St. Brigid's National School
Killygarry

Bí Cineálta Policy

Introduction:

The Board of Management of Killygarry 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.

Additional Policies that have informed the development of this policy include:

- 2013 Anti Bullying Policy
- 2015 Children First Act
- 2017 - Child Protection Procedures - primary - Revised 2023
- GDPR (2018)
- Harassment , Harmful Communications and related Offences Act /Coco's Law 2020
- Report on the Implementation of Anti Bullying Measures
- Cineáltas Action plan 2022
- Perspectives on Bullying Behaviour 2023
- Bí Cineálta 2024

Definition of Bullying Behaviour

Killygarry National School adopts the definition of bullying behaviour as outlined in the Bí Cineálta: Action Plan on Bullying and Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2024:

"Bullying is <u>targeted</u> behaviour, online or offline, that causes <u>harm</u>. The harm caused can be physical, social, and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is <u>repeated </u>over time and involves an <u>imbalance of power</u> in relationships between two people or groups of people in society." Section 2.1, Bí Cineálta.

This definition encompasses a wide range of behaviours, including:

Physical Bullying: Pushing, shoving, hitting, kicking, damaging property.

Verbal Bullying: Name-calling, insults, threats, teasing.

Relational Bullying: Spreading rumours, social exclusion, manipulating friendships.

Cyberbullying: Sending hurtful messages, sharing embarrassing photos or videos online, creating fake profiles, online exclusion.

Introduction & Policy Development

Killygarry National School is a rural co - educational primary school of 200 pupils ranging in ages from 4-12, with a staff of 8 mainstream teachers, 3 SET Teachers, 3 SNAs, a school secretary, caretaker, dinner/cleaning lady and an administrative Prinicpal, is deeply committed to providing a safe and inclusive learning environment. The school firmly believes that bullying behaviour is unacceptable and is dedicated to preventing and addressing all forms of bullying to safeguard the well-being, academic performance, and social development of each student. Recognising that bullying contradicts the values of respect and dignity inherent in their Catholic ethos, Killygarry National School strives to create a school community where every child feels cherished and supported.

How Killygarry NS Engaged with the School Community/ Stakeholders

All members of our school community were provided with the opportunity to input into the development /review of this policy. The school is committed to a collaborative approach and have engaged with the following stakeholders in the development of this policy

Surveys and Feedback: The Principal and class teachers conducted surveys in the middle of the school year 2024/25 and these were used to develop and monitor the effectiveness of the policy.

Parent Consultation: Parents were informed of the Bí Cineálta process at the Parents Association AGM in November 2024 and they were also consulted through an online survey to get maximum feedback possible.

Collaboration with Staff: Teachers, SNAs, the school secretary and ancillary staff were informed of the Bí Cineálta introduction and were engaged in discussions and completion of a survey and their perspectives were included. The Principal and one class teacher and AP post holder attended training on the Bí Cineálta framework in February 2025 and staff received in school training in April 2025 as part of a half-school day closure.

Pupils: During the 2023/24 academic year the school hosted a Bí Cineálta week and all pupils participated in workshops and activities in the classrooms and with an outside presenter and at the end of the week we raised the Bí Cineálta Flag. During the 2024/25 the pupils were

involved in a school art competition to draw up their own Bí Cineálta Plan for the school and they completed a survey so the voice of the child was heard. The school ran a 'no homework week' to enable the pupils to engage with the Bí Cineálta framework and carry out activities based on this process.

	DATE CONSULTED	METHOD OF CONSULTATION
SCHOOL STAFF	28/01/2025 14/03/2025	Online Survey Staff Training in Killygarry N.S.
STUDENTS	28/01/2025 – 06/02/2025	Online Survey (2nd – 6th Class)
PARENTS	28/01/2025	Online Survey
BOARD OF MANAGEMENT	06/02/2025	Board of Management Meeting
BREAKFAST/AFTER-SCHOOL CLUB	28/01/2025	Online Survey
DATE POLICY WAS APPROVED	6th February 2025	
DATE POLICY WAS LAST REVIEWED		

Types of Bullying Behaviour

The school acknowledges that bullying can manifest in various forms both directly and indirectly Bullying behaviour can occur separately or together and can take the form of Physical / Verbal / Cyberbullying and Extortion

- Disablist Bullying
- Exceptionally Able Bullying
- Gender Identity Bullying
- Homophobic/Transphobic (LGBTQ+) Bullying
- Physical Appearance Bullying
- Racist Bullying
- Poverty Bullying
- Religious Identity Bullying
- Sexist Bullying
- Sexual Harassment

Our school is committed to addressing all of these types of bullying behaviour and will provide support and resources to students who experience or witness any form of bullying.

