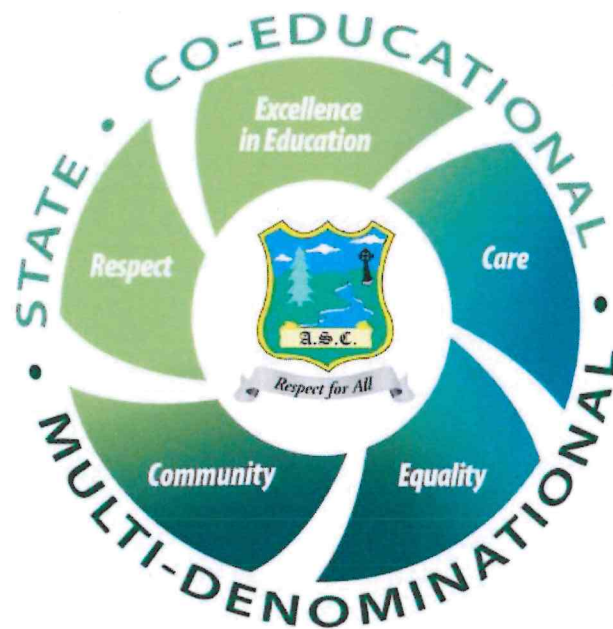# Ard Scoil Chiaráin Naofa

Bí Cineálta Anti-Bullying Policy.

May 2025.

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour.

Introduction

Ard Scoil Chiaráin Naofa, Clara, is a co-educational and multi-denominational post-primary school, committed to our ETB School Core Values of Excellence in Education, Care, Equality, Community, and Respect. We promote the holistic educational development of all within the school community, striving for academic excellence and aiming to maximise the potential of each individual in a safe, caring, and respectful environment.

The Board of Management of Ard Scoil Chiaráin Naofa 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.

In this policy document, the term "parent" is taken to include "guardian".

Mission Statement

Ard Scoil Chiaráin Naofa promotes the holistic educational development of all within the school community. We strive for academic excellence and aim to maximise the potential of each individual in a safe, caring, and respectful manner.

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.

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	• 20.03.25 • 09.04.25 • 15.05.25	• Year Head Meeting • Half Day Training • Year Head Meeting
Students	• From 31.03.25 to 04.04.25	• Online Survey
Parents	• 04.04.25	• Online Survey
Board of Management	• 19.05.25	• Circulated to members via email before Board meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers		
Date policy was approved: 27.05.25		
Date policy was last reviewed: • Previous anti-bullying policy last reviewed on 17.09.24		

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):

Culture and environment:
- In accordance with our ethos, fostering an understanding of the uniqueness and dignity of each human being;
- Modelling respectful and inclusive interactions with all members of the school community;
- Building empathy, respect and resilience in all pupils;
- Emphasising the personal responsibility of pupils not to become involved in bullying behaviours and to respond appropriately if bullying incidents do occur;
- Creating a 'telling' environment;
- Class teachers (and other staff members as appropriate) to act as 'trusted adults' for bullying disclosures;
- Ensuring the school is a safe physical space for pupils;
- Ensuring effective monitoring and supervision of pupils, to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible;
- Each member of the school staff has a responsibility to develop and maintain a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable;
- Maintaining high staff awareness of bullying and the importance of working pro-actively to prevent bullying incidents and resolving them effectively if they do occur.

Curriculum:
- In the teaching of all subjects, fostering an attitude of respect for all, promoting the value of diversity, addressing prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour;
- Exploring of topics such as belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships through the SPHE curriculum;
- Providing pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth;
- Emphasising inclusion and focusing on developing social skills.

