

Lurga National School



BÍ CINEÁLTA POLICY

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Lurga 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.

As a Catholic School, 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	March 2025	Half Day school closure with all schools in the Smalls Schools Cluster. Collaborative input into current practice and areas for continued improvement. Email to staff members followed including Circular 0055/2024, <i>Bí Cineálta</i> Procedures, Resources, videos, links and PowerPoints and staff questionnaires
Students	February 2025	Focus Group - Students' Council Students from 1st to 6th Class surveyed.
Parents	February 2025 June 2025	Email explaining new procedures sent to parents along with accompanying Google Forms with recommended questions within. Bi Cineálta policy shared with the parent body through the school website.
Board of Management	March 12 th 2025 June 2026	Circular 0055 / 2024 communicated to the Board of Management. Review new draft policy - leading to consultation and final ratification after amendments made where necessary.
Date policy was approved: June 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: May 2025		

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:

Relationships between all members of the school community in Lurga N.S. should be based on respect, care, integrity and trust. 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.

Culture and Environment Strategies

- Assemblies
- Wellbeing Team comprising of staff and students
- Artwork and signage around school that supports positive values
- All cultures and beliefs are celebrated
- Grandparent's Day
- Astro area supporting a different form of play for children
- Holidays/Culture display
- Show and Tell
- Friendship week, BiCineálta week
- No hidden spaces
- Involvement in initiatives like Sporting activities/ quiz /gardening/ green schools / Active Flag
- Bright, light, safe corridors
- Adequate organisation of toilets for break times
- Belonging and sense of community fostered
- Positive social culture where relationship building is key

A Telling Environment:

It is important that the school community supports a 'telling' environment.

According to research conducted in Ireland, there is a persistent tendency not to report bullying incidents. Students should feel comfortable to talk about concerns regarding bullying behaviour.

A Trusted Adult:

Students who witness bullying behaviour should be supported and encouraged to report the behaviour to a trusted adult in the school so that the behaviour can be addressed. Students who witness bullying behaviour on social media have an important role in helping to address the behaviour by reporting the witnessed behaviour to a trusted adult.

The trusted adult should reassure the student that they have done the right thing by reporting the behaviour. The trusted adult should, without delay, inform the member of staff who has responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour. In Lurga N.S., this is the class teacher.

Creating Safe Physical Spaces in School:

Students can feel a greater sense of belonging to a school community when they are given ownership of their own space through art and creativity. This helps students to identify and to feel a sense of responsibility for their school environment.

Supervision:

Appropriate supervision is an important measure to help prevent and address bullying behaviour. Lurga N.S. will take all reasonable measures to ensure the safety of their students and to supervise students when students are attending school or attending school activities.

- Ensuring the visibility of school staff who are supervising at break times including during yard duty.

Curriculum: (Teaching and Learning)

The curricular subjects offered to students provide opportunities to foster inclusion and respect for diversity. Lurga N.S. will provide opportunities for students to develop a sense of self-worth through both curricular and extracurricular programmes using eg.

- Team teaching
- Support for all through the Continuum of Support
- Displays of art-work - help to foster pride in achievements
- Use of teaching programmes that support the Curriculum; Friends

For Life; RSE, Stay Safe, Walk Tall etc. • Group work evident in all subjects in all classes • Novel Study/Literacy Hour/Stations to encourage full participation • Project Work • Play as a methodology • Student Council • Learn Together • Buddy Systems

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.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/a4148-resources-for-primary-schools/>

The resources listed here are intended as an aid for schools to help implement their Bí Cineálta policy. It is not an exhaustive list and it will be updated over time.

Policy and Planning:

The wellbeing of the school community should be at the heart of school policies and plans. Chapter 4 of the Bí Cineálta procedures details the requirements of a school's Bí Cineálta policy and student friendly Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

There are a range of other policies such as the school's acceptable use policy, Code of Behaviour, Acceptable Use Policy, SPHE & RSE Whole School Plan, SEN Policy, Complaints Procedures, Inclusion Policy, Anti-Bullying promotion, and Code of Behaviour that can support implementation of a school's Bí Cineálta policy.

