Scoil an Chlochair

Convent Primary School

School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

1.0 Introduction
The Board of Management of the Convent Primary 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 pupils who attend our school are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our pupils is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our pupils 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 pupils 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.

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.

This policy was formulated in April 2025. It applies to all Staff and children during school hours, break times, and on all school related activities. This policy is in keeping with the school ethos of providing a safe and secure environment for all pupils and the wider school community.

Mission Statement:
"Our school has a Catholic ethos and is inspired by the Mercy philosophy of education which is "committed to the holistic development and the achievement of the full potential of each student, particularly those who are disadvantaged or marginalised." Our aim then, and our focus, is to ensure your child develops her/his potential to the full in a happy, secure learning environment. To this end, we nurture an atmosphere of care, respect and joy in the school and in everything we do. We, the Staff, are committed to ongoing whole-school development in collaboration and partnership with our Board of Management, the Parents and the wider community"

2.0 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 follows:

Bullying is 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.

2.1 Core Elements of Bullying Behaviour

There are many different methods of bullying behaviour, including physical, verbal and relational forms, and it can take place online and offline. There are also many different motives for bullying behaviour which can be understood on an individual level for example, desire for dominance, status, revenge and/or on a societal level for example, identity-based bullying such as racist, disablist, sexist or LGBTQ+ bullying. Bullying behaviour in schools is often strongly influenced by attitudes, behaviours, norms and power dynamics that are deeply engrained in our society. The core elements of the definition include targeted behaviour, repeated behaviour and an imbalance of power.

a) Targeted Behaviour

Bullying is deliberate, unwanted behaviour that causes harm to others, and where the pupil displaying bullying behaviour knows that their behaviour is or will be perceived as harmful by the child or young person experiencing the behaviour. Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. The harm can be:

- Physical, for example, personal injury, damage to or loss of property
- Social, for example: withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion
- Emotional, for example: low self-esteem, depression, anxiety

It can have a serious and long-term negative impact on the pupil experiencing the bullying behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the pupil experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other pupil, this is not bullying but, importantly, must still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour.

b) Repeated Behaviour

Bullying takes the form of a systematic pattern of behaviour which is repeated over time. Single offline incidents of intentional negative behaviour involving an imbalance of power are not considered bullying but must still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour. Posting a single harmful message/image/video online, and which is highly likely to be reposted or shared with others can therefore be seen as bullying behaviour.

c) Imbalance of Power

In incidents of bullying, the pupil experiencing the bullying behaviour finds it hard to defend themselves as a result of the abuse of a real or perceived imbalance of power. This imbalance of power may manifest itself through differences in size, strength, age, ability, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, race, ethnic origin including membership of the Traveller and/or Roma communities, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, experience of the care system, disability or the receipt of special education.

In incidents of online/cyber bullying, the imbalance of power may relate to online anonymity, technical proficiency and possession of information/images/video, and the inability of the targeted pupil to remove offensive online material or escape the bullying.

2.2 Behaviour That Is Not Bullying Behaviour

- A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards another pupil is not bullying behaviour.
- Disagreement between pupils, or instances where pupils don't want to be friends or to remain friends, is not considered bullying behaviour unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others including deliberate manipulation of friendship groups.
- Some pupils with special educational needs may have social communication difficulties which may make them communicate their needs through behaviours that can hurt themselves or others. It is important to note that these behaviours are not deliberate or planned but, in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they can't control.
- Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the pupil experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other pupil, this is not bullying.
- These behaviours, while not defined as bullying can be distressing. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of 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.

2.3 How Bullying Behaviour Occurs
Bullying behaviour can take many forms, which can occur separately or together. These can include direct bullying behaviour, indirect bullying behaviour and online bullying behaviour. This is not an exhaustive list

2.3.1 Direct bullying behaviour:
a) Physical bullying behaviour:
Physical bullying behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping pupils. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils can often engage in "mess fights" they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.

Personal property can be a focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, schoolbooks and other learning material or interference with a pupil's locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of b0 personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

b) Verbal bullying behaviour:
Continual name-calling directed at a pupil which hurts, insults or humiliates the pupil should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance; for example, size or clothes worn or gender identity. It can also refer to a pupil's accent, distinctive voice characteristics, academic ability, race or ethnic origin.

c) Written bullying behaviour:
Written bullying behaviour includes writing insulting remarks about a pupil in public places, passing around notes about or drawings of a pupil.

d) Extortion
Bullying behaviour can involve extortion. Extortion is where something is obtained through force or threats.

2.3.2 Indirect bullying behaviour:
a) Exclusion
Exclusion bullying behaviour occurs where a pupil is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded or ignored by a pupil or group of pupils.

b) Relational
Relational bullying behaviour occurs when a pupil's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. Common forms include control: "Do this or I won't be your friend anymore"; a group of pupils ganging up against one pupil; non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a pupil; giving a pupil the "silent treatment"; and the deliberate manipulation of friendship groups to make someone unpopular.

2.3.3 Online bullying behaviour:
Online bullying behaviour or cyberbullying is carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text or direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, e-mail, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chatrooms and other online technologies.

This form of bullying behaviour can include:

- sending or sharing nasty, insulting, offensive, and/or intimidating messages or images via text messages, emails, direct messages or other websites or apps
- posting information considered to be personal, private and sensitive without consent
- making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other pupils
- excluding or disrupting access to a pupil on purpose from online chat groups, access to accounts or from an online game

Even though a message may be posted online just once by a pupil it can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be seen by a wide audience where it is intended to be shared or has a likelihood of being shared multiple times and is thus repeated.

As online bullying uses technology to carry out bullying behaviour and does not require face-to-face contact it can occur at any time. Many types of bullying behaviour can be facilitated through online bullying. In many cases online bullying can relate to an "offline" experience with someone known to the pupil.
This type of bullying may involve forms of sexual exploitation including but not limited to, sextortion and the non-consensual sharing of intimate images. The sharing or threatened sharing of images without consent is a criminal offence.

2.4 Types of bullying behaviour
There are many different types of bullying behaviour. These can include the following which is not an exhaustive list:

a) **disablist bullying behaviour**: behaviour or language that intends to harm a pupil because of a perceived or actual disability or additional need

b) **exceptionally able bullying**: behaviour or language that intends to harm a pupil because of their high academic ability or outstanding talents

c) **gender identity bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a pupil because of their perceived or actual gender identity

d) **homophobic/transphobic (LGBTQ+) bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a pupil because of their perceived or actual membership of the LGBTQ+ community

e) **physical appearance bullying**: behaviour or language that intends to harm a pupil because of their physical appearance. Pupils who "look different" can be mocked or criticised about the shape, size or appearance of their body

f) **racist bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a pupil because of their race or ethnic origin which includes membership of the Traveller or Roma community. Racism is defined in the National Action Plan Against Racism as "a form of domination which manifests through those power dynamics present in structural and institutional arrangements, practices, policies and cultural norms, which have the effect of excluding or discriminating against individuals or groups, based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin"

g) **poverty bullying:** behaviour that intends to humiliate a pupil because of a lack of resources

h) **religious identity bullying:** behaviour that intends to harm a pupil because of their religion or religious identity

i) **sexist bullying:** behaviour that intends to harm a pupil based on their sex, perpetuating stereotypes that a pupil or a group of pupils are inferior because of their sex

j) **sexual harassment:** any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on sex which affects the dignity of the pupil, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, experience of the care system, disability or the receipt of special education. In incidents of online (or cyber) bullying, the imbalance of power may relate to online anonymity, technical proficiency and possession of information/images/video, and the inability of the targeted pupil to remove offensive online material or escape the bullying

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3.0 Section A: Development/Review of our Bí Cineálta Policy

This Bí Cineálta policy and pupil- friendly version of the policy has had the meaningful involvement of the board of management, staff, pupils and their families in its development, implementation and review. Members of the wider school community including Bus Escorts, Traffic Wardens were provided with the opportunity to input into the development/review of this policy also. All members of the school community including the wider school community are encouraged to report any bullying behaviour to the school as appropriate.