What is NOT bullying

- Once off incidents,
- Disagreements between students/ groups of friends
- Students with Special Needs (dysregulated)*
- Reckless or accidental behaviour
- Inappropriate Behaviour (refer to school's Code of Behaviour)

The Impact of Bullying Behaviour

Bullying can have a severe impact on children in both long and short term, can cause stress, insecurity and anxiety. It can damage self-confidence and self - esteem, lower mood and in extreme cases can result in mental health difficulties. Cyber bullying can be anonymous, go unnoticed, can have a wider audience and can be difficult to have offensive comments/ material removed.

Where can Bullying occur?

It can happen anywhere: inside or outside school, online, coming to or from school, in organised clubs/ after schools/ on the school bus. The school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. The school does not have to seek online material such as screenshots or video evidence where cyber bullying has been carried out outside of school but the school will support the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour online. When the bullying occurs outside of school, but has an impact in school, we are required to **support** the students involved.

IDENTIFYING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Is it Bullying ? How our school will determine if Bullying has occurred?

- Is the behaviour **targeted** at a specific student or group of students?
- Has one harmful comment has been posted online and possibly shared multiple times. If so we will treat this as targeted repeated (by sharing) bullying
- Is the behaviour is intended to cause **harm** (physical, emotional distress)
- Is the behaviour **repeated**, Is there a pattern?
- If we can say yes to **any** of the above, then it is bullying.
- If we can answer no, then it is not bullying and we will address it under our Code of Behaviour.

When identifying bullying behaviour the teacher should consider: what, where, when and why. It is important that the student feels listened to and reassured immediately. The school will seek to maintain the privacy of all involved. The teacher will conduct all conversations with sensitivity. If a group is involved in bullying behaviour each student should be engaged individually at first. Thereafter, all students should be met as a group and each student in the

group discussion should be asked for their account so that everyone is clear about each other's views. Each student should be supported following the group meeting. It might be helpful that each student writes down an account of the incident. It is important at this point to determine if the incident is bullying. If not, the school will invoke their code of behaviour.

Section B: Prevention Strategies

Killygarry N.S. will implement a comprehensive approach to preventing bullying behaviour, encompassing the following strategies:

Fostering a Positive School Culture and Environment:

Our school will actively promote a culture of kindness, empathy, respect, and inclusivity through assemblies, posters, classroom discussions, and school events.

Our school leadership team will set clear expectations for behaviour and will model respectful interactions with all members of the school community.

Our school will provide opportunities for students to develop their social and emotional skills, empathy, and resilience through the SPHE and RSE curricula.

Our school will create safe physical spaces with good visibility and supervision to minimise opportunities for bullying behaviour.

Open Communication and Reporting Procedures:

The school will establish a "trusted adult" system where students can confidentially report concerns about bullying behaviour. This will be the class teacher, principal or other support teacher/SNA.

The school will create a "telling environment" where students feel safe and supported to report bullying without fear of retaliation or being ignored. Monthly feedbacks/ check ins/ student council feedback via a suggestion box will help to monitor how our school is doing in managing bullying behaviour.

Clear reporting procedures will be communicated to students, staff, and parents through the school website, parents communication app (Aladdin) and parent association meetings.

The school will ensure confidentiality, sensitivity and will take all reports of bullying seriously.

The school in conjunction with our student council Dáil na nÓg will develop a student friendly version of the Bi Cinealta policy _ see appendix. The policy will use language that is easy for students to understand and we will display this where it is easily accessible for all students.

