Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Introduction:

The Board of Management of Kilmacanogue National School has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

This policy fully complies with the requirements of *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* 2024.

The Board of Management acknowledges that bullying behaviour interferes with the rights of the child as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We all, as a school community, have a responsibility to work together to prevent and address bullying behaviour and to deal with the negative impact of bullying behaviour.

We are committed to ensuring that all students who attend our school are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our students is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our students, and we are fully committed to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

We confirm that we will, in accordance with our obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the harassment of students or staff on any of the nine grounds specified: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

Definition of bullying

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

Please note that the following are not considered bullying behaviour:

- A once off instance of negative behaviour
- Disagreement between students
- Instances where students don't want to remain friends
- Non-deliberate behaviours of students with special educational needs

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 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	April 2024 March 2025 - May 2025 May 2025	Neuro-Inclusion Teacher Survey Wellbeing/Inclusion discussed at staff meeting and team meetings Bí Cineálta In-School Consultation Day
Students	April 2024 June 2025	Neuro-Inclusion Pupil Survey Pupil Questionnaire – School Snapshot
Parents	June 2025	Policy shared with Parents' Association for feedback
Board of Management	May 2025	Policy shared with BOM for feedback and approval
Date Policy was approved: June 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by the school. These include strategies specifically aimed at preventing online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

- Teachers influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner through a range of curricular initiatives and positive, inclusive talk and modelling respectful practices.
- A "telling environment" is promoted. Telling a trusted adult is actively encouraged and facilitated.
- Trusted adult identified for all students. In most cases this is the class teacher, but for more vulnerable pupils this may be an SET, SNA, member of ISM and/or Behavioural support teacher
- Duties relating to Inclusion and Wellbeing have been assigned to a member of the In-school Management (ISM) Team, to promote and coordinate wellbeing and inclusion across the school.
- Teacher and SNA Professional Learning related to emotional and behavioural wellbeing, Bí Cineálta and restorative practice is encouraged and facilitated.
- Bí Cineálta Risk Assessment to identify risk areas around the school (as part of staff and student surveys) and strategies implemented to minimise these risks.
- A Behaviour Support Teacher has been appointed from our SEN allocation, to support vulnerable, target pupils exhibiting behaviours of concern.
- Pupils are provided with a space to voice their concerns and suggest changes or initiatives through the Student Council. The principal regularly checks in with the student council to consult or provide feedback.
- We proactively develop positive relationships and strong communication links with parents using a variety of resources: Parents' Association, Class Dojo, Aladdin, school newsletters and school website
- Respectful behaviour is reinforced in the start of year meetings with teachers and parents.
- Respectful behaviour is at the core of class rules which are established at the beginning of the year in every classroom.
- SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the interrelated areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships.
- The Stay Safe programme is a personal safety skills programme which seeks to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying. This content is recorded in teachers' monthly progress reports.
- RSE aims to provide opportunities for children to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way.
- Further examples of programmes in use:
  - Zones of Regulation programme to develop pupil's self-awareness and self-regulation skills.

- o Restorative Practice: Several members of staff have had training in Restorative Practices, and these are informing our approach when resolving social, emotional or behavioural incidences.
  - o Other resources and programmes include: Oide Anti-Bullying Support Material, Fun Friends, Walk Tall.
- Focus on cyberbullying during Internet Safety Week every year, incorporating Cyber Bullying packs from Webwise and Prim-Ed, talks for pupils and parents.
- The school has an Acceptable Use Policy 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):

- Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Health and Safety Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- Risk Assessment
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Parental Complaints Procedure

A number of additional policies are due for introduction or review in the school year 2025-2026:

- Protected Disclosures Policy
- SPHE Policy
- Yard Policy
- Dignity in the Workplace Policy (to protect staff from inappropriate behaviours).
- Special Education Policy

We are in the process of incorporating Inclusion and Wellbeing awareness into all school policies as part of our Wellbeing Statement and ongoing School Self-Evaluation.