Policy and Planning:
- Placing the wellbeing of the school community at the heart of all school policies and plans;
- Ensuring that other school policies such as the Internet Acceptable Use Policy, Additional Educational Needs Policy, Code of Behaviour etc. support the implementation of the Bí Cineálta Policy;

- Encouraging the participation of pupils in the development and implementation of school policies and plan as appropriate;
- Ensuring that bullying prevention strategies are discussed at staff meetings;
- Encouraging staff to access professional development courses to support wellbeing in the school;
- Reviewing the Bí Cineálta policy at least annually as required.

Relationships and partners:
- Fostering a sense of ownership, pride and participation among all members of the school community;
- Promoting co-operation and group enterprise through team sports, activities and group work;
- Implementing anti-bullying strategies and bullying awareness raising measures;
- Supporting the active involvement of pupils in school life;
- Supporting the active involvement of parents in school life;
- Teaching problem-solving approaches to inter-personal difficulties;
- Involving and expecting parents to help prevent and resolve bullying incidents;
- Accessing supports from suitable external agencies/personnel where appropriate and feasible e.g. NEPS, Tulsa, An Garda Síochana etc.

Preventing cyberbullying behaviour:
- Developing and communicating the Internet Acceptable Use Policy in IT classes;
- Referring to appropriate online behaviour as part of the Code of Behaviour;
- Preventing students from having unsupervised access to the internet while in school and ensuring the school's internet is filtered to prevent access to inappropriate sites;
- Educate pupils about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship via the SPHE curriculum;
- Regularly emphasising that values such as kindness and respect are as applicable in the online world as elsewhere;
- Providing advice to parents with regard to internet safety, including emphasising that the digital age of consent in Ireland is 16;
- Clarifying that the school cannot be responsible for behaviour that takes place at home, and therefore encouraging parents to be aware of their children using social media accounts and online platforms.

Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour:
- The strategies outlined in the first five sections above are also applicable to the prevention of homophobic and transphobic bullying;
- Challenging gender and sexual orientation-based stereotypes via literature choices, school materials etc;
- Maintaining an inclusive physical environment;

- Encouraging critical thinking skills so as to challenge gender and other stereotypes and tropes;
- Encouraging parents to reinforce values of respect at home.

Preventing racist bullying behaviour:
- The strategies outlined in the first five sections above are also applicable to the prevention of racist bullying;
- Encouraging critical thinking skills so as to challenge racist and other stereotypes and tropes;
- Celebrating the diversity of the school community;
- Ensuring that library books, textbooks and other school materials represent appropriate lived experience of people from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds;
- Ensuring that there are effective means of communication with pupils and parents who may not have English language proficiency;
- Encouraging parents to reinforce values of respect at home.

Preventing sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment:
- The strategies outlined in the first five sections above are also applicable to the prevention of sexist bullying;
- Modelling of respectful behaviour and fair treatment of all pupils, regardless of gender;
- Provision of equal opportunities and activities for boys and girls, where possible;
- Clarifying that sexual harassment should never be dismissed as teasing or banter;
- Promotion of positive role models within the school community;
- Encouraging critical thinking skills so as to challenge sexist and other stereotypes and tropes;
- Encouraging parents to reinforce values of respect at home.

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):

- Staff members are alert to signs of when a student may be experiencing bullying (see page 26 of *Bí Cineálta, 2024).*
- Parents are encouraged to raise any concerns about their child with the relevant Year Head at the earliest opportunity.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour:

The teachers with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour are as follows:

- The Year Head of the child making the bullying accusation.
- Any other teacher that may be delegated by the principal to address a particular bullying issue.
- All staff members are responsible for assisting in the prevention of and monitoring of bullying behaviour.
- The principal has overall responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the Bí Cineálta policy.

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 (as appropriate) *
- take action in a timely manner
- inform parents of those involved

*In some cases, a pupil or parent may report bullying behaviour, but request that the school takes no action. It is important to deal with these requests with empathy and sensitivity. Parents should generally be informed when it is suspected that their child is being bullied. *In cases where parents make a request of this nature, they should be asked to put this request in writing to the school.* Nonetheless, while acknowledging the parent's request, in some cases the school may still decide that it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

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 behaviour has occurred: To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour the following questions should be considered: 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?

