

# Scoil an Spioraid Naoimh

Laytown, Co. Meath -

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**Bí Cineálta & Anti Bullying Policy  
Updated 2025**

## **Bí Cineálta & Anti Bullying Policy**



### **Rationale:**

The Board of Management of Scoil an Spioraí Naoimh 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.

We confirm that we will take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the bullying or harassment of our students in whatever form and however motivated.

Catholic schools have a distinctive understanding of the human person, recognising that every person is created in God's image and likeness and has inherent dignity as a child of God. This is the basis for ensuring that each person in our school is treated with respect and care, in accordance with the Catholic Schedule. As a Catholic school, we are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual. No human person is to be devalued, and all have an indispensable part to play in the school community, regardless of difference.

In developing preventative strategies which this school will use to prevent all forms of bullying behaviour, we come from the context of our Catholic ethos where inclusivity permeates the school in a real way. The dignity and the wellbeing of the individual person is of paramount concern in our Christian response.

## Key principles of best practice

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of **Scoil an Spioraid Naoimh school** has **adopted the following anti-bullying policy** within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour and in line with the recommended Bí Cineálta Procedures from the Department of Education.. This policy fully complies with the Bí Cineálta procedures which replace the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools which 2013. The Board of Management is therefore fully committed to the following **key principles of best practice** in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

**(a) 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;

**(b) Effective leadership**

**(c) A school-wide approach**

**(d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact**

**(e) 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;
- effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;

**(f) Supports for staff: Peer Support, Webinars and Continuous Professional Development ,**

**(g) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and**

**(h) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.**

In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows: **Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conduct, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.**

**The Definition of Bullying used in S.S.N.:** Bullying is any behaviour that (i) is **deliberate** (i.e. targets a chosen person or group while leaving everyone else alone) and (ii) is **repeated** again and again in one form or another and (iii) is unwanted because it is "**hurtful on the inside,**" i.e. upsetting, annoying, frustrating, embarrassing, humiliating, undermining, isolating or indeed all of the above. If all three aspects apply the behaviour is bullying. If all three are not present (i.e. if even one is missing) then the behaviour, while possibly unacceptable, is not bullying.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- **Physical** - A child can be physically punched, kicked, hit, spat at, etc.
- **Verbal** - Verbal abuse can take the form of name calling. It may be directed towards gender, ethnic origin, physical/social disability, or personality, etc.
- **Deliberate exclusion**, malicious gossip: A child can be bullied simply by being excluded from discussions/activities, with those they believe to be their friends.
- **Damage to property or theft** - Pupils may have their property damaged or stolen. Physical threats may be used by the bully in order that the pupil hands over property to them.
- **Cyber-bullying** and
- **Identity-based bullying** such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour that do not fall within the definition of bullying will be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people is regarded as bullying behaviour.

The list of examples below is non exhaustive

|                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc.</li> <li>• Physical aggression</li> <li>• Damage to property</li> <li>• Name calling</li> <li>• Slagging</li> <li>• The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person</li> <li>• Offensive graffiti</li> <li>• Extortion</li> <li>• Intimidation</li> <li>• Insulting or offensive gestures</li> <li>• The "look"</li> <li>• Invasion of personal space</li> <li>• A combination of any of the types listed.</li> </ul>                                                      |
| <b>Cyber</b>                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Denigration:</b> Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation</li> <li>• <b>Harassment:</b> Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual</li> <li>• <b>Impersonation:</b> Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name</li> <li>• <b>Flaming:</b> Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight</li> <li>• <b>Trickery:</b> Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online</li> <li>• <b>Outing:</b> Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images</li> <li>• <b>Exclusion:</b> Purposefully excluding someone from an online group</li> </ul> |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Cyber stalking:</b> Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety</li> <li>• Silent telephone/mobile phone call</li> <li>• Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls</li> <li>• Abusive text messages</li> <li>• Abusive email</li> <li>• Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles</li> <li>• Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures</li> <li>• Abusive posts on any form of communication technology</li> </ul> |
| <b>Identity Based Behaviours</b><br><b>Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation</b> (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community). |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Homophobic and Transgender</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation</li> <li>• Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation</li> <li>• Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner</li> <li>• Physical intimidation or attacks</li> <li>• Threats</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background</li> <li>• Exclusion on the basis of any of the above</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Relational</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Malicious gossip</li> <li>• Isolation &amp; exclusion</li> <li>• Ignoring</li> <li>• Excluding from the group</li> <li>• Taking someone's friends away</li> <li>• "Bitching"</li> <li>• Spreading rumours</li> <li>• Breaking confidence</li> <li>• Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear</li> <li>• The "look"</li> <li>• Use or terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way</li> </ul>                         |
| <b>Sexual</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching</li> <li>• Harassment</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Special Educational Needs, Disability</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name calling</li> <li>• Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs</li> <li>• Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying</li> <li>• Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues.</li> <li>• Mimicking a person's disability</li> <li>• Setting others up for ridicule</li> </ul>                                                              |

## Section A: Development and Review of Our Bí Cineálta & Anti Bullying Policy

### Campaign History:

All members of the school community have been provided with the opportunity to have an input into the review of this policy.

