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Glenflesk N.S. Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Glenflesk N.S. 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.

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.

Our Policy is organised as follows:

Section A: Development/Review of Bí Cineálta Policy

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

Section D: Oversight

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. This harm can be physical, social, and/or emotional in nature. Bullying is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power between individuals or groups. (Chapter 2 of the *Bí Cineálta* procedures)

Types of Bullying Behaviour

There are many different types of bullying behaviour. These can include the following which is not an exhaustive list:

- disablist bullying behaviour: behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of a perceived or actual disability or additional need
- exceptionally able bullying: behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their high academic ability or outstanding talents
- gender identity bullying: behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual gender identity
- homophobic/transphobic (LGBTQ+) bullying: behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual membership of the LGBTQ+ community
- physical appearance bullying: behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their physical appearance. Students who “look different” can be mocked or criticised about the shape, size or appearance of their body.
- racist bullying: behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their race or ethnic origin which includes membership of the Traveller or Roma community. Racism is defined in the National Action Plan Against Racism¹³ as “a form of domination which manifests through those power dynamics present in structural and institutional arrangements, practices, policies and cultural norms, which have the effect of excluding or discriminating against individuals or groups, based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin”¹⁴
- poverty bullying: behaviour that intends to humiliate a student because of a lack of resources
- religious identity bullying: behaviour that intends to harm a student because of their religion or religious identity
- sexist bullying: behaviour that intends to harm a student based on their sex, perpetuating stereotypes that a student or a group of students are inferior because of their sex
- sexual harassment: any form of unwanted verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on sex which affects the dignity of the student

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	05-02-2025	Staff Meeting Survey
Students	14-03-2025	Survey
Parents	28-02-2025	Survey
Board of Management		
Wider School Community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers		
Date policy was approved:		
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):

We, Glenflesk N.S. implement the following strategies to prevent bullying, including online, homophobic, transphobic, racist, and sexist bullying, as well as sexual harassment:

1. School Culture & Environment

We strive to foster a positive school culture by:

- Establishing a zero-tolerance approach to bullying.
- Involving parents as active partners in anti-bullying efforts.
- Modeling respectful behaviour among staff and students.
- Encouraging a “telling environment” where students feel safe to report bullying.
- Promoting the concept of a trusted adult through the Stay Safe Programme.
- Creating safe spaces within the school and yard, ensuring high visibility.
- Displaying artwork and signage that reflect our values of equality, inclusion, and respect.
- Ensuring a consistent approach to handling reports of bullying.
- Organising Anti-Bullying Week activities.
- Implementing a playground helper system (where necessary).
- Providing regular communication to parents on bullying prevention and response.
- Maintaining effective supervision and monitoring of pupils.

2. Curriculum & Learning

We integrate anti-bullying education into teaching and learning by:

- Promoting collaborative and respectful learning environment.
- Ensuring a shared understanding of bullying and its impact.
- Implementing the SPHE curriculum.
- Explicitly address cyberbullying and identity-based bullying (e.g., homophobic and transphobic bullying).
- Implementing the ZIPPY’S FRIENDS Resilience Programme to develop self-regulation, coping skills, and emotional intelligence.
- Restorative Practice – A value-based approach which uses skills to be proactive in building positive relationships and to respond to harm and conflict.
- Webwise Internet Safety Programme – Teaching responsible online behaviour, digital citizenship and preventing cyberbullying.
- Promote Safer Internet Day – creating an awareness around appropriate online behaviour.
- Regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online.
- Classroom rules & positive behaviour reinforcement – promoting respect and responsibility.
- Role play & social stories – Helping students understand social interactions.
- Buddy systems & grouping strategies – Encouraging peer support and inclusion.
- Visual supports & emotional coaching – Providing tools to regulate emotions and behaviour.
- Incentives & positive reward systems – Reinforcing kindness and respectful behaviour.
- Providing curricular and extracurricular activities that encourage teamwork, self-worth, and respect.
- Offering small group work opportunities to build connection and empathy, RP circles and check ins
- Celebrating diversity and culture through art, displays and photographs.
- Nurture Groups

3. Policy & Planning

The BÍ Cineálta Policy at Glenflesk N.S. aims to:

- Raise awareness of bullying as unacceptable behaviour.
- Promote a school ethos where students feel safe to disclose bullying.
- Implement supervision and monitoring measures.

