



Abbeyleix South National School

Scoil Náisiúnta Mainistir Laoise Theas

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Abbeyleix South 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. Ireland ratified the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child in September 1992. In doing this we committed to promote, protect and fulfil the rights of children.

Bullying is a children's rights issue. Bullying interferes with the following rights of the child:

- The right to freedom of expression (Article 13)
- The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 14)
- The right to freedom of association and freedom of peaceful assembly (Article 15)
- The right to privacy (Article 16)
- The right to be protected from all forms of abuse and neglect (Article 19)
- The right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health (Article 24)
- The right to education (Article 28)
- The right to enjoy their own culture, religion or language (Article 30)

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 core definition above sets out clear criteria to help school communities to prevent, correctly identify and address bullying among students. Alleged incidents of bullying are however often complex and must be considered on a case-by-case basis. The core elements of the definition are further described below:

Targeted behaviour

- Bullying is deliberate, unwanted behaviour that causes harm to others, and where the student displaying bullying behaviour knows that their behaviour is or will be perceived as harmful by the child or young person experiencing the behaviour. Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. The harm can be physical (for example, personal injury, damage to or loss of property), social (for example, withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion) and/or emotional (for example, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety) and can have a serious and long-term negative impact on the student experiencing the bullying behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying but, importantly, must still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour.

Repeated behaviour

- Bullying takes the form of a systematic pattern of behaviour which is repeated over time. Single offline incidents of intentional negative behaviour involving an imbalance of power are not considered bullying but must still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour. Posting a single harmful message/image/video online, and which is highly likely to be reposted or shared with others can therefore be seen as bullying behaviour.

Imbalance of power

- In incidents of bullying, the student experiencing the bullying behaviour finds it hard to defend themselves as a result of the abuse of a real or perceived imbalance of power. This imbalance of power may manifest itself through differences in size, strength, age, ability, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, race, ethnic origin including membership of the Traveller and/or Roma communities, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, experience of the care system, disability or the receipt of special education. In incidents of online (or cyber) bullying, the imbalance of power may relate to online anonymity, technical proficiency and possession of information/images/video, and the inability of the targeted student to remove offensive online material or escape the bullying.

Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour

- A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards another student is not bullying behaviour. **However, a single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be visible to a wide audience and has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and so becomes a repeated behaviour.**

Disagreement between students, or instances where students don't want to be friends or to remain friends, is not considered bullying behaviour **unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others including deliberate manipulation of friendship groups.**

Some students with special educational needs may have social communication difficulties which may make them communicate their needs through behaviours that can hurt themselves or others. It is important to note that these behaviours are not deliberate or planned but, in certain situations, **they are an automatic response which they can't control.**

Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying.

These behaviours, while not defined as bullying, can be distressing.

Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

Criminal Behaviour

- Bullying behaviour can be considered criminal behaviour under certain circumstances and legal consequences can apply. The age of criminal responsibility in Ireland is 12 years.

Some online behaviour may be illegal, and students need to be aware of the far-reaching consequences of posting inappropriate or harmful content online. In cases of intimate imagery, the Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020, also known as Coco's Law, **criminalises the non-consensual sharing of intimate images and also criminalises threatening to share these images.**

If bullying behaviour **involves physical violence or threats of violence**, it may be considered **assault**.

If bullying behaviour involves **discrimination or hate speech** targeting a student based on their race, religion, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation or membership of the Traveller community, it may be **considered a hate crime** under the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989, and those engaging in such behaviour may face criminal charges.

If bullying behaviour **involves sexual harassment or sexual assault**, this may also be **considered criminal behaviour**.

An Garda Síochána is the appropriate authority to investigate alleged criminal behaviour.

When Bullying behaviour becomes a child protection concern

Section 10 of the Children First Act, 2015 places a statutory obligation on schools, as a 'provider of a relevant service' to ensure, as far as practicable, that each child attending the school is safe from harm while attending school or otherwise participating in school activities.

Generally bullying behaviour can be addressed without the involvement of Tusla. However, bullying behaviour may become a child protection concern when it results in significant physical or emotional harm, or where it becomes a persistent and severe problem and measures taken to address it are not effective.

In determining when bullying behaviour should be reported to Tusla the following factors should be considered:

- The impact on the child
- Protective/appropriate action taken by parents
- Protective/appropriate action taken by the school
- Engagement of child/family with support services such as NEPS

If there is doubt about whether bullying behaviour is a child protection concern schools should contact Tusla's social work department for advice. This will enable the social worker to explore the situation with the school staff and provide advice on the best course of action.

