

School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Saplings Special School Goresbridge has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2024*. The board of management acknowledges that bullying behaviour interferes with the rights of the child as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We all, as a school community, have a responsibility to work together to prevent and address bullying behaviour and to deal with the negative impact of bullying behaviour.

We are committed to ensuring that all students who attend our school are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our students is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our students and we are fully committed to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

We confirm that we will, in accordance with our obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the harassment of students or staff on any of the nine grounds specified: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

Definition of bullying

Bullying is defined in *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying* and *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* as targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society. The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the *Bí Cineálta* procedures.

Each school is required to develop and implement a *Bí Cineálta* policy that sets out how the school community prevents and addresses bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

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 as outlined below.

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	07/05/25 11/04/25	Survey Staff training
Students	May 25	Survey
Parents	May 25	Survey
Board of Management	27/04/25	Board Meeting
Wider school community	--	--
Date policy was approved: 23/06/25		
Date Policy was last reviewed:		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by the school. These include strategies specifically aimed at preventing online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

- Promotion of respectful relationships across the school community
- Promotion of tolerance and understanding of others
- Staff encourage trust, care, consideration and support for others
- Saplings is welcoming of difference and diversity and fosters inclusivity at all times
- Close working relationships with parents
- Modelling of appropriate behaviours, supported with visuals where necessary
- Links with local community
- Supervision policy in place
- Friendship Week
- Internet Safety Day
- Stay Safe programme
- RSE programmes
- SPHE Curriculum
- Modelling of appropriate behaviours
- Social Stories
- World Autism Day
- Involvement of all stakeholders
- Ongoing staff training

- Poster campaigns (senior class)
- Class Rules
- Regular teacher meetings
- The use of stories related to bullying/being kind
- Individualized social stories
- Ongoing professional development for staff

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):

- All curricular, mandatory and organizational policies in place and reviewed regularly, including but not exclusive to the Code of Behaviour, Dignity at Work, SPHE, RSE, Parent/school Communication and the Child Safeguarding Statement.
- Bí Cineálta Policy
- Principal report to the board of management at every meeting
- Consultation with parents and the wider school community

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

- Principal
- Deputy principal
- Class Teachers

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 (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

Determining if bullying has occurred

- Teachers to consider what, where, when and why a behaviour has occurred
- Meet each student involved, taking into consideration the age and ability
- Ask students (or staff) to be asked for an account of the incident
- Provide appropriate support for each student
- Ensure the privacy of all involved

Addressing Bullying Behaviour

- Involve parents at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to consult with them on any actions to be taken to address the behaviour.
- Take action in a timely manner
- Listen to and support the student involved and listen to their views on actions should/should not take place to address the bullying behaviour.
- If parent requests that no action be taken, they must inform the school in writing.
- Keep accurate and impartial records, documenting the form and type of bullying behaviour, where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement, and including the views of the student and their parents
- The school will contact Tusla directly where it is considered that any bullying behaviour is a child protection concern

Review of Progress

- The school will engage with the student and parents no more than 20 days after the initial engagement to review the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the behaviour and this review will be documented.
- The date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased should also be recorded.
- Any engagement with external services should be noted
- If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, a review of strategies will occur and a timeframe agreed for further engagement.
- If the student displaying the bullying behaviour continues to display that behaviour, consideration will be given to deal with the inappropriate behaviour as provided for under the school Code of Behaviour.
- If a parent is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school in accordance with the Bí Cineálta procedures, they should be referred to the school's complaints procedures.
- If a parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions may have had a negative effect on the student.

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):

- Involvement of external support if deemed necessary eg NEPS
- Development of targeted and individualized programmes of support eg. social stories/visual supports
- Targeted Wellbeing activities

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

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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 will be 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 **BÍ Cineálta Policy** was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management, Saplings, Goresbridge on 23rd June 2025 .The 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 by Principal _____

Signed by Chairperson of the Board _____

Date _____