If the answer to each of the questions above is Yes, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour, and the behaviour should be addressed using the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

If the answer to any of these questions is No, then the behaviour is unlikely to be bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour. (Note: One off incidents may be considered bullying in certain circumstances. A single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and thus becomes a repeated behaviour).

- When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred teachers should consider: what, where, when and why?;
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;
- All 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 should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying, they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly;
- If a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first;
- Pupils who are not directly involved in the alleged bullying incidents can also provide very useful information;
- Thereafter, all students involved may 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 be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident(s);
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.

Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, it is generally acknowledged that no one approach works in all situations. Professional discretion will be required, therefore, to determine the best approach, depending on the age and understanding of the pupils involved, the circumstances of the incident(s), the supports available etc.

Where bullying behaviour has occurred:
- The primary aim for the relevant teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying is to stop the bullying and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved,

rather than to apportion blame;

- 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 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 students involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter, and to give them the opportunity to reinforce and support the actions being taken by the school;
- 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. Parents will not be permitted to interview or reprimand children other than their own;
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her (and his/her parents) how s/he is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;
- If deemed appropriate, sanctions may be applied with reference to the school's Code of Behaviour. It must 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;
- A record should be kept of the engagement with all involved;
- This record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known (see Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the Bi Cineálta procedures), where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students involved and their parents;
- The record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour.

Reviewing progress:
- The relevant teacher must engage with the students involved and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement;
- important factors to consider as part of this engagement 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;
- The relevant teacher 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;
- The date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased should also be recorded;
- Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted;
- Ongoing supervision and support may be needed for the students involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased;
- If the bullying behaviour has not ceased the relevant teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents. A timeframe should be

agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased;

- If it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then consideration should be given to using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour. The application of disciplinary sanctions is a matter for the pupil being disciplined, their parents and the school;
- If a parent(s) is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, they should be referred to the school's complaints procedures;
- If a parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, and after the Board of Management's complaint process has concluded, they 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 school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

- Ending the bullying behaviour through the rapid investigation and resolution of the bullying situation;
- Ensuring that the school culture fosters respect, empathy and support for all pupils;
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil and commending them for telling, reassuring them and offering them support;
- Praising and supporting pupils who are remorseful about their behaviour and willing to work towards a resolution of the issues involved;
- Helping affected pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help them develop friendships and social skills (e.g. group work in class, team sports, extra-curricular activities);
- Draw attention to issues relating to appropriate assertiveness strategies (e.g. body language, saying no, etc.), emotional regulation and anger management strategies where necessary;
- Ongoing work related to curricular objectives regarding friendships, communications, tolerance, diversity, individual uniqueness etc. (SPHE, Religion);
- Where appropriate, implementation of social awareness programmes or similar with Special Needs Children in the Special Education setting;
- Supporting the child to develop preventative strategies to avoid similar incidences recurring (e.g. telling relevant adult, keeping a diary, appropriate response to emotions, friendships etc.);
- Working with parents in helping them to support their children;

- 'Checking-in' with affected children periodically to ensure that the resolution of the problem is successful in the long-term;
- Ensuring that relevant staff are aware of particular children's difficulties so that they can provide extra support or supervision as appropriate;
- Advising parents to bring the child to counselling or other appropriate professional services if deemed appropriate (in exceptional circumstances);
- Co-operating with relevant professionals/outside agencies etc. to ensure that children can access the necessary help (in accordance with data protection considerations);
- When necessary, additional support may be sought from external agencies such as NEPS, Tusla, National Parents Council (NPC), Oide etc;
- Resources such as those provided by Webwise and the DCU Anti-Bullying Centre (FUSE programme), may prove helpful in supporting pupils impacted by bullying behaviour.

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.