This campaign began in 2004 after staff training with Seán Fallon, Break through the Cloud of Bullying.

The campaign was updated in 2020 by the following committee Yvonne Kerr, Bláithín Maguire, Sinéad Carroll and Orla Garry in consultation with the staff and wider school community. Representatives of the BOM and P.A met with Yvonne Kerr and Orla Garry for a review and for parental input.

Staff completed refresher training with Seán Fallon as part of our Continuing Professional Development on 7/12/20.

Surveys were sent to the parents reviewing SPHE and Anti-Bullying.

Bláithín Maguire and Yvonne Kerr attended Bí Cineálta online training in 2024.

Staff completed Bí Cineálta half day closure training on 28/2/25.

Questionnaires were circulated to the staff, parents and pupils in April 2025.

Policy was updated and reviewed by teachers and then updated by Yvonne Kerr, Orla Garry and Bláithín Maguire in May and June 2025.

## Section B: Our Anti-Bullying Prevention Strategies

The Education and Prevention Strategies used in S.S.N. are as follows

### **OUR SCHOOL FOSTERS A FRIENDLY, RESPECTFUL, ANTI BULLYING ETHOS AMONG PUPILS, STAFF AND PARENTS**

#### **School Wide Approach**

We, in Scoil an Spioraid Naoimh use anti-bullying tools based on Seán Fallon's "Break Through the Cloud of Bullying - Anti Bullying Campaign". Our aim is to create a school-wide framework in which we can deal effectively with the problem of bullying.

#### **First Strategy**

- Create the **culture** among the pupils where they come to regard bullying as unacceptable. This is done through an **ongoing awareness-raising programme** that works, like the most effective advertising campaigns, by repeating the anti-bullying message again and again to change the way pupils think and ultimately to change the way they behave towards each other.
- Detailed lesson plans are followed in each class level and are taught on the last Friday of each month known as 'Friendly Friday except in October when Friendly Friday is celebrated on the second last Friday due to **Halloween holidays**.'

#### **Second Strategy**

- Replace the biggest obstacle preventing pupils from reporting bullying to adults - that is punishment - with something that works better.
- For a bullying situation to be successfully and permanently brought to an end the focus needs to be on
  - (a) reforming the minority of pupils who bully others so they become like the majority who do not,
  - (b) empowering observers/bystanders of bullying behaviour to safely report bullying to adults (teachers) so this reforming process can be undertaken and
  - (c) equipping the adults (teachers) to carry out both the empowering of the observers and the reforming of those bullying so the bullying stops without any backlash against anyone involved - a "win-win" outcome.

#### **Other Strategies**

- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.

- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is published on the school website and all new enrolment parent(s)/guardian(s) are directed to it and asked to view it. All parents are informed at the Parent Information evening of the availability of school policies on our website.
- An Acceptable Use Policy in the school ensures that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored.

### **Implementation of SPHE curriculum**

- The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme, Sean Fallon's Break Through the Cloud.
- School wide delivery of lessons on **Cyberbullying, Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying, Diversity and Interculturalism.**
- Where possible, delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes delivered by Community Gardai which cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.
- Programmes which promote pupil wellbeing in our school include Weaving Well Being, Friends for Life and other social and emotional programmes.

### **Intervention strategies**

- Teacher interviews all pupils
- Restorative interviews
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s) to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time /Focused lesson to support nurturing relationships, building friendships and showing respectful behaviour towards each other
- Restorative conferencing
- SPHE Curriculum to include Weaving Wellbeing, Stay Safe (lessons on Bullying and Secrets and Telling), Walk Tall, Friends for Life

### **REFERENCE TO OTHER POLICIES**

- Bullying in the Workplace
- Disciplinary and Grievances Procedures

- Dignity at Work Charter
- SPHE Plan
- Digital Plan
- Code of behaviour Policy (D.F. L)
- Additional Educational Needs
- Acceptable Use Policy

## Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

. The **School's Procedures** for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows.

### Investigating and dealing with incidents of alleged bullying

#### STAGE 1

- Confidential
- No blame
- No sanction
- Principal not involved
- Parents not involved (unless deemed necessary by the class teacher and in the best interest of the child)
- Promise Sheet signed

#### Stage1:

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant)teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) 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;
- Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- Where possible incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way;
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher will seek answers to restorative questions of what, where, when, who and why (refer to PDST Anti-Bullying

Support Material-Restorative Practice pg 37/38). This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner;

- If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved will be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;
- Each member of a group will be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher;
- A promise sheet is signed by those pupils who have presented with Bullying Behaviour, this is a no-blame, no sanction approach.
- A check in will be completed with everyone involved at the end of Stage 1

### STAGE 2 (unlikely)

If Stage 1 promise is broken, parents and principal are informed and involved at the second stage promise

- Principal involved
- Parents involved and/or counter-sign the promise sheet 2.