Curriculum , Teaching and Learning:

The school will utilise the SPHE and RSE curricula to educate students about bullying

behaviour, its impact, and strategies for prevention and intervention. Other programmes such as Zippy's friends, Fun Friends and Friends for Life will be used where appropriate. Teachers will incorporate lessons on empathy, respect, and conflict resolution into their classroom teaching. The school will promote positive social interactions and peer support through group work, collaborative projects, and extracurricular activities.

Addressing Specific Types of Bullying:

Cyberbullying: The school will teach digital literacy and internet safety topics as part of the SPHE curriculum to teach students about responsible online behaviour, digital citizenship, and online safety. The school has developed and communicated an acceptable use policy for technology and will address appropriate online behaviour within the Code of Behavior.

Homophobic/Transphobic Bullying: The school will create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all students, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. The school will challenge gender stereotypes and homophobic language.

Racist Bullying: The school will celebrate diversity and will foster a school culture where students from all backgrounds feel valued and respected. We will provide support to students for whom English is an additional language and will ensure that learning materials represent diverse perspectives and lived experiences.

Sexist Bullying: The school will promote gender equality and will ensure that all students have equal opportunities to participate in school activities. The school will challenge sexist language and stereotypes and will encourage respectful interactions between all students.

Sexual Harassment: The school will maintain a zero-tolerance policy for sexual harassment. We will educate students about appropriate behaviour and will provide clear reporting procedures for incidents of sexual harassment.

Parental Involvement:

The school recognises the important role parents play in preventing bullying behaviour. We will communicate the Bí Cineálta policy to parents and will provide resources and information on bullying prevention strategies and inform them what we will do in addressing bullying behaviour when it has occurred.We will encourage parents to reinforce positive behaviours at home and to communicate any concerns about bullying to the school.

Preventing Bullying Behaviour

We strive to create a school environment where bullying is unacceptable and this requires a multi-faceted approach. Our prevention strategies include:

- **Fostering a "Telling" Environment**: We actively work to overcome the barriers that prevent students from reporting bullying, as highlighted in our recent conversation. This includes addressing fears of retaliation, social stigma, and a lack of confidence in

adults. We emphasise that reporting bullying is the right thing to do and will be taken seriously. We go through the Code of Behaviour with all classes at the start of the academic year.

- **Promoting Open Communication**: We encourage open and honest dialogue about bullying through age-appropriate initiatives, workshops, circle time and classroom discussions. This helps to raise awareness, dispel myths, and empower students to speak out against bullying.
- **Building Empathy, Respect, Responsibility and Resilience**: We will integrate activities that foster empathy, respect, responsibility, resilience and inclusivity into our curriculum and school culture. These include collaborative learning projects, peer mentoring programs (e.g buddy reading) and initiatives that celebrate diversity.
- **Strengthening Digital Citizenship**: Recognising the increasing prevalence of cyberbullying, we prioritise digital citizenship education through our SPHE curriculum. We will teach students about responsible online behaviour, the potential consequences of harmful online actions, and the importance of reporting cyberbullying.
- **Clear and Enforceable Policies**: Our school's Acceptable Use Policy for technology and the standards outlined in our Code of Behavior set clear expectations for online and offline behaviour, explicitly addressing cyberbullying and other forms of unacceptable conduct.
- **Engaging Parents**: We actively engage parents as partners in preventing bullying. We provide resources and workshops on cyber safety, offer guidance on monitoring children's online activities, and encourage open communication between parents and the school.
- **Safe Physical Spaces**: We have designed our school environment to minimise hidden spaces and ensure adequate supervision during breaks and transitions. Our well-maintained grounds and the student-created artwork displayed throughout the school foster a sense of ownership and pride, contributing to a positive school climate. We will ensure supervision notes about ongoing issues are available to all staff and sub teachers on supervision duty.

Relationships and Partnerships / Culture

The following are some of the initiatives we will run in our school to continue to promote healthy relationships and partnerships to maintain a culture of positivity in our school and to prevent bullying behaviour.