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	Week commencing 10th February 2025	• Half day closure 10/2/25 • Survey • Review of draft Bí Cineálta Policy • CPD
Pupils	Week commencing 10th February 2025	Survey
Families	Week commencing 10th February 2025	Survey
Board of Management	Week commencing 28th April 2025	Review of draft Bí Cineálta Policy
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	Week commencing 10th February 2025	Survey
Date policy was approved: 29th July 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: 29th July 2025		

4.0 Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

Bullying behaviour is not acceptable. We as members of this school community, the board of management, staff, pupils and their families have a responsibility to work together in partnership to prevent and address bullying behaviour and to deal with the negative impact of bullying behaviour. This Bí Cineálta policy has been developed by the school community. It sets out how it will be implemented our school community prevents and addresses bullying behaviour.

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.

Prevention strategies that will be used by our school 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.

The following four key areas from the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice have been considered when developing measures to prevent bullying behaviour and are essential for a holistic, whole-school approach to wellbeing promotion:

- Culture and Environment;
- Curriculum/Teaching and Learning
- Policy and Planning
- Relationships and Partnerships.

4.1 Culture and Environment

A positive and inclusive school culture and environment is essential to prevent and address bullying behaviour. At the Convent Primary School, we will endeavour that our school environment will be a place where:

- Pupils and school staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported.
- Relationships between all members of the school community based on respect, care, integrity and trust.
- Open communication between the patron, boards of management, school staff, pupils and their parents help to foster a collaborative approach and shared responsibilities in relation to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.
- Our school leadership team endeavours to influence the school culture and set the standards and expectations for the school community when preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.
- Each member of school staff is responsible to develop and maintain a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and to take a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.
- Pupils are encouraged to shape the school culture by promoting kindness and inclusion within their peer group and maintain a positive and supportive school environment for all.
- Families are encouraged to be active partners in their child's education and can help foster an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated through promoting empathy and respect.
- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.

4.1.2 Essential Elements of an Antibullying Culture and Environment

The following are key components of an antibullying culture and environment: a telling environment, trusted adults, safe physical spaces and supervision.

a) Telling Environment

Our school community values the importance of and supports a 'telling' environment. We will endeavour to make our school a safe environment where pupils will be encouraged to feel comfortable to talk about concerns regarding bullying behaviour.

b) Trusted Adult

The concept of "a trusted adult" can be an effective strategy to encourage pupils to report if they or another pupil is experiencing bullying behaviour. Staff will support the concept of 'a trusted adult' by fostering relationships with pupils and letting pupils know that they can talk to them. Pupils who witness bullying behaviour will be supported and encouraged to report the behaviour to a trusted adult in the school so that the behaviour can be addressed. Pupils who witness bullying behaviour on social media have an important role in helping to address the behaviour by reporting the witnessed behaviour to a trusted adult. The trusted adult should:

- Reassure the pupil that they have done the right thing by reporting the behaviour.
- Without delay, inform the class teacher or the principal.
- Continue to support the pupil, as appropriate, while the behaviour is being addressed by the relevant member of staff

c) Creating Safe Physical Spaces in School

We acknowledge the importance of creating safe physical spaces for our pupils to support psychological safety and as an important measure to prevent bullying behaviour. We will endeavour to address this by:

- regularly monitoring our supervision strategies
- improving the visibility of school staff who are supervising at break times including during yard duty
- adding murals, artwork and signage can help schools to promote the school's values such as equality, diversity, inclusion and respect
- ensuring that the school grounds are well maintained to promote a sense of ownership and respect in the school community

d) Supervision

In the Convent Primary School, we value a safe environment and work towards providing that for the entire school community. Our aim is to provide a safe place for all the children in our care. To that end an Arrival Dismissal Supervision Policy is in place. It sets out the procedures for the supervision of pupils during the school day and on all school related activities. The policy is in keeping with our school ethos of providing a safe and secure environment for all pupils and the wider school community. Supervision also applies to monitoring pupil use of communication technology within the school. While careful supervision is undertaken at all times during the school day, all members of the school community must be aware that no arrangement exists for the supervision of pupils who arrive at the school before 8.45am or who remain in the vicinity of the school after school hours awaiting collection.

4.1.2 Current initiatives in Place

The following are some of the initiatives in place at the Convent Primary School. This list is not exhaustive**.**

- **In class activities:** Buddy Up days, reverse integration of pupils, Listening Ear Boxes, Wellbeing afternoons, buddy reading, pupil support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support, learning about different cultures and religions in the curriculum, giving children time to talk about their personal celebrations and achievements
- **Playground:** Friendship stop, Buddy bench, mix of year groupings on the yard, Playground rules, Communication boards.
- **Pupil committees:** Health and Wellbeing Committee, Green Schools, Student Council, Active Schools
- **Whole school activities:** Kindness being role modelled, successes shared by whole school committees, pupil voice including involvement of the pupils in contributing to a safe school environment, birthdays celebrated, Lámh communication promoted by the whole school community, Nurture room, our school therapy dog Frank
- **Parental:** regular communication, frequent surveys, use of Aladdin and social media platforms to update families, active PA, families invited to attend shows, grandparents mass, intercultural/wellbeing information session, internet safety, educating parents about social media
- **Continuous Professional Development**: Friends for life, Nurture, Incredible Years, Emotion, Coaching, Motus, Children First
- **Staff:** regular celebration of key life events, birthday celebrations, opportunities to collaborate professionally, staff input in relevant matters, open communication
- **Annual activities:** Mental Health Awareness Week, Anti-Bullying Week, Friendship Day, "Odd Socks Day", participation in the Amber Flag Programme, Intercultural Day

4.2 Curriculum/Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning that is collaborative and respectful is promoted at the Convent Primary School. Pupils have regular opportunities to work in small groups with their peers and reverse integration to our special classes which can help build sense of connection, belonging and empathy among pupils and to promote understanding of pupil needs and different learning styles and capabilities.

The curricular subjects offered to pupils provide opportunities to foster inclusion and respect for diversity. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to develop a sense of self-worth through both curricular and extra-curricular programmes.

Extracurricular activities include: sports, drama, modern foreign languages, choir, assemblies, sport training after school, chess, various pupil committees, Grow in Love, Friendship Week, Buddy Up Day, playground leaders, Active Schools, Green Schools, Pupil Council, Health and Wellbeing Committee, group work, JEP, Mallow Maths and Science Fair. This list is not exhaustive.

The Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE), Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE), curricula at primary level aim to foster pupils' well-being, self-confidence and sense of belonging and to develop pupils' sense of personal responsibility for their own behaviour and actions. These programmes are fully implemented at the Convent Primary School. Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes is encouraged. The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.

