



Bí Cineálta Policy

Bunscoil Chríost Rí

2025

Bí Cineálta

■ Title

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

■ Introductory Statement and Rationale

(a) Introductory Statement

The Board of Management of Bunscoil Chríost Rí has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour, in consultation with our Staff, Pupils and Parents, as we believe that it is a shared responsibility and their contributions and involvement will be essential to the effective development of a whole education approach to bullying prevention.

We confirm that we will take all steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent all bullying or harassment of our students in whatever form and however motivated.

Catholic schools have a distinctive understanding of the human person, recognising that every person is created in God's image and likeness and has inherent dignity as a child of God. This is the basis for ensuring that everybody in our school is treated with respect and care, in accordance with the Catholic Schedule.

As a Catholic school, we are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual. No human person is to be diminished devalued and all have an indispensable part to play in the school community, regardless of difference.

This policy fully complies with the requirements of “Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2024”.

(b) Rationale

Bunscoil Chríost Rí 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.

■ Vision and Aims

a) Vision:

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.

b) Aims:

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:

1. Gender
2. Civil status
3. Family status
4. Sexual orientation
5. Religion
6. Age
7. Disability
8. Race
9. Membership of the Traveller community.

Definition:

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 core elements of the definition are further described below:

Targeted behaviour:

Bullying is deliberate, unwanted behaviour that causes harm to others, and where the student displaying bullying behaviour knows that their behaviour is or will be perceived as harmful by the child or young person experiencing the behaviour. Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. The harm can be physical (for example, personal injury, damage to or loss of property), social (for example, withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion) and/or emotional (for example, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety) and can have a serious and long term negative impact on the student experiencing the bullying 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 still be addressed under the school's Code of Behaviour.

Repeated behaviour:

Bullying takes the form of a systematic pattern of behaviour which is repeated over time. Single offline incidents of intentional negative behaviour involving an imbalance of power are not considered bullying but must still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour. Posting a single harmful message/image/video online, and which is highly likely to be reposted or shared with others can therefore be seen as bullying behaviour.

Imbalance of power:

In incidents of bullying, the student experiencing the bullying behaviour finds it hard to defend themselves as a result of the abuse of a real or perceived imbalance of power. This imbalance of power may manifest itself through differences in size, strength, age, ability, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, race, ethnic origin including membership of the Traveller and/or Roma communities, sexual orientation, etc.

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.

All school policies can be found on our website www.criostri.ie

Bí Cineálta Timeline:

All members of the community were provided with the opportunity to input into the development of this policy:

	Date Consulted:	Method of Consultations
School Staff	Feb 4th-19th 2025	● Anonymous survey ● Powerpoint presentations ● Small group consultations ● Whole staff feedback meeting
Students	Feb 4th-19th 2025	● Anonymous survey
Parents	January 22nd - Feb 7th 2025	● Anonymous survey ● Parents & Friends Association contacted
Board of Management	BOM Meetings: ● Nov 26th 2024 ● Jan 28th 2025 ● March 11th 2025 ● May 20th 2025	● Powerpoint presentations
Wider school community		● Parents & Friends Association contacted
Date Policy Approved:	20/5/2025 & 23/9/25(updated wording from Patron inserted).	

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by this school to address all forms of bullying behaviour, in whatever form and however motivated, including online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment.

Culture and Environment:

A positive and inclusive school culture and environment is essential to prevent and address bullying behaviour. The school environment is a space where students and school staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported. Open communication between the patron, boards of management, school staff, students and their parents help to foster a collaborative approach and shared responsibilities in relation to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

The school leadership team influences the school culture and sets the standards and expectations for the school community when preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. Each member of school staff has a responsibility to develop and maintain a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable.

Students can shape the school culture by promoting kindness and inclusion within their peer group and maintain a positive and supportive school environment for all.

Parents, as active partners in their child's education, can help foster an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated through promoting empathy and respect.

