



Breifne College Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour 2025-2026

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Breifne College has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

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

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

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

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

Definition of bullying

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

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

Section A: Development/review of our Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour

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

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	28 th March 2025	Half day school closure – presentation to staff and wholeschool discussion. Read, review & give feedback on draft policy.
Students	March 2025	Student survey. Meeting with student focus group.
Parents	March 2025	Parent survey. Meeting with parent focus group (16/05/25). Email to PA seeking feedback on draft policy.
Board of Management	May 2025	New policy presented to the BOM.
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	April 2025	Bus Driver Survey and caretaker staff. Survey.
Date policy was approved:		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

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

Culture and Environment:

- Positive culture and environment
- Positive and inclusive school culture
- Positive and caring relationships
- Zero Tolerance to Bullying
- Effective leadership
- Tutor / Year-Head System
- A trusted adult
- Safe physical access
- Code of Behaviour Implementations
- Promoting a telling environment
- Well-Being Week/Ethos Day
- Supervision (Break; Lunch; Morning; Bus Duty)

- International Culture Day/ Seachtain na Gaeilge
- Online Concern Form for reporting a bullying concern.
- Opportunities to participate in class and whole school activities to raise self – esteem.
- Awareness Workshops such as: Bully4U Workshops, Mark McCormack - Resilience Workshops.
- Award Systems (e.g. Trip to cinema for 1st Years)
- Peer Mentors, Prefects (specific Anti-Bullying Prefects)
- Extra-Curricular Clubs / Activities to Help Social Interaction with Peers.
- Building / Environment for Lunch: Juniors and Seniors separated at Lunch.
- Toilet Environment: Juniors and Seniors separated toilets. Gender neutral toilet
- Out of Bound Areas defined.
- Workshops for staff on restorative practices, conflict resolution, and creating a positive school environment.

Curriculum (T&L):

- 12-minute tutor curriculum everyday will be delivered to all students which will focus on areas of anti-bullying such as examples of bullying, pros and cons of phone use, our core values, wellbeing etc.
- Extended tutor time to educate on
- Subject Department meetings to include space for addressing how to prevent/address bullying.
- Teaching and learning in SPHE (Bullying; Online Behaviour; Relationships; Mental Health).
- CSPE (Citizenship; Law; Rights; Responsibilities).
- RSE Curriculum.
- Home Economics/Science (Stereotypes; Well-Being).
- ICT Lessons (Webwise Online Safety)/ Think B4UClick.
- IT Teachers: Connected, PDST BinCTRL, Cyber Bullying tactics.
- SPHE: UP2US, Web We want
- CSPE: Think B4UClick
- Safe Internet Day
- Anti-Bullying Week
- Educate on Incel Culture / Toxic Masculinity
- Guest Speakers from Different Organisations – (Pieta House/ Women’s Aid/ DPSU/ Queer Phobia
- Extra - curricular activities to develop positive self-worth.
- Teaching methodologies: Group work/ Collaboration/Role - play, acting out scenarios.

Policy and Planning:

- Bí Cineálta policy
- Student friendly Bí Cineálta policy
- Strengthen the involvement of parents and students in the development and review of the policy.
- Guidance Policy
- Friday 5
- Code of behaviour
- Child safeguarding statement
- Acceptable use policy
- Supervision
- RSE Policy

- SEN policy
- Ethos Policy
- DEIS/ Wellbeing in education
- Whole school CPD
- Restorative Practice
- BFL
- Care Team Weekly Meetings
- Year-Head Meetings / Year Group Assemblies
- Staff & Student Journals
- AEN / Inclusion Policy
- Provision Mapping
- Mentoring Programme

Relationships and partnerships:

- Strong interpersonal connections.
- Regularly update parents on the measures being taken to prevent and address bullying behaviour and provide them with resources to support their children at home.
- Understanding/Fairness/Consistency
- Celebrating Strengths
- Restorative Approach
- Ethos: Care, Equality, Respect,
- Bullying awareness initiatives
- Student and parent participation
- Critical thinking Skills
- Promoting peer support
- Supporting activities that build empathy, respect and resilience.
- Safety
- Positive Role Model
- Boundaries
- Student Voice
- High Expectations
- Student lead campaigns
- Teacher to Student - Education during morning register
- Teacher to Teacher - CPD Training and Workshops

Specific Strategies for preventing cyber bullying behaviour

Preventing cyber bullying behaviour: (Note - the digital age of consent is the minimum age a user must be before a social media or internet company can collect, process and store their data. In Ireland the digital age of consent is 16. Children between 13 and 16 must have parental permission to sign up to social media services. Most social media platforms have a minimum age requirement and for the majority of these, it is 13 years old. Therefore, children under the age of 13 should not have a social media account).

- Implement programs and workshops that educate students on respectful online behaviour and the consequences of cyberbullying.
- Promoting digital citizenship
- Implementing SPHE curriculum
- Open conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online.
- Referring to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of Code of behaviour.
- Promoting online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their child's activities online.