Other measures include:

- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence-based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme, Friends First Programme, FUSE, HTML Heros.
- School wide delivery of lessons on Cyber Bullying and Internet Safety (Be Safe-Be Web wise, Webwise, the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary level. These lessons, delivered by Community Garda, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, families and the wider school community.
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s)
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.

4.3 Policy and Planning

The wellbeing of the school community is at the heart of school policies and plans. This Bí Cineálta policy details how we try to prevent and address bullying behaviour. We use many of the resources and practices as recommended in the Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools, in particular FUSE Anti-Bullying and Online Safety Programme developed by DCU Anti-Bullying Centre.

We value pupil and family voice in developing awareness and ensuring effective implementation of policies and planning by involving families and pupils in the development of school policies and plans through the following: policy review by the school community, surveying pupils and families, focus groups with the PA and the pupil committees.

We value staff and Board of Management voice and all school personnel and Board members are also consulted in the development of policy and procedures in the school. We have developed a strong culture of continuous professional development with school personnel engaging in professional learning courses that support the school in preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. School personnel often share their experiences and examples of best practice at meetings, via email or through collaborative working groups.

The following policies are in place and they support implementation of our Bí Cineálta policy:

- Pupil Friendly Bí Cineálta policy
- Wellbeing Framework for Policy and Practice
- Code of Behaviour
- Child Safe Guarding Statement
- Digital Citizenship
- Arrival Dismissal Supervision Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- RSE Policy
- SPHE Policy
- Attendance Policy
- SET Policy
- SEN Policy
- SSE Policies

4.4 Relationships and Partnerships
The Convent Primary School recognises that strong interpersonal connections are a vital part of effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. We recognise the importance of positive relationships across the whole education community to promote empathy, understanding and respect. We support these interpersonal connections through a range of formal and informal structures such as pupil committees, extracurricular activities, school clubs, PA and pupil support teams.

The following is a list which is not exhaustive of ways we endeavour to strengthen relationships and partnerships between members of our school community:

- age-appropriate awareness initiatives that look at the causes and impacts of bullying behaviour including those dealing with navigating friendships, identity-based bullying, racist bullying, homophobic/transphobic bullying, sexism and sexual harassment
- supporting the active participation of pupils in school life
- supporting the active participation of families in school life, including those who may find it difficult or daunting to engage with the school due to being unfamiliar with the education system or due to language or cultural barriers
- conducting workshops and seminars for pupils, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying
- supporting activities that build empathy, respect and resilience
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring
- promoting acts of kindness
- teaching problem solving
- hosting debates

4.5 Preventing Cyberbullying Behaviour
Technology and social media have provided many positive opportunities for entertainment, social engagement and education. Technology is a part of life that can impact even the youngest members of society. However, the increase in the use of technology has led to pupils becoming increasingly vulnerable to cyberbullying or unacceptable online behaviour.

The Convent Primary School proactively addresses these challenges by promoting digital literacy, digital citizenship, and fostering safe online environments. Strategies to prevent cyberbullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- implementing our Acceptable Use Policy,
- implementing the SPHE curriculum
- implementing the Digital Media Literacy curriculum which teaches pupils about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship
- having regular conversations with pupils about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- referring to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour
- promoting or hosting online safety events for families who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online
- inviting specialist speakers to speak to pupils about internet safety
- holding an Internet safety month to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour.

The digital age of consent is the minimum age a user must be before a social media or internet company can collect, process and store their data. In Ireland the digital age of consent is 16. For the purposes of data collection, pupils between the age of 13 and 16 years old must have parental permission to sign-up to social media services where companies use the legal basis of consent to collect process and store users' data. Most social media platforms and services have a minimum age requirement and for the majority of these services it is 13 years' old. Therefore, technically, children under the age of 13 should not have a social media account.

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

4.6 Preventing Homophobic/Transphobic Behaviour
All pupils including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender pupils, have a right to feel safe and supported at school. Strategies to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- maintaining an inclusive physical environment such as by displaying relevant posters
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- challenging gender-stereotypes
- encouraging pupils to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour

4.7 Preventing Racist Behaviour
Our school is culturally diverse. Our pupils come from many different cultures and backgrounds. Pupils from diverse backgrounds may face discrimination and prejudice and may be subject to racist bullying behaviour. Strategies we use to prevent racist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where pupils "see themselves" in their school environment
- having the cultural diversity of the school visible and on display
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour
- providing supports to school staff to respond to the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language and for communicating with their parents
- providing supports to school staff to support pupils from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma pupils, and to encourage communication with their parents
- ensuring that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of pupils and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds

4.8 Preventing Sexist Behaviour
Schools should focus on gender equality as part of the school's measures to create a supportive and respectful environment. Strategies to prevent sexist bullying behaviour include the following. This is not an exhaustive list:

- ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat pupils equally irrespective of their sex
- ensuring all pupils have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex
- celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contributions of all pupils
- organising awareness campaigns, workshops and presentations on gender equality and respect
- encouraging families to reinforce these values of respect at home

5.0 Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour
The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour is(are) as follows: Class teacher(s) and Principal.

The following principles apply to all staff:

- Staff will be vigilant to bullying behaviour.
- Staff will adhere to the Bí Cineálta Policy procedures.
- Staff will inform the Principal of bullying behaviour.
- The class teacher(s) will oversee recording of bullying reports for pupils in their class. This includes using the procedure guidelines to investigate reports of bullying and recording bullying behaviour on the *Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour***. See** Appendix A. This form will be uploaded on Aladdin.
- Staff will use pupil unique identifiers when recording information.

The following principles apply to the principal:

- The Principal is available to support and to assist class teacher in addressing bullying behaviour.
- The Principal will follow up after twenty days to investigate if bullying has ceased.
- Principal will inform Board of Management of incidences of Bullying.

5.1 Approach to Addressing Bullying Behaviour
The whole school community has a responsibility to prevent and address bullying behaviour. 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 pupils involved, rather than to apportion blame. It is important for school staff to be fair and consistent in their approach to address bullying behaviour. Both the pupil who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the pupil who is displaying bullying behaviour need support. It is important that the pupil who is experiencing bullying behaviour is engaged with without delay so that they feel listened to, supported and reassured. School staff should identify the supports needed for the pupil who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties and ensure that their needs are met.

A pupil's agency or sense of power can be decreased when they experience or witness bullying behaviour. When a pupil tells an adult that they feel that they are experiencing bullying behaviour they may feel that they are taking back some control over what is happening to them. It is very important that a pupil's agency is not decreased further by adults deciding what will happen next without listening to the pupil and involving them in deciding on the actions that will be taken. When addressing bullying behaviour teachers should:

- ensure that the pupil 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 pupils involved
- listen to the views of the pupil who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- take action in a timely manner
- inform family of those involved*

Families 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 family(ies) of the 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 pupil expresses concern about their family being informed, the school should develop an appropriate plan to support the pupil and for how their family will be informed. Communication barriers that may exist when communicating with family should be considered, for example, literacy, digital literacy or language barriers.

5.2 Identifying if Bullying Behaviour Has Occurred
The class teacher(s) supported by the principal investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour with a view to establishing the facts and managing the behaviour.

In investigating and dealing with bullying, the class teacher(s) and principal will exercise their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.

