Gaelscoil na gCeithre Maol Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying

The Board of Management of Gaelscoil na gCeithre has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

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

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

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

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

Definition of bullying

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

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

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

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

	Date Consulted	**Method of Consultation**
School Staff	April 2025 08-04-2025 13/05/2025	Wellbeing Questionnaire Read, Review & Give Feedback on draft Policy. Staff Meeting
Students	May 2025	Wellbeing questionnaire Surveys & Focus Group
Parents	May 2025	Wellbeing questionnaire – All Parents/Guardians Focus Group with Parents Association
Board of Management	28th May 2025	Meeting
Wider School Community as appropriate (Bus Driver)		Consultation as deemed necessary

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):

Culture & Environment

- Create a positive and inclusive school culture where all students feel safe, respected, and valued.
- Promote respectful and positive relationships across the school community. Using circle practise in the classroom to build a positive culture and environment.
- Effective leadership.
- A telling environment (do not keep it to yourself). Encourage open communication between students, staff, and parents. Encourage pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- Safe physical access
- Supervision – All staff members trained to recognise and respond to bullying behaviour.

Curriculum (Teaching & Learning)

- Opportunities to participate in class and whole school activities to raise self – esteem.
- Teaching and learning in SPHE. Use of SPHE methodologies. Teach students about bullying and its effects.
- RSE Curriculum
- Student participation (Group work/ Collaboration, Role - play, acting out scenarios, Circle time, Critical thinking Skill). This will give the students opportunities to develop their social and emotional skills.
- Incorporate lessons on respect, empathy, inclusion, and diversity into the curriculum.
- Extra - curricular activities to develop positive self - worth i.e. PE, Gardening, Meditation
- Code of behaviour in each classroom drawn up with the children.
- Child safeguarding statement
- Acceptable use policy
- RSE Policy
- SEN policy
- SSE Wellbeing in education
- Integrate anti-bullying messages into the school curriculum.
- Student and parent participation (cyber safe talks)
- TPL (Teacher Professional Learning)
- Buddy Bench in school yard.
- Behaviour charts in the classroom as required.
- Resources such as “Mind me, Mind You”, Lust for Life, FUSE etc.
- Emotional regulation breaks.

Policy & Planning

- Develop a clear and consistent anti-bullying policy that is adhered to by all staff.
- Regular reviews and policy updates to be conducted periodically.
- Staff training on how to recognise and respond to bully behaviours both in the classrooms and school yard.
- Clear reporting and responding procedures to be in place.
- Acceptable use policy to be strictly adhered to.
- Policies relevant to bullying include Code of Behaviour, Child Safeguarding Statement, Risk Assessment, Supervision of Pupils, Acceptable Use Policy, Attendance, Communication Policy, SPHE, RSE, SEN/Inclusion Policy.
- Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for pupils with SEN include improving inclusion, focusing on developing social skills, paying attention to key moments, and cultivating a school culture which has respect for all and helping each other as central.

Relationships & Partnerships

- Promote open communication between pupils, staff, and parents.
- Build positive relationships with students and their families.
- Build resilience, respect, and empathy in all pupils.
- Consult with local organisations to help with additional support and resources.
- Collaborate with both parents and students to educate them about the dangers of cyberbullying by facilitating guest speakers eg Barnardos.
- Open channels of communication encouraging parents to feel comfortable with approaching the school if they suspect their child is being bullied.

Preventing cyber bullying behaviour:

- Promoting digital citizenship.
- Implementing SPHE curriculum.
- Implementing the Digital Media Literacy curriculum which teaches students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship.
- Developing and communicating an acceptable use policy for technology.
- Having regular conversations with students 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/hosting online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online. This will educate them about the dangers of cyberbullying.
- Holding internet safety day to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour.
- Explicitly teach the issues of cyberbullying and the importance of using technology safely.
- Monitor student use of technology in the classroom.

Preventing Homophobic/transphobic, behaviour, Racist and Sexist Behaviour

- Maintain an inclusive physical environment i.e. displays.
- Encouraging peer support i.e. mentoring.
- Encouraging students to speak up when they see or experience inappropriate behaviour.
- Fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students "see themselves" in their school environment.
- Conducting workshops with students, staff, and parents to raise awareness of bullying.
- Ensuring that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.
- Ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their gender.
- Celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contribution of all students.
- Encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home.

- Promoting positive role models within the school community.

Preventing Racist Bullying Behaviour

- Teach students about the history and impact of racism.
- Promote diversity and inclusion within the classroom.
- Ensuring that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.

Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour

- Teach students about the importance of gender equality.
- Celebrate diversity at school and acknowledge 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):

Supervision

- 2 teacher and 2 SNAs present to supervise at breaks (in the yard & in classrooms on wet days). All staff members are trained to recognise and respond to bullying behaviours.
- Children will always be supervised in the classroom.
- Children will be accompanied by at least 2 staff members on school trips.
- Children should be advised where to play when out at yard and what spaces to avoid.
- Teachers bear in mind children who may have recently clashed when organising groups for collaborative work/ teams etc with a view to giving space to the children involved to heal.
- Visitor Supervision: Visitors to the school should supervised at all times. They should not be alone with pupils.

Monitoring

- Incident Reporting: The class teacher investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying with a view to establishing full facts and records on an incident report form.
    - Incident Investigation: All reports of bullying should be investigated. The investigation should include conversation with the student who was allegedly bullied, the student who allegedly and any witnesses.
    - Follow up: The school should take appropriate action.

By implementing these policies, Gaelscoil na gCeithre Maol, can create a positive and safe environment for all students.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

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

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

1. Determining if Bullying Behaviour Has Occurred

- **Initial Report**: A student, parent, or staff member reports an incident or concern.
- **Information Gathering**: The school collects detailed accounts from all involved parties
- **Assessment of Behaviour**: The behaviour is assessed against the school's definition of bullying
- **Documentation**: All incidents and findings are documented clearly.
- **Decision Making**: A decision is made by designated staff based on evidence gathered.

2. Approaches to Address the Bullying Behaviour

- **Support for the Victim**:
  - Counselling or support sessions.
  - Safety planning (e.g., buddy systems, supervision).
  - Regular check-ins with a trusted adult.

- **Intervention with the Bully**:
  - Restorative practices (e.g., mediation or facilitated conversations).
  - Consequences in line with the school's behaviour policy.
  - Education about empathy, respect, and the impact of their actions.
  - Monitoring and support to encourage and facilitate behaviour change.
- **Engagement with Parents/Guardians**:
  - Informing both parties' families about the incident and actions taken (in line with GDPR guidelines).
  - Collaboration to support both students at home and school.

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3. Reviewing Progress

- **Ongoing Monitoring**:
  - Continued observation of interactions between the students.
  - Scheduled follow-ups with the victim and bully.
- **Feedback Collection**:
  - Asking for feedback from students, parents, and teachers to assess if the situation has improved.
- **Documentation and Adjustment**:
  - Keeping records of all follow-up actions.
  - Adjusting strategies if bullying persists or new issues arise.
- **Long-Term Support**:
  - Providing long-term support for those affected to rebuild confidence and relationships.

The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour

1. Support for Students Who Experience Bullying

- **Emotional Support**:
  - Provide access to a trusted adult.
  - Offer counselling or wellbeing support services.
- **Safety Planning**:
  - Implement strategies to ensure the student feels safe at school.
- **Empowerment and Confidence Building**:
  - Teach assertiveness skills and resilience through targeted programs or mentoring.
  - Involve the student in decisions about how the school responds.
- **Regular Check-ins**:

- Schedule ongoing follow-ups to monitor wellbeing and ensure the issue has been resolved.

2. Support for Students Who Witness Bullying

- **Education and Awareness**:
  - Encourage understanding of the role of a bystander and how to act responsibly.
  - Teach students how to report incidents safely and anonymously if needed.
- **Empowerment**:
  - Recognise and affirm students who take positive action to support peers.
  - Provide opportunities to engage in peer support or anti-bullying initiatives.
- **Safe Reporting Channels**:
  - Ensure students know how and where to report bullying, and that they will be taken seriously.

3. Support for Students Who Display Bullying Behaviour

- **Understanding the Behaviour**:
  - Explore the reasons behind the behaviour through pastoral or counselling support.
  - Involve the student in restorative conversations to understand the impact of their actions.
- **Behavioural Interventions**:
  - Implement behaviour improvement plans or reflective exercises.
  - Set clear expectations and provide consistent consequences aligned with the school's code of conduct.
- **Teaching Alternative Skills**:
  - Provide social-emotional learning opportunities to develop empathy, conflict resolution, and positive communication.
- **Parental Involvement**:
  - Engage families to create a consistent message and support behaviour change at home and school

Section D: Oversight

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

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

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed, following input from our school community, each calendar year or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this policy refers.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: _____ Date:

Principal