- Developing a Student Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy with students.
- Develop procedures for recording, investigating, and addressing bullying.
- Provide support programmes for both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour.
- Collaborate with external agencies to prevent and address bullying.
- Providing staff support to ensure consistent responses to bullying.
- Maintaining accurate records, investigations, and follow-ups on bullying incidents.
- Continuously evaluating the effectiveness of the Bí Cineálta policy.
- This policy is supported by:
 - Acceptable Use Policy
 - Code of Behaviour
 - Student-friendly Bí Cineálta policy
 - Special Education Policy
 - SPHE plan
 - RSE policy

4.Relationships & Partnerships

We build strong relationships through:

- Parental engagement.
- Student involvement in school life through various student committees and leadership roles.
- Age-appropriate awareness initiatives that look at the causes and impacts of bullying behaviour including those dealing with navigating friendships, identity-based bullying, racist bullying and homophobic/transphobic bullying
- Supporting the active participation of students in school life
- Supporting the active participation of parents in school life.
- Conducting workshops for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying.
- Supporting activities that build empathy, respect and resilience
- Encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring.
- Promoting acts of kindness.
- Teaching problem solving.
- RP Chats, circles, check ins

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.

This school takes positive steps to ensure that the culture of the school is one which welcomes a respectful dialogue and encounters with diversity and difference, by ensuring that prevention and inclusivity strategies are given priority and discussed regularly at board of management and staff meetings.

- The dignity and the wellbeing of the individual person is of paramount concern in our Christian response. This school will listen closely to and dialogue with parents, thereby building a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, trust and confidence.
- In continuing to develop prevention strategies, this school will listen to young people and parents, to help establish their particular context and needs. Frequent periods of reflection and engagement by the school, young people and parents, will be used to discern appropriate supports for young people in this school and to help inform future prevention strategies.

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):

- Yard Supervision: Teachers and staff monitor the yard during breaks to ensure student safety and address any potential bullying incidents.
- Classroom Monitoring: Teachers actively supervise students during lessons and transitions to maintain a positive classroom environment.
- Staff Meeting Reminder: Regular reminders to ensure teachers and staff can identify signs of bullying and respond appropriately.
- Restorative Practices: Actively developing good relationships, preventing escalation of conflict and handling conflict in a healthy manner.
- Parental Communication: Parents are informed of supervision strategies and encouraged to report any concerns regarding bullying.
- Trusted Adult: All students are supported in identifying a trusted adult they feel comfortable speaking to if they have a worry or feel unsafe. This helps ensure every child knows there is someone available to listen and help.
- Student Bí Cineálta Policy: A student-led bí cineálta policy is promoted throughout the school, encouraging peer support, kindness, and respect as part of the school's culture.

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.
- Deputy principal will follow up after twenty days to investigate if bullying has ceased.
- Deputy principal is available to provide up to date information and supports if needed to assist class teacher in addressing bullying concern.
- Principal will inform Board of Management of incidences of Bullying.

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):

Identifying Bullying Behaviour

- When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the teacher should consider the following:
- what, where, when and why?
- is the behaviour targeted, is the behaviour harmful, is the behaviour repeated. Only when the answer to all three of these questions is yes, is the behaviour considered to be bullying. Behavior that does not answer yes, to all of these questions is dealt with under the Code of Behaviour.
- If a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first.
- Thereafter, all students involved should be met as a group.
- At the group meeting, each student should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views. Each student should be supported, as appropriate, following the group meeting.
- Ask students to write down their accounts, if necessary/ appropriate.
- Use the school's bullying definition and relevant guidelines to determine if the behaviour qualifies as bullying.
- If the behaviour is inappropriate but not bullying, follow the school's Code of behaviour.

Responding to Bullying Behaviour

- Ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured.
- Seek to ensure the privacy of those involved.
- Restorative Conversations
- 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.
- If the bullying happens outside school but impacts the student at school, provide appropriate support.