The following procedure should be used for identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred:

1. A fair and consistent approach will be used by staff when addressing bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or family(ies).
2. Interviews will be conducted outside the classroom in a fair and consistent way.
3. When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred staff should consider what, where, when and why?
4. If a group of pupils is involved, each pupil should be engaged with individually at first thereafter, all pupils involved should be met as a group.
5. At the group meeting, each pupil should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views.
6. Each pupil should be supported as appropriate, following the group meeting it may be helpful to ask the pupils involved to write down their account of the incident(s)

5.2.1 Determining Whether the Behaviour is Bullying Behaviour.
To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour the following questions should be considered:

1. **Is the behaviour targeted at a specific pupil or group of pupils?**
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.

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.
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.

5.3 Where Bullying Behaviour Has Occurred
Where bullying behaviour has occurred the following steps should be taken:

1. Families are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with schools, in addressing bullying behaviour. The family(ies) of the pupils 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.
2. It is important to listen to the views of the pupil who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
3. A record should be kept of the engagement with all involved. See Appendix A.
4. This record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the pupils involved and their families.
5. The record should include the views of the pupils and their families regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour

School are not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when pupils 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 pupils involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, our schools will deal with it in accordance with our Bí Cineálta policy.
Where the pupil displaying the bullying behaviour is not a pupil in our school, but the pupil who is experiencing the bullying behaviour is a pupil in our school, the school will support the pupil who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as appropriate and engage with them and their families to determine what steps can be taken.

5.4 Follow up Where Bullying Behaviour Has Occurred
Where bullying behaviour has occurred the following follow up steps should be taken:

- The class teacher and principal must engage with the pupils involved and their families 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 pupils involved.
- The teacher should document the review with pupils and their families to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of pupils and their families 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 pupils involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased.
- If the bullying behaviour has not ceased the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the pupils involved and their families. A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- If it becomes clear that the pupil 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 pupil, their families and the school.

5.5 Child Protection Concerns

Section 10 of the Children First Act, 2015 places a statutory obligation on schools, as a "provider of a relevant service" to ensure, as far as practicable, that each child attending the school is safe from harm while attending school or otherwise participating in school activities.

Teachers registered with the Teaching Council are Mandated Persons under the Children First Act. They have a legal obligation under the Act to report harm of children that meets or is above a defined threshold to Tusla, and also to assist Tusla if requested, in assessing a concern which is the subject of a mandated report. If the concern does not reach the threshold for mandated reporting, but a teacher feels that it is a reasonable concern about the welfare or protection of a child, a report should be made to Tusla under the Children First National Guidance. The Children First National Guidance applies to everyone. All school staff and volunteers must report reasonable concerns to Tusla.

The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (Revised 2023) provide that all school staff should report reasonable concerns to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) who may take advice and/or report the concerns to Tusla. If the staff member is a registered teacher and the concern is at or above the threshold of harm at which a mandated report must be made the concern shall be submitted as a mandated report to Tusla jointly by the DLP and the registered teacher. See Chapter 5 of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (Revised 2023).

The Children First Act defines harm as assault, ill-treatment, neglect or sexual abuse and covers single and multiple instances. The threshold of harm is reached where the mandated person believes that a child's health, development or welfare have been, or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected. The Children First National Guidance document 2017 is the national, overarching guidance with regard to child safeguarding. The Guidance provides that in cases of serious instances of bullying where the behaviour is regarded as possibly abusive, a referral may need to be made to Tusla or An Garda Síochána as appropriate. Generally, bullying behaviour can be addressed without the involvement of Tusla. However, bullying behaviour may become a child protection concern when it results in significant physical or emotional harm, or where it becomes a persistent and severe problem and measures taken to address it are not effective.

In determining when bullying behaviour should be reported to Tusla the following factors should be considered:

- the impact on the child
- protective/appropriate action taken by the families
- protective/appropriate action taken by the school
- engagement of child/family with support services such as NEPS

Tusla should be contacted directly for advice in cases where it is considered that bullying behaviour is a child protection concern. If there is doubt about whether bullying behaviour is a child protection concern the principal should contact Tusla's social work department for advice. This will enable the social worker to explore the situation with school staff and provide advice on the best course of action.

5.6 Criminal Behaviour

Bullying behaviour can be considered criminal behaviour under certain circumstances and legal consequences can apply. The age of criminal responsibility in Ireland is 12 years. Some online behaviour may be illegal, and pupils need to be aware of the far-reaching consequences of posting inappropriate or harmful content online. In cases of intimate imagery, the Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020, also known as Coco's Law, criminalises the non-consensual sharing of intimate images and also criminalises threatening to share these images.

If bullying behaviour involves physical violence or threats of violence, it may be considered assault.

If bullying behaviour involves discrimination or hate speech targeting a pupil based on their race, religion, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation or membership of the Traveller community, it may be considered a hate crime under the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 198911, and those engaging in such behaviour may face criminal charges. If bullying behaviour involves sexual harassment or sexual assault, this may also be considered criminal behaviour.

An Garda Síochána is the appropriate authority to investigate alleged criminal behaviour.

5.7 Requests to take no action

- A pupil reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than "look out" for them. The pupil may not want to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They may 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 pupil, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the pupil to work out together what steps can be taken to address the matter and how their families will be informed of the situation. It is important that the pupil who has experienced bullying behaviour feels safe.
- Families may also make schools aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action. Families should put this request in writing to the school or be facilitated to do so where there are literacy, digital literacy or language barriers. However, while acknowledging the family's request, schools may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

5.8 Determining if bullying behaviour has ceased

- The teacher must engage with the pupils and families involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress following the initial intervention.
- Important factors to consider as part of the review are the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the pupils involved.
- Even though the bullying behaviour may have ceased, ongoing supervision and support may be required for both the pupil who has experienced the bullying behaviour as well as the pupil who has displayed the behaviour. 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 pupils and families and agree to meet again over an agreed timeframe until the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- Where it becomes clear that the pupil 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 pupil, their families and the school.

5.9 Recording bullying behaviour

All incidents of bullying behaviour should be recorded using the *Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour* in Appendix A.

- The record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known, where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the pupils and their family.
- The record should include the views of the pupils and their family regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour.

- It should document the review with pupils and their family to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of pupils and their family in relation to this. It is important to document the date of each of these engagements and the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted.
- These records should be retained in accordance with the school's record keeping policy and in line with data protection regulations.
- Where a Pupil Support File exists for a pupil, schools are encouraged to place a copy of the record on the pupil's support file. This will assist the school's pupil support team, where they exist, in providing a consistent and holistic response to support the wellbeing of the pupils involved. Where a Pupil Support Plan exists, the plan should be updated to incorporate response strategies and associated supports.

5.10 Complaint process
If a family 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. See Appendix G. Additional Information relating to schools' complaint procedures are available at: https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/parental-complaints/
In the event that a pupil and/or family is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, a pupil and/or family may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions have had a negative effect on the pupil. The Office of the Ombudsman for Children can be contacted at ococomplaint@oco.ie.

