



Radharc na Mara School

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

The Board of Management of Radharc na Mara 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.

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 & Roma community.

We confirm that we will take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the 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 each person 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 devalued, and all have an indispensable part to play in the school community, regardless of difference.

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 can be:

- Physical: (e.g.: personal injury, damage to or loss of property)
- Social: (e.g.: withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion)
- Emotional: (e.g.: low self-esteem, depression, anxiety)

Bullying behaviour is ***repeated over time*** and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society.

Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour

- A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards a student is not bullying behaviour. However, a single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be visible to a wide audience and has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and so becomes a repeated behaviour.
 - Disagreements between students.
 - Some students with special educational needs may have social communication difficulties which may make them communicate their needs through behaviours that can hurt themselves or others.
 - Bullying behaviour is not accidental or reckless. If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying but must be addressed under the school's Code of Behaviour.
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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	May 2025	Half Day Closure: using Guidance documents and resources. Familiarisation with Bí Cineálta Procedures publication. Group activities around ways to prevent & address various types of bullying behaviour.
	Oct 2025	Draft policy circulated for discussion & to make any amendments.
	Dec 2025	Notice board with the relevant information displayed. Policy, resources & additional information available on School Drive for all staff.
Students	June 2025	Student Council for input into developing an Anti-Bullying policy in Child Friendly format. Student Survey conducted
Parents	Oct 2025	Parents' Survey emailed & responses saved to drive. Draft policy distributed to parents for review.
Board of Management	Oct 2025	Send draft policy to members in advance of meeting to invite feedback and suggestions.
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	Nov 2025	Policy up loaded to school website for all to view.
Date policy was approved: Dec 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by Radharc na Mara school to address all forms of bullying behaviour as appropriate:

In developing 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 the 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 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 engagement by the school, young people and parents, will be used to discern appropriate supports for young people in this school and to help inform future prevention strategies.

1. Culture and Environment:

Radharc na Mara School adopts a school-wide approach to the fostering of respect & inclusion for all members of the school community.

We strive to:

- Create a school environment where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour is adopted.
- Involve parents as active partners in fostering an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated.
- Establish clear expectations for behaviour and enforce them consistently.
- Support the idea that our school is a telling environment.
- Promote the concept of a "trusted adult".
- Create safe spaces in our school building and yards - visibility
- Incorporate artwork and signs to promote our school values
- Create a positive school culture and climate which -
 - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity
 - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment and
 - promotes respectful relationships across the school community

Strategies/ways in which we work to achieve these goals are as follows:

- Staff are briefed on the **uniform approach** we must take to handle all reports of bullying - this is distributed to staff and a copy is displayed on the Staff Room notice board also.
- **Bí Cineálta/Anti Bullying week** will take place each year with an emphasis on kindness & friendship, poster making, slogan making etc.
- **Child Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy** formed with pupil input and distributed to parents, children & staff to discuss.
- **Parents** receive information at times regarding useful information on Anti Bullying, Stay Safe & SPHE lessons which focus on positive behaviour.
- Effective supervision & monitoring of pupils.
- **Assemblies:** Celebrating school, class & individual achievements through our monthly assemblies.
- **Playground helpers** - students in higher classes volunteer to support younger classes on yard with games and positive interactions.
- **Yard star** is chosen weekly from Infants - 4th class & acknowledged by the Principal in recognition of their kindness & positive interactions.
- Pupils are provided with opportunities to develop a **positive sense of self-worth** through formal & informal interactions as follows:
 - Lunchtime activities that encourage inclusion & having fun playing with friends
 - Acts of Kindness acknowledged by class teacher & principal.
 - Student Council to allow and encourage student voice.
 - Green Schools/Active Flag committees.
 - Quiet spaces in classrooms
 - Incredible Years used in Junior classes to build friendships, kindness, empathy & deal with emotions.

