



Knocknacarra Educate Together  
National School

# Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

*This policy has been formulated by Knocknacarra ETNS to support the establishment of a caring, supportive and respectful learning community and to comply with legislation and Department of Education circulars.*

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## **Introductory Statement and Rationale**

The Board of Management of Knocknacarra Educate Together NS 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. A 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.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour 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, shared and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

<b>Types and Forms of Bullying Behaviour</b>		
<b><u>Direct Bullying</u></b>	<b><u>Indirect Bullying</u></b>	<b><u>Online Bullying Behaviour</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Physical bullying behaviour</li> <li>- Verbal bullying behaviour</li> <li>- Written bullying behaviour</li> <li>- Extortion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exclusion</li> <li>- Relational</li> </ul>	

## **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	09/05/2025	Survey and whole-staff discussion
Students	05/06/2025; 10/06/2025	Survey (Junior Infants to 6 <sup>th</sup> Class); small group consultation with Student Council
Parents	14/05/2025-14/06/2025	Survey; invitation for feedback regarding draft policy
Board of Management	16/06/2025	Policy review, discussion and ratification
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	10/06/2025	Conversation with afterschool provider to align policies
Date policy was approved: 16/06/2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: 18/11/2024 (previous Anti-Bullying Policy)		

## **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.

### **School Culture and Environment**

- 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;
- Supports for staff;
- Use of restorative practice when managing conflict; and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of this policy.

### **Curriculum**

- The use of the Learn Together Curriculum is an integral aspect of developing this climate. Its objectives in two strand units are of particular importance for ensuring the establishment of a positive, welcoming and safe learning environment. Moral and Spiritual Development considers core values and moral development in context. Equality and Justice addresses the rights and responsibilities of individuals as well as the importance of promoting equality as defined in the nine grounds for discrimination.

- In addition, the key principles of Educate Together influence the policies and procedures in the school through the form of the “hidden curriculum”. This means child-centredness, robust gender equality, acceptance towards all and democratic principles are essential components of the school ethos. When these principles are applied, they support the establishment of a positive school culture that has the capacity to prevent bullying.
- The SPHE Curriculum also provides opportunities for addressing issues of fairness and kindness to prevent bullying behaviour. Aspects of the Walk Tall, Weaving Wellbeing and A Lust for Life Programmes as well as the Stay Safe programme in its entirety are used.
- Children are encouraged to speak out when they witness any bullying behaviour. Staff take any concerns seriously. Specific lessons mention the importance of the bystander effect in encouraging or preventing bullying behaviour.
- Bullying behaviour is approached from a school-wide perspective, with a consistent message that bullying behaviour is not tolerated. A culture of telling when such behaviour occurs is firmly established, emphasising the importance of respecting others’ right to tell or speak out when they are feeling unsafe or witness unkind behaviour. Regular, repeated messages that emphasis saying no and telling a safe adult are reinforced in formal lessons and informal situations.
- Outside of messages in discrete anti-bullying lessons, these key messages will feature in assemblies and in the visual environment in the school.

### **Policy and Planning**

Policy and planning in the school is child-centred and focused on wellbeing. Policies and curriculum plans that can support the prevention of bullying include:

- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Code of Behaviour
- Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy
- SPHE Curriculum Plan
- Learn Together Curriculum Plan
- Equality of Access and Participation Policy
- Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- SSE Wellbeing Report and School Improvement Plan
- Additional Educational Needs Policy
- Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices Policy

### **Strategies to Address Identity-Based and Online Bullying**

#### **Online Bullying**

- Raise awareness among the school community.
- Use digital safety tools and software.
- Organise annual cyber safety initiatives for pupils and parents.
- Webwise.ie resources.
- Promote respectful online behaviour in class discussions.
- Encourage reporting and support students affected by online bullying.

#### Homophobic/Transphobic Bullying

- Create an inclusive environment with visuals and peer support.
- Challenge gender stereotypes.
- LGBT lessons using Learn Together Curriculum, and topics to be integrated discreetly through-out classes across the curriculum. Use [BelongTo.ie](http://BelongTo.ie) as a potential resource.
- Encourage students to speak up. Incorporate stories and books of diverse families in class.

