



Gaelscoil Bhréifne

Polasaí Bí Cineálta *Anti-Bullying Policy*



Aim and Rationale:

The Board of Management of Gaelscoil Bhréifne has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour. This policy is fully compliant 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. As a school community, we all 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 Behaviour

Gaelscoil Bhréifne 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 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." 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.

Section A: Introduction & Policy Development

Gaelscoil Bhréifne is a DEIS Band 2 urban co-educational school of 198 students ranging in age from 4 – 13 years, with a staff of 19 (including Principal, Teachers, SNAs, care-taker and secretary). Gaelscoil Bhréifne is deeply committed to providing a safe, holistic and inclusive learning environment for every student. 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, holistic and social development of each student. Gaelscoil Bhréifne strives to create a school community where every child feels cherished, supported and encouraged to develop their individual skills and talents.



How Gaelscoil Bhréifne Engaged with the School Community/ Stakeholders

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

Consultation with the Coiste na nDaltaí: The voice of the children in our school was central in providing feedback on anti-bullying initiatives and the development of this policy. Focus Groups were conducted with children from each class level to discuss their views and thoughts on policy development. The information provided by the children was used to inform both our Bí Cineálta Policy and our Cod Iompair/ Behaviour Policy, which was reviewed concurrently.

Surveys and Feedback: The management team of Gaelscoil Bhréifne distributed surveys to staff, parents and students during the school year 2024/2025 and these were used to develop and monitor the effectiveness of the policy. Information provided on these surveys has informed our approach to dealing with bullying behaviour, our strategies to prevent bullying behaviour and our communications with parents regarding bullying behaviour.

Parent Consultation: Parents were consulted through an online, anonymous survey and a meeting was organised between management staff and representatives from the Parents Association/ Coiste na dTuistí to discuss their views. This information has informed both our Bí Cineálta Policy and our Cod Iompair.

Collaboration with Staff: Teachers, SNAs, the school secretary/ ancillary staff and bus escorts were engaged in regular discussions throughout the school year 2024/ 2025 regarding the development of this policy. A half day training was facilitated by senior management staff and attended by all staff in the school to discuss the procedures and guidelines outlined by the Dept.of Education and the strategies employed in our school to prevent and deal with bullying behaviour. Further development of the policy was conducted at a number of further staff meetings during the school year.

	DATE CONSULTED	METHOD OF CONSULTATION
SCHOOL STAFF	Márta 2025 Aibreán 2025 Bealtaine 2025	School Closure: Whole staff training Whole staff meetings Anonymous surveys
STUDENTS	Bealtaine 2025	Focus Groups from each class level Anonymous surveys
PARENTS	Bealtaine 2025 Meitheamh 2025	Online anonymous survey Management meeting with representatives from the PA
BOARD OF MANAGEMENT	Lúnasa 2025	BOM meeting: End of school year 2024/2025
WIDER SCHOOL COMMUNITY BUS ESCORTS/	Bealtaine 2025	Anonymous surveys Management meeting to discuss the



		guidelines from Bí Cineálta
DATE POLICY WAS APPROVED	27/08/2025	
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 / Relational / Cyberbullying and Extortion

Other forms of bullying include:

- 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 incident
- Disagreement 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. 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:

1. Is the behaviour **targeted** at a specific student or group of students?
 2. 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
 3. Is the behaviour is intended to cause **harm** (physical, emotional distress)
 4. Is the behaviour **repeated**, Is there a pattern?
 5. If we can **say yes to any** of the above, then it is bullying.
 6. 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. Two members of staff will be present for all conversations.
 - 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

Gaelscoil Bhréifne 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 curriculum.

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. Every adult in our school is considered a "trusted adult." A coded list of children who are engaging with the trusted adult system can be found in the appendix of the Plean Scoile DEIS.

The school will create a **"telling environment"** where students feel safe and supported to report bullying without fear of retaliation or being ignored. **Monthly feedback/ check-ins/ Coiste na nDaltaí 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, the Aladdin system and Parent Association meetings. Relevant documents are available on the school sharepoint system, in the folder "Bí Cineálta."

The school will ensure **confidentiality, sensitivity** and will take all reports of bullying seriously. A **Bosca Buartha ("Worry Box")** will be implemented in all classrooms to encourage a culture of telling and sharing.

