



Limerick Educate Together National School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Limerick Educate Together National School 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. Ireland ratified the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child¹ in September 1992. In doing this we committed to promote, protect and fulfil the rights of children. Bullying is a children's rights issue. Bullying interferes with the following rights of the child:

- The right to freedom of expression (Article 13)
- The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 14)
- The right to freedom of association and freedom of peaceful assembly (Article 15)
- The right to privacy (Article 16)
- The right to be protected from all forms of abuse and neglect (Article 19)
- The right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health (Article 24)
- The right to education (Article 28)
- The right to enjoy their own culture, religion or language (Article 30)

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 targeted behaviour, online or offline, that causes harm
- The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature and can have lasting effects on the child experiencing the behaviour
- Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society
- It is behaviour which is deliberate in nature and is unwanted. It is not accidental or reckless behaviour .

The harm can be :

- Physical (eg: personal injury, damage to or loss of property)
- Social: (eg: withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion)
- Emotional: (eg: low self esteem, depression, anxiety)
- A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards a student is not bullying behaviour. However, a single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be visible to a wide audience and has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and so becomes a repeated behaviour.

Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour:

- If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour, but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying, but, importantly, must be addressed under the school 's code of behaviour
- Some students with special educational needs may have social communication difficulties which may make them communicate their needs through behaviours that can hurt themselves or others. It is important to note that these behaviours are not deliberate or planned, but in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they cannot control
- Disagreement between students is not considered bullying **unless** it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Types of Bullying:

There are many different types of bullying behaviour. These can include directing bullying at someone focused on the following: disability, exceptional ability, gender identity, LGBTQ+ , physical appearance, racism, poverty status, religious identity, sexism and sexual harassment. This is not an exhaustive list.

Bullying can be : Direct:

- Physical: pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping students. Physical assault. Destruction of personal property
- Verbal: continual name calling which insults, humiliates the student – this may refer to physical appearance, sex, clothes, gender, accent, academic ability, race or ethnic origin

Written: Writing insulting remarks in public places, passing notes or drawings about the student.

- Extortion: where something is obtained through force or threats

Bullying can be :Indirect:

- Exclusion: where a student is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded or ignored by a student or group of students
- Relational: Where a student's attempts to form friendships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined, threats, non-verbal gesturing, malicious gossip, spreading rumours, silent treatment and manipulation of friend groups etc can all form relational bullying for a student.

Online bullying behaviour:

Cyber bullying is carried out via text, direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, e-mail, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chatrooms and other online technologies.

This can include:

- Sending or sharing of insulting and offensive or intimidating messages or images via online means as mentioned above
- Posting information which is personal, private or sensitive without consent
- Making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other students
- Exclude/disrupt access to a student on purpose on online chat groups/access to accounts/from an online game.

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	May/June 2025	Half day closure discussion and feedback on policy
Students	May/June 2025	Student council and class discussions on why Bí Cinealta policy is important. Student council involved in drafting child friendly Anti Bullying Policy.
Parents	May/June	Draft Anti-Bullying Policy sent to all parents for feedback and suggestion
Board of Management	May/June	Review and discussion of policy – leading to consultation and ratification
Date policy was approved: 12.06.25		
Date policy was last reviewed: 12.06.25		

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

Culture and Environment: We strive to:

- Create a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour
- Build an environment where students feel safe, connected and supported
- Promote kindness and inclusion among student body – peer support and positive environment
- Involve parents as active partners in fostering an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated
- Support the idea that our school is a telling environment.
- Promote the concept of a trusted adult – stay safe linkage – who to tell
- Create safe spaces in our school building and yards – visibility
- Display our School mission statement in all classrooms
- Encourage a sense of belonging with ownership over their own space through art and creativity
- Create a positive school culture and climate which-
 - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
 - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;

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

- Staff are briefed on the uniform approach we must take to handle all reports of bullying – this is distributed to staff and a copy is displayed on the Staff Room notice board for ease of access also
- Activities such as Random acts of Kindness homework, Poster making, slogan making, poems
- Child Friendly Anti- Bullying Policy was formed with pupil and parent input and is distributed to parents, children and staff to discuss. This policy outlines various ways to tell

- Parents receive information at times regarding useful information on Anti Bullying
- Stay safe and SPHE lessons focusing on positive behaviour form part of curricular content in all classes
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils
- Annual Wellbeing week.