In developing the preventative strategies which this school will use to prevent all forms of bullying behaviour, we come from the context of our Catholic ethos, where inclusivity permeates our school in a real way. This school takes positive steps to ensure that the culture of the school is one which welcomes a respectful dialogue and encounter with diversity and difference by ensuring that prevention and inclusivity strategies are given priority and discussed regularly at our board of management and staff meetings.

The dignity and the wellbeing of the individual person is of paramount concern in our Christian response. This school will listen closely to and dialogue with parents, thereby building a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, trust and confidence. In continuing to develop prevention strategies, this school will listen to young people and parents, to help establish their particular context and needs. Frequent periods of reflection and further engagement by the school, young people and parents, will be used to discern appropriate support for young people in this school and to help inform future prevention strategies.

In Bunscoil Chríost Rí we have a number of preventative measures in place:

- All stakeholders were consulted for our Mission Statement development
- We promote kindness and respect through SPHE Programmes
- Multicultural Week is celebrated every year
- We have a dedicated Nurture Room to support vulnerable children
- Wellbeing Week is celebrated every year
- We have an approachable staff who care for all pupils in the school
- Acts of kindness are promoted in the school
- Partnering younger classes with older classes to foster and develop relationships and set good standards, e.g: Reading buddies/Yard Minders etc.

- We have a vibrant Student Council
- We promote and value having a welcoming school atmosphere
- School/classroom rules discussed at beginning of the year
- Transitions & Expectations in corridors are monitored by all staff members

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning):

Teaching and learning that is collaborative and respectful is promoted. Students have regular opportunities to work in small groups with their peers, which can help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy among students.

We provide opportunities for students to develop a sense of self worth through both curricular and extracurricular programmes. The Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) curricula at primary level aim to foster students' wellbeing, self-confidence and sense of belonging and to develop students' sense of personal responsibility for their own behaviour and actions. Students' social and emotional learning (SEL) skills can be improved through the SPHE curriculum.

In Bunscoil Chríost Rí we have a number of preventative measures in place:

- Wellbeing initiatives
- Smart Moves
- FUSE Anti-Bullying & Online Safety Programme
- Weaving Wellbeing
- Webwise promotion
- Safer Internet Day
- RSE
- Stay Safe
- Friends for life
- SPHE

Policy & Planning:

The wellbeing of the school community is at the heart of school policies and plans. There are a range of other policies such as the Code of Behaviour that can support implementation of a school's Bí Cineálta policy. Supporting the participation of students in the development and implementation of school policies and plans will help increase awareness and ensure effective implementation. Engaging in appropriate teacher professional learning courses can support school staff to prevent and address bullying behaviour. In Bunscoil Chríost Rí we have a number of preventative measures in place:

- We ensure our policies are up to date & in place - with all stakeholders consulted.

All Policies below are seen to be important in the area of prevention of bullying:

- Acceptable Use policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Integration Policy
- Wellbeing Policy
- Nurture Policy
- SEN Policy

- SPHE Whole school plan

Relationships & Partners:

Strong interpersonal connections are a vital part of effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. These interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as student councils, school clubs, parents' associations and student support teams. The following, which is not an exhaustive list, could be considered to strengthen relationships and partnerships between members of the school community:

- Age-appropriate awareness initiatives that look at the causes and impacts of bullying behaviour including those dealing with navigating friendships, identity-based bullying, racist bullying, homophobic/transphobic bullying, sexism and sexual harassment
- Supporting the active participation of students in school life
- Supporting the active participation of parents in school life, including those who may find it difficult or daunting to engage with the school due to being unfamiliar with the education system or due to language or cultural barriers
- Supporting activities that build empathy, respect and resilience
- Encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring
- Promoting acts of kindness
- Teaching problem-solving

In Bunscoil Chríost Rí we have a number of preventative measures in place:

- Open door policy (Staff/Parents/Pupils)
- 6th class yard - Equipment
- Partnership and regular meetings with KRAC
- Principal and/or Deputy Principal attend all TUSLA/Barnardos Child Protection Conferences & Meitheal meetings
- Parents & Friends Association
- Amber Flag/Wellbeing Committees
- Grandparents' Day
- Interpres (PBST) links
- Cookery Room
- UCC links
- Student Council
- Group work and collaborative projects in the school

When implementing a prevention strategy schools should consider engaging with members of the wider school community who are in regular contact with students, such as the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- School bus/Taxi drivers
- Education Welfare Officers
- Traffic wardens
- NEPS

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.