The school in conjunction with our Coiste na nDaltaí have developed a **student friendly version of the Bí Cineálta policy** _ see appendix. The policy will use language that is easy for students to understand, as Gaeilge agus as Béarla, 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. 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. A selection include:

- *Friends for Life: 5th/6th class*
- *Bí Shabháilte*
- *Misneach*
- *www.webwise.ie*
- *www.antibullying.ie*
- *Scéalta Soisialta*
- *Weaving Wellbeing/ Fí na Follaine*
- *A visit from the Community Garda – senior classes*
- *FUSE Anti-Bullying and Online Safety Programme – 4th and 5th classes*
- *Oide Anti-Bullying Resource Materials*
- *The National Anti-Bullying Website*

These resources will be managed throughout the school year in a collaborative effort by class teachers and the SET Team.



This list is not exhaustive and will change as and when new resources become available or relevant to our school context.

A collaborative team-teaching approach will be implemented to ensure that all children can access the programmes outlined above and the messages contained.

Parents play an integral role in supporting the teaching and learning of their children about bullying behaviour, its impact and strategies for its prevention and intervention.

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 is currently developing an **Acceptable use policy for technology** and will address appropriate online behaviour within the Code of Behaviour. The school also implements the guidelines outlined in circular 0044/2025 that bans the use of and access to personal mobile phones by pupils during the school day.

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. A training session on anti-bullying procedures with the National Parents' Council has been organised for the Parents' Association, with ideas and suggestions as to how these can be supported by parents and the school community (Scheduled for October 2025).

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.



This will be communicated at every school assembly, during every SPHE lesson, displayed on walls throughout the school and by the Coiste Cineáltas on one Wednesday a month.

●**Promoting Open Communication:** We encourage open and honest dialogue about bullying through age-appropriate initiatives, workshops, and classroom discussions. This helps to raise awareness, dispel myths, and empower students to speak out against bullying.

●**Building Empathy and Respect:** We will integrate activities that foster empathy, respect, 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. Clear expectations regarding language, appropriate language and the use of language in the school will be communicated consistently to students and parents.

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. We will also collaborate with the Community Garda to seek support and additional education for students in the senior classes.

Clear and Enforceable Policies: Our school's Acceptable Use Policy for technology and the standards outlined in our Code of Behaviour 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. We will regularly review the movement of students throughout the school to ensure safe physical spaces at key moments during the school day.

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.

Anti-Bullying Week - November (Wellbeing week)

Cruinnithe Coiste na nDaltaí – monthly meetings/ initiatives

Celebration Assemblies monthly – Cara na Míosa, Dalta na Míosa, Gaeilgeoir na Míosa

Activities that build empathy, respect and resilience - Circle time / Am Órga

Student and Parent input – PTM, termly/ yearly feedback

Teacher Professional learning – Restorative Practice Training, Wellbeing training

Co-teaching during SPHE Lessons, anti-bullying lessons.

On the yard: Station Games, Wellbeing zones (lego/art), Buddy system, Senior Leaders from Rang 5 agus a 6 on the Junior yard.



Policy and Planning

The following policies have been referenced to inform the development of our Bí Cineálta school policy on Bullying:

- School GDPR
- Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Supervision Policy
- RSE Policy
- SEN Policy
- DEIS Action Plan

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 always supervised within the classroom.
- Playground/Outdoor Supervision: SNA's and Teachers are stationed at strategic locations around the playground to monitor student interactions, as they engage in collaborative games.
- 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.
- Extra supervision is provided on school tours and school outings
- Toilets: subject to routine checks

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 Síochána who will deal with it according to the law.

Investigation and Intervention, Documentation and Record-Keeping:

The class teacher (and another member of the teaching staff) will conduct a thorough investigation, gathering information from all parties involved. 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.

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 E

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 of Gaelscoil Bhréifne.

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, 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 – to be completed school year 2025/2026

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

Gaelscoil Bhréifne 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 school website, 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: _____

Policy Review Date (Annually): _____

Signatures

Principal

Gaelscoil Bhréifne
Cnoc an Choiligh
An Cabhán
H12 TD54
Uimhir Rolla: 20026G
Príomhoide: Niamh Ní Cheallaigh
Leas-Phríomhoide: Éadaoin Nic Einrí



Chairperson of the Board of Management

Date _____