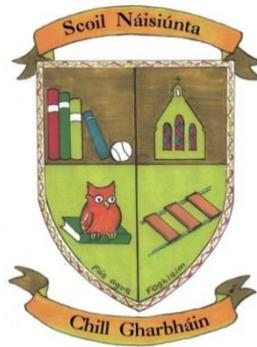# KILGARVAN CENTRAL SCHOOL

Bí Cinealta
Anti- Bullying Policy

June 2025

Roll No 19458F

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Kilgarvan Central School has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

This policy fully complies with the requirements of *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* 2024.

The board of management acknowledges that bullying behaviour interferes with the rights of the child as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We all, as a school community, have a responsibility to work together to prevent and address bullying behaviour and to deal with the negative impact of bullying behaviour.

We are committed to ensuring that all students who attend our school are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our students is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our students and we are fully committed to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

We confirm that we will, in accordance with our obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the harassment of students or staff on any of the nine grounds specified: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

We confirm that we will take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the bullying or harassment of our students in whatever form and however motivated.

Catholic schools have a distinctive understanding of the human person, recognizing that every person is created in God's image and likeness and has an inherent dignity as a child of God. This is the basis for ensuring that each person in our school is treated with respect and care, in accordance with the Catholic Schedule.

As a Catholic school, we are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual. No human person is to be devalued, and all have an indispensable part to play in the school community, regardless of difference,

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined in *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying* and *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* as **targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society.** The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

Each school is required to develop and implement a Bí Cineálta policy that sets out how the school community prevents and addresses bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

Section A: Development/review of our Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour

All members of our school community were provided with the opportunity to input into the development/review of this policy.

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	Feb 2025	Half Day Staff meeting
Students	June 2025	Survey Design of Pupil Friendly Policy
Parents	May 2025 June 2025	Survey – Google Forms PA Meeting
Board of Management	June 2025	Meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers		As necessary

Date policy was approved: 23rd of June 2025

Date policy was last reviewed: -

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

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

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.

The 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 help to inform prevention strategies.

Culture and environment:

- **A positive and inclusive school culture and environment to prevent and address bullying behaviour.** Our school environment should be a space where students and school staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported.
- Relationships between all members of the school community should be based on respect, care, integrity and trust. Open communication between the patron, board of management, school staff, students and their parents help to foster a collaborative approach and shared responsibilities in relation to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.
- The school leadership team influences the school culture and sets the standards and expectations for the school community when preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.
- Each member of the school staff has a responsibility to develop and maintain a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and to take a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.
- Students can shape the school culture by promoting kindness and inclusion within their peer group and maintain a positive and supportive school environment for all.
- Parents as active partners in their child's education, can help foster an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated through promoting empathy and respect.

Our School will endeavour to prevent bullying behaviour by employing the following

- **Creating a Telling Environment:**
  The school community will support a telling environment where students feel comfortable talking about their concerns regarding bullying behaviour.
- **Promoting the Concept of a Trusted Adult**
  The school will promote the concept of a trusted adult as a strategy to encourage students to report if they or another student is experiencing bullying behaviour. Staff will support this strategy by letting students know they can talk to them.
- **Creating Safe Physical Spaces**
  The creation of safe physical spaces to support psychological safety and is an important

measure to prevent bullying behaviour.

- **Supervision**
  Ensure appropriate supervision is in place to help address and prevent bullying behaviour.

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

- Curriculum learning that is collaborative and respectful is promoted. Students have regular opportunities to work in small groups with their peers, to help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy among our students.
- Curricular subjects offered to students provide opportunities to foster inclusion and respect for diversity. Opportunities are provided for students to develop a sense of self-worth through both curricular and extra-curricular programmes.

Some of the ways we promote the above are:
- ➢ SPHE Programme and methodologies
- ➢ Relax Kids Programme to promote self-esteem and confidence
- ➢ The Stay Safe Programme
- ➢ Buddy reading to enhance relationships throughout the school
- ➢ Playground games in Junior Yard
- ➢ Regular sensory regulation breaks.
- ➢ Grow in Love Programme
- ➢ Lust for Life Programme to build self esteem
- ➢ Explicit teaching and appropriate communication and emotional literacy
- ➢ Provide opportunities for students to develop social and emotional skills
- ➢ Student involvement in committees to reflect the importance of the student voice in our school – Green schools, Active Flag, Student Voice.
- ➢ Provide opportunities for collaborative learning – team teaching / station teaching, group work / peer mentoring.
- ➢ Cybernet Safety Policy
- ➢ Friends for Life

Policy and Planning

- The well-being of the school community is at the heart of school policies and plans. The Bi Cinealta Policy has been developed with this in mind. We have also developed a student - friendly version of the policy in consultation with our students. This student-friendly version is presented in language that is easy for students to understand.
- Other policies which support the implementation of the Bi Cinealta Policy are
  - ➢ Acceptable use Policy
  - ➢ Code of Behaviour
  - ➢ Special Education Policy
  - ➢ Supervision Policy
  - ➢ Child safeguarding statement
  - ➢ RSE Policy
  - ➢ SPHE Policy
  - ➢ SS Wellbeing in Education
  - ➢ Communication Policy

- ➢ Agree to Agree Policy
- ➢ Electronic Devices Policy
- ➢ Attendance Policy
- ➢ Dignity at Work Policy

Relationships and Partnerships

Strong interpersonal connections are a vital part of effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. We support these interpersonal connections through a range of formal and informal structures such as our Parents' Association, Our Student Voice and our various student committees.

