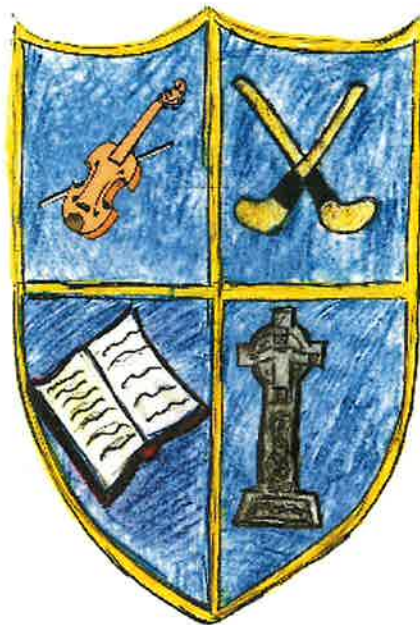


Toonagh National School

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour



June 2026

Introduction

The Board of Management of Toonagh 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*:

- 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.

Behaviours which are not defined as bullying can be distressing. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviours are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour. Examples of these behaviours which are not defined as bullying include:

- A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards another student.
However, a single hurtful message or image posted on social media can be considered bullying as it has a high likelihood of it being shared.
- Instances where students don't want to be friends or remain friends.
- Behaviours by students with special educational needs where no harm was intended.

Many behaviours, while causing distress, cannot be defined as bullying and will be dealt with through the School Code of Behaviour.

Types of bullying behaviour

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

- **disablist bullying behaviour:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of a perceived or actual disability or additional need
- **exceptionally able bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their high academic ability or outstanding talents
- **gender identity bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual gender identity
- **homophobic/transphobic (LGBTQ+) bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual membership of the LGBTQ+ community
- **physical appearance bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their physical appearance. Students who “look different” can be mocked or criticised about the shape, size or appearance of their body
- **racist bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student 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”
- **poverty bullying:** behaviour that intends to humiliate a student because of a lack of resources
- **religious identity bullying:** behaviour that intends to harm a student because of their religion or religious identity
- **sexist bullying:** behaviour that intends to harm a student based on their sex, perpetuating stereotypes that a student or a group of students are inferior because of their sex
- **sexual harassment:** any form of unwanted verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on sex which affects the dignity of the student

Outside School

A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, we will support and reassure the student(s) involved.

Online bullying behaviour (cyber bullying) is carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text/direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, email, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chatrooms and other online technologies.

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	January 2025	Principal and Deputy Principal attended Bí Cineálta seminar.
	February 2025	Staff meeting – Learnings from Bí Cineálta seminar shared with staff.
	April 2025	Staff meeting – Discussion on the format for the gathering of parental, pupil and staff input to help with the formation of our new Bí Cineálta policy.
	May 2025	Staff meeting – Half day closure to engage with the policy, procedures and resources. Staff Survey link shared.
	June 2025	Draft Policy sharing and policy amendment.
Students	May 2025	Student Council meeting to discuss Child Friendly Policy. Pupil Survey link shared to classes 1 st – 6 th .
Parents	May 2025	Message on school newsletter informing parents about the new Bí Cineálta procedures and notifying them that our draft policy will be shared for review.
	June 2025	Draft Policy sharing and policy amendment.
Board of Management	May 2025	Discussion on the new Bí Cineálta procedures.
	June 2025	Final ratification of policy. Publishing policy on school website.
Date policy was approved	23 rd of June 2025.	
Most recent Review	15 th of June 2026	

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

The following strategies will be used in Toonagh N.S. to prevent bullying behaviour occurring.

1. Culture and Environment

- Create a positive and inclusive school culture where all students feel safe, respected and supported.
- Build good relationships between pupils and staff where pupils are encouraged to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment.
- Reinforce the message that a pupil must always tell an adult at school before they leave that day when they think bullying behaviour has occurred.
- Students will shape the school culture by promoting kindness and inclusion within their peer group and maintain a positive and supportive school environment for all.
- Encourage and promote kindness among all students and create a space where the pupil voice is heard.
- 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.
- Ensure that pupils are adequately supervised at all times especially in the yard.
- Always seek to solve restore good relations and respect between parties as early as possible and model this approach throughout the school.
- Use restorative questions when investigating incidents.
- Change seating arrangement in class at different intervals during the school year.
- Promote the values of *Cineáltas an Tamhnaigh* - kindness, respect and acceptance of difference throughout the school at all times:
 - Walking and Talking initiative each morning before school start
 - Our Buddy Bench
 - Students' Council (Pupil Voice)
 - Kindness Awards each month
 - Kindness Noticeboard
 - Odd sock day for celebrating diversity and inclusion
 - Sensory Room
- Circle time.
- Buddy systems, Buddy Bench, Buddy with a Junior.
- Publish the Bí Cineálta policy on the school website which will give parents ease of access to the policy.

2. Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

- The implementation of the Social Physical and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum, according to our school plan.
- Teach the Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) and Stay Safe Programme every second year. Furthermore, teach SPHE and RSE content that promotes well-being, making friendships and a sense of belonging.
- Organise seminars/workshops given by relevant professionals to older pupils and to parents/guardians, focusing on educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while online and also on developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying. The school-wide approach and the role of parents is of great importance in this regard.
- Model respectful behaviour towards colleagues, pupils and visitors in our school environment.
- Regular use of pair and group work activities in all classes.
- Curricular and Extra-curricular activities can help to develop a sense of self-worth, working together, inclusion and respect.
- On-going discussion/ evaluation/ review of the effectiveness of the Bí Cineálta policy.

3. Policy and Planning

The aim of Toonagh National School's Bí Cineálta Policy is as follows:

- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils, parents/guardians.
- To promote a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To ensure there is appropriate supervision and monitoring of all pupils during the school day.
- To develop procedures and create a suitable document for recording and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To engage with appropriate agencies in countering all forms of bullying and promoting anti-bullying behaviour.
- The Acceptable Use Policy, Supervision policy and Code of Behaviour all support the implementation of the Bí Cineálta policy.
- To ensure all pupils engage with the RSE Programme and Stay Safe Lessons at each class level.

4. Relationships and Partners

- Strong interpersonal connections are an important part of effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour within the school. These interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as our Parents' Association and Student Council.
- Pupils will engage in age-appropriate awareness activities that look at the causes and impacts of bullying behaviour.
- Supporting active participation of students in school life and active participation of parents in school life also.
- Conducting workshops and seminars for pupils, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying.
- Encourage inclusion of the wider community within school life through guest speakers and school visits.
- Promoting acts of kindness and a focus on well-being through our Kindness Awards at our Monthly Assemblies and through our 'Throw Kindness Around Like Confetti' Noticeboard which displays our Kindness Award winners.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

- The class teacher will oversee the investigation of bullying reports for students in their class – this includes using the procedure guidelines to investigate reports of bullying and where necessary recording bullying behaviour on the Toonagh NS Recording Bullying Behaviour form.
- All staff will be vigilant to bullying behaviour.
- Principal will inform Board of Management of incidences of bullying.

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 outlined in this section.

The primary aim in addressing reports of bullying behaviour should be to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved. The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

Stage 1 – Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

1. A calm, unemotional, restorative approach, where the student feels reassured and listened to, will be used to deal with reports of real or perceived bullying behaviour.
2. Allegations of bullying behaviour will be investigated and dealt with by the class teacher for students in their class, with the support of all staff.
3. Incidents can occur where behaviour is unacceptable and hurtful but the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. If bullying behaviour has not occurred, the teacher will refer to the school's Code of Behaviour.
4. Each student will be engaged with individually and if appropriate will provide a written account of the incident.
5. Where a group of students are involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first. Thereafter, all students involved may be met as a group.

6. The teacher(s) will exercise his/her/their own professional judgement to determine whether bullying behaviour has occurred. The definition of bullying provided in the Department of Education BÍ Cineálta procedures sets out clear criteria to help schools to identify bullying behaviour.
7. Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the steps below will be followed.