2. Curriculum (Teaching & Learning):

We strive to:

- Provide teaching and promote learning which is collaborative & respectful, fostering inclusion and respect for diversity
- Display a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact.

Strategies/ways in which we can aim to achieve this:

- **SPHE:** the implementation of the SPHE curriculum according to our whole school plan including the Walk Tall, RSE & Stay Safe programmes & integration from the Grow in Love programme.
- **Stay Safe:** School wide delivery of specific lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes e.g. Stay Safe.
- **Cyber Safety Talks:** Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media/cyberbullying - using programmes like Webwise teacher resources, cybersafekids.ie
- **Workshops:** Organise seminars/workshops given by relevant professionals to tie in with Internet Safety Day for older pupils and parents/guardians.
- **Group work:** Students are given regular opportunities to work in small

groups with peers, which can help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy

- **Modelling behaviour:** Model respectfully behaviour towards colleagues, pupils & visitors in our school environment.
- **Curricular & extracurricular activities:** to develop a sense of self-worth, working together, inclusion & respect: Music Generation, Junior Entrepreneur, Branar sa Scoil, Bodhran, Gaelic, Soccer, Athletics - Cross Country
- **Diversity:** Acknowledgement of our diverse school population - celebrating diversity & culture in our school through art, displays & photographs.
- **CPD:** Support for staff including access to CPD when and as required.
- **Recording & Evaluation:** Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour in line with Bí Cineálta policy. On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the Bí Cineálta Policy, through yearly review.
- **SEN:** The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN/EAL pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills & strategies to enable all pupils respond appropriately.
- **EAL:** All eligible students have access to regular EAL sessions to enable them learn strategies to help express themselves & interact with their peers & the wider school community.

3. Policy & Planning:

We strive to:

- Develop, communicate, implement & review our Bí Cineálta policy in consultation with all partners.

Strategies/ways in which we aim to achieve this:

- **Reporting:** Provide clear procedures for reporting and responding to bullying incidents.
- **Awareness:** Raise awareness of all types of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils & parents/guardians.
- **Ethos:** Promote a school ethos in planning which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- **Supervision & monitors:** ensure appropriate measures through which all areas of school activities are kept under observation: be aware of hot spots/times: toilet areas, corridors, areas of less structured supervision e.g. playground, moving classrooms.
- **Acceptable Usage Policy:** this was developed to include the necessary steps to ensure that access to technology with the school is strictly monitored.
- **School Policies:** The following policies, practices and activities are communicated & implemented in support of the Bí Cineálta policy: Code of Behaviour, Child Safeguarding Statement, Risk Assessment, Acceptable Usage Policy, Attendance, SPHE & RSE Policy, SEN Policy, DEIS Policies, Healthy & Safety Policy.

- **Staff Meetings:** Regular staff meetings are held with the opportunity to discuss and address any issues related to bullying and student wellbeing.
- **SEN Integration Policy:** Our school's approach to tackling and preventing bullying takes particular account of the needs of pupils with SEN, and joins up with other relevant school policies and supports and will endeavor to ensure that all services that provide for such pupils work together. Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for pupils for pupils with SEN include improving inclusion from Tír na nÓg & Sproai, focusing on developing social skills, paying attention to key moments such as transitioning from primary to post-primary and cultivating a good school culture which has respect for all and helping one another as central.
- **CPD:** Teacher Professional Learning & other such relevant supports offered to staff.