Types of Bullying behaviour deemed to be inappropriate:
(this list is not exhaustive)

General behaviours which apply to all	• Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g., sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc. • Physical aggression • Damage to property • Name calling • Slagging • The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person
	• Offensive graffiti • Extortion • Intimidation • Insulting or offensive gestures • The “look” • Invasion of personal space • A combination of any of the types listed. • Exclusion • No innocent bystander
Cyber	• Denigration: Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person’s reputation • Harassment: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual • Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person’s name • Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight • Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online • Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images • Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group • Cyber stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety • Silent telephone/mobile phone call • Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls • Abusive text messages • Abusive email • Abusive communication on social networks e.g., Facebook/Instagram/Tik Tok/Be Real/Twitter/You Tube etc. or on games consoles • Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures • Abusive posts on any form of communication technology

Identity Based Behaviours	Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).
Homophobic and Transgender	Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation • Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation • Name calling e.g., gay, queer, lesbian ... used in a derogatory manner • Physical intimidation or attacks • Threats
Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community	Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background • Exclusion on the basis of any of the above
Relational	This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include: • Malicious gossip ▪ Isolation & exclusion • Ignoring • Excluding from the group • Taking someone's friends away • "Bitching" • Spreading rumours • Breaking confidence • Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear • The "look" • Use of terminology such as "nerd" in a derogatory way
Sexual	Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching • Harassment
Special Educational Needs, Disability – Learning Difficulties and Gifted	Name calling • Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs • Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying • Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues. • Mimicking a person's disability • Setting others up for ridicule

Where bullying behaviour can occur

Bullying behaviour can happen anywhere, online or offline and at any time, but there are certain places and times where bullying behaviour can be more likely to occur. These can include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

Inside School – School yard, Classroom and other areas such as toilets and corridors.

Outside School – 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 bullying continues in school, schools should deal with it in accordance with policy.

Rights and Responsibilities of Each Member of the School Community

Right	Responsibility
I have the right to be safe in school	I have a responsibility to make our school a safe and secure place for others

Rights and responsibilities of students and staff

I have a right to be:	I have the responsibility to ensure that:
- Treated with respect - Physically safe and to expect my property to be safe at school - Free from all forms of bullying - Able to learn & teach without disruption	- Others are treated with respect - Others are physically safe and the property of others is safe - Others are free from all forms of bullying - Others/students are able to learn without disruption - Bullying behaviour is acted upon as appropriate

Rights and responsibilities of parents and guardians

I have a right to:	I have the responsibility to ensure that:
Expect that my child is safe in school and can learn without disruption	- I report bullying behaviour to the school - Co-operate fully with the implementation of school policy

Responsibilities of bystanders/witnesses

I should:	I should not:
- Say 'no' or 'stop' when you see or hear someone behaving unfairly - be assertive but not aggressive - Seek help immediately from an adult, if the situation is dangerous. - Tell when you know a student is being bullied.	- Join in bullying behaviour for example, laughing at, sneering, 'slagging' or fighting etc. - Cheer on somebody who is bullying. - Stay in a dangerous situation, e.g. a fight. - Bully the 'bully'.

Development of our Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Group:	Date of consultation:	Method of consultation:
School Staff	Wednesday 2 nd April	Staff Training – Sinéad Keegan Half Day closure. Survey completed.
Pupils	April 2025 June 2025	Policy development focus groups and survey. Pupils were given a questionnaire to seek their input in developing an Anti-Bullying policy in Child Friendly Format – their wording, examples and suggestions were all taken into account when drafting this Policy. In June this policy was distributed to all households. See Appendix 1
Parents	Wednesday 26 th March	Parent Bí Cineálta Workshop (Sinéad Keegan) and survey. Feedback sought.
	June 2025	Bí Cineálta policy draft shared with parent body and parent association for feedback.
Board of Management		Meeting Review new policy draft – leading to consultation and final ratification after amendments made where necessary.
Wider School Community (secretary, caretaker)		Outline of policy with secretaries and policy published on school website.
Date policy was approved		June 2025
Date policy was last reviewed		

Bí Cineálta Staff Questionnaire

Teaching Staff and SNAs - 6 responses

Question	Yes	No
Have you seen the school's Anti-Bullying Policy?	100%	
Do you know how to access the school's Anti-Bullying Policy?	100%	
Do you know who is responsible to and addressing bullying behaviour in your class/school?	100%	
Have you engaged in professional development in this area?	83.3%	16.7%
What specific prevention strategies do you use in your classroom/school?	Teacher Comments noted	
Can you recall the most recent report of alleged or established bullying behaviour that was reported to you at this school?	83.3%	16.7%
If yes, what form of bullying behaviour occurred?	40% Verbal 40% Physical 20% report was made however on investigation not deemed to be bullying	
If yes, how did you deal with the incident and were you happy with the outcome?	Teacher Comments noted	
Where is bullying behaviour most likely to occur in this school? Top 3 areas please.	Yard 100% Outside school and coming to and from school 83.3% Classroom 66.7% Outdoor class, P.E etc 16.7% Other areas, hallway, toilets 16.7%	
Do you feel that this school is committed to dealing with bullying behaviour and its prevention? Please explain your answer.	Teacher Comments noted	
Is there anything else you would like to say about this school's approach to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour?	Teacher Comments noted	