Relationships and Partnerships:

Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying recognises the importance of positive relationships across the whole education community to promote empathy, understanding and respect. The meaningful involvement of the board of management, staff, students and their parents in the development, implementation and review of their school's Bí Cineálta policy and student friendly version is essential to effectively prevent and address bullying behaviour.

Strategies:-

- Good deeds recognised at assembly
- Celebrating each other successes at assembly and through our website
- Drama and role play to address exclusion and Teacher's response
- Home school links
- Community links
- Facebook profile with PA
- Guest speakers
- Regular meetings keeping parents up to date
- Grandparent's Day
- Relationships with local pre-schools, secondary and national school
- Community link through St.Patrick's Day parade
- Student participation in school life
- Monthly newsletter
- Staff meetings
- BOM meetings
- Regular Updates to Parents and the school community

Preventing Cyberbullying 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.

For the purposes of data collection, students between the age of 13 and 16 years old must have parental permission to sign up to social media services where companies use the legal basis of consent to collect, process and store users' data. Most social media platforms and services have a minimum age requirement and for the majority of these services it is 13 years' old. Therefore technically, children under the age of 13 should not have a social media account.

It is important for their child's safety, that parents are aware of their children's use of technology including smartphones and gaming consoles.

Homophobic / transphobic / racist and sexist bullying is prevented by adhering to the strategies in sections 5.6 / 5.7 / 5.8 / 5.9 of the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

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):

- Pupils are supervised from 9:10 a.m. (when the school gates open) until 3p.m. (when school is finished) including during break time and lunch time.
- Encouraging a maximum of one pupil from each classroom to the bathroom at a time.
- Ensuring adequate supervision on school trips/school tours with a minimum ratio of one adult to 15 pupils.
- Maintaining an inclusive physical environment such as by displaying relevant posters.
- Fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students "see themselves" in their school environment.
- Encouraging bystanders to report when they see racist behaviour.
- On wet days, one teacher floats between the classrooms. The Buddie System comes into effect. SNAs stay in their classrooms. All staff are aware if there is a bullying incident ongoing. Extra supervision is implemented if necessary.
- Any area of the school yard where children cannot be seen by staff on duty is out of bounds.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

The Class Teacher(s) - of the pupil / pupils concerned

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):

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred teachers should consider what, where, when and why?

- if a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with 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 be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident(s)

Where bullying behaviour has occurred

- 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 students 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
- 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 record should be kept of the engagement with all involved
- this record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known (see Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the Bi Cineálta procedures), 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

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 the school 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
- 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

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):

- Regular check-ins with the pupil. Is there anything they would like to talk about?
- Normalise a culture of openness so that children know they can approach staff with concerns
- Increased focus on why the bullying behaviour is taking place, rather than apportioning blame
- Option of a soft start for pupils affected for the first 20 minutes in an effort to reduce school refusal or anxiety. This allows time for informal chats / time to observe the children in groups / identify anyone who may be left out
- Reassure the student and let them know there is someone there for them
- Friendship week to promote friendships & kindness
- Explicit teaching of what bullying is, how to report it and why we should not engage in such behaviour
- Worry box / bear so children who are less likely to approach an adult in conversation can do so in writing in their own time
- A culture of telling ASAP after the incident has occurred. Explain the rationale for this to the children
- Resilience building - role play integrated with drama
- Targeted support - use of emotional support programmes - My Hidden Chimp, Digi-Ducks, Friends for Life (Zippy's Friends)
- Relay advantages of not having a smartphone in primary school to parental body
- School wide process in place for factual logging of incidents (Log of Actions)

Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and PostPrimary Schools


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: 15/10/25

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: 

Date: 14/10/25

(Principal)