4. Relationships & Partnerships

We strive to:

- Build strong interpersonal connections

Strategies/ways in which we aim to achieve this:

Interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as:

- **SNA Support:** additional support to students with special educational needs, ensuring they are included and supported within the school community
- **NEPS:** The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) collaborates with the school to offer psychological support and interventions for students.
- **Community Guard:** The school works with the local Community Guard (Kenny Boyle) to ensure a safe and secure environment for all students.
- **DEIS Team (AP1 Post holders):** The DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) team focuses on addressing educational disadvantage and promoting equality within the school.
- **Tusla:** The school collaborates with Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, to support students' welfare and address any child protection concerns.
- **Parent Volunteers:** Parents are encouraged to volunteer and participate in school activities, fostering a strong partnership between home and school e.g. Maths for Fun, Reading for Fun, Heart to Heart
- **Student Council & Voice:** The Student Council provides a platform for students to voice their opinions and contribute to school policies and initiatives.
- **Restorative Practice:** Staff are training to help the school employ Restorative Practice strategies to resolve conflicts and restore relationships, promoting a positive and respectful school environment.
- **Home School Community Liaison Officer:** The Home School Community Liaison Officer works to strengthen the partnership between home and school, supporting students and their families.

- **Meitheal:** The Meitheal program involves peer mentoring and support, fostering a sense of community and collaboration among students.
- **School Completion Officer:** The School Completion Officer works to prevent early school leaving and supports students in completing their education.
- **Parent-Teacher Meetings:** Parent-Teacher Meetings are held to discuss students' progress and address any concerns, fostering open communication between home and school.
- **Guest Speakers:** The school invites guest speakers to provide additional insights and education on bullying prevention and related topics, enriching the students' learning experience.
- **Community organizations:** collaboration with local community organisations to provide additional support & resources: Thermoking, St. James', Ballybane Library, ATU Galway, Bon Secours Pastoral Team, Ballbane Community Garden, Burrenbeo Trust.
- **Monthly Assemblies:** Raise awareness of definition of bullying behaviour and how the school deals with such behaviour regularly at school assemblies.
- **Mentoring:** Encouraging peer mentoring and peer support: Playground helpers, Buddy Reading.
- The meaningful involvement of the Board of Management, staff, pupils and their parents in the development, implementation and review of the schools' BÍ Cineálta policy & student friendly version is actively pursued by the school.

The following are prevention strategies used to address online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate:

- Staff at all times endeavour to encourage pupils to show respect for each other.
- Implementation of the SPHE curriculum.
- Positive self-esteem is fostered among the students by celebrating individual differences, by acknowledging good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success.
- Digital Learning Policy includes learning about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship, Every student should know the rules of being online . AUP also developed for technology in our school.
- The school's BÍ Cineálta/anti-bullying policy is explicitly taught annually in all classes and discussed regularly with the students.
- Staff are particularly vigilant in monitoring students who are considered at risk of bullying behaviour/ experiencing bullying behaviour.
- All disclosed incidents of bullying behaviour are investigated thoroughly and consistently by following the correct procedure as outlined to staff and recorded using the template for this.
- School wide awareness raising on all aspects of bullying behaviour, supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school

tours and extracurricular activities.

- Foster a culture where diversity is celebrated and students "see themselves" in the school environment.
- Involvement of students in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Student Council/Green School's Committee and other activities that can help to pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying behaviour 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
- Shared folder of [links](#) on Google Drive for teaching about the Bí Cineálta guidelines to be provided.

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour:

In addition to all the practices identified above under Culture and Environment, Curriculum, Planning and Policy and Relationships and Partnerships, Radharc na Mara School has the following supervision and monitoring practices/policies to prevent and address bullying behaviour:

Staff supervision: A yard supervision Rota is devised at the beginning of each year so that adequate and appropriate supervision is provided for on yard & wet day supervision inside of school.

Designated areas: Classes are assigned designated areas on yard to ensure age-appropriate interactions & ease of monitoring & observing of behaviour.

Outings & Trips: Children are accompanied by appropriate number of teachers/SNAs/Support staff on all trips, outings, swimming etc. Supervising personnel are placed at strategic positions on buses, walks, trips etc to ensure adequate supervision & monitoring of interactions.

Incident reporting: the class teacher investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour with a view to establishing facts and record on Aladdin incident report form, if necessary. Appropriate actions to be taken & follow up within 20 days.

