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 **Green-Schools**

**Bí Cineálta Anti-Bullying Policy**

* + - 1. The Board of Management of St. Brigid’s N.S. Annacurra has adopted the new *Cineáltas: Action Plan on* *Bullying* which replaces the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2013.* These procedures apply to all primary and post primary schools as defined in the *Education Act 1998*.
			2. These procedures are underpinned by a range of legislation which includes the *Education Welfare Act* *2000* where schools prepare a code of behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school. *The Code of Behaviour Guidelines for Schools* require schools to have an anti-bullying policy as part of the school’s Code of Behaviour. Schools have an obligation under the Equal Status Act 2000-2018 to prevent harassment. The Children’s First Act 2015 places a statutory obligation on schools to ensure, as far as practicable, that each child attending school is safe from harm while attending or participating in school activities.
			3. These new guidelines will provide direction and guidance for our school to prevent and address bullying behaviour. They have been developed with the 4 key principles of Cineáltas in mind:

 Prevention, Support, Oversight and the Community.

*Prevention:* Education and empathy generation are the foundations for knowledge, respect and inclusion.

*Support*: Tangible and targeted supports provide a framework for school communities to work together.

*Oversight*: Visible leadership inspires positive environments for children and the school community.

*Community*: Inclusive school communities that are connected build positive relationships and partnerships.

**The Board of Management School of Annacurra N.S**. is committed to the highest possible standard of education for all its pupils. A stable, secure learning environment is an essential requirement to achieve this goal. The Board of Management recognises that bullying is an experience that no child should endure, it can affect engagement with school, self-confidence and the child’s sense of self and belonging. Therefore, we are fully committed to using the four key principles of Cineáltas to prevent and address bullying behaviour:

*Prevention*: A positive school culture and environment where;

* Students and school staff experience a sense of belonging, feeling safe, connected and supported
* Relationships between all members of the school community (pupils, staff, parents) are based on respect, care, integrity and trust.
* Communication between pupils, staff, parents, board of management, patron are based on a collaborative approach and shared responsibility to prevent and address bullying
* Staff have a responsibility to develop and maintain a school culture where bullying is unacceptable and take a consistent approach to address bullying behaviour
* Pupils maintain a positive and supportive school environment for all by promoting kindness and inclusion within their peer group
* The school community (pupils, staff, parents) support a “telling” environment where pupils should feel comfortable to disclose bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment
* A “trusted” adult will encourage pupils to report by letting know pupils can talk to them and will reassure them that they have done the right thing by reporting the behaviour
* Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils in areas of the school where there is greater risk of bullying behaviour to occur
* Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and on-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.
* Creating safe spaces in schools where staff have a clear line of sight to make it easier to supervise pupils.
* School offers a mix of activities (sports – soccer / basketball, mud kitchen, chalk, hula hoops, tag games) and a soft play area with outdoor games (giant jenga / connect 4, building blocks, plus plus, giant polydron set, chess) for lunch times with benches to encourage social interaction.
	+ - * + Effective leadership;
				+ A school-wide approach;
				+ A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
				+ Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-

build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and

explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.

**School Ethos**

We, in St. Brigid’s, endeavour to create a positive school climate which focuses on respect, kindness and tolerance for each individual. We are committed to the provision of a stable, secure learning environment in which our pupils can feel safe and accepted. Bullying behaviour is unacceptable and wrong.

**What is Bullying?**

*Bullying is* ***targeted behaviour*** *online or offline that causes harm.*

***Harm*** *that is physical, social or emotional in nature*

*It is* ***repeated*** *overtime*

*Involves* ***an imbalance of power*** *in relationships between two people or groups of people*

**Targeted:**

* Deliberate
* Unwanted
* Causes harm to others
* Not accidental / reckless behaviour

**Repeated:**

* Systematic behaviour repeated overtime
* A single harmful message / image / video online is highly likely to be reposted / shared can be seen as bullying
* Single offline incidents of intentional behaviour are not considered bullying (see Code of Behaviour)

**Imbalance of power:**

A pupil finds it hard to defend itself as a result of the abuse of a real or perceived imbalance of power – manifested through size, strength, age, ability, peer group power, economic / social status, religion, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation

**Criminal Behaviour**

*-Can be considered criminal behaviour under certain circumstances and legal consequences can apply*

*-Age 12 is the age of criminal responsibility in Ireland*

*-Some online behaviour may be illegal:*

*“Coco’s Law – criminalises the non-consensual sharing of intimate images or threatening to share*

*-Hate speech targeting - Hatred Act 1989*

*-Physical violence / threats may be considered assault*

**Behaviour that is not bullying**

* A once off negative behaviour towards another student
* Disagreement between pupils, or where pupils don’t want to be or remain friends (unless repeated)
* Pupils with special educational needs who have social communication difficulties that can hurt themselves or others

**How Bullying Behaviour occurs:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Direct Bullying Behaviour:**  | 1. Physical bullying behaviour – pushing, shoving, kicking, damage to personal property2. Verbal Bullying behaviour – name-calling, insults, humiliating remarks, student’s accent, race3. Written Bullying behaviour – writing insults about a pupil in public places, passing notes / drawings4. Extortion – through force or threat |
| **Indirect Bullying Behaviour** | 1. Exclusion – -student deliberately / repeatedly isolated, excluded / ignored by another pupil or group of pupils
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**Where Bullying Occurs:**

* Inside School
* School yard
* In the classroom
* Toilets, corridors, hall, gym
* Outside of School
* Coming to and from school
* Organsied clubs / group outside of school
* Online bullying

**Different Types of Bullying**

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Cyberbullying / Online Bullying
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| 1. Racist Bullying
 |
| 1. Sexist Bullying – Gender Equality
 |
| 1. Identity Based Bullying
 |
| 1. Disablist bullying
 |
| 1. Exceptionally able bullying
 |
| 1. Physical Appearance Bullying
 |
| 1. Religious identity Bullying
 |
| 1. Poverty Bullying
 |
| 1. Sexual Harassment
 |

**Examples of Bullying Behaviours**

**General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying**

* Harassment based on the nine grounds of equality legislation
* Physical aggression
* Damage to property
* Name calling
* Slagging
* The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person
* Offensive graffiti
* Intimidation
* Insulting or offensive gestures
* The *“look”*
* Invasion of personal space
* A combination of any of the types listed.

**Cyber**

* Denigration: Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person’s reputation
* Harassment: continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual
* Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person’s name
* Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight
* Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online
* Outing; Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images
* Exclusion purposefully excluding someone from an online group
* Cyber stalking: ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety
* Silent telephone/mobile phone call
* Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls
* Abusive text messages
* Abusive email
* Abusive communication on social networks e.g., Facebook/Whats app/Snap Chat/ Tik Toc/You Tube or on games consoles
* Abusive website comments/Blogs/pictures
* Abusive posts on any form of communication technology

While this policy addresses issues related to cyber bullying of students (i.e., situations in which one or more students who have been bullied, the policy also applies to teaching and other school staff.

**Identity Based Behaviours**

Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality legislation

*Homophobic and transgender*

* Name calling e.g., Gay
* Physical intimidation or attacks
* Threats

*Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller Community*

* Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background
* Exclusion on the basis of any of the above

*Relational*

This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:

* Malicious gossip
* Isolation and exclusion
* Ignoring
* Excluding from the group
* Taking someone’s friends away
* “Bitching”
* Spreading rumours
* Breaking confidence
* Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear
* The “look”
* Use of terminology such as ‘nerd’ in a derogatory way

*Sexual*

* Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching
* Harassment

*Special Educational Needs, Disability*

* Name calling
* Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs
* Taking advantage of some students’ vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues
* Mimicking a person’s disability
* Setting up others for ridicule

 This policy applies to activities and events that take place:

* During school time (including break times)
* School tours/trips
* Extra-curricular activities

The 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 procedures / policy.

* + - 1. **The relevant teacher(s**) for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:
* The Class teacher of the student who is being bullied
* The Class teacher of the student who is alleged to be bullying
* The Principal
* The SEN teacher(s)
* Where necessary the DLP/ Deputy DLP may be involved

Any teacher may act as the relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

**5. The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows:**

1. It is the responsibility of each pupil to look after the safety and welfare of themselves and their fellow pupils. In this climate it is important that pupils are encouraged to **report** any incidents of bullying that they may have experienced and/or witnessed.
2. Our policy stresses the need for prevention and not just the control of bullying. It is not sufficient to merely discipline the student who has been bullying and give support to the student who has been bullied.
3. Creating a positive school atmosphere where anti-social, negative and disrespectful behaviour is addressed and challenged will make bullying behaviour less likely. Raising the awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils and parents is important.