Bí Cineálta Pupil Questionnaire

Pupils from 2nd – 6th classes 48 responses

Question	Yes	No
Is your school a happy and safe place to be?	97.9%	2.1%
Why? Why not?	Pupils' comments noted	
Is your classroom a safe place to be?	100%	
Do you know what bullying behaviour is?	100%	
Have you learned about bullying behaviour in school?	97.9%	2.1%
Are you being bullied in any way? If yes, please tell an adult at home or at school. They will know what to do to help.	10.4%	89.6%
Is there anyone in your class being picked on?	10.4%	89.6%
Is anyone being left out, or ignored on purpose?	6.3%	93.8%
Is anyone spreading gossip or rumours online or offline?	4.2%	95.8%
Are pupils from other classes giving anyone in this class a hard time?	8.3%	91.7%
Are there any areas in school where you feel unsafe?	10.4%	89.6%
If yes, tell us where	Pupils' comments noted	
Are there any areas coming to or from school where you feel unsafe?	4.2%	95.8%
If yes, please tell us where.	Pupils' comments noted	
Have you seen bullying behaviour happening recently?	4.2%	95.8%
If yes, where did it take place	Pupils' comments noted	
Is there an adult here at school you could talk to if you were worried about or experiencing bullying?	100%	
Do you have any ideas about what the school can do to stop bullying behaviour from happening?	58.3%	41.7%
If yes, please tell us	Pupils' comments noted	

Bí Cineálta Parent/Guardian Questionnaire

30 responses

Question	Yes	No
Does your child feel safe in our school?	93.3%	6.7%
If no, explain.	2 responses noted	
Have you seen the school's anti-bullying policy?	73.3%	26.7%
Do you know how to access the school's anti-bullying policy?	80%	20%
Do you know who to contact if you have a concern regarding bullying behaviour?	93.3%	6.7%
Does your child/children feel that they can talk to a member of school staff if they have a worry or concern about bullying behaviour?	90%	10%
Has your child/children ever experienced bullying behaviour in this school? Core definition of Bullying Behaviour: Bullying is 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. Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools - Department of Education	36.7%	63.3%
Has your child/children ever engaged in bullying behaviour?	3.3%	96.7%
Has your child/children ever witnessed bullying behaviour?	46.7%	53.3%
If yes, were you happy with how this was dealt?	68.8%	31.3%
If no, please explain:	4 responses noted	
Do you feel this school is committed to dealing with bullying behaviour and its prevention?	93.3%	6.7%
If no, please explain:	4 responses noted	
Is there anything else you would like to say about the school's approach to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour? If yes, please advise below.	6 responses	
Will you attend the Bí Cineálta workshop for parents in school on Wednesday 26th March 9.45-10.45?	44.8%	52.2%

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):

Bullying Prevention aligned with Keys Areas of Wellbeing Promotion

Culture and Environment A positive and inclusive school culture and environment is essential to prevent and address bullying behaviour.	
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 – creation of a school charter promoting rights – equality, inclusion and respect. • Encourage a sense of belonging for pupils with ownership over their space through art and creativity. • Create a positive school culture and climate which is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity; 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 this:	• The staff is 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 • 'I Wish My Teacher Knew' Box • Continue with 'Trusted Adult' strategy • Playground helpers – students in higher classes volunteer to support younger classes on yard to help with games and positive interactions. Minders at lunchtime also. • Child Friendly Anti- Bullying Policy was formed with pupil input and is distributed to parents, children and staff to discuss. This policy outlines various ways to tell. See Appendix 2. • 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. • Staff wear hi-vis jackets while supervision at breaktimes. • Development of Restorative Practice strategies.
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Curriculum (teaching and learning)

Teaching and learning that is collaborative and respectful should be promoted.

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. • Acknowledgment of our diverse school population – celebrating diversity and culture in our school through art, displays, photographs, international events. • Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and 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 wellbeing of the school community should be at the heart of school policies and plans.

The aim of Abbeyleix South 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.
Policies that are linked to our Bí Cineálta Policy:	• Code of Behaviour Policy • Acceptable Use Policy • Child Safeguarding • Data Protection • iPad Acceptable use policy • Internet Acceptable use policy • Social Media Policy • Wellbeing Policy • Staff aware that they are all mandated persons, child protection procedures handed out each year as reminder and complete Children First E-Learning Programme. • Principal & Deputy Principal complete DLP/DDLP training and refreshers

Relationships and Partnerships

Strong interpersonal connections are a vital part of effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

- Interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as our parents' association, committees in school such as Amber Flag committee, Green Schools Committee.
- Supporting active participation of students in school life and active participation of parents in school life also.
- Engaging 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.
- Conducting workshops and seminars for students, staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying.
- 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. Eg. The A Lust For Life Programme.
- Linking with external services e.g. NEPS, CAMHS, Tusla, Gardaí
- Linking with BOM, PA, Students' Council, Local clubs
- Student Support Team
- Guest Speakers
- Garda Visits
- Extra-Curricular- Coaches

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour:

Preventing Cyber Bullying, Homophobic/Transphobic bullying, Racist bullying, Preventing sexual harassment.

