



## Scoil Naomh Seosamh Laragh

### **Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour**

The Board of Management of Scoil Naomh Seosamh, Laragh 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.

It is very important to note that this policy is fully aligned with the 'Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools' and that it should be read in conjunction with the procedures. Schools are required to follow the procedures fully, as set out by the Department of Education.

### **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, (e.g. personal injury, damage to or loss of property) social (withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion) and/or emotional (low self-esteem, depression, anxiety) 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.
- It is behaviour which is deliberate in nature and is unwanted. It is not accidental or reckless behaviour.

**Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour:**

A once-off instance of negative behaviour towards a student is not bullying behaviour. However, a single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying as it may be visible to a wide audience and has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and so it becomes a repeated behaviour.

If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour, but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying, but, importantly, must be addressed under the school's code of behaviour.

Some students with special educational needs may have social communication difficulties which may make them communicate their needs through behaviours that can hurt themselves or others. It is important to note that these behaviours are not deliberate or planned, but in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they cannot control.

Disagreement between students is not considered bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude, or create dislike by others.

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

Our school community was provided with the opportunity to input into the development/review of this policy.

|                                                                 | Date consulted | Method of consultation                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------------------|
| School Staff                                                    | 14/03/2025     | Staff Meeting: Bí Cineálta ½ day closure |
| Students                                                        | 09/06/2025     | Survey - 3rd to 6th classes              |
| Board of Management                                             | 11/06/2025     | Board Meeting - outline of procedures    |
| Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers | 11/06/2025     | Meeting Sherpa staff                     |
| Date policy was approved:                                       |                |                                          |
| Date policy was last reviewed: N/A                              |                |                                          |

## 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):

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

### Culture and Environment

We strive to:

- 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.
- Create class behaviour contracts/agreements promoting 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 – this is distributed to staff and a copy is displayed on the Staff Room notice board for ease of access also.
- Playground helpers – students in higher classes volunteer to support younger classes on yard to help with games and positive interactions.
- Child Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy prominently displayed and made known to pupils.
- Organise seminars/workshops given by relevant professionals to older pupils and to parents/guardians, focusing on educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while online and also on developing a culture of reporting any concern about cyber-bullying.
- Stay Safe and SPHE lessons focusing on positive behaviour form part of curricular content in all classes.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils.

## Curriculum

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.
- Model respectful behaviour towards colleagues, pupils and visitors in our school environment.
- Students are given regular opportunities to work in small groups with peers, which can help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy.
- Acknowledgment of our diverse school population – celebrating diversity and culture in our school through art, displays, photographs, international events.
- 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, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies);
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy
- Implementation of the following programmes:
  1. Stay Safe
  2. Weaving Wellbeing

3. Talkabout for Children/Friendship Terrace
- Engagement with the following Initiatives
  1. Internet Safety Day
  2. Community Garda
  3. Anti Bullying Week (13 – 17 November 2025)

## **Policy and Planning**

The aim of Scoil Naomh Seosamh, Laragh's, Bi 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 Child Safeguarding Statement, Acceptable Use Policy, Supervision policy, SEN Policy, RSE Policy, SSE Wellbeing in Education and Code of Behaviour all support the implementation of the Bi Cineálta policy. This is enhanced by appropriate Teacher Professional Learning.

Effective leadership is a key component with Principal, Deputy Principal, DLP, DDLP, and all middle management focused on supporting the implementation of this policy.

## **Relationships and Partnership**

- Scoil Naomh Seosamh, Laragh recognises the need to work with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships within the school community
- We recognise the rights of parents to share in the task of equipping pupils with a range of life skills
- We recognise the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.
- We promote habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.
- We promote qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among members of our school community both in school and outside of school.
- Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by ANY MEMBER of the school community.

## **Preventing Cyberbullying Behaviour**

Technology and social media have provided many positive opportunities for entertainment, social engagement and education. Technology is a part of life that can impact even the youngest members of society. However, the increase in the use of technology has led to students becoming increasingly vulnerable to cyberbullying or unacceptable online behaviour.

