

Appendix A

School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Headford Primary 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.

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

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

Definition of bullying

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

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

Section A: Development/review of our Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour

All members of our school community were provided with the opportunity to input into the development/review of this policy.

| | Date consulted | Method of consultation |
|---|----------------|--|
| School Staff | 1/4/2025 | Staff Meeting |
| Students | 1/4/2025 | Information & parent questionnaire emailed to all parents |
| Parents | 1/4/2025 | Information & pupil questionnaire emailed to all parents to complete with their child/children |
| Board of Management | 16/6/2025 | Board Meeting |
| Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers | 1/4/2025 | Notice on school website |
| Date policy was approved: 16/06/2025 | | |
| Date policy was last reviewed:16/06/2025 | | |

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):

Preventing Cyber Bullying Behaviour

- implementing the SPHE curriculum and Stay Safe (all levels)
- 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
- communicating our acceptable use policy for technology annually (AUP) to students, parents and guardians
- referring to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour
- promoting online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online
- holding an annual Internet safety day to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behavior
- Using the resource-Webwise

- Yearly visits from the Community Gardaí to promote online safety
- Annual pupil anti-bullying survey
- Bi-annual Anti-Bullying assemblies with principal teacher
- Fostering a culture of celebrating inclusion and diversity via monthly assemblies/awards, inclusion and diversity week and multicultural celebration
- 'Staying Safe Online Programme' -5 th/6th Classes

Preventing homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour

- Implementing the SPHE curriculum and Stay Safe (all levels)
- maintaining an inclusive physical environment by displaying relevant posters and books in the classroom and school library
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- challenging gender stereotypes through discussions and discrete lessons
- encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic behavior
- respecting and embracing student preferences in being referred to as he/she/they etc. with consent of parents/guardians
- Annual Pupil anti-bullying survey
- Bi-annual Anti-Bullying assemblies with principal teacher
- Reflection sheets for pupils to reflect on inappropriate behavior, homophobic/transphobic behaviour

Preventing racist bullying behaviour

- Implementing the SPHE curriculum and Stay Safe (all levels)
- fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students "see themselves" in their school environment.
- The school will host an annual 'inclusion and diversity week' whereby ethnic minorities such as Traveller and Roma communities are celebrated
- having the cultural diversity of the school visible and on display around the school, on noticeboards and in our school library
- conducting workshops and seminars for students (Red Card to Racism)
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- encouraging and rewarding bystanders when they report witnessing racist behaviour
- inviting speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds
- ensuring that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds
- encouraging and celebrating children when they speak their 1st,2nd, 3rd languages
- Yearly Pupil anti-bullying survey
- Bi-annual Anti-Bullying assemblies with principal teacher
- Fostering a culture of celebrating inclusion and diversity via monthly assemblies/awards, inclusion and diversity week and multicultural celebrations
- Reflection sheets for pupils to reflect on inappropriate behavior and racism

Preventing sexist bullying behaviour

- Implementing the SPHE curriculum and Stay Safe
- ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex
- ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex
- celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contributions of all students
 - encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home •
- Yearly Pupil anti-bullying survey
- Bi-annual Anti-Bullying assemblies with principal teacher
- Fostering a culture of celebrating inclusion and diversity via monthly assemblies/awards, inclusion and diversity week and multicultural celebrations
- Reflection sheets for pupils to reflect on inappropriate sexist bullying behaviour

Preventing sexual harassment

- Implementing the SPHE curriculum and Stay Safe
- promoting positive role models within the school community
- challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment •
- Yearly Pupil anti-bullying survey
- Bi-annual Anti-Bullying assemblies with principal teacher •
- Fostering a culture of celebrating inclusion and diversity via monthly assemblies/awards, inclusion and diversity week and multicultural celebrations •
- Reflection sheets for pupils to reflect on inappropriate behavior/sexual harassment

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):

- We adhere to the highest standards of supervision in class, the yard, and on excursions outside the school.
- The yard is a standing item at staff meeting
- Staff at all times endeavour to encourage pupils to show respect for each other.
- Implementation of the SPHE curriculum.
- Positive self-esteem is fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences, by acknowledging good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed regularly with the pupils.
- Staff are particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of bullying/ being bullied.
- All disclosed incidents of bullying are investigated thoroughly and consistently by following the correct procedure as outlined to staff and recorded appropriately
- School wide awareness raising on all aspects of bullying, supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extracurricular activities.
- Involvement of pupils in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Kindness/ anti-bullying week, and other activities that can help to pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Refer to appropriate online behaviour when using devices and in SPHE lessons.
- Promote online safety events or material for parents.
- The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school e.g. www.tacklebullying.ie, www.antibullyingcentre.ie>fuse, www.webwise.ie
- Challenge gender- stereotypes – equal participation of all. Equal recognition.
- Raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour and encourage students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour.
- Foster a culture where diversity is celebrated and students “see themselves” in the school environment.
- Ensuring class libraries have material that reflects our diverse school population from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
- Modelling of respectful behaviour by staff of all irrespective of sex.
- Ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of sex or gender identity.
- Making clear that our school has a zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment of any kind with enforceable policy