5.11 Supports
The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves a whole school approach. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, no one intervention/support programme works in all situations.

a) Supporting Bullied pupils:
We support the affected person(s) in the following ways:

- by offering the pupil(s) an immediate opportunity to talk about the experience with their class teacher or another teacher.
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through annual awareness-raising programmes,
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations,
- by informing the affected person(s) family and suggesting how they might help.
- by offering continuing support in the form of:
    - regular follow-up (documented) discussions to check on progress/positive outcomes or to record further incidents of bullying behaviour.
    - assistance with social and/or emotional aspects of bullying (self-esteem issues, assertiveness skills, knowing how to respond when an incident occurs, exploring "how not to be an affected person(s)", etc.)
- Fostering respect and empathy for all pupils

b) Supporting Bullying pupils:
In addition to applying appropriate consequences/sanctions for the incident(s) of bullying behaviour, as per the School's Code of Behaviour we also try to help any pupil involved in bullying in the following ways:

- by offering the pupil an opportunity to talk about what happened, to discover why they became involved, to help him/her see the incident(s) from the affected person(s) perspective, to help the pupil to see the seriousness of the behaviour
- by informing the pupil's family and suggesting how they might help
- by offering continuing support to the individual in the form of:
- regular follow-up (documented) discussions to check on progress/positive outcomes, to offer positive feedback and encouragement if the bullying behaviour has ceased, and to discuss and develop a plan of action to address any subsequent incidents of bullying behaviour if applicable
- assistance with social and/or emotional aspects of bullying (self-esteem issues, emotional empathy, popularity issues, etc.)
- Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school),
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth.

c) Outside Agencies

Agencies that help to prevent, and address bullying include the following:

- Tusla
- National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)
- Oide
- Webwise
- National Parents Council
- Dublin City University (DCU) Anti-Bullying Centre
- An Garda Siochana

See Appendix H for further information

6.0 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
- 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. This update should not include any personal information or information that could identify the pupils involved. It will include where relevant:

- information relating to trends and patterns identified
- strategies used to address the bullying behaviour
- any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant.
- if any serious incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred which have had a serious adverse impact on a pupil
- if a parent has informed the school that a pupil has left the school because of reported bullying behaviour
- if any additional support is needed from the board of management
- if the school's Bí Cineálta policy requires urgent review in advance of the annual review

6.1 Board Meeting Minutes

It is important that the minutes of the board of management meeting documents the number of new incidents of bullying behaviour, the number currently ongoing and the total number of incidents of bullying behaviour since the beginning of the school year as reported by the principal. The minutes should also note where the board has considered the bullying behaviour verbal update and document when the board has decided that an urgent review of the school's Bi Cineálta policy is required. See template in Appendix D.

7.0 Implementation and Review

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.

- This plan will be implemented in September 2025.

The Principal, Staff and BOM will monitor and review this policy. The plan will be monitored and evaluated at regular Staff meetings. Review Date: This plan will be reviewed in Term 1 in the 2025/2026 School Year.

8.0 Communication and Ratification

8.1 Communication

This policy will be communicated to the school community by the following means:

- This policy is available to our school community on the school's website and in hard copy on request.
- A pupil friendly version of this policy is displayed in the school and is also available on our website and in hard copy on request
- Board of Management/Other Staff members via hardcopy in office, email and SharePoint

8.2 Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 9th December 2025

Signed _____ Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____ Principal/Secretary, Board of Management

Appendix A Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour

Scoil an Chlochair
Convent Primary School

Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour

1. If the answer to each of the following questions is Yes, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour and the behaviour should be addressed using the Bí Cineálta Procedures		
Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or a group of students?	**Yes**	**No**
Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?	**Yes**	**No**
Is the behaviour repeated?	**Yes**	**No**
Does the behaviour involve an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society?	**Yes**	**No**

2. Name and class of pupil being bullied	
Name:	**Class:**

3. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour	
Name:	**Class:**
Name:	**Class:**
Name:	**Class:**
Name:	**Class:**

4. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern:

5. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es)			
Playground		**Toilets**	
Classroom		**School Bus**	
Corridor		**Other**	

6. Date(s) the bullying behaviour took place?	

7. Form of bullying behaviour (tick relevant box(es))			
Direct Bullying Behaviour		**Indirect Bullying Behaviour**	
• **Physical bullying behaviour**		• **Exclusion**	
• **Verbal bullying behaviour**		• **Relational**	
• **Written bullying behaviour**		• **Online Bullying behaviour**	
• **Extortion**			

8. Type of bullying behaviour (tick relevant box(es))			
• **Disablist bullying**		• **Exceptionally able bullying**	
• **Gender identity bullying**		• **Homophobic/transphobic bullying**	
• **Physical appearance bullying**		• **Racist bullying**	
• **Poverty bullying**		• **Religious identity bullying**	
• **Sexist bullying**		• **Sexual harassment**	

9. Date of initial engagement with:	
Student(s):	**Parents/Guardians:**
10. Actions agreed and views of the students and their Parents/Guardians regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour	
Date:	
11. Review with students and their Parents/Guardians to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and views of students and their Parents/Guardians in relation to this	
Date:	
12. Details of any engagement with external services/supports	
Date:	
Date recorded on the student's Support File (if relevant):	
Relevant Teacher signature:	**Date:**
Submitted to Principal	**Date:**
Principal Signature:	**Date:**

Appendix C Guide to Addressing Bullying Behaviour

5.0 Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour
The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour is(are) as follows: Class teacher(s) and Principal.

The following principles apply to all staff:
- Staff will be vigilant to bullying behaviour.
- Staff will adhere to the Bí Cineálta Policy procedures.
- Staff will inform the Principal of bullying behaviour.
- The class teacher(s) will oversee recording of bullying reports for pupils in their class. This includes using the procedure guidelines to investigate reports of bullying and recording bullying behaviour on the *Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour***. See** Appendix A. This form will be uploaded on Aladdin.
- Staff will use pupil unique identifiers when recording information.

The following principles apply to the principal:
- The Principal is available to support and to assist class teacher in addressing bullying behaviour.
- The Principal will follow up after twenty days to investigate if bullying has ceased.
- Principal will inform Board of Management of incidences of Bullying.

5.1 Approach to Addressing Bullying Behaviour
The whole school community has a responsibility to prevent and address bullying behaviour. 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 pupils involved, rather than to apportion blame. It is important for school staff to be fair and consistent in their approach to address bullying behaviour. Both the pupil who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the pupil who is displaying bullying behaviour need support. It is important that the pupil who is experiencing bullying behaviour is engaged with without delay so that they feel listened to, supported and reassured. School staff should identify the supports needed for the pupil who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties and ensure that their needs are met.

A pupil's agency or sense of power can be decreased when they experience or witness bullying behaviour. When a pupil tells an adult that they feel that they are experiencing bullying behaviour they may feel that they are taking back some control over what is happening to them. It is very important that a pupil's agency is not decreased further by adults deciding what will happen next without listening to the pupil and involving them in deciding on the actions that will be taken.

When addressing bullying behaviour teachers should:
- ensure that the pupil 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 pupils involved
- listen to the views of the pupil who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- take action in a timely manner
- inform family of those involved

Families 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 family(ies) of the 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 pupil expresses concern about their family being informed, the school should develop an appropriate plan to support the pupil and for how their family will be informed. Communication barriers that may exist when communicating with family should be considered, for example, literacy, digital literacy or language barriers.

5.2 Identifying if Bullying Behaviour Has Occurred

The class teacher(s) supported by the principal investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour with a view to establishing the facts and managing the behaviour.

In investigating and dealing with bullying, the class teacher(s) and principal will exercise their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.