Section C: Steps to investigate, address and review bullying behaviour

This section contains an outline of 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 procedures to review progress (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures).

Section C1: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The personnel with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour are as follows:
- Board of Management: Anti-bullying report to the BOM at every meeting. Response to on-going behaviours in line with the school code of behaviour.
- Principal/Deputy Principal: anti-bullying coordinators; provide support for staff, parents and pupils in dealing with any incidences of bullying.
- In-School Management (ISM) Team: This team reviews the policy annually and monitors its implementation regularly, including the creation and implementation of annual Action Plans and support class teachers.
- Teaching Staff.
    - o Model positive behaviour.
    - o Proactively address bullying and respectful behaviours (see preventative strategies above)
    - o Investigate and record incidents of bullying behaviour.
- SNAs:
    - o Model positive behaviour.
    - o Assist teachers in monitoring pupils and activities on the yard and around the school
    - o Report any witnessed behaviours of concern to a teacher or member of the management team.
- Behavioural Support Teacher: Supporting vulnerable, target pupils and working with these pupils in a proactive and reactive way to address self-awareness, self-regulation, social communication skills, respectful behaviours and bullying.
- Administrative and Auxiliary Staff: Report any witnessed behaviours of concern to the principal.

Section C2: Steps to Determine if Bullying has Occurred

- All members of the school community have access to the Bí Cineálta policy and should know what to do if they experience or witness bullying behaviour.
- It is important for school staff to be fair and consistent in their approach to address bullying behaviour.
- The following principles must be adhered to when investigating bullying behaviour. Staff must:
    - ○ 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 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 at an early stage (if bullying has been determined) and work with parents throughout the process.
- To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour, the school will consider the three key Bí Cineálta questions. This determination is made by staff, with support from management as deemed necessary.
- **Bí Cineálta 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 as laid out in this policy. If the answer to __any__ of these questions is No, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour.
- Note: One-off incidents may be considered bullying in certain circumstances. A single hurtful message posted online / 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 behaviour reported is deemed __not__ to fit the criteria of bullying behaviour, as described above, staff will inform parents of this determination. The behaviour will be addressed under the school's Code of Behaviour.
- If it is determined by staff that bullying behaviour __has__ occurred, the school will follow these steps:
    - Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour should be engaged with individually at first.
    - If a group of students is involved, each student should be also 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 also be helpful to record or ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident.

Section C3: Approaches taken to address the 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).

- Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour need support.
    - It is important that the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour is engaged with __without delay__ so that they feel listened to, supported and reassured.
    - School staff should identify the supports needed for the student who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties and ensure that their needs are met.

- A range of appropriate in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience. These may include:

  - Social skills groups
  - Buddy Programmes
  - Group work such as circle time
  - Revision of specific Stay Safe lessons with class groups
  - Individualised support with a trusted adult (behaviour support teacher, SET, SNA…etc)
  - Breakfast Club

- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise the same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour. This may include:

  - On-site play or art therapists
  - NEPS psychologist
  - Primary Care – Jigsaw
  - CAMHS
  - GP
  - Education Welfare Service – TESS
  - TUSLA

Section C4: Requests to 'do nothing'

- A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than "look out" for them. Where this occurs, it is important that the member of staff shows empathy to the 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 are required to 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.
- In cases where it is agreed to 'do nothing', other relevant staff may be informed and asked to monitor the student(s) closely for a period of time.

Section C5: Determining if Bullying Behaviour has Ceased and related procedures

- The teacher must engage with the students and parents involved **no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion** to review progress following the initial intervention. They should consider:
  - the nature of the bullying behaviour
  - the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour
  - the relationship between the students involved

- If the school determines that the bullying behaviour has ceased, parents are informed at this point. No further action is required under the Bí Cineálta procedures

- In the event of a further incident after a short period of time, this will be interpreted as a continuation of bullying behaviour.