Section E: Review Procedure

This Bí Cineálta anti-bullying 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.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 27th May 2025

Date of next review: May 2026

Signature (Chairperson): _Richard Murff_ Date: _27/5/25_
For and on behalf of the Board of Management.
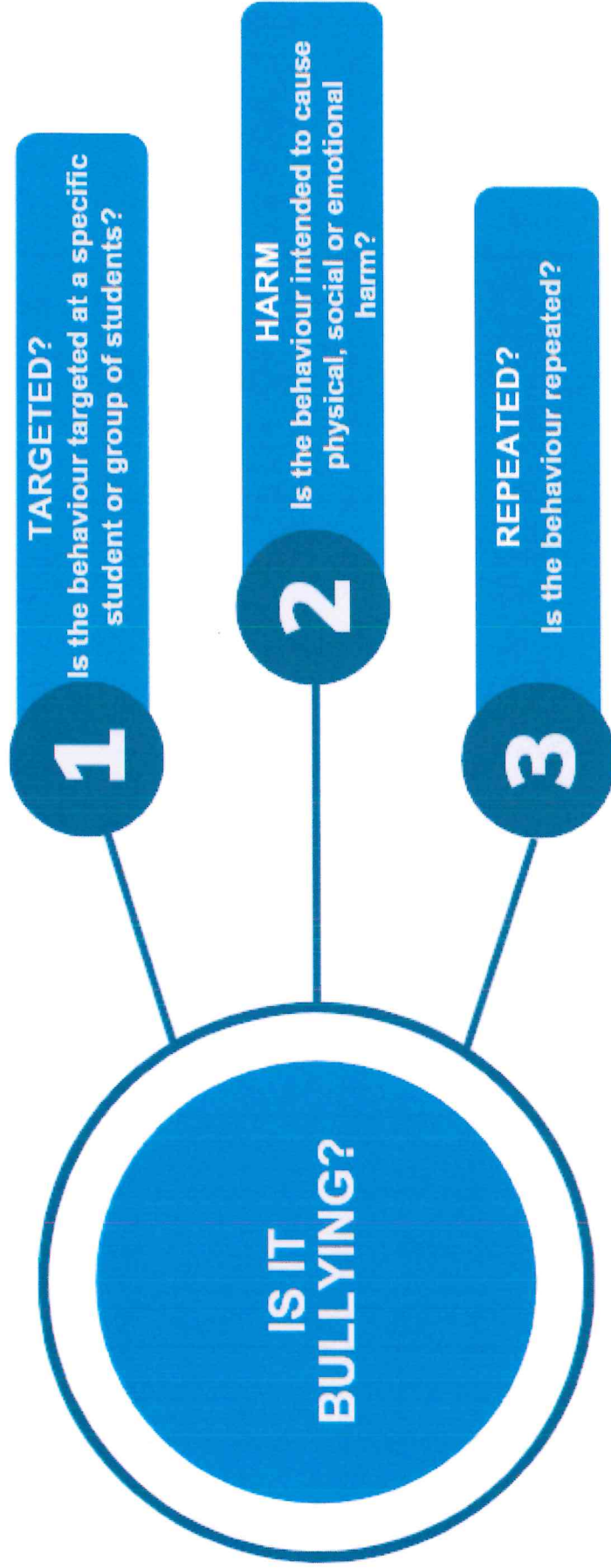
Signature (Principal): _Ceign Geuyn_ Date: _27/5/25_

Appendix 1: Is it bullying?

Determination chart

IS IT BULLYING?