When a Student Requests No Action

- Show empathy and reassure the student.
- Work out together what steps can be taken to address the matter to find a way forward and explain that their parents will be informed of the situation.

When a Parent Requests No Action

- If a parent requests no action in writing, acknowledge their request. The school may decide based on the circumstances it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

Monitoring and Reviewing Progress

- Follow up with students and parents within 20 school days after the initial discussion to assess progress.
- Review the effectiveness of the response and any ongoing support needs.
- If bullying continues, review and adjust strategies and set a new review timeline. Agree to meet again over agreed timeframe until bullying behaviour has ceased.
- If the student displaying bullying behaviour persists, consider disciplinary action per the school's Code of Behaviour.

Recording Incidents

- Document all bullying incidents, including the type, location, and date. (Form available on Aladdin)
- Keep a record of events, including students' and parents' responses.
- Keep records securely and in line with data protection policy.
- Update Student Support Files if applicable.
- If further reviews are needed until the bullying behaviour has ceased, ensure each review is documented along with the relevant dates to track progress and interventions.

Handling Complaints

- If a parent is unsatisfied with the school's response, refer them to the school's complaint procedure.
- If unresolved, they may escalate the complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Accessing Support Services

- **NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service):** NEPS provides psychological support to schools through direct or indirect casework, offering advice, training, and strategies to promote wellbeing and prevent bullying.
- **Oide:** Oide supports teachers' and school leaders' professional learning with resources and training focused on wellbeing and bullying prevention.
- **Webwise:** Webwise promotes online safety by providing digital citizenship resources for teachers, students, and parents, addressing issues like cyberbullying and online wellbeing.
- **National Parents Council (NPC):** The NPC empowers parents through training and resources to support their children's education and address bullying at both primary and post-primary levels.
- **DCU Anti Bullying Centre:** The DCU centre leads in anti-bullying research and provides schools with FUSE programme modules to build positive school culture and reduce bullying.
- **Tusla:** Tusla should be contacted when bullying behaviour raises child protection concerns, providing advice and support as outlined in child welfare procedures.

***Our 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, school should deal with it in accordance with their Bí Cineálta policy**

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):

Supporting Students Who Experience Bullying

- Listen & reassure – ensure the student feels heard and supported. Validate their feelings and reassure them that they are not alone.
- Ensure privacy – speak to the student in a confidential setting to help them feel safe.
- Involve them in solutions – ask how they would like the situation to be handled and involve them in decision-making.
- Provide emotional support – offer ongoing check-ins.
- Engage parents – inform parents early and involve them in supporting their child while respecting the child's concerns about disclosure.
- Encourage resilience & confidence – support the student in rebuilding confidence through positive social interactions and activities.
- Monitor & follow up – continue to check in to ensure that the bullying behaviour has ceased and that the student feels safe.
- Restorative Practices – Rebuilding Relationships, Restorative questions and conversations

Supporting Students Who Witness Bullying

- Encourage reporting – teach students that reporting bullying is a responsible and supportive action, not "*tattling*."
- Empower upstanders – encourage bystanders to support the victim in non-confrontational ways, such as including them in activities or standing with them.
- Educate on bullying & its impact – provide lessons on empathy, kindness, and the impact of bullying.
- Reinforce positive behaviour – acknowledge and praise students who take steps to support their peers.
- Address fear of retaliation – ensure students know that reports will be handled discreetly and that the school will protect them.

Supporting Students Who Display Bullying Behaviour

- Address behaviour, not the person – approach the student calmly and firmly, making it clear that the behaviour is unacceptable.
- Teach empathy & consequences – help them understand the impact of their actions through guided discussions, restorative practices, or structured reflection exercises.
- Offer support & guidance – some students engage in bullying due to their own difficulties. Support them in developing healthier relationships and coping skills.
- Engage parents – Work with parents to reinforce positive behaviour at home.
- Monitor & follow up – Keep checking in to track behaviour changes and provide additional support if needed.
- Restorative Practices – Rebuilding Relationships, Restorative questions and conversations
- 12
- Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and PostPrimary Schools
- 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: _____
Padraig Cronin - Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: _____

Signed: _____
Paul Favier - Principal

Date: _____