

Scoil Oilibhéir Naofa Junior School

Bettystown, Co Meath A92 H762

Roll No: 20216L



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Principal– Maria White

Deputy Principal – Amy Boylan

BÍ CINEÁLTA POLICY 2026-2027

Scoil Oilibhéir Naofa Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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The Board of Management of Scoil Oilibhéir 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.

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.

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 our school's Code of Conduct.

A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards another student is **not** bullying behaviour. Disagreements between students, or instances where students don't want to be friends or to remain friends, is not considered bullying behaviour unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress or exclusion. Bullying is not accidental behaviour.

Some students with educational needs may communicate their needs through behaviours that can hurt themselves or others. It is important to recognise that in such cases, these behaviours may not be deliberate or planned. They may be automatic responses that lie

outside the control of the child.

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	March 2025	Draft policy formulated and discussed in depth at Bí Cineálta training day
Students	4 th April 2025	Focus groups
Parents	April – May 2025	Survey completed and draft policy shared with PA. Feedback sought and suggestions considered, policy adapted where appropriate
Board of Management	May 2025	Draft policy shared, feedback sought and suggestions considered, policy adapted where appropriate and discussed at Board meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	May 2025	Draft policy shared with relevant stakeholders eg after school Feedback sought and suggestions considered, policy adapted where appropriate
Date policy was approved: 11 th June 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: To be reviewed June 2026		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used in Scoil Oilibhéir Naofa.

Culture and environment

❖ **Increased Supervision in high-risk areas**

Playgrounds and Outdoor Areas - Staff members are present and actively supervise students during break times and outdoor activities.

Toilets - Regular checks and supervision occur to ensure these areas are safe and free from bullying.

❖ **Classroom Management**

Seating Arrangements - Seating is organised **and reviewed termly** to minimise opportunities for bullying and to ensure that vulnerable students are seated near supportive peers or adults.

Classroom Rules - Clear rules and expectations regarding respectful behaviour along with the consequences of bullying are established at the beginning of the year. These rules and expectations are **revisited daily during morning meetings.**

❖ **Safe spaces within our school**

Students have access to safe physical spaces in our school to promote a sense of psychological safety. Such areas include; calm corners in our classrooms, our nurture room, dens and zen room. Children are always fully supervised in these areas to minimise the risk of bullying behaviour.

❖ **A sharing environment/a trusted adult**

Our school supports a 'sharing' environment through the implementation of the KiVa lessons. A core rule of the programme is 'we will all tell an adult about bullying'. The concept of 'a trusted adult' is encouraged and supported through our SPHE lessons. Junior/Senior infants do not cover the KiVa lessons. SPHE includes the Walk Tall and Stay Safe programmes.

❖ **Awareness**

The importance of supervision and monitoring will be included on the agenda at level and staff meetings to continuously raise awareness amongst staff. Incidents of bullying/suspected bullying behavior are shared, discussed and recorded at level meetings so that staff can be extra vigilant during yard supervision.

All staff are made aware that we are a KiVa school at the first staff meeting of each academic year. At subsequent staff meetings throughout the year, we reiterate what this means in practice e.g. delivering KiVa lessons to specific classes, having a KiVa team to deal with cases of bullying etc.

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

❖ **KiVa Evidence-Based Anti-Bullying Programme**

Our school uses the KiVa Anti-Bullying Programme as its primary mechanism for preventing bullying. This programme, developed in Finland, is an evidence-based anti-bullying programme that includes several key strategies:

- (1) KiVa Lessons: Structured lessons that focus on enhancing students' social skills, empathy, and self-efficacy.
- (2) KiVa Team: A dedicated team within the school responsible for investigating and addressing bullying incidents.
- (3) Online and Offline Activities: Activities such as role-playing, games, and discussions to build a supportive school environment.
- (4) Peer Support: Encouraging peer support and bystander intervention to prevent bullying.