In addition to above mentioned strategies, the school has the following in place to prevent and address bullying:

- Staff at all times endeavour to encourage pupils to show respect for each other.
- Implementation of the SPHE curriculum.
- Positive self-esteem is fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences, by acknowledging good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success.
- Digital Media Policy includes learning about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship. AUP also developed for technology in our school.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed regularly with the pupils.
- The staff is particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of bullying/ being bullied. Pg 27 3.3 (Bí Cineálta Procedures)
- All disclosed incidents of bullying are investigated thoroughly and consistently by following the correct procedure as outlined to staff and recorded as policy indicates.
- School wide awareness raising on all aspects of bullying, supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extracurricular activities.
- Involvement of pupils in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Kindness/ anti-bullying week, and other activities that can help to pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Refer to appropriate online behaviour when using devices and in SPHE lessons.
- Promote online safety events/webinars or material for parents.
- The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school e.g. www.tacklebullying.ie, www.antibullyingcentre.ie, www.webwise.ie
- Challenge gender- stereotypes – equal participation of all. Equal recognition.
- Raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour and encourage students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour.
- Foster a culture where diversity is celebrated and students “see themselves” in the school environment.
- Ensuring the library has material with reflects our diverse school population from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
- Modelling of respectful behaviour by staff of all irrespective of sex.
- Ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of sex.
- Making clear that our school has a zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment of any kind with enforceable policy.

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

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour the teacher should consider the following: **what, where, when and why?**

- **Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?**
- **Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?**
- **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 student 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, 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 3 for record document 1)**

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 be noted **(See Appendix 4 for record document 2)**
- ongoing supervision and support may be needed for the students involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased
- **Note:** 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 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 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 *BíCineálta 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

Requests to take no action

- A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than “**look out**” for them. The student may not want to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They may feel that telling someone might make things more difficult for them. Where this occurs, it is important that the member of staff shows empathy to the student, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the student to work out together what steps can be taken to address the matter and how their parents will be informed of the situation. It is important that the student who has experienced bullying behaviour feels safe.
- Parents may also make schools aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school **take no action**. *Parents 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.*

The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour.

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.

Teachers will be encouraged to attend training in Restorative Practices.

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. See Appendix 5 Update.**

Where incidents of bullying behaviour have been reported since the last meeting, 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
- any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant.
- If any serious incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred which have had a serious adverse impact on a student
- If a parent has informed the school that a student has left the school because of reported bullying behaviour
- If any additional support is needed from the board of management
- If the school's Bí Cineálta policy needs urgent review in advance of the annual review.

This update does not contain personal or identifying information. See Chapter 7 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

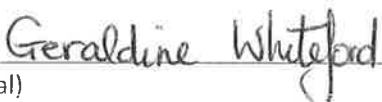
The minutes of the board of management meeting will document the number of new incidents of bullying behaviour; the number currently ongoing and the total number of incidents of bullying behaviour since the beginning of the school year.

The minutes will also note where the board has considered the bullying behaviour verbal update and document when the board has decided that an urgent review of the policy is required.

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.

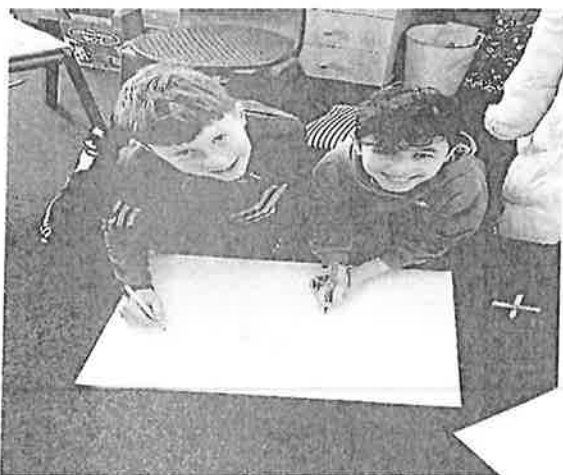
This policy and its implementation will be reviewed, following input from our school community, each calendar year or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this policy refers. **See Appendices 6 and 7 Review.**