Strategies to prevent cyberbullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- Implementing the SPHE curriculum
 - Implementing the Digital Media Literacy curriculum which teaches students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship
 - Having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online
 - Acceptable Use Policy for technology
 - Referring to appropriate online behaviour as part of Child-friendly BÍ Cineálta policy ●
- Promotion of our Internet Safety tool on our school website
- Promotion of Webwise as a tool for parents to use

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 technically, children under the age of 13 should not have a social media account.

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
- Encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- Encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour.

Preventing racist bullying behaviour:

We have become much more culturally diverse over the last number of decades. Students attending our school 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
- 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 support to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma students, and to encourage communication with their parents

Preventing sexist bullying behaviour:

Bunscoil Chríost Rí is aware of gender equality as part of the school's measures to create a supportive and respectful environment. Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary schools
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

Preventing sexual harassment:

Preventing sexual harassment requires an approach that focuses on education, awareness and clear enforceable policies. We have 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:

- Promoting positive role models within the school community.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

Staffing:

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

1. Class Teacher
2. L&M Team Member
3. Deputy Principal/Principal

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

Steps to Address Bullying Behaviour:

- Child-friendly Bí Cineálta Policy developed by Student Council
 - Clear expectations around transitions, yard and school corridors
 - Clear expectations around classroom etiquette
 - Clear guidelines around recording of bullying reports for students - Class teacher initially
 - The P or DP will follow up within twenty school days of report to see if behaviour has ceased ●
- All staff will be vigilant to bullying behaviour
- P will inform Board of Management of any incidents of bullying

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred:

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the teacher should consider the following:

- What?
- Where?
- When?
- Why?

If a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged individually at first. Thereafter, all students involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each student should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views.

Each student should be supported, as appropriate, following the group meeting. It may also be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident.

The definition of bullying sets out clear criteria to help schools to identify bullying behaviour.

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:

School staff should know what to do when bullying behaviour is reported to them or when they witness bullying behaviour.

We are 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.

It is important for school staff to be fair and consistent in their approach to address bullying behaviour. Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour need support.

It is very important that a student's agency is not decreased further by adults deciding what will happen next without listening to the student and involving them in deciding on the actions that will be taken.

The following principles must be adhered to when addressing bullying behaviour:

- Ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to 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*
- *Parents are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with schools, in addressing bullying behaviour.

Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved must 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.

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.

Requests to take no action:

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.

Determining if bullying behaviour has ceased:

The teacher must engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress following the initial intervention.

Even though the bullying behaviour may have ceased, ongoing supervision and support may be required for both the student who has experienced the bullying behaviour as well as the student who has displayed the behaviour.

It can take time for relationships to settle and for support to take effect.

If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students and parents and agree to meet again over an agreed timeframe until the bullying behaviour has ceased.

Where it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school should consider 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.

Recording bullying behaviour:

- All incidents of bullying behaviour should be recorded.
- Any engagement with external services/supports should be noted.
- The records should be retained in line with data protection regulations.

Complaint process:

If a parent is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with these procedures, they should be referred to the school's complaints procedure. In the event that a student and/or parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, a student and/or parent 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.

The Office of the Ombudsman for Children can be contacted at ococomplaint@oco.ie.

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. This policy is available to our school community on the school's website and in hard copy on request.

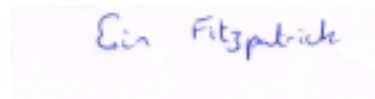
A student friendly version of this policy is displayed in the school and is also available on our website and in hard copy on request.

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.

■ Ratification and Communication

The Board of Management of Bunscoil Chríost Rí ratified this policy.

Signed:



Mr.Eoin Fitzpatrick Secretary BOM

Mr.Denis Bohane Chairperson

Date 20/5/25 & 23/9/25

Review Date: Yearly