

# Barnacogue National School - Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of S.N. Shéamais (Barnacogue N.S.) 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	7 <sup>th</sup> March 2025  13 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	Staff Meeting – staff provided with the opportunity to discuss the new Bí Cineálta action plan and stemming from this discussion, staff were informed of the important points in dealing with an incidence or report of bullying.  Sharing of draft policy with staff to discuss / consult and make any amendments
Students	6 <sup>th</sup> March 2025	Students were given a questionnaire regarding the current anti bullying procedures in the school and to seek their input in developing an Anti-Bullying policy in Child Friendly Format – their wording, examples and suggestions were all taken into account when drafting this Policy.
Parents	25 <sup>th</sup> February 2025  20 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	Parents were given a questionnaire regarding the current anti bullying procedures in the school and to seek their input in to developing a new child friendly Bí Cineálta policy.  Bí cineálta draft policy shared with parents to seek feedback.
Board of Management	December 2024 – June 2025	Review new policy draft – leading to consultation and final ratification after amendments made where necessary.
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	NA	
Date policy was approved:		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

## 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):

### Culture and Environment

#### We strive to:

- Create a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and a there is 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 – equality, inclusion and respect.
- Encourage a sense of belonging with ownership over their own space through art and creativity.
- Create a positive school culture and climate which-
  - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
  - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
  - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;

#### Ways in which we work to achieve these goals are as follows:

- Staff are briefed on the uniform approach we must take to handle all reports of
- bullying
- Anti Bullying week activities such as Random acts of Kindness homework, Poster making, slogan making, etc
- Playground leaders – students in higher classes to support younger classes on yard to help with games and positive interactions.
- Child Friendly Anti- Bullying Policy formed with pupil and parent input. This policy outlines various ways to tell.
- Adding a ‘worry box’ into each classroom.
- Stay safe and SPHE lessons focusing on positive behaviour form part of curricular content in all classes.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils.

## **Curriculum (teaching and learning)**

### **We strive to:**

- Provide teaching and promote learning which is collaborative and respectful, fostering inclusion and respect for diversity.
- Display a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact.

### **Ways in which we work to achieve this:**

- Teach SPHE and RSE content which fosters student's well-being and self
- confidence as well as promoting personal responsibility for their own behaviours
- and actions (Stay Safe/ Walk Tall/ RSE)
- Model respectful behaviour towards colleagues, pupils and visitors in our school environment.
- Curricular and Extra-curricular activities can help to develop a sense of self worth, working together, inclusion and respect.
- Students are given regular opportunities to work in small groups with peers, which can help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy.
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that:
  - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
  - Supports staff;
  - Include consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
  - Incorporate on-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the Bí Cineálta policy.

## **Policy and planning**

### **The aim of Barnacogue National School's Bí Cineálta policy is**

- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils, parents/guardians.
- To promote a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To ensure appropriate supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
- To develop procedures for noting, investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To implement a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- To work with appropriate agencies in countering all forms of bullying and promoting anti bullying behaviour.

- ✚ The Acceptable Use Policy, Supervision policy, Special Education Policy and Code of Behaviour as well as the Agree to Agree policy all support the implementation of the Bi Cinealta policy.
- ✚ Effective leadership is a key component with Principal (DLP) and Deputy Principal (DDL), focused on supporting the implementation of this policy.

### **Relationships and Partnerships**

- Encourage open communication between staff, pupils and parents.
- Interpersonal connections are supported in our school - various pupil groups/committees to discuss and organise events, projects and initiatives.
- Age and stage appropriate awareness initiatives that engage the student body in looking at their own behaviour – building empathy, respect and resilience in pupils, promoting acts of kindness and friendship, being an active help to others and looking at the causes of and impact of bullying during SPHE lessons.
- Making parents aware of any courses or online resources available to them to regarding bullying behavior/cyberbullying and its impact.
- Encouraging peer mentoring and peer support.
- Supporting active participation of students in school life and active participation of parents in school life also.
- Engaging parents and students in actively contributing to the formation of a Child Friendly Anti Bullying Policy to make them active participants in promotion of and discussion of useful ways to identify and reduce bullying behaviour and highlight procedure and how to deal with it if it does occur.