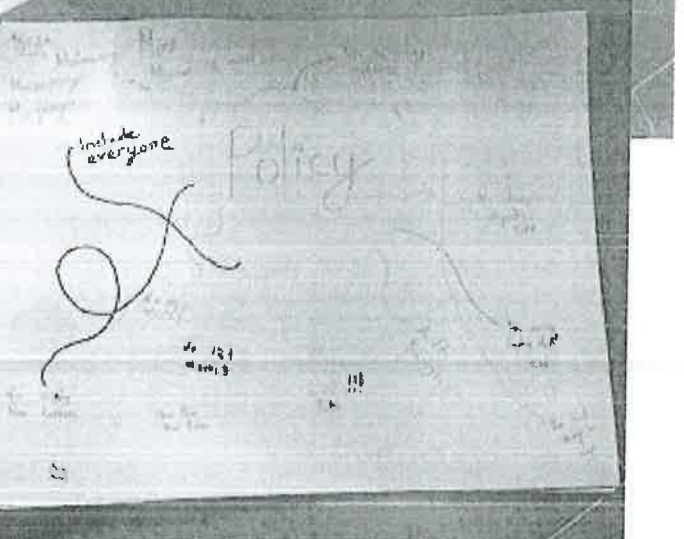
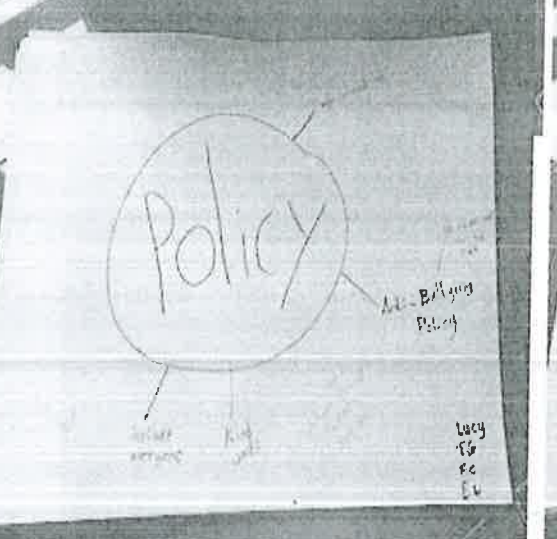
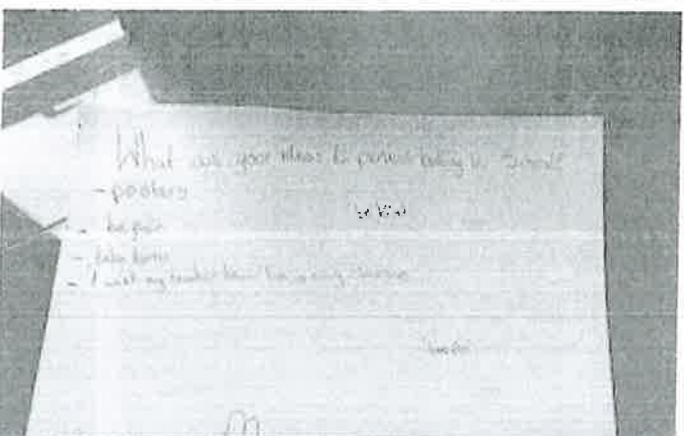
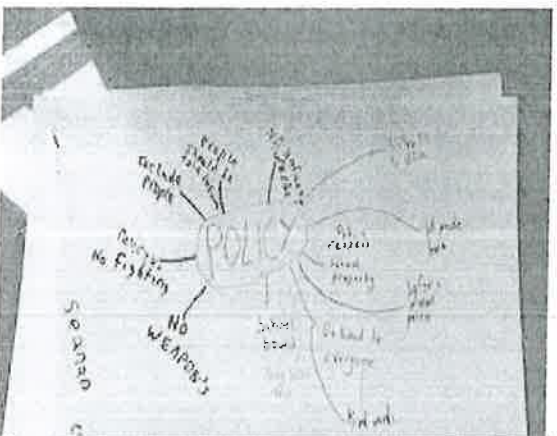
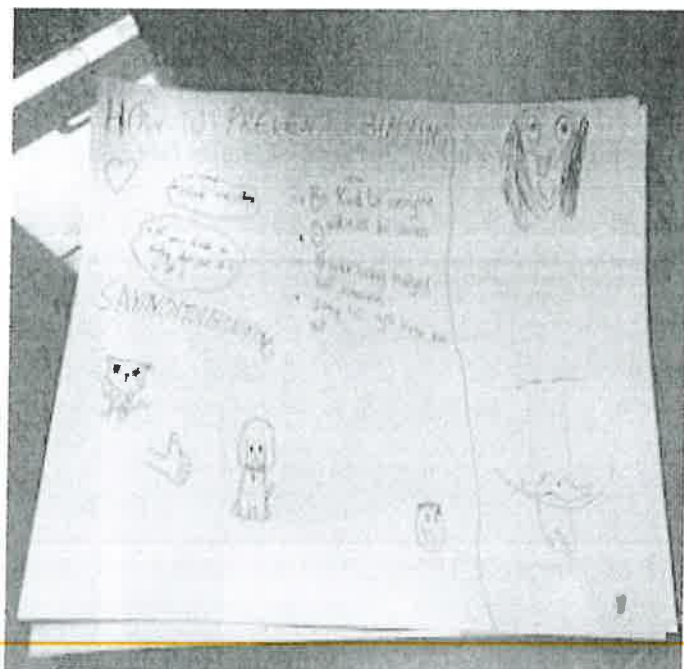
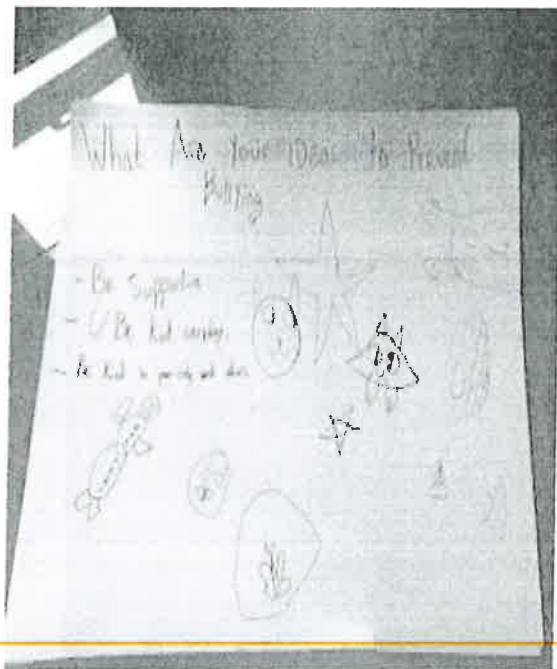
Signed:  Date: 14/10/25
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed:  Date: _____
(Principal)

