

## Bí Cineálta Policy

### Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of St Mary's P.S has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

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

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

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

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

### 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.

What is not 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.

**St Mary's P.S should not be 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, St Mary's P.S will support the students involved.

Where bullying behaviour continues in school, St Mary's P.S will deal with it in accordance

with the Bí Cineálta Policy.

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, St Mary's P.S will support the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as appropriate and engage with them and their parents to determine what steps can be taken.

### **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	10/02/2025- Teachers	Half Day Closure- Presentation, Questionnaire & Feedback
	29/04/2025-SNA's	Aladdin Notice & Questionnaire
Students	26/03/2025	Bí Cineálta Poster Competition- Aladdin Notice to Teachers
Parents	01/04/2025	Email with Questionnaire including questionnaire for children
Board of Management		
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	29/04/2025	Email with questionnaire

Date policy was approved:

Date policy was last reviewed:

## Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

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):

A copy of our Supervision Policy can be found here.

Appropriate supervision is an important measure to help prevent and address bullying behaviour. St Mary's P.S. take all reasonable measures to ensure the safety of their students and to supervise students during morning supervision from 8:35a.m, 1st and 2nd breaks and hometime supervision.

Climbing walls have been erected to both inside and outside yards and the lunchtime and a soccer lunchtime league was previously established and takes place during May and June every year.

## Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

The member of the teaching staff who has responsibility for investigating and dealing with bullying is referred to as the relevant teacher. In St Mary's Primary School, the relevant teacher will normally be the classroom teacher, the relevant teacher in some instances may be a Support teacher, teacher on supervision duty, member of the in school management, deputy principal, principal or HSCL Coordinator.

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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

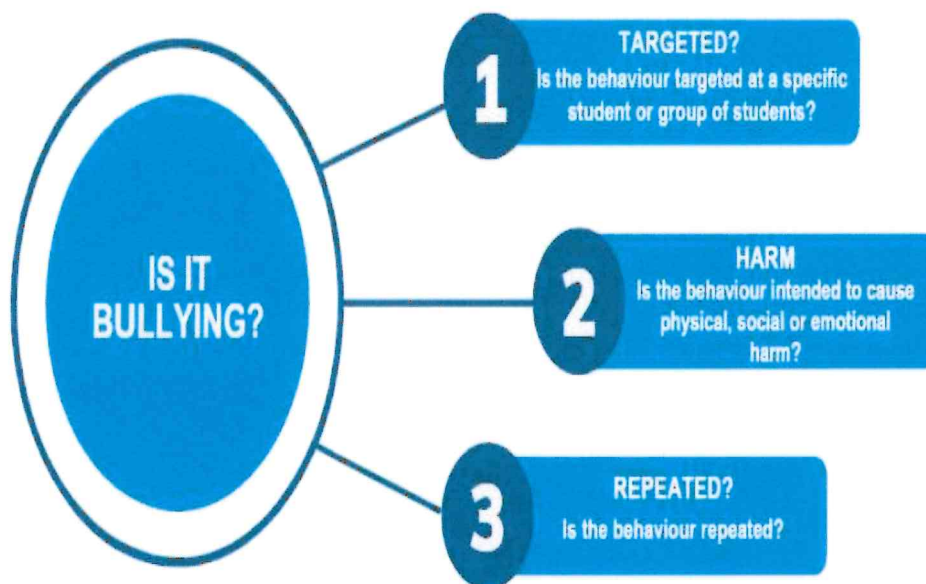
The steps that will be taken by the school to determine if bullying behaviour has occurred, the approaches taken to address the bullying behaviour and to review progress are as follows (see Chapter 6 of the *Bí Cineálta* procedures):

### Is it Bullying Behaviour ?

To determine if bullying behaviour has occurred, these three questions will be asked. If the answer to each of these questions is **Yes**, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour and the behaviour should be addressed using the **Bí Cineálta Procedures**.

If the answer to any of the questions is **No**, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's **Code of Behaviour**.

**Once off incidents may be considered bullying in certain circumstances. For example, a single hurtful message posted on social media as there is a likelihood of it being shared.**



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

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- > take action in a timely manner
- > inform parents of those involved

### **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.

### **Determining if bullying behaviour has ceased**

- **Review with child/ren and parents within 20 days.**
- If bullying has ceased it is important that ongoing supervision and support for the student who has experienced the behaviour and the student who has displayed the behaviour. It can take time for relationships to settle and for support to take effect. In some cases, relationships may never be restored.
- 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 will 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. It is not a matter for other students and their parents.

