



Policy Area	Bí Céineálta – Anti Bullying Procedures
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Reviewed / Developed	Original School Policy – June 2024 May 2025
Monitored	Every Year
Responsibility	Board of Management – Raheen Wood Community National School
Approved	29 th of May 2025

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Raheen Wood Community National School community believes that each pupil has a right to an education in a positive school culture free from fear and intimidation.

The Board of Management of Raheen Wood Community 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.

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 following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying
- Identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and will be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

Examples of bullying behaviours

General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g., sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc. • Physical aggression • Damage to property • Cyber-bullying • Name calling • Slagging • The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person • Offensive graffiti • Extortion • Intimidation • Insulting or offensive gestures • The “look” • Invasion of personal space • A combination of any of the types listed.
Identity Based Behaviours Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).	
Homophobic and Transgender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spreading rumours about a person’s sexual orientation • Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation • Name calling e.g., Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner. • Physical intimidation or attacks • Threats

Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background • Exclusion on the basis of any of the above
Relational	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malicious gossip • Isolation & exclusion • Ignoring • Excluding from the group • Taking someone's friends away • "Bitching" • Spreading rumours • Breaking confidence • Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear • The "look" • Use or terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way
Sexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching • Harassment
Special Educational Needs, Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name calling • Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs • Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying • Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues. • Mimicking a person's disability • Setting others up for ridicule

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Chapter 2 of Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2024.

Section A: Development/review of our Bi Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

All members of our school community were provided with the opportunity to input into the development of our anti bullying policy.

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	March 2025	Survey and Staff Meeting – staff provided with the opportunity to discuss the new Bi Cinealta action plan and the results of parent and children questionnaires Staff given time to discuss and relay feedback.
Students	March 2025	Survey and Individual Conferencing
Parents	March 2025 May 2024	Survey Extensive consultation on the Antibullying policy and draft document.
Board of management	March 2025	Presentation of Training Video
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	March 2025	Individual Conferencing
Date policy was approved:	May 2025	
Date policy was last reviewed:	June 2024	Previous Anti – Bullying Policy prior to Bí Céineálta Procedures being published

The Purpose of this Policy

The school regards bullying as a serious infringement of individual rights and a serious threat to the self-esteem and self-confidence of targeted person(s). Therefore, it does not tolerate bullying of any kind.

Every report of bullying is treated seriously and dealt with, having due regard for the well-being of all involved. We are committed to ensuring resolution.

The immediate priority, should a bullying incident occur, is ending the bullying, and resolving the issues and restoring the relationships involved insofar as is practicable using compassionate communication and Restorative Practice, an evidence-based approach rooted primarily in a set of core values and the explicit promotion and enhancement of skills such as the ability to empathise and to find solutions to specific problems.

All members of this school community are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance of a safe environment in the school. On becoming aware of any alleged bullying situation, in or outside the school, involving children of the school community, they should notify a trusted, responsible adult. In our school context, an allegation of

bullying behaviour can be brought to any staff member's attention, and this will be reported immediately to the Principal Teacher and In – School Management Team. Each allegation will be dealt with in safe, confidential manner. Bullying behaviour is too serious not to be reported.

Pupils' positive participation in school life in general is encouraged through existing school structures, which include explicit teaching anti-bullying strategies, as listed below.

Awareness of bullying, and willingness to take action to prevent or stop it, is part of this participation.

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB), the Board of Management of Raheen Wood Community National School has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of 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*.

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, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils, families and the school community. It is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

A positive school culture and climate which

- promotes the well-being of children, staff and the wider school community.
- is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity.
- promotes respectful relationships across the school community.
- Create a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.
- Involve parents as active partners in fostering an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated.
- Support the idea that our school is a telling environment.
- Promote the concept of a trusted adult – stay safe linkage – who to tell.
- Create safe spaces in our school building and yards – visibility
- Incorporate artwork and signs to promote our school values –
- Encourage a sense of belonging with ownership over their own space through art and creativity.
- promotes respectful relationships across the school community;

Effective leadership

The Principal and other leaders in the school, including all teachers, should strive to engender an ethos under which bullying is unacceptable. All who are identified as leaders within the school community can ensure that practical steps are taken to challenge and respond to bullying.

A school-wide approach

A school-wide approach (involving school management, staff, parents and pupils) to dealing with the problem of bullying behaviour is a key element of effective practice. Bullying behaviour affects those immediately involved. It can affect everyone in the classroom, in the school and, ultimately, in the wider community.