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

We strive to:

- Provide teaching and promote learning which is collaborative and respectful, fostering inclusion and respect for diversity
- Display a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact.
- Link Bí Cineálta with the Learn Together Curriculum.

Ways in which we work to achieve this:

- Teach SPHE and RSE content which fosters student's well-being and self-confidence as well as promoting personal responsibility for their own behaviours and actions
- Model respectful behaviour towards colleagues, pupils and visitors in our school environment
- Curricular and Extracurricular activities can help to develop a sense of self-worth, working together, inclusion and respect
- Students are given regular opportunities to work in small groups with peers, which can help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy
- Acknowledgment of our diverse school population – celebrating diversity and culture in our school through art, displays, photographs, international events
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including, in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying
- Supports for staff; Accessing up to date information from Oide
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and on-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

Policy and Planning

The aim of the Bi Cineálta Policy is:

- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils, parents/guardians
- To promote a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour
- To ensure appropriate supervision and monitoring measures

through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation

- 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
- The Acceptable Use Policy, Supervision policy, Special Education Policy and Code of Behaviour all support the implementation of the Bí Cinealta policy
- Effective leadership is a key component with Principal, Deputy Principal, DLP, DDLP, and all middle management 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 and our various and multiple student 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
- Encouraging peer mentoring and peer support
- Supporting active participation of students in school life and active participation of parents in school life also
- Engaging students in actively contributing to the formation of a Child Friendly Bí Cinealta Policy to make them active participants in promotion of and discussion of useful ways to identify and reduce bullying behaviour and highlight procedure and how to deal with it if it does occur.

Supervision

- There is a high level of supervision in place. The school's duty of care begins at 8:30 and ceases at 2:20. Refer to the school's supervision policy.

Preventing specific types of bullying behaviour

cyberbullying behavior

Technology and social media have provided many positive opportunities for entertainment, social engagement and education. Technology is a part of life that can impact even the youngest members of society. However, the increase in the use of technology has led to students becoming increasingly vulnerable to cyberbullying or unacceptable online behaviour.

LETS will proactively address these challenges by promoting digital literacy, digital citizenship, and fostering safe online environments. Strategies to prevent cyberbullying behaviour in our school include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- implementing the SPHE curriculum
- implementing the Digital Media Literacy curriculum which teaches students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship
- having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- developing, 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

The digital age of consent is the minimum age a user must be before a social media or internet company can collect, process and store their data. In Ireland the digital age of consent is 16.

For the purposes of data collection, students between the ages of 13 and 16 years old must have parental permission to sign up to social media services where companies use the legal basis of consent to collect, process and store users' data. Most social media platforms and services have a minimum age requirement and for the majority of these services it is 13 years' old. Therefore technically, children under the age of 13 should not have a social media account. It is important for their child's safety, that parents are aware of their children's use of technology including smartphones and gaming consoles.

Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour

All students, including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students, have a right to feel safe and supported at school. Strategies to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- 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
- conducting 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

Preventing racist bullying behaviour

Our school has become much more culturally diverse over the last decade. Students attending come from many different cultures and backgrounds. Students from diverse backgrounds may face discrimination and prejudice and may be subject to racist bullying behaviour.

Strategies to prevent racist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- 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 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
- Become an upstander not a bystander
- 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, and to encourage communication with their parents
- inviting speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds or celebrating multicultural day in association with wellbeing week

Preventing sexist bullying behaviour

- ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their gender
- ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their gender
- 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

Preventing sexual harassment

- Preventing sexual harassment requires an approach that focuses on education, awareness and clear enforceable policies. In LETS there is a zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment
- Sexual harassment should never be dismissed as teasing or banter
- Strategies to prevent sexual harassment include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:
 - promoting positive role models within the school community
 - challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

- The class teacher will oversee recording of bullying reports for students in their class – this includes using the procedure guidelines to investigate reports of bullying and recording bullying behaviour on the correct form on Aladdin
- The Principal/ Deputy Principal will follow up after twenty days to investigate if bullying has ceased
- All staff will be vigilant to bullying behaviour
- Principal will inform Board of Management of incidences of Bullying.