### **Preventing Cyberbullying Behaviour**

- Explicitly teach the issues of cyberbullying and the importance of using technology safely e.g. FUSE
- Monitor student use of technology in the classroom and on the grounds of the school.
- Work with parents and students to educate them about the dangers of cyberbullying e.g. WEBWISE

### **Preventing Homophobic/Transphobic Bullying Behaviour**

- Create a safe and inclusive environment for all students, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Educate students about the importance of respecting all people, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Encourage peer support, such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities.

### **Preventing Racist Bullying Behaviour**

- Teaching students about the history and impact of racism.
- Promote diversity and inclusion in the classroom.
- Provide support to students who have been targeted by racist bullying.
- Ensure that library material represents appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

### **Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour**

- Teach students about the importance of gender equality.
- Celebrate diversity at school and celebrate the contributions and achievements of all 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):

- Teacher present to supervise at small break and lunch time.
- Children are accompanied by at least one staff member on school trips.
- Children are told where to play when out at yard and what spaces to avoid.
- Teachers bear in mind children who may have recently clashed when organising groups for collaborative work/ teams etc with a view to giving space to the children involved to heal.

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**

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

The class teacher will oversee recording of bullying reports for students in their class – this includes using the procedure guidelines to investigate reports of bullying and recording bullying behaviour on the correct form on Aladdin

The DDLP will follow up after twenty days to investigate if bullying has ceased.

#### ***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 involve

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):

**The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:**

- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the 'Relevant Teacher(s)', the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' will use his/her/their professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
- If it is established by the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' that bullying has occurred, the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- The 'Relevant Teacher(s)' must record the bullying incident on the school information management system (Aladdin) by adding an Alleged Bullying Behaviour Report to the relevant pupil's file which will be visible on files on all other pupils named. The 'Relevant Teacher' must inform the Principal.
- On being informed of an alleged incident of bullying, the teacher dealing with the report will first interview the victim(s) and discuss the feelings

**The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame).**

*With this in mind the school's procedures are as follows:*

- In investigating and dealing with bullying the teacher(s) will exercise his/her/their judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type if it has and how best the situation might be resolved.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the 'Relevant Teacher(s)'. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report instances of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, SNAs, caretakers and cleaners are encouraged to report any incidences of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them to the Class Teacher.
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
- On being informed of an alleged incident of bullying, the teacher dealing with the report will first interview the victim(s) and discuss the feelings which the victim(s) experienced because of the bullying behaviour.
- Initial investigations of bullying will be done in class where possible but some incidents might be best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' should seek answers to questions of what, where, who, when and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an

example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non- aggressive manner.

- If a group is involved each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about the other's statements.
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.
- Where the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' has/have determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- The 'Relevant Teacher' does not apportion blame but should make an effort to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter.
- When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the 'Relevant Teacher' will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information. This may be recorded on Aladdin under the Bi Cinealta tab, and uploading a file "Alleged Bullying Behaviour Report".
- If a pupil chooses to continue the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer be considered a once off occurrence. In this event parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted. The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for the pupil.
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may be arranged separately with a view to bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
- Repeated incidents of bullying behaviour will result in the imposition of sanctions. Such sanctions will be proportionate to the seriousness of the bullying behaviour. It must be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required that this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.
- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent must be referred to the school's complaints procedure.
- In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their rights to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.
- The School will maintain care for the victim over time. This will be done by speaking to the child a number of weeks after the incident to check on their continuing welfare. The child's parents will also be consulted.
- If a child makes a report of bullying, but asks that nothing is to be done about it, the relevant teacher will support the child appropriately to explore how it will be handled sensitively and how parents may be notified. If a parent does so, they must submit in writing that they require no further action to be taken, but even so, the school may still deem it necessary to be investigated and handled appropriately.

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):

***Supporting Bullied pupils:***

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

***Supporting Bullying pupils:***

- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a ‘clean sheet,’
- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honorable thing and giving them praise for this,
- Making adequate counseling facilities available to help those who need it (Subject to funding), learn other ways of meeting their needs besides violating the rights of others,
- Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school)
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils’ feelings of self-worth,
- In dealing with negative behavior in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child,
- In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a ‘clean sheet’ and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.

\*\*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: Patricia Gawley Date: 12/06/2025  
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed:  Date: 12/06/2025  
(Principal)