A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact

The school will put in place appropriate systems to ensure that all relevant members of the school community have a shared understanding of what constitutes bullying behaviour. This will be done through discussions at parent meetings and information will be available on the school website. Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-

- explicitly teach learning opportunities for the acquisition of life skills that address anti-social behaviour.
- build empathy, respect, and resilience in pupils.

The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows :

- Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures
- The anti-bullying module of the SPHE program as it applies during each school year

This includes but is not limited to:

- Stay Safe
 - Walk Tall
 - Webwise
 - All Together Now (classes 5 and 6)
- At least five awareness-raising exercises per school year for each class group (e.g. from the 'Awareness-Raising' strand of the Anti-Bullying Campaign)
 - Pupils are helped to examine the issue of bullying in a calm rational way, outside of the tense context of particular bullying incidents.
 - Pupils are made aware that the consequences of bullying behaviour are always bad for those who are targeted, even if this is not always obvious at the time.
 - Pupils are encouraged to recognise, reject and report bullying behaviour, either spontaneously or through questionnaires that are regularly used in the school.
 - Through presentations or other exercises, the school staff and parents/guardians are made aware of the nature of bullying and the signs that might indicate that a pupil is being bullied. They are encouraged to be vigilant in watching out for signs of bullying and to report any suspicion of bullying they may have to a 'Relevant Teacher' (in the case of staff members) or any staff member (in the case of parents/guardians).
 - Through meetings and other communications, parents/guardians are regularly informed of the school's Anti-Bullying activities and encouraged to support its work.

Strategies to prevent cyberbullying

Prevention and awareness-raising measures must also deal explicitly with cyber-bullying. The best way to address cyber-bullying is to prevent it happening in the first place. Prevention and any awareness-raising measures should focus on educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while on-line and on developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying.

- > implementing the SPHE curriculum
- > teach students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship
- > having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- > developing and communicating an acceptable use policy for technology

- > promoting or hosting online safety for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online
- > holding an Internet safety talks with senior classes to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour.

Anti-identity-based bullying strategies:

- We teach respectful, positive, and inclusive language which is modelled by staff in all classrooms and in the playground.
- Staff will be aware of binary language or language that implies gender stereotyping
- The correct anatomical terms are used in a consistent way across all class levels
- Derogatory language (e.g. when a child misuses the word 'gay' or 'lesbian') will be addressed in a restorative way,
- The Goodness me, Goodness you programme, (GMGY) the multi-belief and values curriculum, is taught in all classes throughout the year, it celebrates inclusion and diversity, and promotes positive language.
- The 'All Together Now, An educational Awareness Programme on Homophobic Bullying', will be taught in the senior classes, every other year, as stated in the Anti Bullying Policy.
- Staff will be made familiar with the PDST Identity Based Bullying resource, and PDST Education and Transgender resource.

Links to other policies

Code of Behaviour

Child Protection Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment

Relationships and Sexuality Policy

Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

- Supervision Policy in place and Investigation Procedure outlined below

Supports for Staff

- In the form of Training and the Collaborative approach to problem solving in College of Teachers' Meetings
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- The staff will follow the "Reform not Blame" approach as set out below.
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy. The policy will be reviewed once a year in September at a College of teacher meeting, and more often if required. The teaching resources mentioned in this document will also be reviewed at this time. The policy will be brought to the Board of Management meeting and the parent's council meeting once a year.

Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour:

Each class teacher is responsible for investigating and dealing with bully behaviour in their class. Class teachers will be supported by the Principal and other school leaders.

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
- > act 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)

Reporting Bullying Behaviour

- Any pupil or parent/guardian can report bullying to any teacher.
- Anonymous reports will be taken seriously and investigated.
- All school staff, including non-teaching staff, are informed of the anti-bullying policy and must report any bullying incidents they witness or are told about to the Principal.

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred-Key Steps

- The Class Teacher investigates all reports or suspicions of bullying — whether the behaviour happened in school or outside in line with the Bí Cineálta procedures
- The aim is to establish the facts and stop the behaviour, not to assign blame.
- Incidents can occur where behaviour is unacceptable and hurtful, but the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies that deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Supportive conversations may be held with pupils involved; this does not mean anyone is in trouble — it's part of understanding the situation.
- Parents are informed and involved in a supportive and respectful way.

- Pupils involved in bullying are:
 - Spoken to calmly and privately
 - Helped to understand the impact of their behaviour
 - Asked to stop the behaviour and take actions to make things better
- The focus is on restorative approaches, not punishment — the goal is learning and change, not blame.
- Pupils who report bullying are helping others — they're not getting anyone "in trouble".
- Once resolved, the Class Teacher monitors the situation for 20 school days to ensure it doesn't reoccur.
- A written report is completed after the review period, documenting what happened and any follow-up steps taken.