We follow the KiVa rules of:

- (1) No one is excluded.
- (2) Difference is richness.
- (3) We do not bully.
- (4) We will not join in with the bullying.
- (5) We will help and encourage the bullied children.
- (6) We will all tell an adult about bullying.

❖ **Online Bullying Behaviour - Webwise**

1st and 2nd class children complete the Webwise lessons which address online safety and cyberbullying. Advice and guidelines from Webwise are also provided for parents. Resources such as the RTE cartoon 'Alva's World' are a useful method of educating the children. Inappropriate websites are blocked and not accessible in our school. Children are restricted to using child-friendly search engines such as Kiddle. Children are actively supervised when using iPads.

❖ **Sexist Bullying Behaviour and Sexual Harassment – SPHE and RSE**

The SPHE and RSE curriculum incorporates lessons on gender equality, respect, and healthy relationships. It helps students understand and address sexist behaviour and sexual harassment.

- ❖ Our school encourages and promotes teaching and learning that is collaborative and respectful. Students have opportunities to work in small groups with their peers to help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy.

Policy and Planning

❖ **Staff Training/Professional Development:**

Our school has been trained in the KiVa anti bullying programme by Archways, who are licenced to deliver the KiVa programme to schools in Ireland. All school staff have been trained in the KiVa Anti Bullying Programme and the KiVa screening process for bullying.

- ❖ Other policies which support the implementation of our Bí Cinéalta policy include the Code of Conduct, Acceptable Use Policy, RSE policy and Child Safeguarding policy.
- ❖ SSE – School Improvement Plan
Targets: (1) To improve communication with parents and increase parental involvement in school activities.
(2) Put in place systems which will support all pupils in interactions with their peers and support those who need it in building relationships.

Relationships and Partnerships

- ❖ **Student Involvement:** Our Student Council has actively contributed to the formation of a child-friendly Anti-Bullying policy. We have consulted and listened to the students using focus groups from each year level.
- ❖ **Parental Involvement:** Parents have been consulted and have contributed to the formation of this policy. This policy, along with the Code of Conduct, is available for parents to view on our school website. An information evening for parents has helped to raise awareness about the impacts of bullying. We encourage open communication for parents to report concerns about bullying behaviour.

Regular Reviews and Feedback

- ❖ **Policy Reviews:** We will regularly review our policy and update it as necessary.
- ❖ **Feedback Mechanisms:** We will strive to create opportunities for students, staff, and parents to provide feedback on the effectiveness of supervision and monitoring practices.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teachers/SNA's with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour are as follows:
the class teacher and the KiVa team.

When bullying behaviour occurs, we 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:

Step 1: Identify if bullying behaviour has occurred

A screening form will be completed by the first adult to know about the hurtful behaviour. Incidents that, on the balance of probability, meet the criteria of systematic bullying, are directed to the KiVa team. Otherwise, the class teacher will address the issue following the code of conduct. Blank copies of the screening form are available in the principal's office along with all other KiVa forms. All completed forms will be stored in the principal's office.

Step 2: Where bullying behaviour has occurred

One KiVa team member meets with the bullied student by the end of the following school day (where feasible). In the meeting, the KiVa team member finds out what happened, how long the bullying has been occurring, and which students have taken part in the bullying. The conversation is intended to increase the bullied student's sense of safety and to assure them that adults are on their side. The bullied student is also asked to identify classmates who may support them. It is agreed that there will be a follow-up discussion to ensure that the bullying has stopped. After the discussion, the teacher of the bullied student is informed.

Step 3: Individual discussions with students who have taken part in bullying

Two members of the KiVa team have individual discussions with each student who has taken part in the bullying. The students are called in for a discussion on the same day. It

is vital that the meetings take place within a short timeframe of each other. The individual discussions are short (5–10 minutes). The focus of this meeting is simply to highlight that bullying has happened and that it must stop. The students must commit to changing their behaviour. All students will be spoken to in a respectful manner. We simply want to put an end to the bullying behaviour and not cause any more distress for anyone involved.

