



Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Old Bawn Community School (OBCS) 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 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	11 th March 2025 12 th May 2025	Half Day Full Staff Meeting Policy shared
Students	1 st April 2025	Meeting with the Student Council
Parents	20 th January 2025 5 th February 2025 26 th February 2025	Parents were surveyed at Parent/Teacher meetings
Board of Management	11 th June 2025	Policy given in advance for examination
Date policy was approved: 11 th June 2025		
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):

- A form for reporting will be available to all students on their year group teams.
- Bí Cineálta policy will be visible throughout the school and will be included in the student journals.
- Presence of staff on corridors before and after school, during break times and at the beginning and end of lunch.
- OBCS will identify students who may be isolated or rejected in the peer group and those who may be marginalised, at risk of being vulnerable or targeted for bullying either online or in person.
- Targeted support will be provided to students, identified as potentially vulnerable, to ensure prevention, identification and resolution of bullying.
- Universal support will be provided to all students by using supportive teams in class to ensure inclusion. Teamwork skills will be taught, and students will practice and implement them while in these classwork teams. Students will be empowered to use their voice in small teams initially and with a view to growing confidence to use their voice in larger group settings. (Teamwork – A Cooperative Learning Approach may be used particularly in Transition Year).
- A wellbeing/environment committee was set up to look at our physical spaces. This is to ensure spaces are not dark and hidden to allow bullying and also to create positive spaces and safe surroundings.

The OBCS SLT and staff will:

- Conduct empathic confidential conversations (welfare checks) with identified vulnerable students. Empathic interviewing creates a trusting relationship between pupil and adult.
- Link with the teaching team, SPHE team, class tutors to create a powerful united approach.

The SLT and Middle Management Team will regularly meet with the Student Support Team to liaise on the best way to use their knowledge to guide the whole school community on prevention of bullying.

The strategies above which are aimed at developing a psychologically safe school for all based on an ethos of cooperation, respect and inclusion for all, where no types of bullying behaviours can take root. In addition the following strategies will be employed:

- Anti-bullying week is an integral part of every academic year, with speakers, announcements, competitions and specific topics covered in all SPHE classes.

- Whole school community will be involved in “Internet Safety Day”, raising awareness for students on appropriate online behaviour and parents on internet safety
- Cultural diversity is visually and actively celebrated in our school with permanent artwork representative of all cultures and communities attending our school, Culture Day is celebrated every year, with students from first to sixth year representing their heritage in food, stories, costumes, displays and music.
- All members of staff will model respectful behaviour and treat all students equally regardless of their sex. Positive role models will be promoted in our school.
- All students will be provided with equal opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity or ability.
- The SPHE curriculum will be implemented fully to promote kindness, respect and appropriate behaviour.
- Our school will mark “Stand Up” Week to reflect on the personal and social dimensions of sexual orientation and gender identity, in keeping with our school ethos.
- Communication and Personal Development Programs – these are run to help our students to build up their self-esteem and to develop their friendship and social skills. These programs are a great strategy to use particularly in the areas of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.

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):

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

- Presence of staff on corridors, at the main door and around the school before and after school, during break times and at the beginning and end of lunch.
- CCTV throughout the school building as well as outside.
- Classroom doors are locked between classes. Students are not allowed in classes without a member of staff.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour is (are) as follows: The SLT, the Year Heads and middle management and the Pastoral Care Team.

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):

- Bullying is reported to SLT and Year Head. The referral form is filled out by the reporter and the Year Head.
- The Year Head or a member of the SLT investigates the reported incident
- If it is deemed to be a case of bullying parents of both parties are contacted and invited in for a meeting.
- A resolution is sought that is acceptable to all parties which may include sanctions up to and including expulsion.
- Students involved will be referred to the Pastoral Care Team.
- There must be a follow up with all parties within twenty days.
- Outside agencies may be contacted if appropriate. Victims may need counselling and opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem and to develop their friendship and social skills.
- Individuals who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

- Teachers should approach bullying incidents calmly and unemotionally, investigating them outside the classroom to avoid public humiliation and gather both sides of the story. Interviews should be conducted sensitively, respecting everyone's rights.
- When analysing bullying, ask what, where, when, who, and why, and handle conflicts non-aggressively to set a positive example.
- If a group is involved, interview each member individually before meeting them as a group to ensure clarity on everyone's account. If a pupil is found to be bullying, explain how their actions breach the Code of Behaviour and encourage them to see the situation from the victim's perspective.
- Support group members in handling peer pressure after the interview, with help from teachers, guidance counsellors, chaplains, year heads, or tutors.