Management, staff, pupils, parents are consulted in the formulation of this policy. Their endorsement and support are vital if our anti-bullying objectives are to be achieved.

The development, adoption and implementation of our anti-bullying code will be discussed regularly in the classrooms with the children themselves, at staff meetings and Board of Management meetings.

The anti-bullying code is included as part of our Code of Behaviour Policy Document. This is published in our school website and is given to each parent of Junior Infant children, or any parent of a child who is joining our school community as part of their Induction Information Pack.

**Parents’ Information on bullying includes**

* Definition of bullying
* Signs and symptoms of bullying
* How a parent can help
* The school’s procedure.

Such information raises an awareness of bullying among the parent population. It gives the parents of a pupil who is being bullied the confidence to approach the school. It sends a clear message to the parents of a pupil who is engaged in bullying behaviour that they have a major responsibility in addressing and changing their child’s behaviour.

(ii) Curricular Areas: -

A central aim of our daily practices of teaching and learning in St. Brigid’s N.S. is to nurture a sense of personal identity, self-esteem and awareness of one’s particular abilities, aptitudes and limitations, combined with respect for the rights and beliefs of others. To this end, we ensure that each year every class will participate in self-esteem lessons, reinforcing the positive as a means to **preventing** bullying behaviour:

1. English: There is a wide range of literature and a wide range of texts available which could be used to stimulate discussion.
2. Art: Class rules are clearly displayed in classrooms. These can be colourfully illustrated and displayed by students.
3. S.E.S.E: The interdependence of people in communities at local, national and international level is highlighted to promote respect and tolerance for difference. Issues such as colonisation, exploitation and dictators could be used to illustrate the abuse of power. Bullying behaviour is essentially an abuse of power.
4. Physical Education: The Sports Code of Conduct is a starting point for promoting respect in team events. Co-operation and respect for others is promoted through team sports and non-competitive participation in sporting activities. Sporting activities provide excellent opportunities for promoting the importance of conforming and playing fairly and by the rules as well as learning how to control one’s aggression.
5. S.P.H.E.: The Stay Safe Programme, the RSE Programme, the Walk Tall Programme, Weaving Well-being programme, Circle Time and Motus Learning (5th & 6th class) all give opportunities for children to explore issues around keeping themselves and others in a safe secure environment. Work on assertiveness and self-esteem is vital to this area. It has been found that jealousy plays a big part in explaining why a child is picked on, teased, slagged, humiliated, and belittled. “We were only messing”, is a term to be challenged and discussed.
6. Drama: Learning to be assertive is considered to be the best defense against being bullied. Eye contact and positive body language, allied to an air of confidence are crucial. Children need to have these coping strategies and through role-playing these will develop. Phrases like “Go away and leave me alone” need to be practiced in the safe environment of the classroom.
7. Development and promotion of a code for the School: The Three B’s

**Be good**

**Be kind**

**Behave**

(iii) Infant Programme

Defining and dealing with bullying in the infant classes is done through the day-to-day activities, and routine. Children are taught to share, take turns, listen to others, be kind and respectful, and generally anti-social behaviour is not tolerated or allowed. Specific lessons in the S.P.H.E. and Grow In Love programmes address the children’s exploration of their sense of self and others around them. In this atmosphere of respect, tolerance and kindness, the incidents of bullying should not emerge. Teachers deal with children with gentleness and tolerance and this teaches the children a good model of behaviour. Children are given the opportunity to explore and talk about their family relationships, particularly those with their siblings, where bullying behaviour can first emerge.

(iv) Programme for children with Special Educational Needs

Children with special needs will have programmes adapted for them by their SEN teachers and class teachers to suit their individual needs.

(vi) Agreeing class rules, discussions on friendships, promoting kindness, focusing on well-being

 will be used at the start of the academic year to highlight bullying behaviour.

(vii) Effective supervision and monitoring of students.