#### Racist Bullying

- Celebrate diversity through visible displays, learning materials and school culture.
- Provide workshops to build empathy and awareness.
- Support EAL students and engage diverse families.
- Celebrate cultural events of relevance to pupils' personal lives.
- Celebrate events such as Traveller Pride Week.

#### Sexist Bullying and Preventing Sexual Harassment

- Model respectful behaviour and ensure equal opportunities.
- Celebrate diversity and run gender equality campaigns.
- Involve parents in reinforcing values of respect.
- Promote respectful relationships and positive role models.
- Challenge harmful stereotypes.

#### Faith-Based Discrimination

- Celebrate all beliefs through the Learn Together curriculum.
- Mark diverse religious and cultural holidays.
- Encourage inclusive discussions.

#### Other Bullying Types

- Be vigilant about bullying related to disability, ability, appearance, or poverty.
- Use inclusive teaching and the school's ethos to promote kindness and respect.

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 protocols, as described fully in the Health and Safety Policy, help to prevent and address bullying and are summarised here:

- Acknowledging that according to consultation with pupils, yard time and other less-structured times of day are more likely settings for bullying behaviour, supervision protocols are in place that require a minimum of two staff members present. Staff supervising children wear high-vis jackets so they are easily found if assistance is required. The staff supervise by moving about the yard or learning setting and check in with many different children informally. On wet days, teachers are assigned a maximum of two rooms to supervise.
- In the morning, two members of the in-school management team supervise those who arrive before the official start time.
- During the day, a member of staff is present at all times in every learning setting.
- Children are not allowed to use any area of the yard where they are hidden, either among trees, or around the side of the building.
- For off-site learning experiences, a minimum of two staff members is ordinarily present, and following a risk assessment, this level of supervision may be increased.

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

The teachers with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour are all teaching staff with the support of the principal. Other staff members will report any concerns to a teacher. A ‘key adult’ with whom the pupil may have a special relationship may be involved. The Principal will inform the BoM of a case that is being dealt with, without naming pupils or families. If the bullying behaviour continues, details of the case may be spoken of at the Board of Management. All names will be redacted.

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 and
- 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):**

- The primary aim for the relevant teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame).
- In investigating and dealing with accusations of bullying, the teacher, in consultation with the principal, will decide how best the situation might be resolved.
- All reports, including anonymous reports, of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. In that way pupils will gain confidence in ‘telling’. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It is made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, inclusion support assistants (ISAs), bus escorts, caretakers and cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to a relevant teacher.
- Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
- It is very important that all involved (including all pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset.
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
- Incidents are investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way. It is advisable to have two members of staff present for any interviews whenever practical. Written records of all conversations should be kept, with the date and the time of the conversation noted.

- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.
- It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the Code of Behaviour). The school will give parents an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for pupils.
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of this Policy, and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- It will be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect.
- In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, the interventions put in place will be reviewed.
- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
  - Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased,
  - Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable,
  - Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable and
  - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the principal.
- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.
- All records (see Appendix A) must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour must adhere to the following:

- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, 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.

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):

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying will be implemented and based on the ideas of Restorative Practice. While sanctions may be used as specified in the Code of Behaviour, the general focus of responding to bullying behaviour is one of trying to mend and restore relationships as well as to encourage children to speak out when they experience or witness (as a bystander) bullying behaviour.

Regular check-ins with the children, staff and parents involved will ensure progress in addressing bullying behaviour and preventing further bullying behaviour. Monitoring the situation is essential to ensure the safety and comfort of all involved.

All interventions will follow the lead of the children experiencing bullying behaviour, following their preferences and those of their parents. In consultation and with the agreement of all children and parents, the principal and relevant teacher may work together to support all parties to engage in activities that promote the restoration of positive relationships. This may take the form of circle time, completing a common task in a supported way or conversations facilitated by teachers. The purpose of any such activities will be to ensure each party understands the consequences of their actions for themselves and for the others.

In addition, teachers will collaborate to help children develop their self-esteem. A variety of methods will be used including written reflections, guided conversations and facilitated cooperative activities.