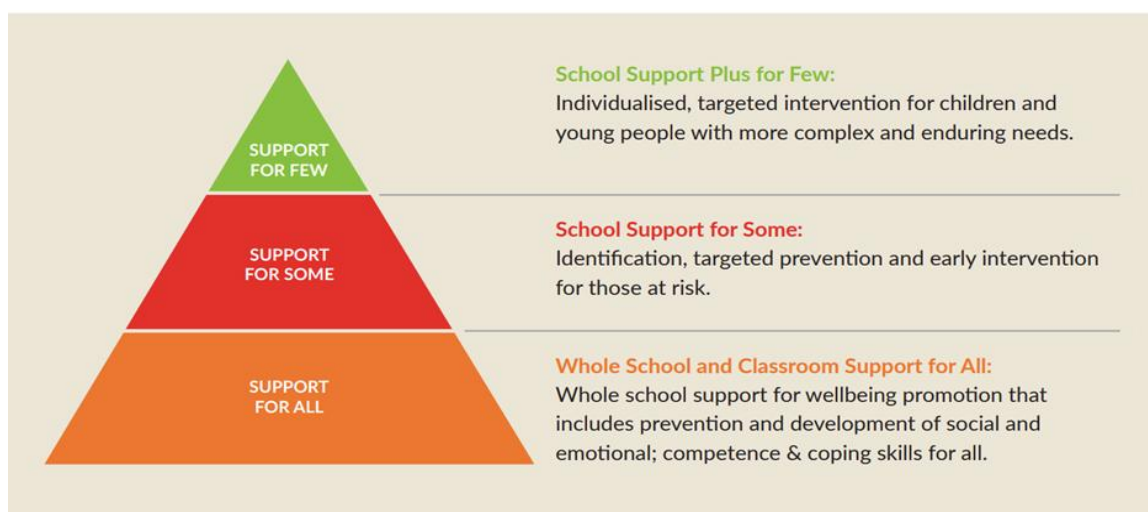
The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

- Student support
- Personal development programmes
- Restorative practice
- Integr8+ Programmes

The Student Support Team is a central part of the student support system in Old Bawn Community School. It is the overarching team concerned with the progressing of actions for the welfare and wellbeing of all our students.

The student support team acts as a school hub, bringing coherence to the support system by co-ordinating the valuable work of departments, teams and groups – Junior Cycle Wellbeing Co-ordinator, The Special Education Needs co-ordinator, Pastoral Care team, Guidance team, Senior Leadership representative, attendance officer, year heads and a representative from the Critical Incident Team.

The student support team will often make recommendations to support all students based on the continuum of support model:



The school ensures a secure environment for all community members and promotes self-respect, self-discipline, and responsibility. It disapproves of any vulgar, offensive, or aggressive behaviour.

Committed to equity, including gender equity, the school adapts to pupils' needs and integrates positive influences into the curriculum to shape attitudes and values. Special care is given to "at risk" pupils through early intervention and sensitive responses to individual needs.

The school values cooperation with parents, recognizing their role in equipping pupils with life skills, and collaborates with community agencies to prevent and address bullying. It fosters mutual respect, courtesy, and awareness of interdependence within the community, acknowledging each individual's uniqueness and worth.

Promoting social responsibility and understanding, both in and out of school, staff members, under the principal's direction, share the responsibility to prevent bullying and aggressive 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.

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

Signed: 

(Chairperson of the Board)

Date: 11th June 2025

Signed: 

(Principal)

Date: 11th June 2025