Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of **Tuam Educate Together** 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 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	August 2025	Staff Meeting discussion on Bí Cineálta
Students	September 2025	Class room visits to develop child friendly Policy Art work
Parents	September 2025	Bi Cinealta and Restorative Practices discussed at Class meeting
Board of Management	November 2025	Board explored, amended and ratified policy
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers.	September 2025	Ger our Lunch Bag operative and Monika our cleaner were asked to contribute to our child friendly policy art work.

Date policy was approved:November 2025

Date policy was last reviewed: November 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

- 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 Committee/Friendship week, 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 resources on Google Drive for teaching about the Bí Cineálta guidelines

- Challenge gender-stereotypes – equal participation of all and equal recognition.

- Raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour and encourage students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour.

- 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 gender.

- Ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of gender.

- Making clear that our school has a zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment of any kind.

Section C
Addressing Bullying Behaviour

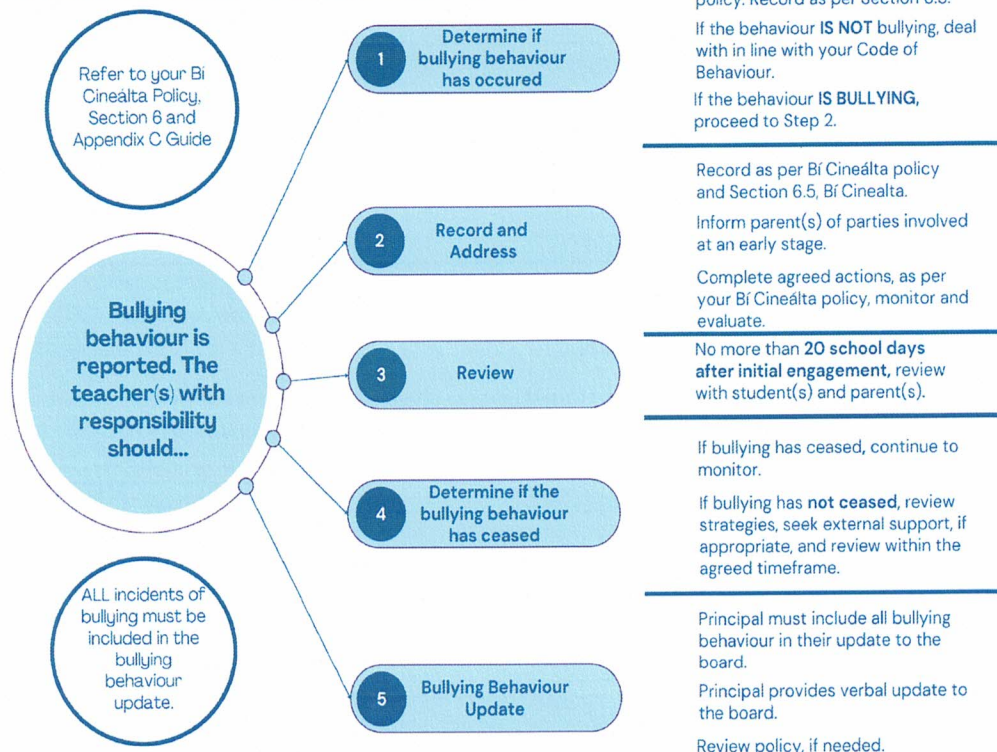The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour is (are) as follows:

All Class teachers and Support staff including SEN teachers and SNAs

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 and review

Bí Cineálta: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

Refer to your Bí Cineálta Policy, Section 6 and Appendix C Guide

Bullying behaviour is reported. The teacher(s) with responsibility should...

ALL incidents of bullying must be included in the bullying behaviour update.

1 Determine if bullying behaviour has occured

Teacher(s) investigate as per school policy. Record as per Section 6.5.

If the behaviour **IS NOT** bullying, deal with in line with your Code of Behaviour.

If the behaviour **IS BULLYING**, proceed to Step 2.

2 Record and Address

Record as per Bí Cineálta policy and Section 6.5, Bí Cineálta.

Inform parent(s) of parties involved at an early stage.

Complete agreed actions, as per your Bí Cineálta policy, monitor and evaluate.

3 Review

No more than **20 school days** after initial engagement, review with student(s) and parent(s).

4 Determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased

If bullying has ceased, continue to monitor.

If bullying has **not ceased**, review strategies, seek external support, if appropriate, and review within the agreed timeframe.

5 Bullying Behaviour Update

Principal must include all bullying behaviour in their update to the board.

Principal provides verbal update to the board.

Review policy, if needed.

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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):

1.Determine if bullying behaviour has occurred.	**Class Teacher** investigates a report of Bullying behaviour. If the behaviour IS NOT bullying, deal with it in line with Tuam Code of Behaviour. If the behaviour IS BULLYING proceed to Step 2. 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 Bí Cineálta policy.
2.Record and Address	On being informed of an alleged incident of bullying behaviour the **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.

Class Teacher must record his/her notes from any investigation on Aladdin making a Bí Cineálta recording template.Parent(s) of parties involved should be informed at an early stage. Principal is informed at the same time.

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. A restorative agreement is signed and will be referred to again at the review meeting.

Both the student displaying bullying behaviour and the student experiencing bullying behaviour need support.

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 Tuam ETNS Bí Cineálta recording template.(available online on Aladdin Under documents) |
| 3. Review | 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 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	The 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 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 Play Therapist
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

- **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.
- **Behaviour Reflection Sheet:** Through Restorative Practice questioning students are encouraged to reflect on their behaviour and its impact on others

- **Promote Inclusion**: Students are encouraged to share experiences and stories. Celebrating 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, FUSE activities and lessons from Webwise help to build children's resilience and raise awareness of appropriate and acceptable behaviour.
- **Support from Nurture Teachers** and our school's play therapist.

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: _Mike Connolly_

Date: 5/11/25   (Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: _fione feeney_

Date: 5/11/25   _Acting_
                       (Principal)