- Friendship week
- Bí Cineálta Week - October
- Dail na nÓg
- Buddy Bench/Buddy System
- Signs around the yard on how to play nicely and how to look out for others
- Promoting peer support / buddy activities
- Activities that build empathy, respect, responsibility and resilience - Circle time / Golden Time, Play time
- Student and Parent input

- Teacher Professional learning
- A values charter for our school
- Bí Cineálta Plan displayed around the school – Designed by pupils for pupils
- Senior pupils assisting younger pupils
- Restorative Practices
- Anti-Bullying Week
- We are a 'Telling School'
- Participation in Health Promoting School Initative
- Workshop for Parents on Bullying and Cyber Bullying
- Programmes and Initiatives such as FUSE
- 'Stand up for yourself' Programme – designed by the DP of Killygarry N.S.
- 'Teacher, I want you to know….' Initiative in the school
- Worry Box
- Zones of Regulation
- New Parent Information Meeting
- 'What do you want teacher to know?' initiative
- Chess Skills
- 'A Kindness Tree'
- Through song e.g. 'Just be kind'
- Teacher notebook with nice comments in it
- 'A Secret Friend'

Policy and Planning

The following policies have been referenced to inform the development of our Bi Cinealta school policy on Bullying

- *Code of Behaviour Policy*
- *Child Safeguarding Statement*
- * Acceptable use Policy*
- *Supervision Policy*
- *RSE Policy*
- *SEN Policy*
- *SSE - Wellbeing*

Supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviours

All students are supervised during school hours, including break times, lunch periods, and during transitions between classes. Staff members are assigned to various designated supervision zones to ensure that students are monitored effectively. Specific measures include:

- Classroom Supervision: Teachers ensure that students are supervised within the classroom at all times.

- Playground/Outdoor Supervision: SNAs and teachers are stationed at strategic locations around the playground to monitor student interactions.
- Hallways and Common Areas: Teachers, office staff and the Principal are present in hallways during high-traffic times to observe student behaviour.
- The school entrance is supervised before and after school (10 minutes before and after school)
- Extra supervision is provided on school tours and school outings

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Section C: Addressing and Recording Bullying Behaviour

Where it has been established that Bullying behaviour has occurred

Staff will have received training on how to deal with bullying behaviour when it is reported to them or when they witness bullying behaviour. They will follow all the steps in this policy. It is important that staff are fair and consistent in their approach to address bullying behaviour. Both the bully and the student being bullied will need to be supported. The student being bullied will be supported immediately, reassured and their views sought as to how best they would like us to deal with the situation. Parents will be contacted without delay and an initial meeting set up. A record should be kept of the engagement with all parties involved. See appendix E. The record should include the views of the student and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour.

Parental Notification and Involvement:

Parents of students involved in bullying incidents will be informed promptly and will be kept updated on the progress of the investigation and intervention process.The school will encourage parents to work collaboratively with the school to address the bullying behaviour.This information will be kept confidential (as per the school's GDPR policy) and will be used to monitor trends, evaluate the effectiveness of prevention and intervention strategies, and inform future policy development. It may be appropriate to add a note to the Student support File

Requests to take no action

If the student requests that no action be taken after reporting a bullying incident, we will be empathetic to this situation, deal with the matter sensitively and speak with the student to work out what steps we can take together to address the matter and how their parents will be informed of the situation if we deem this is important in order to keep them safe.
If parents request that no action be taken, they will then be informed at the beginning of this initial meeting that we, as a school, may still decide to deal with this bullying behaviour if we deem it necessary on the grounds of child protection or in severe cases. Parents who request that no action be taken by the school will be required to put this request in writing to the

school or assisted to do so where there are literacy or language barriers.

If Bullying becomes a Child Protection Concern / Criminal Behaviour

If we determine that the bullying behaviour should be reported to Tusla, the following factors will be taken into consideration:

The impact on the student
Protective action by the parent
Protective appropriate action by the school
Involvement of NEPS
Engagement of the student / family with support services

Criminal Behaviour

The age of criminal behaviour in Ireland is 12 years. If the behaviour involves physical violence or threats of violence, it may be considered assault. If the bullying behaviour involves discrimination or hate speech, it may be considered a hate crime and if the bullying behaviour involves sexual assault or harassment, the school will refer this and any incident of physical assault / hate speech to An Garda Siochána who will deal with it according to the law.

