

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Tiermohan 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*, as outlined in Appendix A.

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 children who attend our school are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our children is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our children 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 children 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	12/3/25	Emails, Staff Meeting
Children	11/4/25 3/4/25 and ongoing	Survey of children from 1 st -6 th classes Consultation with Student Council
Parents	11/4/25	Survey of all parents
Board of Management	7/5/25	Board of Management Meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, Special Needs Assistant, Secretary	2/5/25	Emails and Whole Staff Meeting
Date policy was approved by Board of Management: 7/5/25		
Date (Anti-Bullying) policy was last reviewed: 11/9/24		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by the school. These include strategies specifically aimed at preventing online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

Culture and Environment:

We strive to;

- Create a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable
- Create a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.
- Involve parents as active partners in fostering an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated.
- Foster a culture of open communication
- Promote the concept of a trusted adult – stay safe linkage – who to tell.
- 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 children 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 at all times endeavour to encourage children to show respect for each other.
- Staff are briefed on the uniform approach we must take to handle all reports of bullying
- Bí Cineálta week activities
- Playground helpers – children in higher classes support younger classes on yard to help with games and positive interactions.
- Parents receive information at times regarding useful information on Anti Bullying.
- Stay safe and SPHE lessons focusing on positive behaviour form part of curricular content in all classes.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of children.
- Student Council development as well as notice board to promote kindness and build responsibility amongst children.
- Staff foster positive self-esteem among the children, by celebrating individual differences, by acknowledging good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success.
- Staff are particularly vigilant in monitoring children 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 Databiz using the template for this.
- School wide awareness raising on all aspects of bullying, supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extracurricular activities.
- Child contribution in fostering a safe school environment e.g. Bí Cineálta week, and other activities that can help to children and encourage a culture of peer respect and support
- Ensuring that children 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 behaviour when using devices and in SPHE lessons.
- Promote online safety events or material for parents
- The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school e.g. www.tacklebullying.ie, www.antibullyingcentre.ie, fuse.ie, www.webwise.ie
- Shared folder of resources for teaching of bullying including lessons from above websites – shared Google drive for all teachers to access.
- Challenge gender- stereotypes – equal participation of all.

- Raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour and encourage children to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour.
- Foster a culture where diversity is celebrated and children “see themselves” in the school environment.
- Ensuring the library has material which reflects our diverse school population from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
- Modelling of respectful behaviour by staff of all irrespective of sex.
- Ensuring all children have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of sex.
- Clear zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment of any kind with enforceable policy - See Code of Behaviour.

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 child’s well-being and self confidence as well as promoting personal responsibility for their own behaviours and actions.
- Implementation of the SPHE curriculum
- Model respectful behaviour towards colleagues, children 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.
- Children 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 children
- Supports for staff;
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the Bí Cineálta policy.

Policy and planning

The aims of Tiermohan National School’s Bí Cineálta policy are:

- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, children, 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 all support the implementation of the Bí Cineálta policy.

Effective leadership is a key component with Principal, Deputy Principal, DLP, DDLP, and middle management focused on supporting the implementation of this policy. Acceptable Use Policy includes learning about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship. The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed regularly with the children.

Relationships and Partnerships

- Interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as our Parents' Council and our child committees and groups.
- Age and stage appropriate awareness initiatives that engage the student body in looking at their own behaviour – 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.
- Conducting workshops and seminars for children, staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying.
- Encouraging peer mentoring and peer support
- Supporting active participation of children in school life and active participation of parents in school life also.
- Engaging parents and children 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.

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):

Two teachers and one SNA will be present to supervise at break and lunch time

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:

Class teachers, Principal Teacher

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

ensure that the child 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 child 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):

Identify if bullying behaviour has occurred:

- Two staff members can be present when engaging with children individually initially without parents' notification and presence.
 - Two staff members can be present when engaging with a group of children to investigate what happened. Teacher's discretion can be used with this approach about when best to use it.
 - A group meeting will provide the opportunity for the children to give their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views. Each child should be supported, as appropriate, following the group meeting. It may also be helpful to ask the children involved to write down their account of the incident. The following three questions should be considered to determine if bullying has occurred.
1. Is the behaviour targeted at a specific child or group of children?
 2. Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?
 3. Is the behaviour repeated?

If the answer to each of the questions above is Yes, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour and the behaviour should be addressed using the Bí Cineálta procedures.

Requests that no action taken:

A child who reports bullying behaviour may ask a member of staff not to do anything and just "look out" for them due to not wanting to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They might 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 child, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the child to work out together what steps can be taken to address the behaviour. It must be made clear to the child that other parties may need to be informed for their welfare. Parents may also make the school aware of bullying behaviour and specifically request that no action is to be taken by the school. Parents should put this in writing to the school. However, schools may decide that based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour through the Bí Cineálta procedures and/or the Code of Behaviour where appropriate.

Determining if the bullying behaviour has ceased:

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

Factors to consider in the review include:

- the nature of the bullying
- the effectiveness of strategies used to address the bullying behaviour
- the relationship between the children involved

Ongoing supervision of both the child experiencing bullying behaviour and the child displaying bullying behavior may be required as well as continued support. It can take time for relationships to settle and for supports to take effect. In some cases, relationships may never be restored to how they were before the bullying behaviour occurred. If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the child and parents and agree to meet again over an agreed timeframe until the bullying behaviour has ceased. Where it becomes clear that the child 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 child, their parents and school.

Recording bullying behaviour:

All incidents of bullying behaviour should be recorded. The following details should be included on the record:

- form (see section 2.5 of Bí Cineálta procedures)
- type (see section 2.7 of Bí Cineálta procedures)
- where and when (if known)
- the date of initial engagement with the child and their parents
- the views of the child and their parents* regarding the action to be taken to address the bullying behaviour (*only in relation to their own child)
- when review takes place, it should be noted if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of the child and parents in relation to this.
- note the date of reviews and engagements
- note the date that the bullying behaviour has ceased
- any engagement with external services/ supports should also be noted
- if a school support file exists for a child involved, schools are encouraged to place a copy of the record on the child's support file

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 complaints procedure. In the event that a parent is dissatisfied following the complaints procedure, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for children.

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):

Where bullying behaviour has occurred:

A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when children 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 child involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, then school can deal with it in accordance with Bí Cineálta policy.

It is important for staff to be fair and consistent in their approach to address bullying behaviour. Both the child who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the child who is displaying bullying behaviour need support. School staff should engage with the child who is experiencing bullying without delay. School staff should identify the supports needed for the child who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties. It is important that a child's agency is not decreased further by adults deciding what will happen next without listening to the child and involving them in deciding on the actions that will be taken.

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

- ensure the child 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 view of the child 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 of both 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 as outlined in the school's Bí Cineálta policy. In circumstances where a child expresses concern about their parents being informed, the school should develop an appropriate plan to support the child and for how their parents will be informed.

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 child 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 child 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: 
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: 7th May 2025

Signed: 
(Principal)

Date: 7th May 2025