Schools should proactively address these challenges by promoting digital literacy, digital citizenship, and fostering safe online environments. Strategies to prevent cyberbullying behaviour include the following, (which is not an exhaustive list):

- implementing the SPHE curriculum
- having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- reviewing and communicating our Acceptable Use Policy for technology.
- referring to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour
- promoting or hosting online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online.
- holding an Internet safety day to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour

The digital age of consent is the minimum age a user must be before a social media or internet company can collect, process and store their data. In Ireland the digital age of consent is 16. Therefore, children under the age of 13 should not have a social media account.

An initiative from parents to foster agreement on not providing pupils with mobile phones while they remain in primary school will be supported by the school and Board of Management.

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

All students, including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students, have a right to feel safe and supported at school. Strategies to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- maintaining an inclusive physical environment such as by displaying relevant posters
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- challenging gender stereotypes
- conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour
- encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour

## Preventing Racist Bullying Behaviour

Schools have become much more culturally diverse over the last number of decades. Students attending schools come from many different cultures and backgrounds. Students from diverse backgrounds may face discrimination and prejudice and may be subject to racist bullying behaviour. Strategies to prevent racist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students “see themselves” in their school environment
- having the cultural diversity of the school visible and on display
- conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of racism
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour
- providing supports to school staff to respond to the needs of students for whom English is an additional language and for communicating with their parents
- providing supports to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma students, and to encourage communication with their parents
- inviting speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds
- ensuring that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds

## Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour

Schools should focus on gender equality as part of the school’s measures to create a supportive and respectful environment. Strategies to prevent sexist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex
- ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex
- celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contributions of all students
- organising awareness campaigns, workshops and presentations on gender equality and respect
- encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home

## **Preventing Sexual Harassment**

Preventing sexual harassment requires an approach that focuses on education, awareness and clear enforceable policies. Schools must make it clear that there is a zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment. Sexual harassment should never be dismissed as teasing or banter. Strategies to prevent sexual harassment include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- using Weaving Wellbeing and the RSE curriculum to teach students about healthy relationships and how to treat each other with respect and kindness
- promoting positive role models within the school community
- challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment

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):

- Staff at all times endeavour to encourage children to show respect for each other.
- Positive self-esteem is fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences, by acknowledging good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success.
- Digital Media Policy includes learning about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship. AUP also developed for technology in our school
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed regularly with pupils.
- Staff are particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of bullying/being bullied.
- All disclosed incidents of bullying are investigated thoroughly and consistently by following the correct procedure as outlined to staff and recorded on Aladdin using the template provided.
- School wide awareness raising on all aspects of bullying, supervision and monitoring.
- Involvement of pupils in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Student Council, Wellbeing Week and other activities that can help pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Refer to appropriate online behaviours when using devices and in SPHE lessons.
- Promote online safety events or materials for parents
- Challenge gender stereotypes – equal participation for all. Equal recognition.
- Raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour and encourage students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour.
- Foster a culture where diversity is celebrated and students 'see themselves' in the school environment.
- Modelling of respectful behaviour by staff of all irrespective of sex.
- Ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of sex.
- Making clear that our school has a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment of any kind with enforceable policy – See Code of Behaviour

## Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by ANY MEMBER of the school community.

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 principal will follow up within twenty school days to investigate if bullying has ceased.
  - All staff will be vigilant for bullying behaviour.
  - The principal will inform the Board of Management of incidents of bullying.
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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):

## **PROCEDURES FOR INVESTIGATION, FOLLOW UP AND RECORDING**

The primary aim for the relevant teacher 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).

Pupils or parents may bring a bullying concern to a teacher. Non-teaching staff such as secretary, SNAs etc. will report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to a relevant teacher.

All reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. Pupils will be informed that when they report incidents of bullying that they are acting responsibly.

In investigating and dealing with accusations of bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, using the definitions of bullying outlined in Bí Cineálta and in this policy, and decide how best the situation might be resolved.

Parents and pupils are required to cooperate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved. It is important that all involved (including all pupils and parents) understand that this is a restorative rather than a punitive approach.

