



Tullamore Educate Together N.S.  
Ag foghlaim le chéile an Tútach Cúthór

## Tullamore E.T.N.S. - Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Tullamore E.T.N.S. 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.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying and
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.
- Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.
- However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.
- Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.
- The definition of bullying includes a wide range of behaviour, whether verbal or written, whether physical or social, whether targeting person or property, whether carried directly or indirectly or through any electronic or other medium, which would harm a pupil or undermine a pupil's self-confidence or self-esteem.

## Culture and Environment

The Board of Management of Tullamore ETNS recognises that a positive and inclusive school culture and environment is essential to address and prevent bullying behaviour. It is committed to providing :

- A positive school culture and climate which
  - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
  - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non- threatening environment; and
  - promotes respectful relationships across the school community
- Effective leadership;
- A school-wide approach;
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures)
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
- Supports for staff;
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the Bí Cineálta policy.

### 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	04/02/25 + 11/02/25	Presentation / Feedback Survey
Students	6/02/25	Focus Group (Student Council and Wellbeing Warriors)
Parents	14/05/25	Focus Group following election of parent nominee to the Board
Board of Management	19/02/25	Preliminary Discussion
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers		
Date policy was approved: 25/08/2025		
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 outlined in sections 5.5-5.9 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

- The prevention and awareness of bullying is integral to this policy and pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through curricular programmes.
- The focus of Tullamore E.T.N.S.' education and prevention strategy will be to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils. These habits will be explicitly nurtured through:

(a) Core Value Strand Unit of the Learn Together Curriculum

(b) SPHE Curriculum

(c) Friendship/Wellbeing Week

- The prevention and awareness of bullying will be proactively dealt with through:

(a) Awareness Raising Strand of the Anti- Bullying Campaign or similar resource

(b) SPHE Curriculum-makes provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships.

(c) The Stay Safe programme at primary level, is a personal safety skills programme which seeks to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying

(d) RSE programme

(e) Internet Safety Week; Presentations by outside agencies-Community Garda

(f) Learn Together Curriculum

(g) The work can be extended to other areas of the curriculum such as Art, Drama and P.E.

(h) A dedicated time slot at monthly staff meetings will be available to report and gauge levels of bullying in the school as a whole

Supervision is provided before and after school and at morning and lunch breaks. 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):

- Internet acceptable use policy
- Supervision policy
- Special Education Needs policy
- Code of Behaviour

### **Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour**

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

(a) All reports of bullying should be noted, investigated and dealt with by the class teacher so that pupils will gain confidence in telling. A record of reports should be kept by the person to whom the report is made.

(b) Serious cases should be referred immediately to the Principal/Deputy Principal.

(c) Parents should be informed earlier rather than later

(d) Parents must be informed of the appropriate person to whom they can make their enquiries regarding bullying

(e) Pupils must understand that reporting is not 'telling tales'.

(f) Individual teachers should record and take appropriate measures in accordance with policy.

(g) Non-teaching staff should be encouraged to report incidents. Discretion is important.

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

### **Identifying if Bullying Behaviour has Occurred**

Bullying is defined 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. To determine whether the behaviour is bullying behaviour the following questions must 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 questions above is Yes, then the behaviour above is bullying behaviour and the behaviour should be addressed using the BÍ Cineálta Procedures.

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.

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.

### **Where Bullying Behaviour has Occurred**

- The relevant teacher investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour, with a view to establishing the facts and bringing any such behaviour to an end.
- All reported/suspected incidents are logged on the Form for Recording Bullying Behaviour available on Google Drive.
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved
- in cases of cyberbullying An Garda Síochána will be involved;
- The relevant teacher, in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner, should proceed as follows:

(a) When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. When this is difficult to ascertain (as time may have lapsed) a strategy should be put in place for a child to keep a record of the next incident of bullying behaviour so it can be dealt with as soon as possible.

(b) If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;

(c) If the teacher determines the bullying behaviour has occurred they will work towards a resolution of the situation with the pupils involved and the parents of the parties involved should be contacted to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. If this results in a successful resolution the matter is closed.

(d) If this is not the case and the behaviour continues a meeting of the parents/guardians of the parties involved will be called and sanctions will be imposed; this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his/her parents and the school.

(e) The relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

(f) The relevant teacher must use the *Bí Cineálta* recording template for recording bullying behaviour to record the bullying behaviour. It is retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal.

(g) All documentation regarding bullying incidents and their resolution is retained securely in the school

### **Follow-up Where Bullying Behaviour has Occurred**

The teacher must engage with the students involved and their parents 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 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 students and their parents 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 students 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 students involved and their parents. A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased.

If it becomes clear that the student 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 student, their parents and the school.

If a parent(s) 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.

If a 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.

### **Record Keeping**

All bullying behaviour will be recorded on the school's template for recording bullying behaviour. This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with students and parents. The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented. If the bullying behaviour is a child protection concern the matter will be addressed without delay in accordance with *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

## Section D: Oversight

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

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

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

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Principal) Date: 25/08/2025