1 TARGETED?
Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?

2 HARM
Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?

3 REPEATED?
Is the behaviour repeated?

If the answer to each of the questions is **Yes**, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour and the behaviour should be addressed using the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

If the answer to any of the questions is **No**, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.
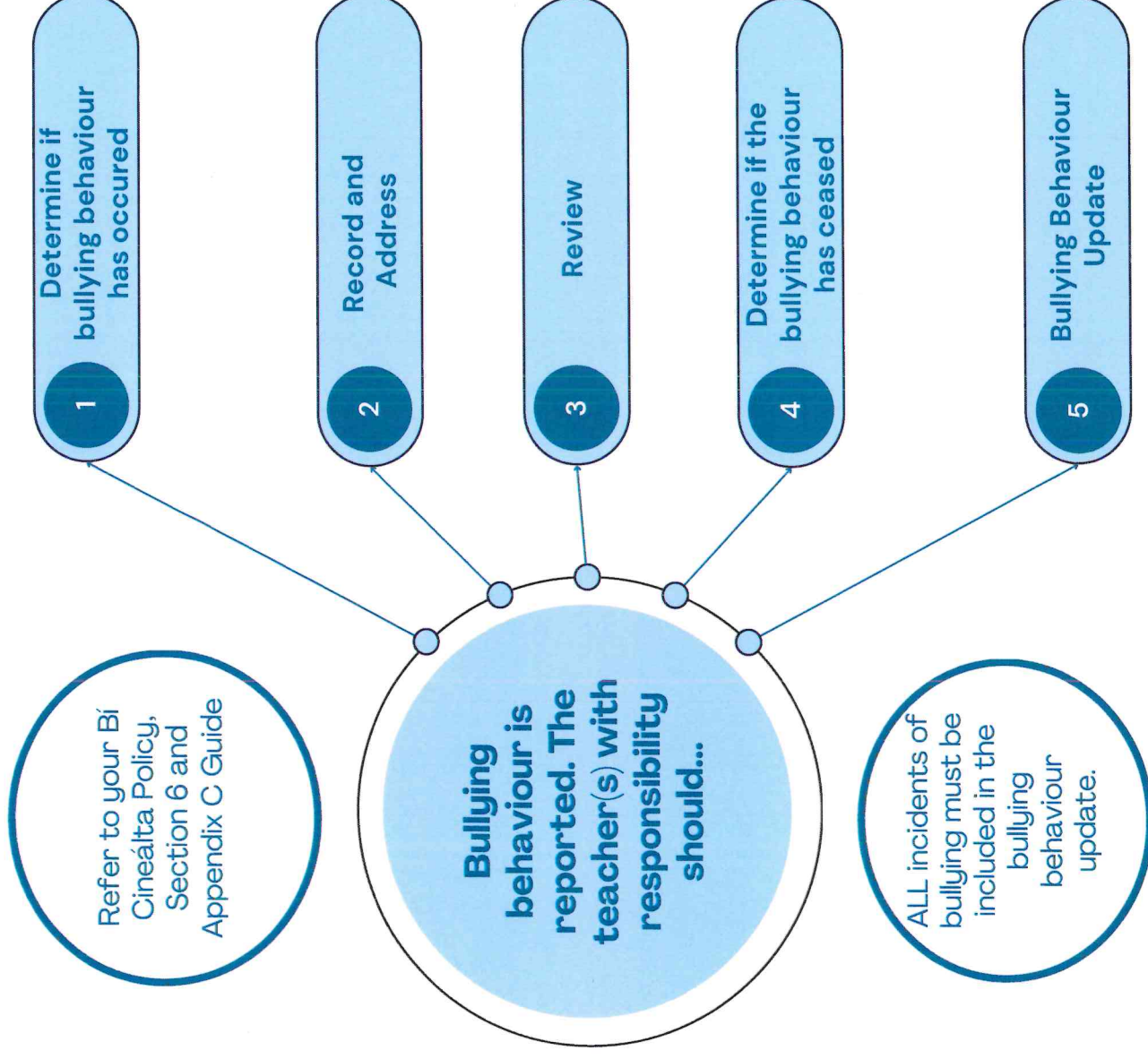
Oide
Taclíocan bhForbairt
Ghairmiúil Ionas Ceannairí
Scoile agus Múinteoirí

Supporting the Professional
Learning of School Leaders
and Teachers

Appendix 2: Flowchart re. addressing bullying behaviour.