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

- a) Class Teacher
- b) Other Teachers in the school where appropriate/necessary
- c) Principal Teacher

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):

Addressing Bullying Behaviour

- All reported incidents of bullying behaviour will be investigated.
- The relevant teacher will speak to all the students involved in the alleged bullying behaviour. She/he may carry out observations, she/he may discuss the situation with the SET and or the principal and other relevant staff members. The teacher must determine if:
 - a) The behaviour is targeted.
 - b) The behaviour is repeated
 - c) The behaviour is intending to cause harm.
- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting each member of the group should be asked to give his or her account so that everyone in the group is clear about each others' statements. It may be helpful to ask each person to write their account with support if necessary.
- All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights and privacy of all pupils concerned.
- The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all concerns or incidents being investigated.
- Where bullying behaviour has occurred the parents of all parties must be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to consult with them on the actions to be taken to address the behaviour as outlined in the school's Bí Cineálta policy.
- Parents and or students may ask that nothing is done about bullying behaviour other than monitoring the situation. Parents should put this request in writing or be facilitated to do so. However, while acknowledging the parents and or students request, we may decide that it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.
- The teacher and or the principal will engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress. If the bullying has not ceased the teacher will review the strategies used in consultation with the student. Sanctions will be in line with the HNS Code of Positive Behaviour.

Complaints

- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with its procedures, the parent will be referred to the school 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 parent of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Recording Bullying Behaviour

- All incidents of bullying behaviour will be recorded. The record will note the form

and type of bullying behaviour, if known, where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students 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.
- The relevant teacher must record all allegations of bullying and actions taken using the school template (Appendix A).
- It should document the review with the students and their parents to determine if the bullying behavior has ceased and view of the students and their parents in relation to this. It is important to note the dates of each engagement and the date that the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- Any engagement with external services should be documented.
- The 20 day Recording Template (Appendix A) will be used in cases where the relevant teacher or principal deem that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days.
- Bullying behaviour can be considered criminal behaviour under certain circumstances and legal consequences can apply. The age of criminal responsibility in Ireland is 12 years. Bullying behaviour which is deemed to be criminal will be referred to the Garda Síochána.
- Bullying behaviour may become a child protection concern when it results in significant physical or emotional harm, or where it becomes a persistent and severe problem and measures taken to address it are not effective. The relevant teachers and or the principal will make a report to Tusla if they believe the threshold of harm is reached.

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):

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves a whole school approach. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, no one intervention/support programme works in all situations.

Supporting Bullied pupils:

- Ending the bullying behaviour
- Fostering respect for bullied pupils and all pupils
- Fostering greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through annual awareness-raising programmes
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations
- Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).

- A school support plan may be drawn up for the pupils experiencing, witnessing or exhibiting bullying behaviour.
- Students involved may be referred to outside services.

Supporting Bullying pupils:

- Making it clear that bullying pupils seek to amend and restore relationships are not blamed or punished and get a 'clean sheet,'
- Making it clear that bullying pupils seek to amend and restore relationships are doing the right thing and giving them praise for this.
- Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extracurricular group or team activities during or after school)
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth
- In dealing with negative behavior in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child.
- A school support plan may be drawn up for the pupils experiencing, witnessing or exhibiting bullying behaviour.
- Students involved may be referred to outside services.

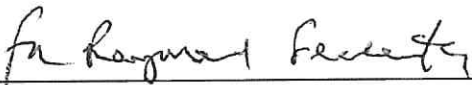
All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with students and parents. The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented. If the bullying behaviour is a child protection concern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

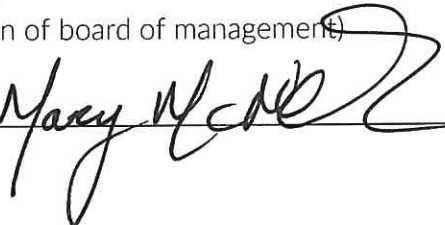
Section D: Oversight

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:  Date: 16/6/25.
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed:  Date: 16/6/25
(Principal)