The following procedure should be used for identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred:

1. A fair and consistent approach will be used by staff when addressing bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or family(ies).
2. Interviews will be conducted outside the classroom in a fair and consistent way.
3. When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred staff should consider what, where, when and why?
4. If a group of pupils is involved, each pupil should be engaged with individually at first thereafter, all pupils involved should be met as a group.
5. At the group meeting, each pupil should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views.
6. Each pupil should be supported as appropriate, following the group meeting it may be helpful to ask the pupils involved to write down their account of the incident(s)

5.2.1 Determining Whether the Behaviour is Bullying Behaviour.

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour the following questions should be considered:

1. **Is the behaviour targeted at a specific pupil or group of pupils?**
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.

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.

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.

5.3 Where Bullying Behaviour Has Occurred

Where bullying behaviour has occurred the following steps should be taken:

1. Families are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with schools, in addressing bullying behaviour. The family(ies) of the pupils 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.
2. It is important to listen to the views of the pupil who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
3. A record should be kept of the engagement with all involved. See Appendix A.
4. This record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the pupils involved and their families.
5. The record should include the views of the pupils and their families regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour

School are not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when pupils 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 pupils involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, our schools will deal with it in accordance with our Bí Cineálta policy.

Where the pupil displaying the bullying behaviour is not a pupil in our school, but the pupil who is experiencing the bullying behaviour is a pupil in our school, the school will support the pupil who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as appropriate and engage with them and their families to determine what steps can be taken.

5.4 Follow up Where Bullying Behaviour Has Occurred

Where bullying behaviour has occurred the following follow up steps should be taken:

- The class teacher and principal must engage with the pupils involved and their families 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 pupils involved.
- The teacher should document the review with pupils and their families to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of pupils and their families 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 pupils involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased.
- If the bullying behaviour has not ceased the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the pupils involved and their families. A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- If it becomes clear that the pupil 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 pupil, their families and the school.

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Section 10 of the Children First Act, 2015 places a statutory obligation on schools, as a "provider of a relevant service" to ensure, as far as practicable, that each child attending the school is safe from harm while attending school or otherwise participating in school activities.

Teachers registered with the Teaching Council are Mandated Persons under the Children First Act. They have a legal obligation under the Act to report harm of children that meets or is above a defined threshold to Tusla, and also to assist Tusla if requested, in assessing a concern which is the subject of a mandated report. If the concern does not reach the threshold for mandated reporting, but a teacher feels that it is a reasonable concern about the welfare or protection of a child, a report should be made to Tusla under the Children First National Guidance. The Children First National Guidance applies to everyone. All school staff and volunteers must report reasonable concerns to Tusla.

The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (Revised 2023) provide that all school staff should report reasonable concerns to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) who may take advice and/or report the concerns to Tusla. If the staff member is a registered teacher and the concern is at or above the threshold of harm at which a mandated report must be made the concern shall be submitted as a mandated report to Tusla jointly by the DLP and the registered teacher. See Chapter 5 of the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (Revised 2023).

The Children First Act defines harm as assault, ill-treatment, neglect or sexual abuse and covers single and multiple instances. The threshold of harm is reached where the mandated person believes that a child's health, development or welfare have been, or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected. The Children First National Guidance document 2017 is the national, overarching guidance with regard to child safeguarding. The Guidance provides that in cases of serious instances of bullying where the behaviour is regarded as possibly abusive, a referral may need to be made to Tusla or An Garda Síochána as appropriate. Generally, bullying behaviour can be addressed without the involvement of Tusla. However, bullying behaviour may become a child protection concern when it results in significant physical or emotional harm, or where it becomes a persistent and severe problem and measures taken to address it are not effective.

In determining when bullying behaviour should be reported to Tusla the following factors should be considered:

- the impact on the child
- protective/appropriate action taken by the families
- protective/appropriate action taken by the school
- engagement of child/family with support services such as NEPS

Tusla should be contacted directly for advice in cases where it is considered that bullying behaviour is a child protection concern. If there is doubt about whether bullying behaviour is a child protection concern the principal should contact Tusla's social work department for advice. This will enable the social worker to explore the situation with school staff and provide advice on the best course of action.

5.6 Criminal Behaviour

Bullying behaviour can be considered criminal behaviour under certain circumstances and legal consequences can apply. The age of criminal responsibility in Ireland is 12 years. Some online behaviour may be illegal, and pupils need to be aware of the far-reaching consequences of posting inappropriate or harmful content online. In cases of intimate imagery, the Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020, also known as Coco's Law, criminalises the non-consensual sharing of intimate images and also criminalises threatening to share these images. If bullying behaviour involves physical violence or threats of violence, it may be considered assault.

If bullying behaviour involves discrimination or hate speech targeting a pupil based on their race, religion, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation or membership of the Traveller community, it may be considered a hate crime under the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 198911, and those engaging in such behaviour may face criminal charges. If bullying behaviour involves sexual harassment or sexual assault, this may also be considered criminal behaviour. An Garda Síochána is the appropriate authority to investigate alleged criminal behaviour

5.7 Requests to take no action

- A pupil reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than "look out" for them. The pupil may not want to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They may 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 pupil, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the pupil to work out together what steps can be taken to address the matter and how their families will be informed of the situation. It is important that the pupil who has experienced bullying behaviour feels safe.
- Families may also make schools aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action. Families should put this request in writing to the school or be facilitated to do so where there are literacy, digital literacy or language barriers. However, while acknowledging the family's request, schools may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

5.8 Determining if bullying behaviour has ceased

- The teacher must engage with the pupils and families involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress following the initial intervention.
- Important factors to consider as part of the review are the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the pupils involved.
- Even though the bullying behaviour may have ceased, ongoing supervision and support may be required for both the pupil who has experienced the bullying behaviour as well as the pupil who has displayed the behaviour. 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 pupils and families and agree to meet again over an agreed timeframe until the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- Where it becomes clear that the pupil 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 pupil, their families and the school.

5.9 Recording bullying behaviour

All incidents of bullying behaviour should be recorded in in Appendix A: *Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour*
The record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known, where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the pupils and their family.

- The record should include the views of the pupils and their family regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour.
- It should document the review with pupils and their family to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of pupils and their family in relation to this. It is important to document the date of each of these engagements and the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted.
- These records should be retained in accordance with the school's record keeping policy and in line with data protection regulations.
- Where a Pupil Support File exists for a pupil, schools are encouraged to place a copy of the record on the pupil's support file. This will assist the school's pupil support team, where they exist, in providing a consistent and holistic response to support the wellbeing of the pupils involved. Where a Pupil Support Plan exists, the plan should be updated to incorporate response strategies and associated supports.

5.10 Complaint process

If a family 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. See Appendix G. Additional Information relating to schools' complaint procedures are available at: https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/parental-complaints/

In the event that a pupil and/or family is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, a pupil and/or family may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions have had a negative effect on the pupil. The Office of the Ombudsman for Children can be contacted at ococomplaint@oco.ie.

