



Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Rathgarogue 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.

Rathgarogue NS developed and implements this Bí Cineálta policy which 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 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	04.03.2025	Staff Meeting
Students	17.01.2025	Student Council and Wellbeing Committee met with Ms. Eimear Lyng (APII) and Anne-Marie O' Neill (Principal) to discuss the Bí Cineálta Procedures and devise a plan to ensure all pupils are aware of the procedures.
	26.02.2025	Pupil feedback sought through survey from pupils from 2nd - 6th class.
	28.02.2025	Student Council and Wellbeing Committee met with Ms. Eimear Lyng (APII) to discuss strategies to raise awareness of the Bí Cineálta Procedures and embedding kindness in school.
Parents	22.06.2025	Feedback from parents sought via online survey.
	03.03.2025	Members of the Parent Association met with Anne-Marie O' Neill (Principal) and Ms. Sinéad Goggin (APII) to discuss the content and the implementation of the Bí Cineálta procedures.
Board of Management	07.02.2025	Anne-Marie O' Neill (Principal) informed the Board of Management about the new procedures and the Board decided to survey the parents for input.
Wider School Community	21.05.2025	School bus providers consulted and continued open communication agreed upon.
Date Policy was Approved: 10.06.2025		
Date Policy was last Reviewed:		

Section B:

Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the strategies used in Rathgarogue NS to help prevent bullying behaviour. 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.

- Promotion of a culture of kindness and foster respect for all members of the school community. The 4 school rules developed by pupils Be Kind, Show Respect, Listen and Tidy up will be discussed in each classroom in early September and highlighted continually throughout the school year.
- Promotion of a culture of telling and explicitly teaching about the role of the bystander. Class teachers promote the concept of a “trusted adult” in the school. Pupils are educated about the important role of the bystander and rather than viewing telling an adult about bullying behaviour as “snitching” it is viewed as positive, responsible behaviour.
- Promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- Holding “Bí Cinealta” week in September each year with a focus on anti-bullying programmes and the SPHE curriculum.
- Implementing the SPHE programme in full with a focus on positive friendships, problem solving and developing good interpersonal relationships.
 - Programmes used in teaching of the SPHE curriculum: Fun Friends, Zippy’s Friends, Friends for Life, Smart Moves, Webwise resources, Fuse, Gender Equality Matters etc.
- Cairde peer friendship programme between Junior Infants and 6th class.
- Connecting Time; pupils engage in activities with and connect with their peers and paired classes.
- Friendship Week is celebrated each year in February where classes focus on characteristics of a good friend and what to do when friendships go wrong.
- School staff provide supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra curricular activities. Non teaching and ancillary staff are asked to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision also applies to monitoring student use of technology within the school.
- Display of school rules in a central space in our school and every classroom.
- Highlighting positive behaviour (showing kindness, respect etc) in students through our classroom and whole school reward systems including ‘Happy-grams’, ‘Caught Being Kind’ and Dalta na Seachtaine awards.
- teaching students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship

- having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- reviewing and communicating an Acceptable Use Policy for technology
- referring to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour
- promoting or hosting online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online
- holding an Internet Safety Day to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour
- maintaining an inclusive physical environment such as by displaying relevant posters
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- challenging gender stereotypes (eg. career choices based on gender)
- conducting age appropriate workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour
- encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour
- fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students "see themselves" in their school environment
- having the cultural diversity of the school visible and on display
- conducting age appropriate workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of racism
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour
- providing supports to school staff to respond to the needs of students for whom English is an additional language and for communicating with their parents
- providing supports to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma students, and to encourage communication with their parents
- inviting speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds
- ensuring that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds
- 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
- organising awareness campaigns, workshops and presentations on gender equality and respect
- encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour:

A positive and inclusive school culture and environment is essential to prevent and address bullying behaviour. The whole school community endeavours to create an environment where students and school staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported.

The school community supports a “telling environment” and nurtures the role of the trusted adult.

Students are encouraged to report if they or another student is experiencing bullying behaviour. Staff support this strategy by letting students know that they can talk to them.

Physically safe spaces are created throughout the school where adults have a clear line of sight when supervising students.

Rathgarogue NS Supervision Policy ensures all reasonable measures are in place to ensure the safety of students and to supervise students when students are attending school and attending school activities.

Play equipment is available to students at breaktimes to encourage students to participate in fun games and be actively engaged. Playground games are explicitly taught to students to encourage participation and connection with peers.

Rathgarogue NS Acceptable Use Policy outlines strategies in relation to keeping children safe online.