When bullying behaviour occurs the school will:

- ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour is heard and reassured
- seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- consider the age and ability of those involved
- listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- take action in a timely manner
- inform parents of those involved.

The steps that will be taken by the school to determine if bullying behaviour has occurred, the approaches taken to address the bullying behaviour and to review progress are as follows

In LETS we note that some children engage in low-level negative behaviours towards others. These behaviours may be the same as behaviours which can be deemed as bullying, but do not always fall under the definition of bullying e.g. A child may laugh at another child, this may be hurtful but a one off experience, or it can be part on an on-going pattern of behaviour that may amount to bullying.

Teachers monitor these behaviours as part of their responsibilities. In LETS staff are encouraged to keep a note of behaviours if and when they see a pattern emerging and to alert other staff via Aladdin. However minor or once-off occurrences of negative behaviour may not be recorded and can generally be dealt with informally using our Code of behavior.

However the school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of alleged bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of alleged bullying behaviour are as follows:

- initial verbal report from child and or parent/staff member to designated teacher
- should any member of staff witness possible bullying behaviour s/he should tell the perpetrator to stop immediately and shall make the relevant class teacher aware of the incident
- on receipt of a report the relevant teacher will take a three step approach to dealing with the allegation of bullying

Step 1 - The relevant teacher speaks to individuals concerned to establish a chain of events and whether bullying has occurred. In the case of suspected bullying the relevant teacher will keep written records of the case on Aladdin. The Principal should be informed of any incidents at this stage. Details of the steps to be taken by the relevant teacher are contained in **Appendix 1**.

Step 2 - If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred the teacher should follow the steps set out in Appendix 2. The teacher will establish a plan of action on how to resolve the issues within the next 20 school days. This period of time gives the child who has been engaging in bullying behaviour the opportunity to change his/her behaviour.

This must be recorded on the schools Record of Bullying Behaviour form **Appendix 3**

Step 3 – After 20 school days The principal/deputy principal will contact all parties involved to ascertain if

- whether the bullying behaviour has ceased
- whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable
- whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable

Intervention Strategies

- If it is deemed necessary that sanctions be implemented, the relevant teacher shall refer to the school's Code of Behaviour
- a behaviour plan is implemented for the child who has been deemed to be bullying.

The aim of this is to reward positive behaviour and to encourage the child to make positive choices in his/her behaviour towards other children. A trusted adult can act as a mentor to encourage positive behaviour in this child in the future

- in relation to bullying in schools, Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011 (Children First) and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools provide that in situations where “the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school must consult the HSE Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan”
- where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school’s complaints procedures
- in the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Programme of Support

It is recognised in our school that bullying affects the victim, the person who is doing the bullying and the person who witnesses bullying.

Support for the child who has been bullied

- support in the form of a trusted adult to speak to daily is offered to the child who has been bullied for as long as this is deemed necessary
- self-esteem building exercises and opportunities to increase feelings of self-worth will be undertaken with the child who has been bullied in order to restore their self-esteem
- where appropriate or necessary friendship groups or a buddy system will be implemented for the child for yard times
- if it is deemed appropriate the child will be offered concrete support in how to deal with a similar situation in the future i.e. given the language tools to react and seek help immediately. For example: this can be practised using role play/ drama/social stories. This is particularly useful for children with Special Educational Needs who may lack the necessary verbal and/or non-verbal skills to do so. The teacher, with the support of the SEN team will offer this support.

