



Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS
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Our Lady of Good Counsel G.N.S

Bí Cineálta Policy

School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Our Lady of Good Counsel G.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.

Definition of bullying

In accordance with the BÍ Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools, bullying is defined as:

Bullying is 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.

This BÍ Cineálta policy 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.

Types of Bullying

There are many different types of bullying behaviour. These can include directing bullying at someone focused on the following: disability, exceptional ability, gender identity, LGBTQ+ , physical appearance, racism, poverty status, religious identity, sexism and sexual harassment. This is not an exhaustive list.

Direct bullying behaviour:

- Physical: pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping students. Physical assault. Destruction of personal property.
- Verbal: continual name calling which insults, humiliates the student – this may refer to physical appearance, size, clothes worn, gender identity, accent, academic ability, race or ethnic origin.
- Written: Writing insulting remarks in public places, passing notes or drawings about the student.
- Extortion: where something is obtained through force or threats

Indirect bullying behaviour:

- Exclusion: where a student is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded or ignored by a student or group of students.
- Relational: Where a student's attempts to form friendships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined, threats, non-verbal gesturing, malicious gossip, spreading rumours, silent treatment and manipulation of friend groups etc can all form relational bullying for a student.

Behaviour that is not bullying

A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards another student is not bullying behaviour. However, a single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and thus becomes a repeated behaviour.

Disagreement between two students, or instances where students don't want to be friends or to remain friends, is not considered bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others including deliberate manipulation of friendship groups.

Some students with special educational needs may have social communication difficulties which may make them communicate their needs through behaviours that can hurt themselves or others. It is important to note that their behaviours are not deliberate or planned, but, in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they can't control.

Bullying behaviour that occurs outside of school

As per the Bí Cineálta Procedures, a 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 bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved.

Examples of prohibited bullying behaviours that can occur outside of school (non-exhausted list):

- Bullying behaviour that occurs in the area immediately outside the school, the local shops and the wider local area.
- Bullying behaviour that occurs on the journey to and from school.
- Bullying behaviour that occurs in organised clubs and groups outside of school such as sports clubs.
- Online bullying (cyberbullying) behaviour, along with other types of bullying behaviour can cause significant harm and have a lasting impact on students who experience this behaviour. Access to technology means that online bullying behaviour can happen any time and that the student's home is no longer a safe place. The nature of these technologies means that digital content can be shared and seen by a very wide audience almost instantly and the content is almost impossible to delete permanently.

Section A: Development/review of our Bi 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	28/05/25	Online Survey and staff Meeting
Students	Week of 25/05/25	Online Survey
Parents / Guardians	07/05/25	Online Survey
Board of Management	11/06/25	Meeting
Wider School Community as appropriate	N.A.	N.A.
Date policy was approved: 11/06/25		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

Our Lady of Good Counsel G.N.S. engages in prevention strategies that will be used to prevent bullying behaviour. These include strategies specifically aimed at preventing online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment.

Prevention Strategies

Culture and Environment:

- Create a positive school culture which is based on respect for self and for others, and which focuses on co-operation and helping one another.
- Cultivate a school culture and environment where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and where a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour is evident.
- Involve parents as active partners in fostering an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated.
- Support the idea that our school is a telling environment.
- Promote the concept of a trusted adult (Stay Safe Programme).
- Create safe spaces in our school building and yards.
- Incorporate artwork and signs to promote our school values.
- Developing awareness of the Child Friendly BÍ-Cineálta policy with pupils, at an age appropriate level in each class at the beginning of each school year (see Appendix E).
- Promoting the role of play ground helpers during break times.
- The role of staff supervision during break times to promote a positive school culture and environment.
- Create 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;

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning):

- Teach SPHE, RSE and Stay Safe content which fosters student's well-being and self-confidence as well as promoting personal responsibility for their own behaviours and actions.
- Model respectful behaviour towards colleagues, pupils and visitors in our school environment with a special focus during Friendship and Wellbeing week.
- Curricular and Extra-curricular activities can help to develop a sense of self-worth, working together, inclusion and respect.
- Implementing Social Skills programmes at various class levels.
- Students are given regular opportunities to work in small groups with peers, which can help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy.
- Acknowledgment of our diverse school population – celebrating diversity and culture in our school through art, displays, photographs and events such as Intercultural Week.

- 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 especially during Internet Safety Week.
 - Full implementation of the Stay Safe Programme at appropriate times during the school year.
 - Daily mile completed by classes to promote emotional regulation.
- Supports for staff;
- Consistent recording (see Appendix A and B), investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.
- Appropriate CPD.

