SCOIL MHUIRE
ROBINSTOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL
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Bí Cineálta 2026 – 2027

Policy & Procedures to Prevent& Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Robinstown 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.

We confirm that we will take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the bullying or harassment of our students in whatever form and however motivated.

Catholic schools have a distinctive understanding of the human person, recognising that every person is created in God's image and likeness and has inherent dignity as a child of God. This is the basis for ensuring that each person in our school is treated with respect and care, in accordance with the Catholic Schedule.

As a Catholic school, we are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual. No human person is to be devalued, and all have an indispensable part to play in the school community, regardless of difference.

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.

TYPES OF BULLYING

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, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on sex which affects the dignity of the student.*

SECTION A:

DEVELOPMENT/REVIEW OF OUR BÍ CINEÁLTA POLICY TO PREVENT & 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***

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
Information seminar for Principal	15th October 2024	Online Seminar
Professional Learning Day for principal and teacher	15th January 2025	Face to Face CPD
School Staff	3rd April 2025	Half Day School Closure for Staff
Students	25-03-25 05/11/26	Questionnaire online

Parents	25-03-25	Questionnaire online Information Email School Website
Board of Management	19-03-25 08-10-26 21-05-25 05/10/26	Meeting Email
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	25-03-25 10/11/26	School Website
Date policy was approved: 08/10/26		
Date policy was last reviewed: 08-10-26		

SECTION B: PREVENTING BULLYING

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by this school to address all forms of bullying behaviour, in whatever form and however motivated, including online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment.

In developing preventative strategies which this school will use to prevent ***all forms of bullying behaviour****, we come from the context of our Catholic ethos where inclusivity permeates the school in a real way. This school takes positive steps to ensure that the culture of the school is one which welcomes a respectful dialogue and encounter with diversity and difference, by ensuring that prevention and inclusivity strategies are given priority and discussed regularly at board of management and staff meetings. The dignity and the wellbeing of the individual person is of paramount concern in our Christian response. This school will listen closely to and dialogue with parents, thereby building a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, trust and confidence. In continuing to develop prevention strategies, this school will listen to young people and parents, to help establish their particular context and needs. Frequent periods of reflection and engagement by the school, young people and parents, will be used to discern appropriate supports for young people in this school and to help inform future prevention strategies.*

Culture and Environment: We strive to

- *Create a positive school climate where all pupils feel safe, respected and valued.*
- *Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.*
- *Promote diversity and inclusion in all aspects of school life.*

- *Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with additional needs and/or differences.*
- *Use systems of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.*
- *Create a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and a consistent approach to addressing bullying behavior is adopted.*
- *Support the idea that our school is a telling environment. Promote the concept of a trusted adult. This is promoted and reinforced through the yearly teaching of the Stay Safe and RSE programmes.*
- *Foster and enhance the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities.*

Ways in which we work to achieve these goals are as follows:

- *All staff will actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour. Staff are briefed regularly at staff meetings on the uniform approach we must take to handle all reports of bullying.*
- *Parents receive information at times regarding useful information on Anti Bullying, Stay Safe and SPHE lessons which focus on positive behaviour.*
- *Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils. A pro-active approach is encouraged during periods of supervision. Supervision is provided before and after school and at morning and lunch breaks. Students are assigned designated areas in which to socialise and eat.*
- *Reinforce the school's Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) regarding technology and social media. Provide digital safety workshops to educate students about cyberbullying risks and responsible online behaviour.*
- *Anti-Bullying signs and messaging will be displayed around the school. Positive messages that promote friendship and kindness will also be displayed.*
- *Implement an anonymous reporting system (e.g., a reporting box) for students who feel unsafe reporting bullying in person.*
- *Celebrating school, class and individual achievements through our weekly assemblies.*
- *Pupils will be provided opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and*

informal interactions. Structured lunchtime activities during the school year that encourage inclusion and having fun playing with friends.

- *A Friendship Week will take place in October each year with an emphasis on wellbeing, kindness and friendship.*

Curriculum

- *Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.*
- *The implementation of the Social Physical and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum, according to our school plan, including the Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) and Stay Safe Programmes.*
- *School-wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence-based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme, programmes that teach about cyberbullying (e.g. Webwise teachers' resources and lessons from (www.cybersafekids.ie)*
- *Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate and responsible use of social media.*
- *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.*
- *In younger classes, picture/story books can be used to teach important concepts (e.g. Amazing Grace considers gender & race through story etc)*

▪ *Use of programmes such as Friends for Life (which looks at social skills and resilience)* ▪ *The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.*

Policy and Planning

- *The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour and to support the implementation of the Bí Cineálya policy:*