Monitoring: if there are reported incidents between children that warrant closer monitoring on yard/trips, this is notified on Aladdin (orange flag) and through handover meetings.

BOM: a report on supervision & incidents of bullying behaviour is give at each BOM

meeting.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

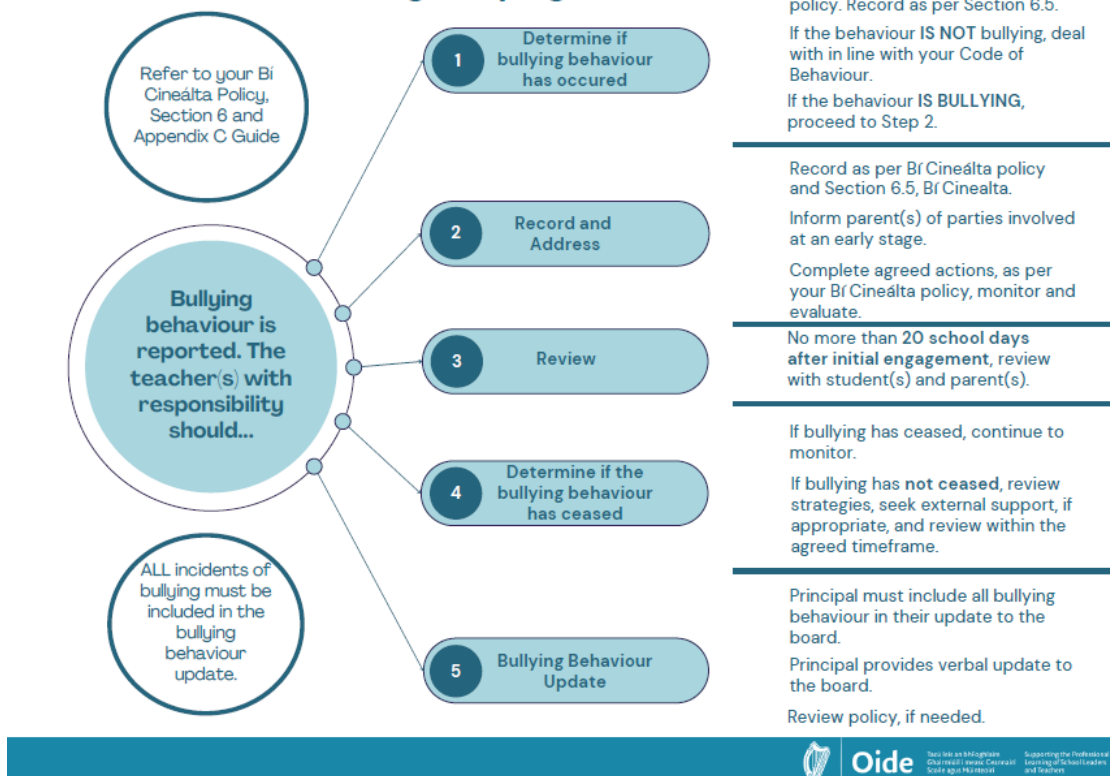
The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour is (are) as follows:

- All mainstream class teachers
- Principal/Deputy principal will provide support & advice and become involved when appropriate.
- All staff will be vigilant to bullying behavior.
- AP2 Bí Cineálta co-coordinator is available to provide up to date information & supports if needed.

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
- > Record & review

Bí Cineálta: Addressing Bullying Behaviour



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:

The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up & recording of bullying behaviour and the establishment of intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

1. Determine if bullying behaviour has occurred:

Class Teacher investigates a report of Bullying behaviour to see if it has occurred:



(A more detailed definition is also provided in Chapter 2 of the B'í Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools)

- 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.
- 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 B'í Cineálta Procedures and proceed to Step 2.
- **Note:** 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.
- **Note:** A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are requested to support the student(s) involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, schools should deal with it in accordance with their B'í Cineálta policy.

Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, SNAs, caretakers and cleaners are encouraged to report any incidences of bullying behaviour witnessed by them to the class teacher(s).

2. Record & Address:

When identifying the bullying behaviour, class teacher should consider what, where, when and why when interviewing the student experiencing the bullying. Class teacher(s) investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying with a view

to establishing the facts (type & form of bullying behaviour)

- Class teacher will first interview the student experiencing bullying. Initial investigations of bullying behaviour will be done in class where possible but some incidents might be best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- If a group is involved each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about the other's statements. Students may be asked to write down their account of the incident. All students should be supported as appropriate, following the group meeting.
- Class teacher must record his/her notes from any investigation on Aladdin on the Bí Cineálta recording template.
- Parent(s) of parties involved should be informed at an early stage.
- Where the class teacher has determined that a student has engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her that he/she is in breach of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the perspective of the student experiencing the bullying behaviour.

It is important for class teacher(s) to be fair and consistent in their approach to address bullying behaviour.

- Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student(s) who is/are displaying bullying behaviour need support.
- It is important that the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour is engaged with without delay so that they feel listened to, supported and reassured.
- Teacher(s) should identify the supports needed for the student who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties and ensure that their needs are met.

When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the Class Teacher will complete the report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information. This will be recorded in the Radharc na Mara Bí Cineálta recording template.(available online on Drive)

3. Review:

With the student(s) and parent(s) involved **no more than 20 school days after initial engagement.**

4. Determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased:

If the bullying behaviour has ceased, ongoing supervision and support may still be required.

If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the class teacher should review the

strategies used in consultation with the students and parents and Principal and agree to meet again over an agreed timeframe until the bullying behaviour has ceased.

If the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour the school may consider using strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

5. Bullying Behaviour Update:

Principal must include all reports of bullying behaviour in their update to the Board of Management. This will include a verbal account of investigations, trends and findings.

6. Complaint Process:

If a parent(s) is not happy 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.

7. Supports:

Supports to prevent and address bullying are available from the following government agencies

- NEPS
- Oide
- Webwise
- National Parents Council
- DCU Anti Bullying Centre
- Tusla

***Note 1:** In circumstances where the student expresses concern about their parents being informed about a case of bullying behaviour the class teacher will support the student appropriately to explore how it could be handled and work out together how parents may be informed.

***Note 2:** If a parent makes a report of bullying behaviour but requests that the school take no action, they must submit this in writing. We will acknowledge this but may still deem it necessary for a report to be addressed and investigated.

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):

Our school's programme of support for working with students affected by bullying behaviour involves a whole school approach. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, no one intervention/support programme works in all situations. In addition to supports referenced above, it may include but is not limited to the following:

- **Encourage Open Communication:** We have created a safe and supportive environment where students feel comfortable discussing their experiences. They know it's okay to speak up if they see or experience bullying.
- **Promote Inclusion:** Students are encouraged to share experiences and stories. Acknowledging diversity and a variety of different festivals and special occasions throughout the year significantly impact students' sense of

belonging.

- **Engage in Extracurricular Activities:** Participation in clubs, sports, or arts is encouraged. Being part of a group with shared interests can boost self-esteem and provide a supportive peer network.
- **Involve Parents:** Lines of communication with parents and guardians are kept open at all times. They are informed of different situations at school and collaborate on strategies to support the student both at home and school.
- **Seek Professional Support:** Support is available from professional organisations like NEPS, Oide, NCSE, Tusla, NPC etc.
- **Implement Educational Programs:** Access to programmes like Walk Tall, Incredible years Programme, Weaving Wellbeing and lessons from Webwise help to build children's resilience and raise awareness of appropriate and acceptable behaviour.
- **Support from Nurture & EAL teacher.**
- Teachers will be encouraged to attend training in **Restorative Practices**

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*.

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: _____
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Principal)