update which will include where relevant, information relating to trends and patterns identified, strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant. This update does not contain personal or identifying information. See Chapter 7 of the *Bí Cineálta* procedures.

This policy is available to our school community on the school's website and in hard copy on request. A student friendly version of this policy is displayed in the school and is also available on our website and in hard copy on request.

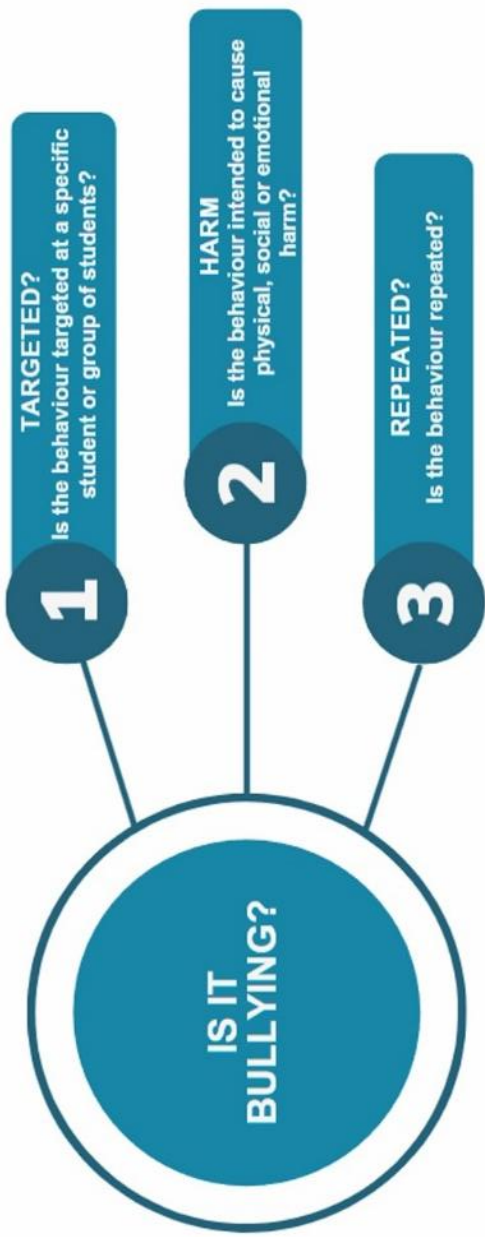
This policy and its implementation will be reviewed, following input from our school community, each calendar year or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this policy refers.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

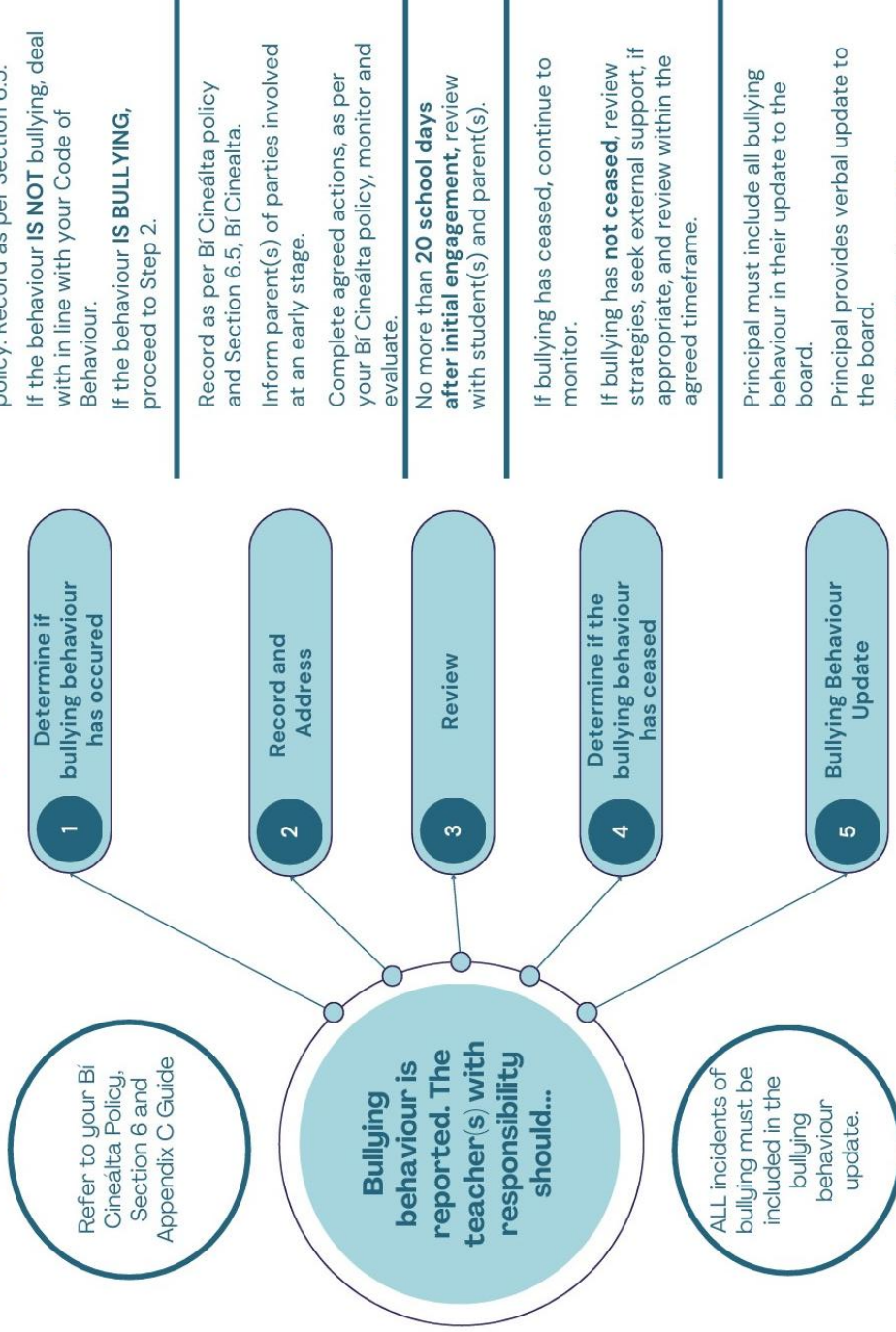
(Principal)



If the answer to each of the questions is **Yes**, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour and the behaviour should be addressed using the Bf Cineálta Procedures.

If the answer to any of the 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.

# 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.