5.11 Supports

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves a whole school approach. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, no one intervention/support programme works in all situations.

a) Supporting Bullied pupils:

We support the affected person(s) in the following ways:

- by offering the pupil(s) an immediate opportunity to talk about the experience with their class teacher or another teacher.
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through annual awareness-raising programmes,
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations,
- by informing the affected person(s) family and suggesting how they might help.
- by offering continuing support in the form of:
    - regular follow-up (documented) discussions to check on progress/positive outcomes or to record further incidents of bullying behaviour.
    - assistance with social and/or emotional aspects of bullying (self-esteem issues, assertiveness skills, knowing how to respond when an incident occurs, exploring "how not to be an affected person(s)", etc.)
- Fostering respect and empathy for all pupils

d) Supporting Bullying pupils:

In addition to applying appropriate consequences/sanctions for the incident(s) of bullying behaviour, as per the School's Code of Behaviour we also try to help any pupil involved in bullying in the following ways:

- by offering the pupil an opportunity to talk about what happened, to discover why they became involved, to help him/her see the incident(s) from the affected person(s) perspective, to help the pupil to see the seriousness of the behaviour
- by informing the pupil's family and suggesting how they might help
- by offering continuing support to the individual in the form of:
- regular follow-up (documented) discussions to check on progress/positive outcomes, to offer positive feedback and encouragement if the bullying behaviour has ceased, and to discuss and develop a plan of action to address any subsequent incidents of bullying behaviour if applicable
- assistance with social and/or emotional aspects of bullying (self-esteem issues, emotional empathy, popularity issues, etc.)
- Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school),
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth.

e) Outside Agencies

See Appendix H for further information. Agencies that help to prevent, and address bullying include the following:

- Tusla
- National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)
- Oide
- Webwise
- National Parents Council
- Dublin City University (DCU) Anti-Bullying Centre
- An Garda Siochana

Appendix D Guide to Providing Bullying Behaviour Update

Guide to providing Bullying Behaviour Update
for Board of Management meeting of _____/_____/20_____

Having reviewed the details of the incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the previous board of management meeting, the principal must provide the following information at each ordinary meeting of the board of management:

Total number of new incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the last board of management meeting.	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour currently ongoing.	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the beginning of this school year.	

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:

- the trends and patterns identified such as the form of bullying behaviour, type of bullying behaviour if known, location of bullying behaviour, when it occurred etc.
- the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour
- any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour
- if any serious incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred which have had a serious adverse impact on a student
- if a parent has informed the school that a student has left the school because of reported bullying behaviour
- if any additional support is needed from the board of management
- 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.

Appendix E Bí Cineálta Policy Review

The Board of Management must undertake an annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and its implementation in consultation with the school community. As part of the review, this document must be completed.

1. The Board formally adopted its Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour in accordance with the *Bí Cineálta Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools on* _____/_____/20_____
2. Where in the school is the student-friendly Bí Cineálta policy displayed?_____
3. When did the Board formally adopt its Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour in accordance with the *Bí Cineálta Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*? T*he Bí Cineálta policy was last adopted by the school on* _____
4. Date the Board published the Bí Cineálta policy and the student- friendly policy on the school website?_____/_____/20_____
5. How has the student-friendly policy been communicated to students?_____
6. How has the Cineálta policy and student-friendly policy been communicated to parents/guardians?_____
7. How have (a) parents/guardians, (b) students and (c) school staff been consulted with as part of the review of the Bí Cineálta Policy?_____
8. Outline any aspects of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and/or its implementation that have been identified as requiring further improvement as part of this review:_____

   _____
9. Where areas for improvement have been identified, outline how these will be addressed and whether an action plan with timeframes has been developed?_____

   _____

10. Have all school staff been made aware of the, school's Bí Cineálta policy and the *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*?	Yes	NO
11. Does the Bí Cineálta policy document the strategies that the school uses to prevent bullying behaviour?	Yes	NO
12. Has the Board received and minuted the Bullying Behaviour Update presented by the principal at every ordinary board meeting over the last calendar year?	Yes	NO
13. Has the Board discussed how the school is addressing all reports of bullying behaviour?	Yes	NO
14. Is the Board satisfied that all incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed in accordance with the school's Bí Cineálta Policy?	Yes	NO
15. Have the prevention strategies in the Bí Cineálta policy been implemented?	Yes	NO
16. Has the Board discussed the effectiveness of the strategies used to prevent bullying behaviour?	Yes	NO
17. Does the student-friendly policy need to be updated as a result of this review and if so why?	Yes	NO
18. Does the school refer parents/guardians to the complaints procedures if they have a complaint about how the school has addressed bullying behaviour?	Yes	NO
19. Has a parent informed the school that a student has left the school due to reported bullying behaviour?	Yes	NO
20. Has the Office of the Ombudsman for Children initiated or completed an investigation into how the school has addressed an incident of bullying behaviour?	Yes	NO

Signed: _____ Chairperson, Board of Management	Date:_____/_____/20_____
Signed: _____ Principal	Date:_____/_____/20_____
Date of next review: _____/_____/20_____	

Appendix F BOM Annual Review

Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management of the Convent Primary School confirms that the board of management's annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour and its implementation was completed at the board of management meeting of _____/_____/20_____

This review was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Education's Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Signed: _____

(Chairperson of Board of management)

Date: _____/_____/20_____

Revised Parental Complaints Procedure

Note:
- *A copy of this procedure will be available for parents/legal guardians on the school website and/or on request from the school. This procedure comes into effect on the 1st of January 2024.*
- *Under the Education Act 1998, legally, all schools are managed by the school's Board of Management, on behalf of the school patron.*

Purpose/Objective

The parental complaints procedure was revised and agreed by the Irish National Teachers' Organisation and the management bodies of primary schools, the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association, the Church of Ireland, An Foras Pátrúnachta, the Muslim Primary Education Board, Educate Together and the National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education in 2023. It is designed to provide an open and clearly defined process to facilitate parents/legal guardians in raising concerns about their own child/children in an agreed, fair and transparent manner.

It is recognised that parents/legal guardians are the primary educators in a child's life and as such from time-to-time concerns may arise which they may need to engage with the school. It is expected that engagement will be timely, courteous and resolution focused to ensure that the important relationship between the parent and school can be preserved and respected. It is expected that all parties concerned will engage proactively.

Procedural Points

The procedure is a staged procedure where every effort is made to resolve matters at the earliest possible stage. In most cases, concerns will be dealt with either informally or formally at the earlier stages of the procedure. Where it has not been possible to agree a resolution at the earlier stages, the procedure does allow for the escalation of the matter to the Board of Management. This procedure sets out, in four stages, the process to be followed in progressing a complaint and the specific timescale to be followed. It is expected the parties will follow each stage in sequence.

- Where the term written correspondence is used, this refers specifically to a letter or email correspondence from a parent/legal guardian(s).
- Only complaints about a teacher which are written and signed by a parent/legal guardian, and which relate to their own child, will be investigated.
- Where a complaint raised by a parent/legal guardian is deemed by the employer/board of management to relate to the following, this procedure will not apply;
  - matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education;
  - frivolous or vexatious complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a teacher in a school; or
  - complaints in which either party has recourse to law or to another existing procedure.
- In all circumstances, any form of written correspondence for the attention of the Board of Management must be supplied to the Chairperson of the board of management **only**. Any deviation from this could be deemed prejudicial and as acting outside the scope of this agreement.
- **Days in this procedure refer specifically to school days.** A school day is a day on which the school is in operation. Holiday periods, school closures and leaves of absences are not counted as school days for the purpose of this procedure.
- Group/collective complaints are not provided for and each parent/legal guardian raising a concern will be dealt with separately through this process.
- The procedure is a domestic forum and accordingly, neither management nor the INTO intends that there would be legal representation at any stage.
- Issues should be raised in a timely manner. It is in the best interests of the child that issues are raised to achieve early resolution at the earliest possible stage with the teacher, ideally while the pupil is in that teacher's class.