- Internet safety day

Specific Strategies for preventing homophobic/ transphobic bullying behaviour

- Foster a school culture where diversity is celebrated, and students feel that they belong.
- Maintaining an inclusive physical environment such as displaying relevant posters.
- Encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities.
- Challenging gender-stereotypes.

Specific Strategies for preventing racist bullying behaviour

- Fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students feel that they belong “I belong” in their school environment.
- Encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities.
- Encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour. – “A telling environment”
- Providing supports to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma students, and to encourage communication with their parents.
- Include activities and events that promote cultural awareness and understanding, as well as support for students from ethnic minorities.
- Ensuring that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Specific Strategies for preventing sexist bullying behaviour:

- Ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex.
- Ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex.
- Celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contribution of all students.
- Encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home.

Specific Strategies for preventing sexual harassment:

- Promoting positive role models within the school community.
- Challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment.

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

Appropriate supervision is an important measure to help prevent and address bullying behaviour. Breifne College ensures the safety of their students and supervises students when students are attending school or attending school activities.

- Teacher supervision Rota established at the beginning of each school year to supervise at small break and lunch time.
- Students are accompanied by at least one staff member on school trips.
- Students are told where they are allowed on school grounds and what areas are out of bounds.
- Teachers bear in mind students who may have recently clashed when organising groups for collaborative work/ teams etc. with a view to giving space to the student involved to heal.
- The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Year Heads and Senior Management.

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

- Ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour is heard and reassured.
- Seek to ensure the privacy of those involved.
- Conduct all conversations with sensitivity.
- Consider the age and ability of those involved.
- Listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation.
- Take action in a timely manner.
- Inform parents of those involved.

The steps that will be taken by the school to determine if bullying behaviour has occurred, the approaches taken to address the bullying behaviour and to review progress are as follows (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

Identify if bullying behaviour has occurred:

- Two staff members can be present when engaging with students individually initially without parents' notification and presence.
- Two staff members can be present when engaging with a group of students to investigate what happened. Teacher's discretion can be used with this approach about when best to use it.
- A group meeting will provide the opportunity for the student to give 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 ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident.

The following three questions should be considered to determine if bullying has occurred.

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.

Requests no action taken:

A student who reports bullying behaviour may ask a member of staff not to do anything and just "look out" for them due to not wanting to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They might feel that telling someone might make things more difficult for them. Where this occurs, it is important that the member of staff shows empathy with the student, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the student to work out together what steps can be taken to address the behaviour. It must be made clear to the pupil that other parties may need to be informed for their welfare.

Parents may also make the school aware of bullying behaviour and specifically request that no action is to be taken by the school. Parents should put this in writing to the school. However, schools may decide that based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour through the Bí Cineálta procedures and/or the Code of Behaviour where appropriate.

Determining if the bullying behaviour has ceased:

The teacher must engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress. Factors to consider in the review include:

- The nature of the bullying behaviour.
- The effectiveness of strategies used to address the bullying behaviour.
- The relationship between the students involved.

Ongoing supervision of both the student experiencing bullying behaviour and the student displaying bullying behavior may be required as well as continued support.

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 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 school.

Recording bullying behaviour:

All incidents of bullying behaviour should be recorded. The following details should be included on the record:

- Form (see section 2.5 of Bí Cineálta procedures).
- Type (see section 2.7 of Bí Cineálta procedures).
- Where and when (if known).
- The date of initial engagement with the students and their parents.
- The views of the students and their parents* regarding the action to be taken to address the bullying behaviour (*only in relation to their own child).
- When review takes place, it should be noted if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of the students and parents in relation to this.
- Note the date of reviews and engagements.
- Note the date that the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- Any engagement with external services/ supports should also be noted.
- If a student's support file exists for a pupil involved, schools are encouraged to place a copy of the record on the student's support file.

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 complaints procedure. In the event that a student and/or parent is dissatisfied following the complaints procedure, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for children.

Supports are available to help prevent and address bullying behaviour:

- NEPS
- Oide
- Webwise
- National Parents Council (NPC)
- Dublin City University (DCU) Anti-bullying centre
- Tusla

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):

Where bullying behaviour has occurred:

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 behaviour continues in school, then school can deal with it in accordance with Bí Cineálta policy.

It is important for staff to be fair and consistent in their approach to address bullying behaviour. Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour need support. Engage with the student who is experiencing bullying without delay. School staff should identify the supports needed for the student who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties.

It is important that a student's agency is not decreased further by adults deciding what will happen next without listening to the student and involving them in deciding on the actions that will be taken.

The following principles must be adhered to when addressing bullying behaviour:

- Ensure 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 view 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.

Parents of both parties 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 as outlined in the school's Bí Cineálta policy. In circumstances where student expresses concern about their parents being informed, the school should develop an appropriate plan to support the student and for how their parents will be informed.

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)