



Scartaglen Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Scartaglen 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 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.

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

All members of our school community were provided with the opportunity to input into the development/review of this policy.

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	4/4/25 13/5/25	Staff Meeting Staff Survey
Students	14/5/25	Focus Group with Student Council
Parents	13/5/25	Parent Survey
Board of Management	21/5/25	Board of Management Meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	16/5/25	Ancillary staff and bus company consulted
Date policy was approved: 21/5/25		
Date policy was last reviewed: 14/11/24		

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):

General Prevention Strategies (Whole-School Approach)

- Promote a **positive and inclusive school culture** through visible displays of school values.
- Establish a **'telling' environment** by educating students on how and where to report bullying.
- Ensure effective **supervision in all school areas**.
- Integrate bullying prevention across **SPHE, RSE, Stay Safe and other curriculum subjects**.
- Conduct regular **school-wide awareness events** such as Anti-Bullying Week and Internet Safety Day.
- Work with the **student council** to encourage inclusion and empathy.

Strategies to Prevent Online (Cyber) Bullying

- Teach **digital literacy and online safety** through SPHE and the Digital Media Literacy

Curriculum.

- Develop and communicate a clear **Acceptable Use Policy** (AUP) for technology use.
- Promote **positive digital behaviour campaigns**.
- Encourage students to **report harmful online behaviour** and understand how to block/report abuse.

Strategies to Prevent Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying

- Display inclusive symbols and messages around the school.
- Include **LGBTQ+ awareness** in SPHE and across relevant curriculum areas.
- Challenge **gender stereotypes** through discussion and debate.
- Promote **peer mentoring and empathy-building activities** that foster understanding.

Strategies to Prevent Racist Bullying

- Ensure representation of **diverse cultures and ethnicities** in books, displays and school materials.
- Celebrate cultural diversity through events such as **Intercultural Day** or themed assemblies.
- Train staff on **cultural competency** and unconscious bias.

Strategies to Prevent Sexist Bullying and Sexual Harassment

- Ensure equal access and encouragement for all genders in school activities.
- Model and reinforce respectful language and behaviour among all staff and students.

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):

Supervision

- Staff are assigned to supervise all key areas during **morning arrivals, break times, lunch times, and after-school departures**.
- A **rota system** ensures all staff participate in active supervision duties throughout the week.

Use of Student Voice

- **Student feedback** is regularly gathered to identify spaces or times where they feel unsafe.
- Student council help assess and improve supervision strategies based on **peer experiences**.

Technology Monitoring

- **Wi-Fi restrictions and filters** are in place to prevent access to harmful content on school networks.

Adult Presence and Role Modelling

- All staff receive training to be **visible, approachable and proactive** in identifying early signs of bullying.
- Staff are encouraged to **engage with students during supervision**, not just observe.

Monitoring and Record-Keeping

- All **incidents of bullying behaviour** are recorded.
- Supervision practices are **reviewed regularly** by the school leadership to ensure effectiveness and equity.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

- > ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour is heard and reassured
- > seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- > conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- > consider the age and ability of those involved
- > listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- > take action in a timely manner
- > inform parents of those involved

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

Steps to Determine if Bullying Behaviour Has Occurred

1. Initial Engagement

- The teacher listens to the student making the report with empathy and reassurance.
- Details gathered include **what happened, where, when, and who was involved**.
- Each student involved (including witnesses) is met **individually** first, then as a group if needed.

2. Assessment Against the Definition

- The behaviour is assessed against the **core definition of bullying**:
 - Targeted behaviour
 - Repeated over time
 - Involves an imbalance of power
- Notes and accounts may be gathered in **written format** from students involved.

Approaches to Address the Bullying Behaviour

3. Immediate Support

- The student experiencing bullying is **engaged with promptly**, supported, and involved in deciding the next steps.
- Privacy and sensitivity are maintained during all interactions.

4. Informing Parents

- Parents/guardians of students involved are contacted early, and **consulted about actions to be taken**.
- Where students express concern about this contact, the school **plans appropriate supports** and a sensitive communication strategy.

5. Agreed Actions

- An **individualised support plan** may be developed for:
 - The student experiencing bullying
 - The student displaying bullying behaviour (to help them address their actions)
 - Witnesses, if needed
- Actions may include:
 - Mediation or **restorative practice**
 - Class-based lessons or behaviour contracts
 - Referral to pastoral supports or external services

6. Staff Accountability

- The teacher responsible for addressing bullying records the incident and **follows up** according to the school's policy.

- Any criminal or child protection concerns are referred appropriately (e.g., to Tusla or An Garda Síochána).

Reviewing Progress

7. Monitoring

- Follow-up conversations with the student experiencing bullying behaviour to ensure it has stopped and they feel safe.
- Ongoing monitoring of peer interactions and classroom dynamics.
- **Additional support provided** if issues continue.

8. Documentation

- Incidents and responses are **documented accurately and securely**.
- Records help identify any patterns or persistent concerns.

9. Policy Oversight

- The principal and/or the Board of Management **reviews anonymised data** at regular intervals to monitor effectiveness.
- The Bí Cineálta policy is **reviewed annually** or sooner if serious incidents occur.

The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

Supports for Students Who Experience Bullying

- Provide a **trusted adult** to listen and offer reassurance.
- Ensure regular **check-ins**.
- Encourage participation in **peer groups** to rebuild confidence.

Supports for Students Who Witness Bullying

- Teach the importance of the **bystander role**.
- Offer safe ways to **report anonymously**.
- Use **SPHE and class discussions** to process experiences.
- Recognise and encourage **positive actions**.

Supports for Students Who Display Bullying

- Use **restorative approaches** (when appropriate).
- Guide reflection through **structured conversations** or activities.
- Involve **parents** in behaviour support plans.
- Provide **targeted interventions** and refer to external supports if necessary.

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*.

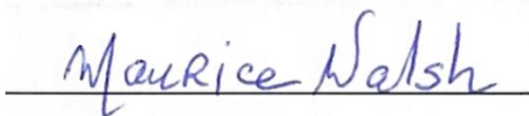
Section D: Oversight

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:



Date: 21/5/25

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed:



Date: 21/5/25

(Principal)