Support for the child who has deemed to be engaging in bullying behaviour

- the child who has been engaging in bullying behaviour will be offered concrete support in changing her/his behaviour. This can involve self-esteem building exercises and opportunities to increase feelings of self-worth. This child may also be given the opportunity to speak to a trusted adult on a regular basis to encourage her/him to continue to make positive behaviour choices

- where deemed appropriate follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing both sides together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect.

Support for the child who has witnessed bullying behaviour

- the child who has witnessed bullying behaviour will be offered concrete support if necessary, by being given the opportunity to speak to a trusted adult on a regular basis to help him/her process what s/he has witnessed
- children who make an initial report on what is later deemed to be bullying behaviour will be praised. The importance of the bystander will be highlighted.


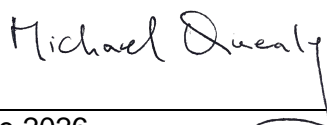
All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with students and parents. The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented. If the bullying behaviour is a child protection concern the matter will be addressed without delay in accordance with Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Section D: Oversight

The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting. This update will include the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting, the number of ongoing incidents and the total number of incidents since the beginning of the school year. Where incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred, the principal will also provide a verbal update which will include where relevant, information relating to trends and patterns identified, strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant. This update does not contain personal or identifying information. See Chapter 7 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

This policy is available to our school community on the school's website and in hard copy on request. A student friendly version of this policy is displayed in the school and is also available on our website and in hard copy on request.

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

Date	12.06.25
Chairperson	
Principal	
Next Review	June 2026

Appendix 1

Step 1: For the Relevant Teacher in Dealing with/ Investigating Incidents of Bullying Behaviour

- in all incidences the teacher will exercise his/her best judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type it is and how best it might be resolved
- parents should be contacted at an early stage
- all reports of bullying must be investigated, that way pupils will gain confidence in telling
- pupils who report bullying should be affirmed for acting responsibly
- all non-teaching staff are encouraged to report incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed or mentioned to them
- teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents
- on being informed of an alleged incident of bullying, the teacher dealing with the report will first interview the victim(s) and discuss the feelings which the victim(s) experienced because of the bullying behaviour
- Initial investigations of bullying will be done in class where possible but some incidents might be best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved
- when analysing incidents of bullying behaviour the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' should seek answers to questions of what, where, who and when. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a nonaggressive manner
- it may be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s)
- if a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about the other's statements
- each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher

Appendix 2

Step 2: Steps to be followed when it has been established that bullying has occurred

- where the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' has/have determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's Bí Cinealta policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the perspective of the pupil being bullied
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils
- the "Relevant Teacher" does not apportion blame but rather treats bullying behaviour as a 'mistake' that can and must be remedied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured, there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter. Staff will endeavor to use restorative type questions at this point. Examples of these questions are as follows:
 - What happened and what were you thinking at the time?
 - What have you thought about since?
 - Who has been affected by what you have done and how?
 - What can you do to make things right?
 - What was your part in the problem?
 - What can we do to make sure that this does not happen again?
 - How do you think the other person felt?

The above questions serve as a guide and their use will vary according to the context involved. More on this problem solving approach can be found in "The Restorative Practices Handbook: for Teachers, Disciplinarians and Administrators"

when an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the "Relevant teacher" will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information. This will be recorded on the schools Record of Bullying Behaviour form **Appendix 3**

- If a pupil chooses to continue the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer be considered a 'mistake.' In this event parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted. The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for the pupil
- follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may be arranged separately with a view to bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable
- repeated incidents of bullying behaviour will result in the imposition of sanctions. Such sanctions will be proportionate to the seriousness of the bullying behaviour. It must be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required that this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school

Appendix 3: Record of Bullying Behaviour Form

RECORD OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR	
Type of Bullying:	
Date:	
Location:	
Date of Initial Engagement with Student and/or Parent(s):	
Views of student and/or parent(s):	
Actions:	
Date of Review with Student and/or Parent(s):	
Summary of Views of Student(s) and/or Parent(s):	
Engagement with External Services (if relevant)	

Types of Bullying (not exhaustive): See p.17-24 of [Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools](#)