Bí Cineálta: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

Bullying behaviour is reported. The teacher(s) with responsibility should...

Refer to your Bí Cineálta Policy, Section 6 and Appendix C Guide

ALL incidents of bullying must be included in the bullying behaviour update.

1 — Determine if bullying behaviour has occured

Teacher(s) investigate as per school policy. Record as per Section 6.5.

If the behaviour **IS NOT** bullying, deal with in line with your Code of Behaviour.

If the behaviour **IS BULLYING, proceed to Step 2.**

2 — Record and Address

Record as per Bí Cineálta policy and Section 6.5, Bí Cinealta.

Inform parent(s) of parties involved at an early stage.

Complete agreed actions, as per your Bí Cineálta policy, monitor and evaluate.

3 — Review

No more than 20 school days after initial engagement, review with student(s) and parent(s).

4 — Determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased

If bullying has ceased, continue to monitor.

If bullying has **not ceased,** review strategies, seek external support, if appropriate, and review within the agreed timeframe.

5 — Bullying Behaviour Update

Principal must include all bullying behaviour in their update to the board.

Principal provides verbal update to the board.

Review policy, if needed.

Appendix 3: Child Friendly anti-bullying policy

Bí Cineálta!

In Ard Scoil Chiaráin Naofa, we want everyone at our school to feel safe and happy.

If you think that you are being bullied or someone else is being bullied, you need to tell a teacher or another adult that you trust. They will know what to do to help.

Please tell someone if you think that you are being bullied or someone else is being bullied.

Our school has a Bí Cineálta policy to try to stop bullying behaviour.

We look at this policy every year to see what is working well or what could work better.

We will ask you what you think.

Tell someone!

Get help!

If a student tells a staff member that they think they are being bullied, we will:

> talk with the student
> ask the student what they want to happen
> work out a plan together
> talk to their parents
> talk to the other student(s) involved
> talk with the other student's parents

Bullying behaviour is when someone keeps being mean or hurtful to others on purpose over and over again.

When it happens a lot. Not just once.

Appendix 4: Incident Record Form.

Incident Record Form

Date: _____   Time: _____

Teacher Completing Form: _____

Student Completing Form: _____

Student Year/Class: _____

Student to complete the following section

Names of students involved:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Where was the incident reported to have happened (choose all that apply)?
  □ On school property
  □ At a school-sponsored activity or event off school property
  □ On a school bus
  □ On the way to/from school
  □ Via internet – sent on school property
  □ Via internet – sent off school property

Details of Incident:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Teacher to complete the following section

What actions were taken in this case (choose all that apply)?
□ None were required, this was a false allegation
□ None, the incident did not warrant any corrective action
□ None, no Bullying occurred
□ None, no harassment occurred
□ None, no intimidation occurred
□ None, the alleged incident could not be verified
□ Determined as a conflict and not bullying, harassment or intimidation
□ Restorative Practice Process
□ Student warning
□ Letter of apology
□ Referral to Student Care Team
□ Parent phone call
□ Detention
□ Suspension
□ Behaviour Contract
□ Plan of Support to include a "go to" adult in the school
□ Other (specify) _____

Action Taken (Warning, Sanctions, Referral, Agreement, Mediation, Other)
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Signed:

Student: _____   Date: _____
Teacher: _____   Date: _____

Suggestions for follow up (if required):
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Teacher Signed: _____   Date: _____

Appendix 5: Template for recording Bullying Behaviour.

Template for recording Bullying Behaviour

1. Name of student being bullied and class group.

Name _____   Class _____

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

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es)		4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es)	
Student concerned		Playground	
Another student		Classroom	
Parent		Toilets	
Teacher		Corridor	
Other		Other	

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

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)

Physical Aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		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.

9. Details of actions taken.

Signed: _____   Date _____