### Recording bullying behaviour

- All incidents of bullying behaviour will be recorded using this [template](#). See Appendix B.
- This record will document the form (See Appendix C) and type ( See Appendix D) of bullying behaviour, if known, where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students and their parents.
- This record will include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour.
- This record will document the review with students and their parents to determine if bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and their parents in relation to this.
- The date of each of these engagements and the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased will also be documented.
- These records will be retained in accordance with the school's record keeping policy and in line with data protection regulations.
- Where a Student Support File exists for a student, a copy of this record will be placed on the student's file.

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):

Supports are available to help prevent and address bullying behaviour. These include the following:

National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)

The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) of the Department of Education provides a comprehensive, school based psychological service to all primary and post primary schools to support the wellbeing, academic, social and emotional development of all students. The NEPS model of service is a consultative, capacity building model, in which there is a balance between casework and support and development work.

The psychological services which NEPS provides for students are differentiated in terms of whether the service involves the psychologist's direct involvement with the student, known as Direct Casework, or involves the psychologist working through teachers or teachers/parents to provide a psychological service for a student, known as Indirect Casework. NEPS staff can support schools with issues around bullying through this direct or indirect case work service.

In relation to bullying, NEPS psychologists often advise schools on best practice to prevent and address bullying when issues arise in schools and/or provide training in preventative initiatives, such as developing social and emotion skills, social

skills, executive function skills, promoting resilience and skills in relationship repair between peers as appropriate.

More information on the supports provided by NEPS is included in the Resources Guide which accompanies these procedures.

### Oide

Oide is the Department of Education's support service for schools, and it supports professional learning for primary and post primary school leaders and teachers in recognised schools and centres for education.

Oide fosters a culture of continuing professional learning among school leaders and teachers encouraging lifelong learning, reflective and enquiry based practices. The work of Oide contributes to school improvement by providing high quality professional learning experiences, supports and resources relating to curricular developments, broader educational goals and national priorities, such as wellbeing which includes preventing and addressing bullying.

Oide provides continuing professional learning support to schools to support implementation of these procedures. More information on the support provided by Oide is included in the Resources Guide which accompanies these procedures.

### Webwise

Webwise is the online safety initiative of the Department of Education and is co-funded by the European Commission. Webwise promotes safer, better internet use through awareness raising and education initiatives targeting teachers, students and parents. Webwise develops and disseminates resources that help teachers integrate digital citizenship and online safety into teaching and learning in their schools. Webwise also provides information, advice, and tools to parents to support their engagement in their children's online lives. With the help of the Webwise Youth Advisory Panel, Webwise develops youth oriented awareness raising resources and training programmes that promote digital citizenship and address topics such as online wellbeing and cyberbullying.

More information on the support provided by Webwise is included in the Resources Guide which accompanies these procedures.

#### National Parents Council

The National Parents Council (NPC) is the representative organisation for parents of children in early years, primary and post primary education. NPC was established as a charitable organisation in 1985, under the programme for Government, as the representative organisation for parents of children attending school. It received statutory recognition in the Education Act 1998.

The NPC works to ensure that all parents are supported and empowered to become effective partners in their children's education. NPC seeks to achieve true partnership and deliver better outcomes for all students.

The NPC delivers online and in person courses to support parents of both primary and post primary students to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

#### Dublin City University (DCU) Anti-Bullying Centre

The DCU Anti-Bullying Centre is a university designated research centre located in DCU's Institute of Education. The centre is known globally for its research in bullying and online safety. The Anti-Bullying Centre offers a range of modules as part of its FUSE programme for the entire school community that can be used to help to promote a positive school culture and assist in preventing and addressing bullying behaviours. There are 5 lessons in each year group from 4th-6th class.

#### Tusla

Schools should contact Tusla directly for advice in cases where it is considered that bullying behaviour is a child protection concern. See section 2.4 for guidance on when bullying behaviour becomes a child protection concern.

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 [Template](#) may be used. 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.