Appendix 1

Developing our Policy - Images of charts from Bí Cineálta Workshops and Focus Group discussions





Parent and Staff Workshops

Policy and Planning

Policy and Planning

Well	Next
- Review bullying policy up to date - Well being policy - Refer to SMSC programmes in teacher planning - Bring in well-being initiatives from other schools	- More staff training - Keeping all policies updated - Social Learning - Well-being

Policy and Planning

For

- Bringing Awareness to Policy
- Including Parents in the process
- Including the Children in the process

Next Step

- Continuing the conversation around bullying
- Continuing Wellbeing, Wellbeing, and other initiatives
- Opening the lines for verbal communication between parents & teachers
- Policies need to be reviewed and implemented, a commitment to parents
- Teacher & Parents are the best - Not the tests!
- ~~Don't let child decide if it is~~
on how to be sensitive to parents
(we don't know either)
- 21 days rule is too long! - most parents don't know what is this rule?
- Timing of meetings need to better accommodate Parents
- Email more information to Parents who can't attend

Curriculum

Curriculum

What the school is doing well?	What are the next steps?
- Teaching the Stay Safe programmes - How to deal with bullying, etc. - Anti-bullying messages integrated into other curriculum areas - Social stories	- More staff training - Update policies - Social stories

Curriculum

Stay Safe Program

- Parent & Child Workshops
- Raising the children's awareness to bullying Parents
- Dedicating class time to the issue

What is the School doing?

- Awareness
- Early Intervention
- Communication
- Open dialog

Next Step

- Equip children with tools and language to navigate both online + in person situations.
- Progress the conversation around Stay Safe.
- Don't just have a written policy - let's implement!

Relationships and Partnerships

Relationships & Partnerships

Doing well

- Building good relationships and respect from beginning of year
- Having a positive and inclusive classroom environment - children feel comfortable communicating any issues
- Always checking in with pupils
- Events including Whole School Community e.g. Sports Day, Nativity, End of Week, Too etc

Next Steps

- Ensure the entire staff are on the same page
- More 'form' building

Relationships & Partnerships

Doing well

- Educating kids
- Kids have someone to talk to
- Supporting parents & teachers
- Circle of Time
- Being mindful of children's needs
- Good teacher-child relationships in general

Improve

- Communication's lack of with parents
- Teachers not communicating with each other regarding issues
- Issues to most teachers is a problem
- Need the resources for providing positive (good) written communication - (parents need to know)
- Understanding for parents of how restorative practice works in reality for our kids
- Communication Book

Culture and Environment

Culture & Environment

Now - In action

- Large amount of support
- Talking environment
- Visual reminders
- Printer, Ink / Newsletter / Website
- Buddy Bunches & play options
- Social, emotional needs accommodation
- Senior/Junior buddies

Next Steps

- Increase visuals
- Additional play/learning/etc options
- Clear responsibility/engagement of different groups
- Make assembly more engaging/practice
- Circle chairs - try to change the dynamic
- Make more use of the outdoor classroom + surrounding areas

Culture & Environment

Improve

- No access to school
- Parents feel uncomfortable
- Who is the point of contact within school to deal with Bullying issues
- Teachers in year need to be better briefed on class ✓
- Better outdoor supervision
- Teachers can be dismissive ✓