We also

- ➢ Encourage open communication between students, staff and parents
- ➢ Build positive relationships with students and their families
- ➢ Conduct workshops and seminars for students and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying and cyber bullying
- ➢ Giving constructive and positive feedback to students on their behaviour
- ➢ Encourage senior pupils to act as positive role models for the younger children
- ➢ Promote the idea of privilege and responsibility
- ➢ Promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe, secure and to be treated with respect in school.
- ➢ Engage with parents and students and encourage them to be active participants in the promotion of our anti bullying policy eg design of student friendly version of Bí Cineálta Policy

Preventing Cyberbullying Behaviour:

- ➢ Explicitly teaching the issues of cyberbullying and the importance of using technology safely
- ➢ Monitor student use of technology in the class room.
- ➢ Implementation of the school's Policy on electronic devices
- ➢ Organising workshops with external facilitators for parents and children

Preventing Homophobic / Transphobic Bullying Behaviour

- ➢ Creating a safe and inclusive environment for all students regardless fo their sexual orientation or gender identity
- ➢ Encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities

Preventing Racist Bullying Behaviour

- ➢ Fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and respected
- ➢ Promoting diversity and inclusion in the classroom
- ➢ Providing support to students who have been targeted by racist bullying
- ➢ Ensuring that library reading materials represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour

➢ Ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex.
➢ Ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex.
➢ Celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contributions of all students.

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

➢ Staff Supervision: members of staff present and visible in playground areas during all break times.
➢ Staff present in yard when children arrive to and depart from school.
➢ At least two members of staff (dependent on number of children) to accompany pupils on school outings/ tours/ matches
➢ Staff on duty to be made aware of any incidents, or potential incidents, which may arise while they are supervising in the yard and to monitor the situation appropriately.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

> The class teacher, (initially), ISMT members

The steps that will be taken by the school to determine if bullying behaviour has occurred, the approaches taken to address the bullying behaviour and to review progress are as follows (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

Teacher / teachers 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 behaviour the teacher will exercise his / her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved. The following are the steps which will be followed

Stage 1 – Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred:

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

1. is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?
2. Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?
3. Is the behaviour repeated?

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

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

If the answer to any of the above questions is NO then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the schools' Code of Behaviour.

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred teachers should consider what, where, when and why?

➢ If a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first
➢ Thereafter, all students involved should be met as a group
➢ At the group meeting, each student should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views
➢ Each student should be supported as appropriate, following the group meeting
➢ It may be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incidents(s)

Teachers will be fair and consistent in their approach when addressing bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.

The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

Where Bullying Behaviour Has Occurred.

A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care and responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, school should deal with it in accordance with their Bí Cinealta Policy

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

> ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour is heard and reassured

> seek to ensure the privacy of those involved

> conduct all conversations with sensitivity

> consider the age and ability of those involved

> listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation

> take action in a timely manner

> inform parents of those involved

- Parents are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with schools, in addressing bullying behaviour. Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the students involved must be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to consult with them on the actions to be taken to address the behaviour.
- It is important to listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to assess the situation.
- A record will be kept of the engagement with all involved.
- This record will document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known, (see section 2.5 and 2.7 of the Bí Cinealta Procedures), where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students involved and their parents.
- The record will include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour.
- If the bullying behaviour is a child protection concern the matter will be addressed without delay in accordance with *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred:

- The teacher will engage with the students involved and their parents again no more that 20 school days after the initial engagement
- For this engagement important factors to be considered are -
  - the nature of the bullying behaviour
  - The effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour
  - The relationship between the students involved
- The teacher should document the review with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of the students and their parents in relation to this.
- The date of all these engagements will be noted and the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- Any engagement with external services / support will also be noted.
- Ongoing supervision and support may be needed for the students involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased
- If the bullying behaviour has not ceased the teacher will review the strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents. A time frame will be agreed or further engagement until the bullying has ceased.
- If the bullying behaviour is continuing, the school will consider using strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour provided for under the school's Code of Behaviour. Disciplinary sanctions maybe considered. This is a matter between the relevant students, their parent and the school.
- All records will be retained in accordance with the school's record keeping policy and in line with data protection regulations.
  Where a Student Support File exists for a student, a record will be kept on the SSF.

Requests to take No Action

A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than 'look out' for them. The student 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 with the student, deals with the matter sensitively and speak with the student to work out together what steps can be taken to address the matter and how their parents will be informed of the situation. It is important that the student who has experienced bullying behaviour feels safe.

Parents may also make the school aware of bully behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action. Parents should put this request in writing to the school to be facilitated to do so where there are literacy, digital literacy or language barriers. However, while acknowledging the parents' request, schools may decide that based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

Complaint Process

If a parent is not happy with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with these procedures they should be referred to the school's complaints procedure.

In the event that a student and/or parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions have had a negative effect on the student

All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with students and parents. The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented.

Section D: Oversight

The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting. This update will include the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting, the number of ongoing incidents and the total number of incidents since the beginning of the school year. Where incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred, the principal will also provide a verbal update which will include where relevant, information relating to trends and patterns identified, strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant. This update does not contain personal or identifying information. See Chapter 7 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

This policy is available to our school community on the school's website and in hard copy on request. A student friendly version of this policy is displayed in the school and is also available on our website and in hard copy on request.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed, following input from our school

community, each calendar year or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this policy refers.

This policy was ratified at a Board of Management meeting on June 23rd 2025

Signed: _Jeremiah Mc carthy_

Date: 23/06/2025

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: Cardine Lehane

Date: 23/06/2025 (Principal)