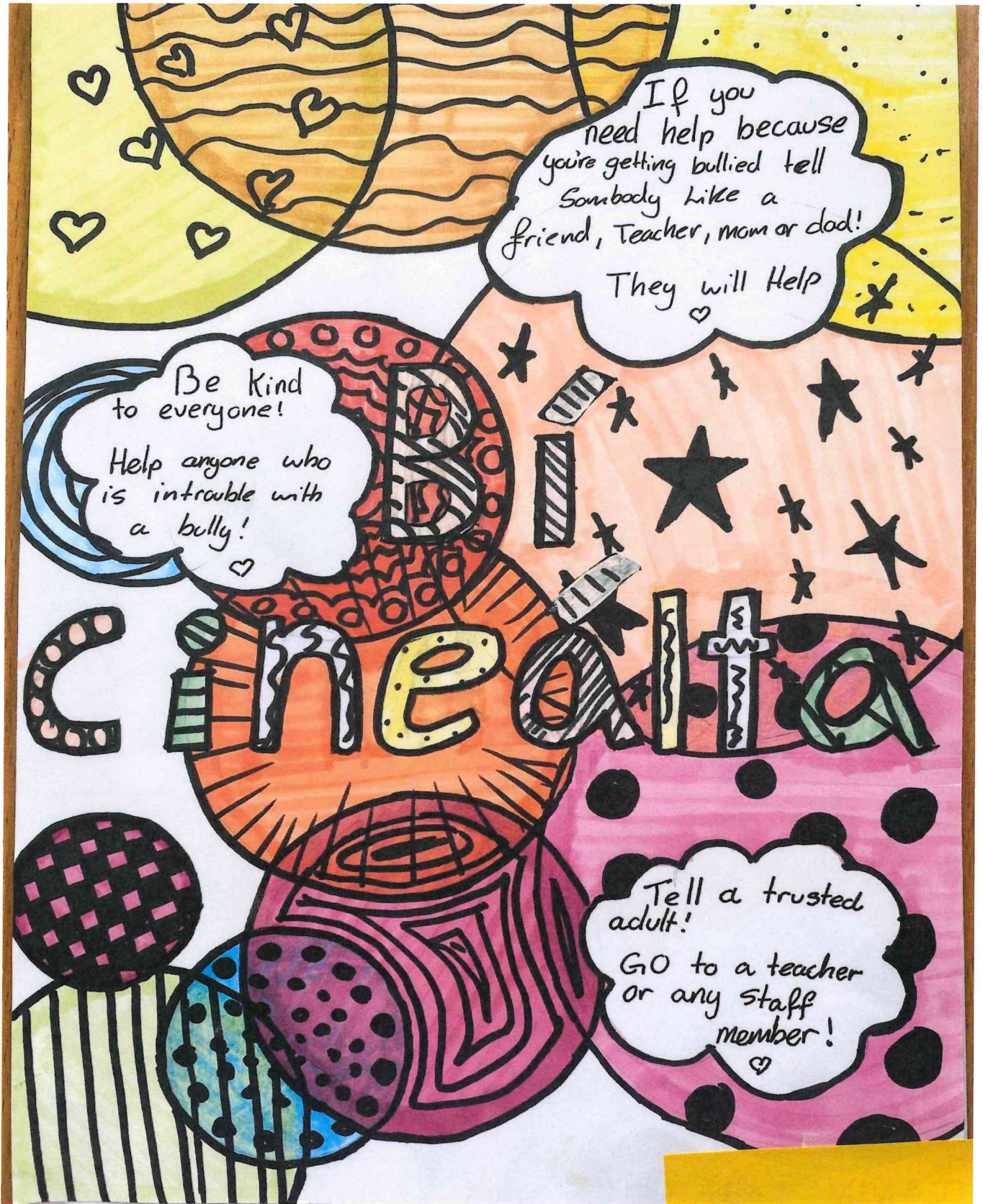
This policy and its implementation will be reviewed, following input from our school community, each calendar year or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this policy refers. The Review [template](#) **must** be completed when the BÍ Cineálta policy is reviewed.

Signed: David Ryan Date: 10/6/25

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: Bernie McVein Date: 10/6/25

(Principal)



## Appendix B: Bullying Behaviour Report Form

### Part 1: Alleged bullying behaviour *(to be completed by the class teacher)*

1. Name and class of student who experienced the behaviour:

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2. Name(s) and class(es) of students who displayed the behaviour:

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3. Name(s) and class(es) of students who witnessed the behaviour:

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4. Name of person(s) who reported the concern and date it was reported:

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5. Brief summary of behaviour, including where and when (date/time) it took place



6. To determine whether the behaviour is bullying behaviour please answer the following questions:

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

*\*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.*

7. Based on the above is it determined that the behaviour is bullying behaviour?

Yes  Proceed to Part 2: Record of Bullying Behaviour.

No  Address the behaviour under the Code of Behaviour.

8. If determined that the behaviour is bullying behaviour, please indicate below the date of the initial engagement with:

The student who experienced the behaviour: \_\_\_\_\_

The parents of the student who experienced the behaviour: \_\_\_\_\_

The student who displayed the behaviour: \_\_\_\_\_

The parents of the student who displayed the behaviour: \_\_\_\_\_

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

(Class Teacher)

**Part 2: Record of Bullying Behaviour** (to be completed by the principal and/or class teacher)

**1. Where did the bullying behaviour take place?** (tick all that apply)



6. Impact of bullying behaviour:


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

(Class Teacher)

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

(Principal)

**Part 3: Actions to be taken** *(to be completed by the principal and/or class teacher)*

To support student experiencing bullying behaviour:


To support student displaying bullying behaviour:


To support student(s) witnessing bullying behaviour:


**Discussions**

Date of Discussion with the student experiencing bullying behaviour: \_\_\_\_\_

What are the views of the student in relation to the proposed actions?