Section C:

Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

- The class teacher
- Where the class teacher is unavailable, a Special Education Teacher or the Principal will assume responsibility

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 the parents of those involved - in line with restorative practice approach

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:

- The school will consider if the behaviour is targeted, repeated and harmful. (If the answer is no then the Code of Behaviour will be followed).
- If a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged 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 also be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident. The definition of bullying 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." sets out clear criteria to identify bullying behaviour. The following questions will help to determine if Bullying behaviour has occurred:

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?

Incidents can occur where behaviour is unacceptable and hurtful but the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies that deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the Code of Behaviour.

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

Where bullying behaviour has occurred

- School staff will be fair and consistent in their approach to address the bullying behaviour. **Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour need support.** It is important that the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour is engaged with without delay so that they feel listened to, supported and reassured.

- School staff will identify the supports needed for the student who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties and ensure that their needs are met.

A student's agency or sense of power can be decreased when they experience or witness bullying behaviour. When a student tells an adult that they feel that they are experiencing bullying behaviour they may feel that they are taking back some control over what is happening to them. It is very important that a student's agency is not decreased further by adults deciding what will happen next without listening to the student and involving them in deciding on the actions that will be taken.

The following principles will be adhered to when addressing bullying behaviour:

- ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to 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 parties 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. Where the relevant teacher feels that it is more beneficial for the pupils involved to be given the opportunity to repair their relationship without informing parents at the first instance of identifying bullying behaviour, parents may not be informed initially.

In circumstances where a student expresses concern about their parents being informed, the school will support the student by listening to their concerns about informing their parents and accepting suggestions from the student about how they would like their parents to be informed.

Given the complexity of bullying behaviour it is generally acknowledged that no one approach works in all situations.

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 to the student, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks 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 schools aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action. **Parents should put this request in writing to the school.** Where there are literacy, digital literacy or language barriers parents will be facilitated to do so. **However, while acknowledging the parents' request, the school may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.**

- 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, schools are required to support the students involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, schools should deal with it in accordance with their B' Cine'alta policy. Where the student displaying the bullying behaviour is not a student in the school, but the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour is a student in the school, the school should support the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as appropriate and engage with them and their parents to determine what steps can be taken.

Examples of approaches that may be useful when supporting those who have experienced witnessed or displayed bullying behaviour:

<p>SPHE Curriculum. Walk Tall, Fun Friends, Zippy's Friends, Friends for Life, Stay Safe, Fuse, Webwise Programmes</p> <p>Worry Box</p> <p>Trusted Adult</p> <p>Adapted yard areas</p>	<p>Adapted yard areas</p> <p>Opportunities for rebuilding relationships</p> <p>Class bonding activities, Connecting activities</p> <p>Hearing the Student Voice</p> <p>Support form NEPS</p> <p>Liaise with parents</p> <p>This list is not-exhaustive.</p>
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Determining if Bullying Behaviour has Ceased

- The teacher must engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress following the initial intervention. Important factors to consider as part of the review 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. Even though the bullying behaviour may

have ceased, ongoing supervision and support may be required for both the student who has experienced the bullying behaviour as well as the student who has displayed the behaviour. It can take time for relationships to settle and for supports to take effect. In some cases, relationships may never be restored to how they were before the bullying behaviour occurred. If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the teacher will review the strategies used in consultation with the students and parents and agree to meet again over an agreed timeframe until the bullying behaviour has ceased. Where it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school will consider 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.

All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This record will include:

1. Where and when the bullying behaviour took place
2. The date of the engagement with students and parents
3. The views of the student and parents on the actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented
4. The review with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased
5. The views of students and their parents in relation to the cessation of bullying behaviour
6. The date of each of these engagements
7. The date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased will be recorded
8. Any engagement with external services/supports will also be noted.

These records will be retained in accordance with the school's record keeping policy and in line with data protection regulations. A copy will be attached to the Student Support File where one exists. 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*.

Complaint Process

If a parent is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with these procedures, they will be referred to the Parental Complaints Procedure. The Parental Complaints Procedure is available on the school website www.rathgaraguens.com.

In the event that a student and/or parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, a student and/or parent 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. The Office of the Ombudsman for Children can be contacted at ococomplaint@oco.ie.

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. This update does not contain personal or identifying information.

Where incidents of bullying behaviour have been reported since the last meeting, the update must include a verbal report which should include the following information where relevant:

- the trends and patterns identified such as the form of bullying behaviour, type of bullying behaviour if known, location of bullying behaviour, when it occurred
- the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour
- any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour
- if any serious incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred which have had a serious adverse impact on a student
- if a parent has informed the school that a student has left the school because of reported bullying behaviour
- if any additional support is needed from the board of management
- if the school's Bí Cineálta policy requires urgent review in advance of the annual review

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: Brendan Kelly
(Chairperson, Board of Management)

Date: 10.06.25

Signed: Anne Marie O'Neill
(Principal)

Date: 10.06.2025