1. *Stay Safe and RSE Policy*
2. *Child Safeguarding Statement*
3. *Code of Behaviour*
4. *Acceptable Use Policy*
5. *Supervision Policy*
6. *Special Education Policy*

The school aims to:

- *raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils, parents/guardians.*

- *To promote a school ethos and culture where all school community members treat each other with kindness and respect and which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.*
- *To ensure appropriate supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation. Assign specific supervision zones to staff members to ensure full coverage of all areas.*
- *To develop procedures for noting, investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.*
- *To implement a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.*
- *To work with appropriate agencies in countering all forms of bullying and promoting anti-bullying behaviour.*
- *Appropriate Teacher Professional Development will be planned for and organised in order to support the successful implementation of this policy.*
- *Effective leadership is a key component with Principal, Deputy Principal, DLP, DDLP, and all members of the in-school leadership team focused on supporting the implementation of this policy.*

Relationships and Partnerships

- *Interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as our Parents Association, our Student Council, committees and groups.*
- *Age and stage appropriate awareness initiatives that engage the student body in looking at their own behaviour – promoting acts of kindness and friendship, being an active help to others and looking at the causes of and impact of bullying during SPHE lessons.*
- *Conducting workshops and seminars for students, staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying.*
- *At assemblies, school rules are reinforced on a regular basis. Raise awareness of the definition of bullying behaviour and how the school deals with such behaviour.*
- *Catch the children being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention. Likewise, give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.*
- *Positive home school links and relationships, help parents to communicate with teachers at an early stage if they suspect their child is being bullied.*
- *Supporting the active participation of students in school life through formal and informal structures, e.g. Cairde sa Clos, assemblies, sports' teams, student council, active school committee.*
- *Encouraging peer mentoring and peer support through programmes such as paired reading, older*

classes helping younger classes with IT

- *Playground Leaders, & Yard Buddies; pupils from Fifth & Sixth Class support infant classes on the yard to help with games and positive interactions.*
- *Lunchtime Referees; senior pupils refereeing competitive games at lunchtime between the middle class groups.*
- *Buddy Reading and other activities between older and younger classes.*
- *The meaningful involvement of the Board of Management, staff, pupils and their parents in the development, implementation and review of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and student friendly version is actively purused by the school through the regular use of discussion groups and surveys.*

SECTION C: ADDRESSING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

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

- ***Each class teacher is responsible for dealing with Bullying Behaviour in their own class.***

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. 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:

Procedures for dealing with possible bullying situations in Robinstown NS.

If an incident has taken place that might involve bullying, record whatever details are known by completing an **Incident Report Form**. Any witness to what looks like bullying behavior may fill out this form.

All actions taken to deal with a reported incident should be recorded on an **Action Taken Form** from when the report was made initially to the point of resolution and rehabilitation. The form will be completed by the anti-bullying co-coordinator if the incident is reported by anyone other than a teacher.

Before investigating an incident that has been reported and before the children are asked to complete a survey on bullying in their own class, they will be reminded by their class teacher of where Robinstown N.S stands on bullying.

The following will be explained to each class before asking the children to complete a survey:

(a) Explain that you are going to carry out a survey

(b) Explain again briefly where Robinstown N.S stands on Bullying

(c) Explain to the children that for behaviour to be bullying, things must be happening that are deliberate, hurtful to someone and are repeated over and over again,

(d) Explain that any child found to be involved in bullying will not be punished provided they promise to stop the bullying and keep that promise. (This **"Reform, not Blame"** approach is necessary so pupils will feel able to give you the information you need. They will usually know if someone is treating others unfairly but may be reluctant to report it, for various reasons, if perpetrators are likely to be punished).

(e) Explain that the survey is confidential, that nobody will be shown what anyone wrote about what might be going on, (unless it was so bad that the Gardaí had to be told, which is very unlikely) but that they will have to put their names on their questionnaires.

4. Survey all classes. This is necessary since bullying might take place in the yard at break time and children from other classes might see it. Ask the pupils to put their names on the questionnaires. You can tell them that any child who honestly does not know of any bullying taking place they should write "I don't know" on each line of the questionnaire before putting their name on it (I don't know indicates a refusal to participate)

5. Later, read through the questionnaires for evidence of bullying. It is likely that there will be several possible bullying situations mentioned but some may not all actually involve bullying.

6. *Remember, to be bullying the behaviour must be* ***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.***

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour, teacher should consider the following three questions:

1. *Is the behaviour* ***targeted*** *at a specific student or group of students?*
2. *Is the behaviour* ***intended to cause harm,*** *physical, social or emotional harm?*
3. *Is the behaviour* ***repeated****?*

If the answer is 'Yes' to all three questions above, the behaviour should be addressed under the Bí Cineálta Policy & Procedures*. The investigating teacher will proceed to point 6 below.*

Note: Once off incidents may be considered bullying in certain circumstances. A single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour.