Date of discussion with parents of student experiencing the bullying behaviour \_\_\_\_\_

What are their views? Any agreed actions for parents?


Date of Discussion with the student displaying the bullying behaviour: \_\_\_\_\_

What are the views of the student in relation to the proposed actions?



Date of discussion with parents of student displaying the bullying behaviour \_\_\_\_\_

What are their views? Any agreed actions for parents?


Details of any collaboration with external agencies or bodies :

*eg name of agency/body, date of engagement, name of individual engaged with, description of discussion and outcome, etc*


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

(Class Teacher)

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

(Principal)

**Part 4: Follow Up in Relation to Effectiveness of Measures Taken** *(to be completed by the principal and/or class teacher)*

Date of review: \_\_\_\_\_

Views of student who experienced the bullying behaviour?


Views of their parents?


Views of student who displayed the bullying behaviour?


Views of the relevant teacher on the relationship between the students, the effectiveness of the strategies used?

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## Appendix C: Forms of Bullying Behaviour

Taken from [Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools](#), Section 2.5 How bullying behaviour occurs (p.21)

Bullying behaviour can take many forms, which can occur separately or together. These can include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

### Direct bullying behaviour

**Physical bullying behaviour:** Physical bullying behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping students. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While students can often engage in “mess fights” they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.

Personal property can be a focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, schoolbooks and other learning material or interference with a student’s locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

**Verbal bullying behaviour:** Continual name-calling directed at a student which hurts, insults or humiliates the student should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance; for example, size or clothes worn or gender identity. It can also refer to a student’s accent, distinctive voice characteristics, academic ability, race or ethnic origin.

**Written bullying behaviour:** Written bullying behaviour includes writing insulting remarks about a student in public places, passing around notes about or drawings of a student.

**Extortion:** Bullying behaviour can involve extortion. Extortion is where something is obtained through force or threats.

### Indirect bullying behaviour

**Exclusion:** Exclusion bullying behaviour occurs where a student is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded or ignored by a student or group of students.

**Relational:** Relational bullying behaviour occurs when a student’s attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. Common forms include control: “Do this or I won’t be your friend anymore”; a group of students ganging up against one student; nonverbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a student; giving a student the “silent treatment”; and the deliberate manipulation of friendship groups to make someone unpopular.

### Online bullying behaviour

Online bullying behaviour (cyberbullying) is carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text or direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, email, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chatrooms and other online technologies.

This form of bullying behaviour can include:

- sending or sharing nasty, insulting, offensive, and/or intimidating messages or images via text messages, emails, direct messages or other websites or apps
- posting information considered to be personal, private and sensitive without consent
- making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other students
- excluding or disrupting access to a student on purpose from online chat groups, access to accounts or from an online game

**Even though a message may be posted online just once by a student it can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be seen by a wide audience where it is intended to be shared or has a likelihood of being shared multiple times and is thus repeated.**

## Appendix D: Types of Bullying Behaviour

Taken from [Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools](#), Section 2.7 Types of bullying behaviour (p.24)

There are many different types of bullying behaviour. These can include the following which is not an exhaustive list:

- **disablist bullying behaviour:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of a perceived or actual disability or additional need
- **exceptionally able bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their high academic ability or outstanding talents
- **gender identity bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual gender identity
- **homophobic/transphobic (LGBTQ+) bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual membership of the LGBTQ+ community
- **physical appearance bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their physical appearance. Students who “look different” can be mocked or criticised about the shape, size or appearance of their body
- **racist bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their race or ethnic origin which includes membership of the Traveller or Roma community. Racism is defined in the National Action Plan Against Racism<sup>13</sup> as “a form of domination which manifests through those power dynamics present in structural and institutional arrangements, practices, policies and cultural norms, which have the effect of excluding or discriminating against individuals or groups, based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin”<sup>14</sup>
- **poverty bullying:** behaviour that intends to humiliate a student because of a lack of resources
- **religious identity bullying:** behaviour that intends to harm a student because of their religion or religious identity
- **sexist bullying:** behaviour that intends to harm a student based on their sex, perpetuating stereotypes that a student or a group of students are inferior because of their sex
- **sexual harassment:** any form of unwanted verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on sex which affects the dignity of the student

## Appendix E: Behaviour that is not Bullying

Incidents can occur where behaviour is unacceptable and hurtful but the behaviour is not bullying behaviour.

### 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.

The behaviours listed above, while they can be distressing, they are not defined as bullying. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Positive Behaviour and its Policy on Behaviours of Concern.