Stage 2 – Where bullying behaviour has occurred

1. Inform the student who has experienced bullying behaviour that they have acted responsibly by telling.
2. Interview the child who has experienced bullying behaviour and discuss the feelings they have experienced because of the behaviour. It is important to listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation.
3. As above, interviews with the alleged perpetrator(s) will take place.
4. Inform parents of all of those involved.
5. Inform the principal.
6. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the teacher should seek answers of 'Who, What, When and Why'.
7. Where the teacher(s) has/have 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 the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
8. The teacher will emphasise how harmful and hurtful bullying is and seek a promise that it will stop.
9. When an investigation is completed, the teacher should complete the 'Recording Bullying Behaviour' Document to include the outcome and a date for review.
10. Pupils displaying and experiencing bullying behaviour will be closely monitored by school staff until the review.
11. Elicit, from the individual/group, ways to resolve the difficulty and agree steps to be taken to make sure that it does not happen again.
12. Circle time may be used with the whole group / class to explore these issues further if it is appropriate and if the child who experienced bullying behaviour agrees to it.
13. After approximately 20 days, the review of the bullying behaviour will take place.
14. If bullying has not ceased, review steps 1 to 13 above.
15. If bullying behaviour continues, the teacher will refer to the School's Code of Behaviour.
16. Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has not dealt with a bullying incident in accordance with the new BÍ Cineálta procedures, the parent must refer to the school's complaints procedure.
17. The School will maintain care for the victim over time. This will be done by speaking to the child a number of weeks after the incident to check on their continuing welfare. The child's parents will also be consulted. Regular monitoring of the pupils involved will take place in the weeks after the incident.
18. If a student requests that no action be taken, staff will speak sensitively to the student to work out together what steps can be taken to deal with the matter and how their parents will be informed. If a parent wishes for no action to be taken, they must put this request in writing, but even so, the school may still deem it necessary to be investigated and handled appropriately.

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

Supporting Pupils experiencing/witnessing bullying behaviour:

- Following Bí Cineálta procedures to end bullying behaviour.
- Monitoring pupils to ensure they feel safe in the school environment.
- Ensure the pupils feel confident to confide in a relevant adult of any further bullying behaviour.
- Indicate that the bullying behaviour is not the fault of the pupil(s) being targeted.
- Encourage pupils to get involved in activities to help develop friendships, social skills and self-esteem (e.g. group work in class, project work and extra-curricular activities).
- Reassure children that staff in the school will be monitoring carefully for some time.

Supporting Pupils displaying bullying behaviour:

- Ensure bullying behaviour is dealt with.
- Make it clear to pupil(s) that once the incident has ended, the incident will not be referred to again, unless another similar incident of bullying behaviour occurs.
- Encourage pupils to get involved in activities to help develop friendships, social skills and self-esteem.
- Encourage the pupils to be fully involved in our Cineáltas an Tamhnaigh approaches:
 - Walking and Talking initiative each morning before school start
 - Our Buddy Bench
 - Buddy with a Junior during break times
 - Students' Council (Pupil Voice)
 - Kindness Awards each month
 - Kindness Noticeboard
 - Odd sock day for celebrating diversity and inclusion
 - Sensory Room
- Re-teach relevant SPHE lessons where applicable.

Resources

- Walk Tall Programme
- Stay Safe Lessons
- Friendship Terrace
- Webwise – Internet Safety
- FUSE - DCU's www.antibullyingcentre.ie
- We may seek advice from NEPS as to how to support the students.

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. 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.

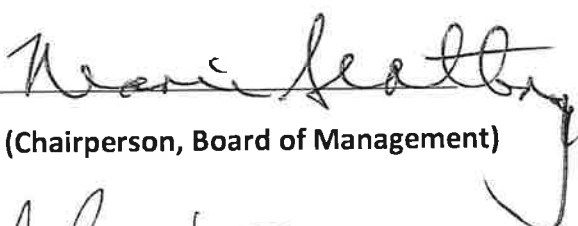
This policy and its implementation will be reviewed, following input from our school community, each calendar year or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this policy refers.

Signed: Denise Whelan (Chairperson of BoM) Date: 23/06/25

Signed: Gearóid Roughan (Principal) Date: 23/06/25

Update and Review

This policy was updated and reviewed by the Board of Management of Toonagh National School on 15/06/26. This policy will be reviewed annually.

Signed: 
(Chairperson, Board of Management)


(Principal)

Date: 15/06/2026



Scoil an Tamhnaigh

Toonagh, Fountain, Ennis,

Co. Clare

Roll No. 03898U

Tel: 065-6820143

Email: toonaghschool@gmail.com

Bí Cineálta Bullying Recording Sheet

Date: _____

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name: _____ Class Group: _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

_____, _____, _____, _____

3. Source of bullying concern/report (enter ✓ in relevant box(es)) *

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

4. Location of incidents

(enter ✓ in relevant box(es)) *

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

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

_____, _____, _____

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (enter ✓ in relevant box(es)) *

Physical Aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling/ Verbal		Written	
Extortion/Blackmail		Other (specify)	

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

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9. Details of actions taken

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10. Views of student(s) and parent(s) regarding the actions to be taken

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11. Date of review with student(s) and parent(s) to determine if behaviour has Ceased:

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Signed: _____ (Teacher)

**Records should be retained in accordance with our school's record keeping policy.*