Teachers should take a calm, unemotional, problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff, or parents.

Incidents are investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.

**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:**

### **IDENTIFYING IF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR HAS OCCURRED**

- When analysing incidents to determine if bullying behaviour has occurred, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example of dealing 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. When appropriate 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 each other's views. Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after an interview by the teacher.
- All interviews are conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way. It is advisable to have two members of staff present for any interviews whenever practical. Written records of all

conversations should be kept, with the date and time of the conversation noted.

- 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

#### **WHERE BULLYING BEHAVIOUR HAS OCCURRED**

- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred at, the parents of the parties will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to consult with them on the actions to be taken to address the behaviour as outlined in the school's Bí Cineálta policy (with reference to the school's Code of Behaviour).
- In circumstances where a student expresses concern about their parents being informed, the school should develop an appropriate plan to support the student and for how their parents will be informed. Schools should consider communication barriers that may exist when communicating with parents, for example, literacy, digital literacy or language barriers. The school will give parents an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for pupils.
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how s/he has been in breach of this Bí Cineálta Policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- A record should be kept of the engagement with all involved. This record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students involved and their parents. The record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour. This document is located in the Bí Cineálta folder in the Shared Google Drive.

#### **FOLLOW-UP WHERE BULLYING BEHAVIOUR HAS OCCURRED**

- The teacher must engage with the students involved and their parents again no more than **20 school days** after the initial engagement. Important factors to consider as part of this engagement are the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the students involved
- The teacher should document the review with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and their parents in relation to this.
- The date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased should also be recorded.
- Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted.
- Ongoing supervision and support may be needed for the students involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased.
- If the bullying behaviour has not ceased the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents. A timeframe

should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased.

- If it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then consideration should be given to using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school.
- If a parent(s) is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, they should be referred to the school's complaints procedures (see Parental Complaints policy)
- If a parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions have had a negative effect on the student

## **REQUESTS TO TAKE NO ACTION**

- It is important to listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation. A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than "look out" for them. The student may not want to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They may feel that telling someone might make things more difficult for them. Where this occurs, it is important that the member of staff shows empathy to the student, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the student to work out together what steps can be taken to address the matter and how their parents will be informed of the situation. It is important that the student who has experienced bullying behaviour feels safe.
- Parents may also make schools aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action. Parents should put this request in writing to the school or be facilitated to do so where there are literacy, digital literacy or language barriers. However, while acknowledging the parent's request, schools may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, schools should deal with it in accordance with their Bí Cineálta policy.

Where the student displaying the bullying behaviour is not a student in the school, but the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour is a student in the school, the school should support the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as appropriate and engage with them and their parents to determine what steps can be taken.

## **RECORDING AND REPORTING**

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour will adhere to the following:

- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will use his/her 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 that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- The relevant teacher will use the recording template on the Shared Google Drive and upload it to Aladdin to record the bullying behaviour and inform the principal.

If the behaviour is deemed to not be bullying but is serious in nature, this behaviour should be recorded using the Incident Report on Aladdin

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):

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying will be implemented and based on the ideas of Restorative Justice. While sanctions may be used as specified in this Code of Behaviour, the general focus of response to bullying behaviour is one of trying to mend and restore relationships as well as to encourage children to speak out when they experience bullying behaviour.

The principal and the relevant teacher will work together to ensure that both parties engage in activities that promote the restoration of positive relationships. This may take the form of circle time or conversations facilitated by teachers. The purpose of any such activities will be to ensure each party understands the consequences of their actions for themselves and for others.

#### Intervention Strategies

- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process.
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s) to support school interventions

Supports are available to help prevent and address bullying behaviour. These include the following:

NEPS

Oide

Webwise

National Parents Council

DCU Anti Bullying Centre

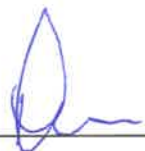
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## OVERSIGHT

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.

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: <u>11/06/2025</u> |
| (Chairperson of board of management)                                                        |                         |
| Signed:  | Date: <u>11/06/2025</u> |
| (Principal)                                                                                 |                         |