Step 4: Group discussion with the students who have taken part in bullying

A group meeting takes place with all the students who have taken part in the bullying as soon as possible after the individual discussions. The aim of this brief meeting is to reinforce the decisions that the individual students have already agreed on with the KiVa team. In this group discussion:

- What each student has committed to do is reviewed
- The date and time of a follow-up discussion with the same group is agreed upon

Step 5: Discussion between the class teacher and a few classmates

The class teacher arranges a discussion with a few select students to decide how they can help support the bullied student. The class teacher either talks to students identified by the bullied student, or if none have been identified, the teacher picks students with good social skills.

Step 6: Determining if bullying behaviour has ceased

The follow-up discussion is held at the time and date agreed during the initial discussion (usually one week later). The purpose is to ensure that the bullying has stopped. The student is also encouraged to immediately report if the bullying keeps happening.

There is a group meeting with the students who have taken part in bullying to check if they have done what they agreed. Ongoing supervision and support may be required for both parties as it can take time for relationships to settle and for supports to take effect.

If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, it may be necessary to:

- implement strategies outlined in the Code of Conduct
- liaise with the principal
- adopt other correctional/protection/disciplinary methods
- involve outside agencies

Step 7: Recording bullying behaviour

All incidents of bullying behaviour are 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. The KiVa programme includes documentation for each part of the screening and investigation process. 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*.

Step 8: Informing parents

Parents will be informed after conversations have taken place with all students involved in the case of bullying.

Requests no action to be taken

A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask that the member of staff does nothing about the bullying behaviour other than 'look out' for them. If this occurs, staff should still complete the screening form. It is important that the member of staff shows empathy to the student, monitors the situation and speaks with them to work out what steps can be taken to address the issue and how their parents will be informed about the situation. Parents may also make the school 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 parents request, schools may decide that it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

Incidents of bullying outside the school

The 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 the BÍ Cineálta policy.

Where the student engaging in the bullying behaviour is not a student in the school, but the student experiencing the bullying behaviour is, the school should support this student as appropriate and engage with them and their parents to determine what steps can be taken.

Complaint process

If a parent is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed in our school, they will be referred to the school's complaints procedure.

Additional information is available at

<https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/parental-complaints/>

A complaint can be made to the Ombudsman for Children if a parent believes that the school's actions have had a negative effect on a student. The Office of the Ombudsman for Children can be contacted at

ococomplaint@oco.ie

Our school uses the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour:

❖ **Supporting Those Who Experience Bullying**

KiVa Lessons - Structured lessons are implemented that focus on enhancing empathy, social skills and self-efficacy among students.

Emotional support - from staff working with the child and Kiva team.

Peer Support - Peer support systems are encouraged where students can offer help and companionship to those who have been bullied.

Safe Spaces - Safe spaces are available within the classroom where students can go if they feel threatened or need a break from stressful situations.

❖ **Supporting Those Who Witness Bullying**

Empathy Training - Students engage in activities and lessons to increase their empathy and understanding of the impact of bullying from the Kiva programme.

Encouraging Bystander Intervention - Students are taught how to safely intervene when they witness bullying, for example by seeking help from an adult or supporting the victim as per the Kiva programme.

Reporting Mechanisms - Clear and anonymous reporting mechanisms for students to report bullying incidents are established at the beginning of the school year.

Classroom Discussions - Classroom discussions are facilitated on the importance of standing up against bullying and supporting peers.

❖ **Supporting Those Who Display Bullying Behaviour**

Behavioral Interventions - Behavioural interventions are implemented that focus on understanding the reasons behind the bullying behaviour and teaching alternative, positive behaviours. Time spent in safe spaces such as the Nurture room can provide a supportive environment to reflect and reconsider behaviour.

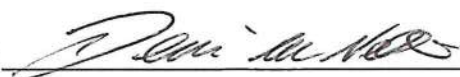
Parental Involvement - Parents are engaged in the process to ensure they are aware of their child's behaviour and can support positive changes at home.

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.

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:  Date: 16/6/26
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed:  Date: 16/6/26
(Principal)