Responding to Ongoing Bullying Behaviour

- If bullying continues after an initial intervention, sanctions from the school's Code of Behaviour will apply, and parents/guardians will be informed.
- **Serious or repeated bullying** may lead to significant disciplinary action, including:
 - A meeting with parents/guardians and the Class Teacher to agree a strategy to stop the behaviour.
 - A formal meeting involving the Class Teacher, Principal, and parents/guardians; suspension may follow.
 - Referral to the Board of Management, with possible expulsion in very serious cases.
- All records of bullying incidents and their resolution are securely stored by the school.
- **Follow-Up and Monitoring**
 - The Class Teacher uses professional judgement to assess if the bullying issue has been appropriately addressed by considering:
 - Whether the bullying behaviour has stopped.
 - Whether issues between the pupils have been resolved, as far as practicable.
 - Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date, only if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. Staff members will use the Restorative Practice model.

- Feedback from pupils, parents/guardians, and the Principal or Deputy Principal.

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):

Recognising the Signs of Bullying

It can be challenging to distinguish bullying from normal peer interactions. However, bullying often becomes clear through its impact on the targeted child and patterns of behaviour — for example, if the same pupil is repeatedly hurt, excluded, or put down.

Children experiencing bullying may:

- Appear withdrawn, anxious, tearful, or nervous
- Complain of frequent illness (e.g. headaches, stomach aches)
- Avoid school or have unexplained absences
- Cling to adults or seek reassurance excessively
- Show changes in schoolwork, behaviour, or concentration
- Exhibit signs of low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, or even self-harm

In some cases, pupils who are bullied may also display bullying behaviour towards others.

Supporting Those Impacted by Bullying

For Pupils Who Were Bullied:

- Take immediate action to stop the bullying behaviour.
- Work to change the school culture to promote respect for all pupils, especially those who have been bullied.
- Foster greater empathy and support for bullied pupils among students and staff.
- Clearly communicate through awareness programs that bullying is never the fault of the targeted pupil.
- Ensure quick identification of those responsible for bullying and resolve incidents promptly.
- Help bullied pupils rebuild their self-esteem by encouraging participation in activities that build friendships and social skills, such as group work in class or extra-curricular teams and clubs.

For Pupils Who Bullied Others:

- Make it clear that pupils who stop bullying and reform will not be blamed or punished further—they will be given a fresh start.
- Praise and encourage those who take the right steps to change their behaviour.
- Support pupils who need to build self-esteem by involving them in activities that develop friendships and social skills.
- Use learning strategies across the curriculum to boost all pupils' feelings of self-worth.

- Encourage teachers and parents to focus on correcting negative behaviour while supporting the child's wellbeing.
- Approach bullying behaviour with the goal of resolution, offering a 'clean slate' in return for a genuine promise to reform.

Ongoing Support:

The school is committed to providing ongoing support for all children, using restorative practices and other strategies to promote wellbeing and foster a positive, respectful school environment over the long term.

Prevention is central to our anti-bullying policy. Staff are encouraged to stay alert to emerging issues between pupils and act early to reduce potential risks. We take a proactive approach that addresses the underlying attitudes behind bullying. This is done through our curriculum and daily interactions, where kindness and respect are modelled consistently. We aim to foster a school culture in which:

- Everyone is valued simply for being human
- All talents and subjects are treated equally
- Failure is seen as a learning opportunity
- Bullying is not accepted, supported, or tolerated

The long-term relationship between a pupil and their Class Teacher is key to building trust and security. Respect is expected between staff and pupils alike, and expectations around behaviour are agreed upon and reinforced across the school. In Kindergarten, this is done through strong rhythms and routines. Teachers model respectful behaviour, provide consistent boundaries, and use simple verbal cues like "kind voices" and "hands are for work and play" to guide children.

Our curriculum also supports these values. Stories, fables, and history lessons help pupils reflect on the dignity and responsibility of being human, encouraging empathy and appreciation for difference. Every subject is valued equally, creating opportunities for every child to succeed, be challenged, and learn from failure without shame.

While we strive to prevent bullying, we also accept that occasional incidents may occur. When they do, pupils and staff must experience that bullying is never acceptable and that it will be addressed quickly and effectively.

Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

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.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 29/05/2025.

Date of next review: June 2026



Signed:

(Principal)

Date: 29/05/2025

Signed: Pearse O' Shiels
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: 29/05/2025