- Where a longer amount of time has passed, a 'reset' is considered appropriate. As a general principle, all children are considered to have a 'clean slate' at the beginning of each school term.

- Even though the bullying behaviour may have ceased, ongoing supervision and support may be required for both the student who has experienced the bullying behaviour as well as the student who has displayed the behaviour. It can take time for relationships to settle and for supports to take effect. In some cases, relationships may never be restored to how they were before the bullying behaviour occurred.

- If the school determines that the bullying behaviour has <u>not</u> ceased, the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students and parents and agree to meet again over an agreed timeframe until the bullying behaviour has ceased.

- Where it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school should consider using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school.

Section C6: Bullying Behaviour that occurs Outside of School

- Schools are not expected to investigate or deal with bullying behaviour which occurs outside of school and/or when students are not under the responsibility of the school. This includes anything that happens outside of school premises and/or school hours, with the exception of school tours and trips where students are under the responsibility of school staff.
- The school is not responsible for investigating or dealing with bullying behaviour which may occur during after-school activities provided, as students are not under the responsibility of the school during this time. All matters relating to after-school activities must be raised directly with the relevant facilitator.
- Where bullying behaviour has occurred when students are not under the responsibility of the school but the behaviour has an <u>impact</u> in the school, students or parents may wish to inform the school. The school will support the students involved (see Section C3) but will not investigate the behaviour.
- If the bullying behaviour continues into the school environment, schools are required to address the bullying behaviour, providing it fits the definition of bullying as laid out above (see Section C2). Note: there must be repeated incidents of bullying behaviour experienced <u>*in the school*</u> in order for the school's Bí Cineálta procedures to come into effect. A single school-based incident may be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Where the student displaying the bullying behaviour is not a student in the school, but the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour is a student in the school, the school will

support the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour.

Section C7: Child Protection
● 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 C8: Recording Bullying Behaviour

● All bullying behaviour will be recorded on our Aladdin system, using the approved template (Appendix 1). 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, engagement with external supports and the outcome.
 ● At each Board of Management meeting, the Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out:
     ○ The overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template) to the Principal or Deputy Principal since the previous report to the board.
     ○ Confirmation that all these cases have been, or are being dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy.

Section C9: Complaint Process
● If a parent is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with these procedures, they should be referred to the school's Parental Complaints Procedure, which can be requested from the school office.   ● In the event that a student and/or parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, a student and/or parent 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 Office of the Ombudsman for Children can be contacted at ococomplaint@oco.ie

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 request and will be displayed on the school website. A student friendly version of this policy will be displayed in the school also.

Ratification and Review:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in June 2025, for enacting in September 2025. 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 by Judy O'Toole (Chairperson)   _____

                                    Date: _____

Signed by Mark Sheekey (Acting Principal)   _____

                                    Date: _____

Appendix 1: Bullying Behaviour Incident Report Form

Date: _____

Staff Member(s) involved: _____

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour you should consider the following questions:
1. Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?
2. Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?
3. Is the behaviour repeated?

o   Name of pupil(s) involved in engaging in bullying behaviour(s):

_____

o   Name of pupil(s) experiencing bullying behaviour(s):

_____

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

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

o   Location of reported bullying behaviour (tick as appropriate)

School classroom	
School yard	
School devices	
Other	

o   Type of bullying behaviour reported (tick as appropriate)

Physical	
Verbal	
Written bullying behaviour	
Extortion	
Exclusion / Isolation	
Cyber Bullying	
Relational	
Other (please specify)	

o   Brief description of bullying behaviour:

o   Impact of bullying behaviour:

Details of action taken (tick as appropriate)

Parents informed	
Restorative Conversation / Problem Solving circle	
Social skills group / SET support	
SPHE lessons	
Social Stories	
Close / specific observation	
Other (please specify)	

Signed: _____   Date: _____

(Staff member)

Signed: _____   Date: _____

(Principal)

Review date: _____

Bullying Behaviour ceased?   Yes / no