### Stage 2

- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour is evident for a second time, procedures as per Stage 1 will be followed. The parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved will be contacted by the class teacher at Stage 2 or earlier if deemed necessary to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school will give parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the support provided to the pupils. Parents will sign the promise sheet 2.
- The school will safeguard the privacy of all parties.

### STAGE 3 (very rare)

If agreements of Stage 2 are broken then the school proceeds to our DFL Sanctions, imposing Sanction 6 (Suspension) and upwards

Principal involved  
Parents involved

Board of Management Involved and a  
Behaviour Management Team  
(representation of all stakeholders)

### Stage 3:

If agreements have been broken again and intervention strategies are not working, the school proceeds to Sanction 6 according to our Code of Behaviour Policy and a Behaviour Management Support team will be available to support the wellbeing of the pupil.

### Follow up and recording

- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
  - 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;
  - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s) or the school Principal or Deputy Principal

A follow-up check in with the relevant parties involved will be arranged.

- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the teacher and school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, they must inform the principal of this in writing. The parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.

### Recording of 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 pupils and parents. The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented
- It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

- In S.S.N all relevant record keeping with regard to bullying will be kept in the Class Anti-Bullying/D.F.L private and confidential folder. This information will be treated sensitively and will be shared with relevant staff from year to year while the child attends Scoil an Spioraid Naoimh. Is this held/recorded on the child's file. Freedom of inf act..

Additional Information relating to schools' complaint procedures are available at: Complaint Procedures for Schools. In the event that a student and/or parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, a student and/or parent 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 Office of the Ombudsman for Children can be contacted at [ococomplaint@oco.ie](mailto:ococomplaint@oco.ie).

**Role of the Inspectorate:** The Inspectorate evaluates both compliance and quality in the implementation of the Bí Cineálta procedures to prevent and address bullying behaviour in primary and post primary schools. All inspection models, including unannounced inspections, incorporate checks to ensure that schools comply with these procedures. SPHE subject and curriculum inspections assess the quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in various SPHE topics including preventing and addressing bullying along with evaluating the planning and overall school support for the subject.

#### Section D: Oversight (as per Chapter 7 of the Bí Cineálta procedures)

Principal must provide an update to the board of management at each board meeting.

This report will include the number of incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the last board meeting, the number of incidents ongoing and the total number reported since the beginning of the school year. The principal must provide a verbal update which will include, where relevant, trends and patterns, the strategies used to address the incidents and whether an urgent review of the policy is needed. The update is to inform discussion at each board of management meeting regarding the effectiveness of the preventative strategies used by the school and the overall effectiveness of the Bí Cineálta Policy.

## Section E: Roles & Responsibilities

**Relevant teacher(s)** : All teachers, Deputy Principal and Principal are responsible for dealing with bullying.

### PARENT'S ROLE & RESPONSIBILITY

- a) Always take an active role in your child's education. Enquire how their day has gone, who they have spent their time with, how lunch time was spent or how they are feeling etc...
- b) If you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour, inform the School **IMMEDIATELY**. Parents must contact the class teacher via school lines of communication. Parents can expect a response during the school day and within 2 completed school days. Principal will be made aware by the class teacher if necessary. Your complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow.
- c) It is important that you advise your child not to fight back. It can make matters worse!
- d) Make sure your child is fully aware of this **Bí Cineálta & Anti Bullying Policy**, and that they should not be afraid to ask for help.
- e) Encourage your child to form positive relationships with peers and teach them empathy.
- f) Parents should consistently find ways to support the school with its implementation of the policy and discuss bullying at home when appropriate.
- g) Where a parent has a concern about Bullying off school premises and where alleged incidents off school premises occur eg. on social media , parents will be advised to contact appropriate agencies e.g. Gardaí. **The school will endeavour to support the children involved without prior judgement.**

### Role of the Inspectorate

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### **Please note:**

The legal age for having a Facebook account is 13 years. Other social networking sites such as Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, Youtube and all others have associated risks and dangers to your child and others.

### **Parental Supervision is essential.**

Parents acknowledge that the school has safeguards in place with regard to pupil internet website access. Use outside of school falls under **Parental Responsibility**. **The school and**

Parents Association organise information evenings on cyberbullying where possible or inform parents of recommended resources regarding Cyberbullying such as the webwise internet safety website. Parents are requested and encouraged to look at various resources bearing in mind the ever-changing world of cyberspace and increased use and demand of online platforms.

## **BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

*‘The board of Management of Scoil an Spioraid Naoimh has a role to play in the maintenance of desirable standards of behaviour in a school. It should be supportive of the Principal Teacher in the application of a fair code of behaviour and discipline within the school’ (Circular 20/90).*

**Ratified by the board of Management in September 2025.**

*This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year.*

**Signed:        Noel Quinn**

**Chairperson, Board of Management**