Formal Stage 1 Discussion

1.1 Parent/guardian meets teacher

A parent/legal guardian who wishes to make a complaint in respect of their own child, should, seek an appointment with the teacher concerned with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings with the teacher can be convened as appropriate.

1.2 Parent/guardian meets Principal[1]

Where the parent/legal guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the teacher, they should seek an appointment with the Principal with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings can be convened by the Principal as appropriate.

1.3 Parent/guardian meets Chairperson

Where the complaint remains unresolved, the parent/legal guardian should seek an appointment with the Chairperson of the Board of Management with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings can be convened by the Chairperson as appropriate.

Complaint resolved

The complaint may be resolved during this stage.

Formal Stage 2 Written *(10 days)*

2.1 Written complaint sent to Chairperson

If the complaint has not been resolved at stage 1, the parent/ legal guardian who wishes to pursue the matter further should submit the complaint in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Management. This commences stage 2.

2.2 Chairperson provides a copy to the teacher

The Chairperson should provide a copy of the written complaint to the teacher against whom the complaint has been made, without delay.

2.3 Chairperson convenes meeting(s)

The Chairperson should seek to resolve the complaint between the teacher and the parent/ legal guardian within 10 school days of the commencement of stage 2.1. This may require one or more meetings to be convened by the Chairperson with the teacher/ parent/legal guardian and other school personnel as deemed appropriate by the Chairperson.

Complaint resolved

The complaint may be resolved at this stage.

Formal Stage 3 Board of Management *(20 days)*

3.1 Chairperson makes a formal report to the Board

If the complaint remains unresolved following stage 2 and the parent/ legal guardian wishes to pursue the matter, they should inform the Chairperson in writing of this fact. The Chairperson should make a formal report to the Board of Management within 10 days of receipt of this written statement. At this meeting, the Board can decide to proceed to either stage 3.2 or 3.3.

3.2 Complaint concluded

Where the Board considers the complaint, the process may be concluded at this stage, if the board considers that:

a) The complaint is frivolous/vexatious;

b) The complaint has already been investigated by the board;

c) The complaint is more appropriately dealt with through a more relevant DE circular,

or;

d) where recourse to law has been initiated.

Where the Board determines the complaint is concluded at this stage, the parent/legal guardian should be so informed within five days of the Board meeting.

3.3 Proceed to a hearing

Where the Board decides to proceed to a hearing, it should proceed as follows:

a) the teacher should be informed that the complaint is proceeding to a full hearing and the Chairperson must ensure the teacher has been supplied with all documents which are being considered by the Board.

b) the Board should arrange a meeting with the parent/legal guardian if it considers such to be required. The parent/ legal guardian is entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting.

c) the teacher should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of their case to the Board. The teacher is entitled to be represented by a friend or a union representative, who may be accompanied for the purpose of assistance and note taking.

d) the teacher should be requested to supply a written statement to the board as the employer in response to the complaint. This written statement will be confidential to the employer and will not be shared with any third party.

e) the meeting of the Board of Management referred to in 3(b), (c) and (d) will take place within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3.1. in so far as possible.

Formal Stage 4 Decision *(5 days)*

4.1 Written decision from Chairperson

The Board will consider the complaint and the response provided and will adjudicate on the matter. The Chairperson should convey the decision of the Board in writing to the teacher and the parent/legal guardian(s) within five days of the meeting held at stage 3.3.

4.2 Complaint concluded

The decision of the Board shall be final.

[1] *Where a complaint is received about a principal the above process commences at Stage 1.2.*

Appendix H Supports

Supports

Supports are available to help prevent and address bullying behaviour. These include the following:

National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)

The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) of the Department of Education provides a comprehensive, school-based psychological service to all primary and post- primary schools to support the wellbeing, academic, social and emotional development of all students. The NEPS model of service is a consultative, capacity-building model, in which there is a balance between casework and support and development work.

The psychological services which NEPS provides for students are differentiated in terms of whether the service involves the psychologist's direct involvement with the student, known as Direct Casework, or involves the psychologist working through teachers or teachers/parents to provide a psychological service for a student, known as Indirect Casework. NEPS staff can support schools with issues around bullying through this direct or indirect case work service.

In relation to bullying, NEPS psychologists often advise schools on best practice to prevent and address bullying when issues arise in schools and/or provide training in preventative initiatives, such as developing social and emotion skills, social skills, executive function skills, promoting resilience and skills in relationship repair between peers as appropriate.

More information on the supports provided by NEPS is included in the Resources Guide which accompanies these

Oide

Oide is the Department of Education's support service for schools, and it supports professional learning for primary and post-primary school leaders and teachers in recognised schools and centres for education.

Oide fosters a culture of continuing professional learning among school leaders and teachers encouraging lifelong learning, reflective and enquiry-based practices. The work of Oide contributes to school improvement by providing high quality professional learning experiences, supports and resources relating to curricular developments, broader educational goals and national priorities, such as wellbeing which includes preventing and addressing bullying.

Oide provides continuing professional learning support to schools to support implementation of these procedures. More information on the supports provided by Oide is included in the Resources Guide which accompanies these procedures.

Webwise

Webwise is the online safety initiative of the Department of Education and is co-funded by the European Commission. Webwise promotes safer, better internet use through awareness raising and education initiatives targeting teachers, students and parents. Webwise develops and disseminates resources that help teachers integrate digital citizenship and online safety into teaching and learning in their schools. Webwise also provides information, advice, and tools to parents to support their engagement in their children's online lives. With the help of the Webwise Youth Advisory Panel, Webwise develops youth-oriented awareness raising resources and training programmes that promote digital citizenship and address topics such as online wellbeing and cyberbullying.

More information on the supports provided by Webwise is included in the Resources Guide which accompanies these procedures.

National Parents Council

The National Parents Council (NPC) is the representative organisation for parents of children in early years, primary and post-primary education. NPC was established as a charitable organisation in 1985, under the programme for Government, as the representative organisation for parents of children attending school. It received statutory recognition in the Education Act 1998.

The NPC works to ensure that all parents are supported and empowered to become effective partners in their children's education. NPC seeks to achieve true partnership and deliver better outcomes for all students. The NPC delivers online and in-person courses to support parents of both primary and post-primary students to prevent and address bullying behaviour. Details on these programmes are included in the Resources Guide which accompanies these procedures.

Dublin City University (DCU) Anti-Bullying Centre

The DCU Anti-Bullying Centre is a university-designated research centre located in DCU's Institute of Education. The centre is known globally for its research in bullying and online safety. The Anti-Bullying Centre offers a range of modules as part of its FUSE programme for the entire school community that can be used to help to promote a positive school culture and assist in preventing and addressing bullying behaviours. Details on these programmes are included in the Resources Guide which accompanies these procedures.

Tusla

Schools should contact Tusla directly for advice in cases where it is considered that bullying behaviour is a child protection concern. See section 2.4 for guidance on when bullying behaviour becomes a child protection concern.Contact details for Tusla are included in the Resources Guide which accompanies these procedure