Traditional Approach	Restorative Approach
School rules are broken.	People and relationships are harmed.
Justice focuses on establishing guilt.	Justice identifies needs and responsibility.
Accountability = punishment	Accountability = understanding impact and repairing harm
Justice directed at the offender; the victim is ignored.	Offender, victim, and school all have direct roles in the justice process.
Rules and intent outweigh whether outcome is positive or negative.	Offender is responsible for harmful behavior, repairing harm and working towards positive outcomes.
Limited opportunity for expressing remorse or making amends.	Opportunity given to make amends and express remorse.

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

## **Section D: Oversight**

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

## **Communication, Review and Monitoring**

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.

## **Ratification by the Board of Management:**

The Board of Management ratified this revised policy on the date below.

Paul Adams, chairperson  
Matt Wallen, principal

Date of ratification: 23/06/2025

## **Appendix A – Template for recording bullying behaviour**

1. Pupil(s) experiencing bullying behaviour

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) displaying or witnessing bullying behaviour

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))

Pupil concerned	
Other pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other _____	

4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School bus	
Other _____	

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern \_\_\_\_\_

6. Indicate the form of the bullying behaviour.

Physical aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Name-calling		Intimidation	
Isolation/exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Extortion		Other _____	

7. Is the behaviour regarded as identity-based bullying? If so, indicate the relevant category:

Racist	Sexist/Gender -based	Abilist	Homophobic	Membership of the Traveller Community	Other _____

8. Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken including engagement with pupils and parents

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Relevant Teacher) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted to Principal \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B – Student Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy

The Student Council in June 2025 collaborated to create this student friendly policy.

# KETNS Bí Cineálta

**Bullying is unkind behaviour that is intentional (on purpose), targeted and repeated, often making someone feel bad about differences.**



**Bullying can be physical, using hurtful words or names, leaving someone out, hurting someone's feelings or being unkind online.**



## What can we do?



- Tell them to stop, if you are comfortable.
- Ask a teacher or another adult for help.
- Check on others to see if they are okay.
- Be a helpful bystander - be brave.
- Respect people's rights to tell when they are feeling unsafe.
- Include everyone and celebrate our differences.
- Follow the lead of the person being bullied to decide a response.
- Fix the broken relationships by doing more than just apologising but understanding each others' feelings.



friends



I am kind  
I am brave



celebrate our differences  
yay!



## **Appendix C - Review of the Bí Cineálta Policy**

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. 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*?  
/ /20

2. Where in the school is the student friendly Bí Cineálta policy displayed?

3. What date did the Board publish the Bí Cineálta policy and the studentfriendly policy on the school website? / /20

4. How has the student friendly policy been communicated to students?

5. How has the Bí Cineálta policy and student friendly policy been communicated to parents?

6. 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

7. Does the Bí Cineálta policy document the strategies that the school uses to prevent bullying behaviour?  Yes  No

8. 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

9. Has the Board discussed how the school is addressing all reports of bullying behaviour?  Yes  No

10. Is the Board satisfied that all incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed in accordance with the school's Bí Cineálta Policy?  Yes  No

11. Have the prevention strategies in the Bí Cineálta policy been implemented?  Yes  No

12. Has the Board discussed the effectiveness of the strategies used to prevent bullying behaviour?  Yes  No

13. How have (a) parents, (b) students and (c) school staff been consulted with as part of the review of the Bí Cineálta Policy?

14. 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:

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

16. Does the student friendly policy need to be updated as a result of this review, and if so, why?

17. Does the school refer parents to the complaints procedures if they have a complaint about how the school has addressed bullying behaviour?  Yes  No

18. Has a parent informed the school that a student has left the school due to reported bullying behaviour?  Yes  No

19. 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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Paul Adams, chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of review

\_\_\_\_\_  
Matt Wallen, principal

**Appendix D – Notification regarding the Board of Management’s annual review of the Bí Cineálta Policy**

The Board of Management of Knocknacarra Educate Together NS 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 [date].

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 \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal

Date of next review \_\_\_\_\_