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Bí Cineálta Policy

to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Slieverue 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.

It is very important to note that this policy is fully aligned with the Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools and that it should be read in conjunction with the procedures. Schools are required to follow the procedures fully, as set out by the Department of Education.

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 follows:
"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.



Bullying behaviour that occurs outside of school

As per the Bí Cineálta Procedures, 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 bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved.

Examples of prohibited bullying behaviours that can occur outside of school:

- Bullying behaviour that occurs in the area immediately outside the school, the local shops and the wider local area.
- Bullying behaviour that occurs on the journey to and from school.
- Bullying behaviour that occurs in organised clubs and groups outside of school such as sports clubs.
- Online bullying (cyberbullying) behaviour, along with other types of bullying behaviour can cause significant harm and have a lasting impact on students who experience this behaviour. Access to technology means that online bullying behaviour can happen any time and that the student's home is no longer a safe place. The nature of these technologies means that digital content can be shared and seen by a very wide audience almost instantly and the content is almost impossible to delete permanently.

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 have a right to act and may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

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

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	13/12/24 04/04/25	SNA Wellbeing Questionnaire Staff Meeting / Half Day Closure
Students	30/01/25	Pupil Surveys
Parents	13/03/25	Parent Surveys
Board of Management	06/11/24 10/06/25	Discussion at Board of Management Meeting. BOM Meeting Ratification
Wider school community as appropriate	13/06/25	Bí Cineálta Policy Uploaded on website.
Date newest policy approved: June 10th, 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: October 7th, 2026		

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):

1. Culture and Environment

We strive to create a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and a consistent approach to addressing bullying behavior is adopted. Our aim at Slieverue N.S. is to foster a sense of belonging at school for all partners in education. The following strategies assist with prevention of bullying behavior:

- Maintain library books to cater for our most vulnerable students
- Staff members are always very visible during yard time which promotes a 'telling' culture.
- Access to Slieverue Linear Park
- Large play space on yard to include pupils who do and do not partake in soccer / other sports
- Sensory Garden
- Rainbow Room
- Movement breaks for children with dysregulation needs.
- We strive to create a welcoming environment for all children from every background

- Staff visible at drop off and collection times
- Principal, Deputy Principal and ISM team in morning supervision rota
- Cultural & Religious Awareness – given the diverse nature of our students, we foster an understanding and tolerance of other traditions and customs.
- Displays of different activities experienced in classrooms and on ClassDojo.

2. Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

Our curricular and extra-curricular activities promote inclusion and respect. Pupils are given the opportunity to work in small groups with their peers to promote respectful collaboration. The following teaching and learning strategies promote respect and collaboration;

- Teaching students about bullying and its detrimental effects – SPHE / RSE
- Shared/Paired Reading promotes mentoring
- Project Groups (Can be self-selected or assigned by teacher)
- Organised events that are task orientated by pupils (e.g. Bring 'n' Buy Sale)
- Peer Mentoring Programme
- Piano Lessons available to pupils during school day
- Annual Drama / Nativity Plays / Choir Services etc develop a sense of collegiality among the students.

3. Policy and Planning

Many of our school policies support Bí Cineálta and kindness and respect. Staff members are encouraged to engage in professional learning to support measures to prevent and address bullying behaviour;

- RSE/SPHE supports Bí Cineálta
- In-service training
- Restorative Practice
- Community Involvement – An Garda Síochána annual talk to 5th / 6th class re Cyber Bullying, Online Behaviour etc
- Providing an annual Kindness / Wellbeing week for the whole school
- Promotion of a school ethos and culture where all school community members treat each other with kindness and respect
- Promotion of a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour. Developing procedures for noting, investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour
- Providing support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour
- Working with appropriate agencies in countering all forms of bullying and promoting anti-bullying behaviour
- The Acceptable Use Policy, Supervision policy, Special Education Policy, Code of Behaviour, RSE Policy, SPHE Policy and Child Safeguarding Statement all support the implementation of the Bí Cineálta policy
- Appropriate Teacher Professional Development to support the successful implementation of this policy
- Effective leadership is a key component with Principal, Deputy Principal, DLP, DDLP, and all members of the in-school leadership team focused on supporting the implementation of this policy

4. Relationships and Partnerships

Strong interpersonal relationships are key to success at Slieverue N.S. We strive to support and provide activities that build empathy, respect and resilience. Interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as our Parents Association, committees and groups. Promotion of positive home school links and relationships, encourages parents to communicate with teachers at an early stage if they suspect their child is being bullied.

The following activities develop relationships and partnerships which supports Bí Cineálta policy:

- Circle Time
- Shared reading/activities – Encourages peer mentoring and peer support
- Choir from 3rd – 6th class
- World Diabetes Day, Down Syndrome Day, Autism Awareness Day, etc…

- Buddy Partnerships
- Annual Credit Union Quiz
- Sports Teams – Soccer, Rugby, Hurling etc…
- SET – Slots to develop social skills.

The meaningful involvement of the Board of Management, staff, pupils and their parents in the development, implementation and review of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and student friendly version is actively pursued by the school.