Investigation and Intervention, Documentation and Record-Keeping:

The class teacher will conduct a thorough investigation, gathering information from all parties involved. Depending on the circumstances the use of questioning, restorative practices, confidential questionnaires, bullying behaviour sociograms and/or class observation will be used. The school will prioritise stopping the bullying behaviour and restoring, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved. The recording template (see Appendix) will be completed initially by the class teacher who will investigate the incident, recording the facts of the incident, including the form of bullying, the type of bullying, the parties involved, the dates and times of incidents, the date of initial engagement, the views of students / parents, the date of the review with the students/ parents to determine if bullying behaviour has ceased , the actions taken and the outcomes of such actions.

Determining if Bullying behaviour has ceased/ Follow up

The teacher will engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial meeting to review progress following the agreed interventions. Ongoing supervision and support may still be required for both parties. 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. We will inform the student and their parents that relationships may never be restored. Where the bullying behaviour continues, the school will invoke their schools Code of Behaviour policy to deal with this behaviour. If sanctions are required, this will be a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school. Under GDPR these sanctions will

not be shared with either students involved or their parents.

Complaints Procedure

If a parent is dissatisfied with how a bullying incident has been addressed or handled by the school, they can refer to our school's complaints procedure.

Section D: Board of Management Oversight / Evaluation and Review. See Appendix

The principal will present an **anonymised** oversight report on bullying behaviour (incidents that met the threshold for bullying) to the Board of Management at every board meeting, including the number of incidents reported since the last board meeting, the number of incidents that are currently ongoing, the number of incidents that have occurred since the beginning of the school year, the types of bullying observed. A verbal report will also be provided, outlining any trends and patterns observed, strategies used to address bullying, and the need for any policy revisions.

Annual Review of the Bí Cineálta Policy:

The school's Bí Cineálta policy will be reviewed annually, or more frequently if deemed necessary by the Board of Management.
The review process will involve consultation with the school community, including: school staff, students, through the student council, parents, through the Parents Association, other relevant stakeholders (INTO, CPSMA, IPPN)

Communication and Transparency:

The school will communicate the outcomes of the annual review to the school community, including any changes made to the policy. The Bí Cineálta policy and student-friendly version will be published on the school website and will be made readily available to all members of the school community. This policy is readily available to our school community via the following routes:

School Website: Both the full policy and the student-friendly version are posted on our website or communicated on Aladdin.

Hard Copy: Printed copies are available upon request.

External Resources:

Gov.ie https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/e8f46-bi-cinealta-resources-for-primary-schools-

post-primary-schools-and-parents/

National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS): Provides psychological assessments, consultations, and support to schools.

Oide: Offers professional development and support to teachers on a range of topics, including bullying prevention and intervention. www.oide.ie

Tacklebullying.ie

Webwise: Provides resources and support for online safety, including cyberbullying prevention.AUP generator

Html Heroes (3rd and 4th class)

www.webwise.ie/BeKindOnline

All Together Now LGBTQ+ resources   5th / 6th class

PDST Restorative Practice training

CDI Tallaght Restorative practices

National Parents Council (NPC): Represents parents and provides information and support on various educational issues, including bullying.

Dublin City University (DCU) Anti-Bullying Centre: Conducts research and provides training and resources on bullying prevention and intervention.www.antibullyingcente.ie/fuse   Free programme for 4th 5th 6th from DCU

Tusla: The Child and Family Agency provides support and services for child protection and welfare, including cases where bullying behaviour is a child protection concern

Conclusion

Killygarry NS is dedicated to creating a school environment where all students and staff feel safe, respected, and valued. The school believes that by working collaboratively as a school community and implementing this comprehensive Bí Cineálta policy, we can effectively prevent and address bullying behaviour and ensure that all students have a positive and enriching educational experience. This policy is available on our website , on our Parent app

and on display in the school. It will be updated annually at our first board meeting or as soon as practicably possible thereafter.

Policy Adopted: 6th February 2025

Policy Review Date (Annually): February 2026

Signatures

Serena Prior

Principal

Kevin Reilly

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Date 6/2/25