* ✓ = Agree

Easier ways for parents to touch base quickly over a minor issue with teachers

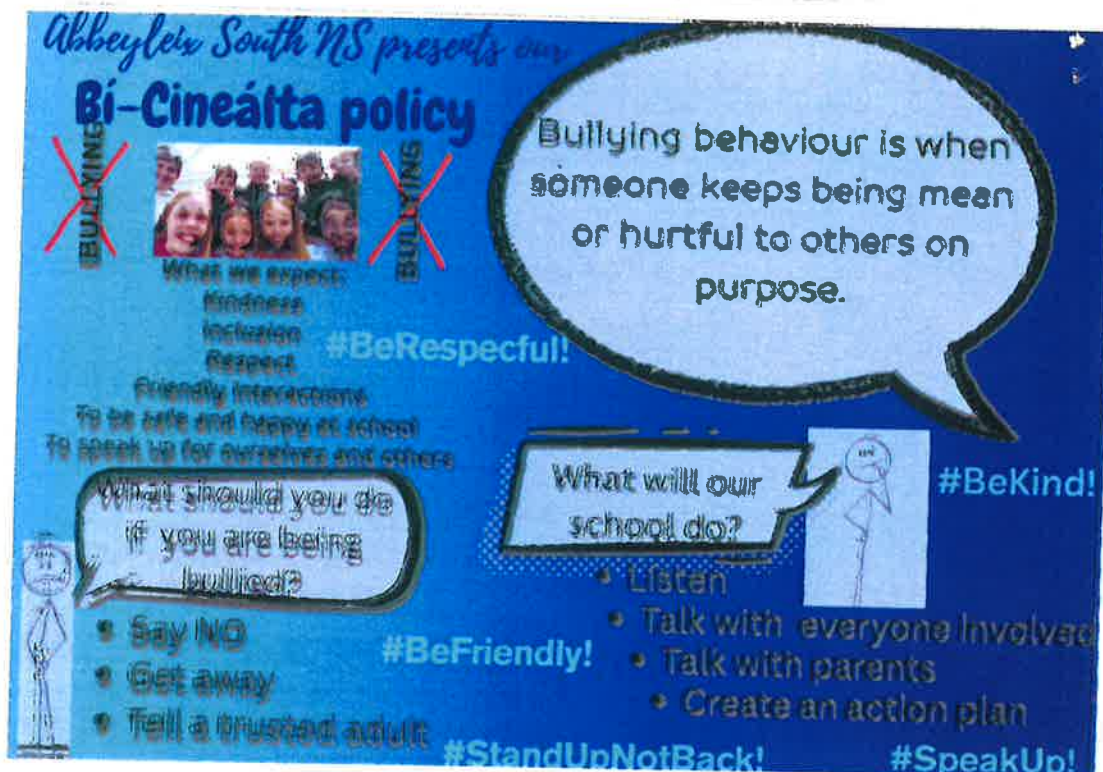
Improve consistency

Doing well

- Kids enjoy school environment
- Good social activities with mix of groups
- Access Control
- Opening up the conversation

Appendix 2

Child Friendly Policy



Appendix 3

RECORD DOCUMENT 1

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

Relevant Teacher: _____

Date: _____

Source of bullying concern:

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour the teacher should consider the following: **what, where, when and why?**

Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students? Yes ☐ No ☐

Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm? Yes ☐ No ☐

Is the behaviour repeated? Yes ☐ No ☐

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.

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.

Did this occur?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Request to take no action: Yes ☐ No ☐

Requests to take no action

- A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than “**look out**” for them. The student may not want to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They may feel that telling someone might make things more difficult for them. Where this occurs, it is important that the member of staff shows empathy to the student, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the student to work out together what steps can be taken to address the matter and how their parents will be informed of the situation. It is important that the student who has experienced bullying behaviour feels safe
- Parents may also make schools aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school **take no action**. **Parents 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**

Where bullying behavior has occurred

Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour

This template is only to be used when bullying behaviour has been identified, in line with the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

1. Date of initial engagement with pupil(s) and parent(s)

2. Initials of pupil who has experienced bullying behaviour and class group

Initials _____ Class _____

3. Initials and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

Initials _____ Class(es) _____

4. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))*		5. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))*	
Pupil concerned		Yard	
Other Pupil		Classroom	
Parent		Corridor	
Teacher		Toilets	
Other		Other (specify)	

6. Initials of person(s) who reported the bullying concern and/or relationship to the pupil(s)

7. Dates of when the bullying behaviour occurred

6. Form of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box/boxes) See page 21

Physical Bullying Behaviour		Exclusion Bullying Behaviour	
Verbal Bullying Behaviour		Relational Bullying Behaviour	
Written Bullying Behaviour		Online Bullying Behaviour	
Extortion		Other (specify)	

7. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box/boxes)

Disablist Bullying Behaviour		Homophobic/Transphobic (L4BTQ+) Bullying Behaviour	
Exceptionally Bullying Behaviour		Physical Appearance Sexual Harassment	
Gender Identity Bullying Behaviour		Racist Bullying Behaviour	
Sexist Bullying Behaviour Sexual Harassment		Religious Identity Bullying Behaviour	
Poverty Bullying Behaviour		Other (specify)	

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

--

9. Views of pupil(s) and parent(s) regarding the actions to be taken

--

**10. Date for review with pupil(s) and parent(s)
(within 20 days)**

--

If bullying behaviour continues beyond the review timeframes, the school's Code of Behaviour is to be used.