Preventing cyber bullying behaviour:

- 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 Acceptable Use Policy
- Promoting online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online
- Promoting Internet Safety Day

(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 date. 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)

Preventing homophobic/ transphobic bullying behavior:

- Maintaining an inclusive physical environment
- Encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- Challenging gender-stereotypes.

Preventing racist bullying behavior:

- Fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students "see themselves" in their school environment
- Encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- Encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour
- Providing supports to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities and to encourage communication with their parents
- Ensuring that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Preventing sexist bullying behaviour:

- Ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex
- Ensuring all student 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 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)

- Staff at all times endeavour to encourage pupils to show respect for each other.
- Staff members are always visible during yard time. The school has up to date security and access systems which prevent anyone from entering or leaving the school yard or building without permission from staff / parents
- Staff and students have identified the following areas which could potentially be 'hidden' in the school; Yard Area by tanks, Grass pitch at side of school, Store Rooms, classrooms during yard time & route to & from yard. Children should not be unsupervised in the aforementioned 'hidden' areas
- A yard supervision rota is devised at the beginning of each term so that adequate and appropriate supervision is provided for on yard. Principal and ISM team supervise from 8.50-9am. Teachers assume a duty of care from 9am-2.40pm.
- Supervision times are announced on ClassDojo each September and parents are reminded as necessary.
- If parents indicate a worry about a particular child on the yard, teachers / SNAs rostered for yard duty are informed of the concern so that the particular concerns can be monitored
- No supervision is provided outside the school gate.
- On wet days, children remain in their classes under the normal supervision Rota.
- When visiting teachers such as Dance/Tin Whistle/Sport take over a class, the school encourages teachers to maintain a presence.
- Unless unavoidable, teachers should never leave their classroom unsupervised.
- An Acceptable Use Policy has been developed and is regularly reviewed to ensure that pupils are aware of their responsibilities when accessing the internet in school and when using school devices.
- All staff members are particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of bullying/being bullied.
- All disclosed incidents of bullying are investigated thoroughly and consistently by following the correct procedure as outlined to staff and recorded on specific school templates.
- Reports on bullying are stored in a specific folder in the Principal's office.
- Acceptable Use Policy, Supervision policy, Special Education Policy, Code of Behaviour, RSE Policy and Child Safeguarding Statement all support the implementation of the Bí Cineálta policy.
- Pupils are actively involved in contributing to a safe and inclusive school environment.
- Slieverue N.S. actively encourages the concept of a 'trusted adult(s)' by letting pupils know regularly that they can talk to them.
- Bystanders are reminded of the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Promote online safety events or material for parents. The school invites An Garda Síochána and various outside speakers to address the importance of online safety.

Section C:
Addressing Bullying Behaviour

- The class teacher (relevant teacher) will oversee recording of bullying reports for students in their class – this includes using the procedures guidelines to investigate reports of bullying and recording bullying behaviour.
- Principal will inform the Board of Management of incidents of bullying.

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)

- Teacher / teachers investigate all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour with a view to establishing the facts and managing the behaviour.
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- Teacher(s) should consider the following: Who, what, where and when?
- Teachers will be fair and consistent in their approach when addressing bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents. Interviews will be conducted outside the classroom in a fair and consistent way. Supervision of teacher's class may be requested by a neighbouring teacher or SET if during the school day. If a group has been involved, each member will be interviewed and asked for his/her account of what happened. This is usually (but not always, depending on circumstances) done individually at first and, thereafter, as a group. It may sometimes be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident.

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

- 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.

- Non-teaching staff such as special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the class teacher.
- School staff should know what to do when bullying behaviour is reported to them.
- 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, schools should deal in accordance with their Bí Cineálta policy.
- Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour need support.
- Parents are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with schools, in addressing bullying behaviour. The primary aim of the teacher investigating bullying is to resolve issues and to restore relationships. 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 bullying behaviour. In some cases, relationships may never be restored to how they were before.
- The parents/guardians of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school will give parents/guardians an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the support provided to the pupils. It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents/guardians) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter (under GDPR) between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents/guardians and the school.
- When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the teacher will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information.
- Behaviour reflection sheets filled out by pupils will be kept.
- Staff will fill out a Bullying Incident report. The teacher must engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 days after the initial discussion to review progress following the initial intervention.
- 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's Code of Behaviour.
- If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school.
- If a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary 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.

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):

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves a whole school approach. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, no one intervention/support programme works in all situations.

Supporting Bullied pupils:

- Ending the bullying behaviour,
- Fostering respect for bullied pupils and all pupils,
- Fostering greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through annual awareness raising programmes
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations
- Making adequate counselling facilities available to pupils who need it in a timely manner (subject to available funding)
- Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).

Supporting Bullying pupils:

- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a 'clean sheet,'
- Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school),
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth,
- In dealing with negative behavior in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child,

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. 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.

Webwise
Webwise is the online safety initiative of the Department of Education. 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

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

Tusla
Schools should contact Tusla directly for advice in cases where it is considered that bullying behaviour is 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 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: Kevin Kennedy (Principal) Date: 07.10.2026

Signed: Kevin Fitzpatrick (Chairperson of Board of Management) Date: 07.10.2026

Date of next review: Oct 2027