(viii) Any additional available support from NCSE, NEPS and Oide and other relevant Agencies will be provided to staff.

(ix) Consistent recording, investigation and follow-up of bullying behaviour.

(x) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy.

(xi) Key Measures re Cyber Bullying

* Staff will be informed on how to identify signs of cyber bullying and will be helped to keep informed about the technologies that children commonly use.
* Advice will be communicated to help students protect themselves from being involved in bullying and to advise them on reporting any incidents.
* Students will be informed about cyber bullying in the course of their education at the school.
* Cyber school will provide lessons to classes 2nd to 6th on about cyber bullying.
* Teachers will dedicate a standalone lesson to deal with the issue of cyber bullying.
* The Parents’ Association will be encouraged to organise a talk on bullying to include cyber bullying.
* Students and staff are expected to comply with the school’s policy on the use of computers in the School.
* Parents will be provided with information and advice on cyber bullying / internet safety webinars.
* Parents and students are advised that it is illegal for a child under 13 to register with and use many social media networks, including Facebook, Instagram, Tick Toc and Snap Chat.
* Parents can avail off signing up for a voluntary smart phone free policy for their children
* St. Brigid’s N.S. endeavours to block access to inappropriate web sites, using firewalls, antivirus protection and filtering systems and no pupil is allowed to work on the Internet within the school which may from time to time be used for such work, without a member of staff present.

**Links to other policies**

School polices that are particularly relevant to bullying include: Code of Behaviour, Child Protection Policy, Supervision of pupils, Acceptable Use policy.

**Guide to Addressing Bullying Behaviour (Appendix C)**

The whole school community has a responsibility to prevent and address bullying behaviour. Schools should work in partnership with their patron, board of management, staff, students and their parents to develop and implement their Bí Cineálta policy. This appendix is intended as a guide to addressing bullying behaviour. It is based on the information contained in Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

**Approach**

The primary aim in addressing reports of bullying behaviour should be to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the students involved, rather than to apportion blame.

**When addressing bullying behaviour teachers should**:

* 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 the students 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

**Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred**

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).

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour you should consider the

following questions:

***1. Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?***

***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 **Appendix C**

\****One-off incidents may be considered bullying in certain circumstances. A single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and thus becomes a repeated behaviour***.

If the answer to any of these questions is No, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour.

Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school’s Code of Behaviour.

**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 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

**Providing Bullying Behaviour Update for Board of Management**

The Principal will present an update / oversight on bullying behaviour at each Board of Management meeting

The update, **Appendix D** will include:

1. The number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting
2. The number of ongoing incidents and the total number of incidents since the beginning of the school year.
3. 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.

Where incidents of bullying behaviour have been reported since the last meeting, the update must include a verbal report which should include the following information where relevant:

1. The trends and patterns identified such as the form of bullying behaviour
2. The type of bullying behaviour if known
3. The location of bullying behaviour,
4. When the bullying occurred
5. The strategies used to address the bullying behaviour
6. any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour
7. if any serious incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred which have had a serious adverse impact on a student
8. If a parent has informed the school that a student has left the school because of reported bullying behaviour
9. If any additional support is needed from the board of management
10. If the school’s Bí Cineálta policy requires urgent review in advance of the annual review This update should not include any personal information or information that could identify the students involved.

**Review of the Bí Cineálta Policy**

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an Annual (calendar) Review of the school’s Bí Cineálta policy and its implementation in consultation with the school community. As part of the review, **Appendix E** must be completed.

Publication of Annual Review

The Board of Management must publish a notification regarding its “Annual Review of the School’s Bí Cineálta policy” stating when the review was completed and in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Education *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* **(Appendix F)**

**Appendix A is the school’s *Bí Cineálta policy to Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour is:***

1. Available on the school’s website to the school community and in hard copy on request
2. **Appendix B is** the student friendly version is also available on the website and in hard copy on request
3. **Appendix C** is the Bí Cineálta Report Form
4. **Appendix D** is the Guide to provide bullying behaviour update to the Board of Management
5. **Appendix E** is the Annual review of the Bí Cineálta policy undertaken by the BOM in consultation with the school community
6. **Appendix F** is the notification to the school community regarding the BOM’s annual review of the Bí Cineálta policy