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher)

Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

Appendix 4

RECORD DOCUMENT 2

Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred – 20 days following initial engagement

1. Date of initial engagement with pupil(s) and parent(s)

2. Date of follow up engagement with pupil(s) and parent(s)

3. Initials of pupil who has experienced bullying behaviour and class group

Initials _____ Class _____

4. Initials and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

Initials _____ Class(es) _____

Outline the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the students involved:

Has the bullying behaviour ceased? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, date bullying ceased: _____

Views of students:

Views of parent(s)/guardians:

Engagement with external services/supports: Yes ☐ No ☐

Note: Ongoing supervision and support may be needed for the students involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased.

If the bullying behaviour has not ceased

Review strategies:

Timeframe agreed for further engagement until the bullying has ceased:

Note: 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 Code of Behaviour**. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school.

Appendix 5

Guide to Providing Bullying Behaviour Update

Guide to providing Bullying Behaviour Update for Board of Management meeting of Abbeyleix South National School

Having reviewed the details of the incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the previous board of management meeting, the principal must provide the following information at each ordinary meeting of the board of management:

Total number of new incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the last board of management meeting.	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour currently ongoing.	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the beginning of this school year	

Where incidents of bullying behaviour have been reported since the last meeting, the update must include a verbal report which should include the following information where relevant:

- the trends and patterns identified such as the form of bullying behaviour, type of bullying behaviour if known, location of bullying behaviour, when it occurred etc
- the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour
- any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour
- if any serious incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred which have had a serious adverse impact on a student
- if a parent has informed the school that a student has left the school because of reported bullying behaviour
- if any additional support is needed from the board of management
- if the school's Bí Cineálta policy requires urgent review in advance of the annual review

This update should not include any personal information or information that could identify the students involved.

Appendix 6

Review of the Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual (calendar) review of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and its implementation in consultation with the school community. As part of the review, this document must be completed.

Bí Cineálta Policy Review

1. When did the Board formally adopt its Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour in accordance with the *Bí Cineálta Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*?
Insert date when the Bí Cineálta policy was last adopted by the school.

____/____/20____

2. Where in the school is the student-friendly Bí Cineálta policy displayed?

3. What date did the Board publish the Bí Cineálta policy and the student-friendly policy on the school website?

____/____/20____

4. How has the student-friendly policy been communicated to students?

5. How has the Bí Cineálta policy and student-friendly policy been communicated to parents?

6. Have all school staff been made aware of the, school's Bí Cineálta policy and the *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*?

Yes ☐ No ☐

7. Does the Bí Cineálta policy document the strategies that the school uses to prevent bullying behaviour?

Yes ☐ No ☐

8. Has the Board received and minuted the Bullying Behaviour Update presented by the principal at every ordinary board meeting over the last calendar year?

Yes ☐ No ☐

9. Has the Board discussed how the school is addressing all reports of bullying behaviour?

Yes ☐ No ☐

10. Is the Board satisfied that all incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed in accordance with the school's BÍ Cineálta Policy?

Yes ☐ No ☐

11. Have the prevention strategies in the BÍ Cineálta policy been implemented?

Yes ☐ No ☐

12. Has the Board discussed the effectiveness of the strategies used to prevent bullying behaviour?

Yes ☐ No ☐

13. How have (a) parents, (b) students and (c) school staff been consulted with as part of the review of the BÍ Cineálta Policy?

14. Outline any aspects of the school's BÍ Cineálta policy and/or its implementation that have been identified as requiring further improvement as part of this review:

15. Where areas for improvement have been identified, outline how these will be addressed and whether an action plan with timeframes has been developed?

16. Does the student-friendly policy need to be updated as a result of this review and if so why?

17. Does the school refer parents to the complaints procedures if they have a complaint about how the school has addressed bullying behaviour?

Yes ☐ No ☐

18. Has a parent informed the school that a student has left the school due to reported bullying behaviour?

Yes ☐ No ☐

19. Has the Office of the Ombudsman for Children initiated or completed an investigation into how the school has addressed an incident of bullying behaviour?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Appendix 7

Notification regarding the board of management's annual review of the school's

Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management of Abbeyleix South National School confirms that the board of management's annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour and its implementation was completed at the Board of Management meeting on

This review was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Education's *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Principal)

Date of next review: _____