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 school's

Code of 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 Bí Cineálta 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.

6. The class teacher will interview any alleged perpetrators using the **Alleged Bullying Interview form** and the **Bullying Behaviour Checklist form**. Those interviewed are reminded that they must be honest in the interview so you can trust their promise to stop and avoid any punishment at the end. Seek clarification at any stage in the interview by asking the pupil to "explain." Each student will be engaged individually at first, thereafter all students involved should be met as a group.

7. Where bullying behaviour has occurred

- *It is important that the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour is engaged without delay so that they feel listened to, supported and reassured.*
- *School staff should identify the support needed for the student who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties and ensure that their needs are met.*
- *Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the students 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. The student will be asked to complete a signed* ***Pupil Behaviour Promise*** parents and the ***class teacher must countersign the form****. The consequences of breaking this promise will be discussed with the student and the parents.*
- *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.*
- *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. However, while acknowledging the parent's request, schools may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.*

- ***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.***

Recording bullying behaviour

All incidents of bullying behaviour should be recorded. The Following forms will be used to record any bullying behaviour in Robinstown NS:

1. ***Incident Report Form***

   To be completed by <u>any</u> witness to <u>any</u> bullying behaviour in school.

2. ***Action taken Form***

   To be completed by bullying coordinator if an incident is reported by anyone other than a staff member i.e. Parent/Child

3. ***Regular Class Survey***

   Completed by the children in a class in which bullying incidents have been reported.

4. ***Interview questionnaire and checklist***

   Used to question a child accused of bullying behaviour, completed by the child's class teacher.

5. ***Pupil behaviour Promise***

   Completed by the child and countersigned by the class teacher and parents/guardians after interview

6. ***Impact statement***

7. *It 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.*

- *Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted. These records should be retained in accordance with the school's record keeping policy and in line with data protection regulations.*

- *If a parent is not happy with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with these procedures, they should be referred to the schools agreed complaint's procedure.*

Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred and determining whether bullying 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. 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 should 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 should 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.*

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):

SUPPORTING STUDENTS WHO EXPERIENCE BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

- *Creating a Safe and Supportive Environment*

  - Ensuring that students feel listened to and reassured when they report bullying. - Providing confidential support to reduce any fear of retaliation.
  - Implementing SPHE curriculum and Wellbeing policy.
  - Implement a buddy system with a peer or trusted adult.

- *Providing Emotional and Educational Support*

  - Engaging with NEPS or external psychological services if needed.
  - Developing individual Student Support Plans where appropriate.
  - Encouraging participation in wellbeing activities to rebuild self-confidence.

- *Parental Involvement*

  - Keeping parents informed about interventions and progress.

  *- Providing guidance to parents on **how to support their child at home**.*

  - Give parents/guardians opportunities for feedback.

SUPPORTING PUPILS WHO WITNESS BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

- *Encouraging a 'Telling Environment'*

  - Teaching students that reporting bullying is an act of responsibility, not betrayal. -

  Ensuring that students who report bullying feel safe and supported.

  - Recognising and rewarding positive bystander behaviour.

- *Education and Awareness*

  - Delivering anti-bullying workshops to teach students about the impact of bullying. -

  Including discussions on empathy, respect, and kindness in SPHE and Wellbeing lessons.

- *Providing Ongoing Support*

  - Checking in with students who witness bullying to address any emotional distress they may experience.

  - Encouraging participation in conflict resolution programs.

SUPPORTING PUPILS WHO DISPLAY BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

- *Understanding the Root Causes*

  - Identifying underlying reasons for the behaviour (e.g., social difficulties, past trauma). -

  Implementing restorative practices to help students take responsibility for their actions.

- *Developing Positive Behaviour Strategies*

  - Providing social skills training, Friends for Life Programme and SPHE lessons to improve relationships with peers.

  - Whole school positive code of kindness- 'Kind Hands, Kind Words, Kind Feet'. -

  Engaging in structured activities that promote teamwork and positive interactions.

- *Monitoring and Follow-up*

  - Regularly monitoring the student's progress in modifying their behaviour.

- *Engaging with parents and support staff to ensure long-term change.*
- *If however, after following the process nothing has changed, we will revert to our Code of Behaviour.*

Please note: if a ceased behaviour reoccurs, we will revert to the Code of Behaviour straight away

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*
- *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 it's 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, Board of Management

Signed:

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management