Relationships and Partnerships:

- Interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as our board of management, parents' association, Wellbeing Warriors and pupils initiatives and activities.
- Age and stage appropriate awareness initiatives that engage the student body in looking at their own behaviour – promoting acts of kindness and friendship, being an active help to others and looking at the causes of and impact of bullying during SPHE lessons. Our weekly Good Counsel Good Citizen Award highlights these acts of kindness and friendship during weekly assembly.
- Raise awareness of the impact of bullying for students, staff and parents through initiatives, workshops school newsletter and information nights.
- Encouraging peer mentoring and peer support.
- Supporting active participation of students in school life.
- Engaging students via the Wellbeing Warriors in actively contributing to the formation of a Child Friendly Anti Bullying Policy to make them active participants in promotion of and discussion of useful ways to identify and reduce bullying behaviour and highlight procedure and how to deal with it if it does occur.

Policy and Planning:

- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils, parents/guardians.
- To promote a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To ensure appropriate supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
- To develop procedures for noting, investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To implement a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- To work with appropriate agencies in countering all forms of bullying and promoting anti bullying behaviour.
- Bí Cineálta policy is up to date and implemented accordingly.
- Student Friendly Bí Cineálta policy displayed in the school to promote pupil voice.

- Relevant policies such as the Code of Behaviour, Child Safeguarding, Acceptable Use Policy, RSE Policy, SEN policy support the implementation of the Bí Cineálta policy.
- Effective leadership is a key component with the Principal, Deputy Principal, DLP and DDLP and all middle management support the implementation of the Bí Cineálta policy
- Appropriate CPD supported among staff

Prevention of Cyberbullying:

- Implementing the SPHE curriculum
- Education regarding responsible and respectful online behaviour especially during Internet Safety Week
- Communication and implementation of Acceptable Use Policy
- Promoting online safety events for parents
- Classes allowed to bring mobile phones to school follow set procedure. All phones to be given to the teacher at the start of the day, stored away and returned at the end of the school day. Please refer to Acceptable Usage Policy for further information.
- Teachers monitor the use of school devices such as tablets/iPads via installed software and/or in class supervision

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour are as follows: Principal, Deputy Principal, all Class teachers, all SET teachers.

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 / guardians 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:

1. Determine if bullying behaviour has occurred

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour, the following questions will be considered:

1. Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?
2. Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?
3. Is the behaviour repeated?

If the answer to each of the questions above is Yes, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour and the behaviour should be addressed using the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

Note: One-off incidents may be considered bullying in certain circumstances. A single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and thus becomes a repeated behaviour.

If the answer to any of these questions is No, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour.

Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

To help identify bullying behaviour, a card with the three questions for consideration (as referenced above) will be distributed to staff for their use in relevant situation(s).

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred teachers should consider what, where, when and why?

- If a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first
- Thereafter, all students involved may 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
- It may be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident(s)

2. Where bullying behaviour has occurred

- Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents/guardians of the students involved will 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
- The views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation should be considered
- A record should be kept of the engagement with all involved
- This record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known (Direct bullying behaviour – physical/ verbal / written / extortion, Indirect bullying behaviour - exclusion / relational / online), where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students involved and their parents / guardians
- The record should include the views of the students and their parents / guardians regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour.

3. Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred

- The teacher will engage with the students involved and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement
- This engagement will consider the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the students involved
- The teacher should document the review with students and their parents/ guardians to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and their parents in relation to this
- The date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased should also be recorded
- Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted
- Ongoing supervision and support may be needed for the students involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased
- If the bullying behaviour has not ceased the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents / guardians. A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased
- If it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school will consider using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school
- If a parent(s) / guardian(s) is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools. They should be referred to the school's complaints procedures
- If a parent / guardian is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, they 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

Approaches

The primary aim in addressing reports of bullying behaviour is to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the students involved, rather than to apportion blame. The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured

1. Bullied pupils

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.
 - Lessons in SPHE, Walk Tall and Stay safe as appropriate
 - Pastoral care system
 - Group work such as circle time
- Victims are reassured from the outset that they are not to blame.

- If pupils require counselling or further supports, the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agency/professional(s). Strategies for restoring self-esteem are explored between teacher and parents/guardians.
- Staged approach – class support, school support (as per *Continuum-Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties*- NEPS)
- Where deemed necessary, the child, in consultation with parents / guardians may be referred for counselling.

2. Students involved in bullying behaviour

- Where deemed necessary, the child, in consultation with parents / guardians may be referred for counselling
- Empathy awareness needs to be developed.
- Clinical referral and assessment may be necessary. – Staged approach – class support, school support (as per *Continuum-Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties*- NEPS)
- Relevant sections of the Stay Safe, Walk Tall and the RSE Programme.
- Any sanction for the bullying behaviour may be applied as detailed in the school's Code of Behaviour.

3. To the relevant class

If deemed necessary, it should be reinforced to students that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

Recording

All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include:

- The type of behaviour
- Where and when it took place
- The date of the engagement with students and parents
- The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour

Refer to Appendix A and B

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
- 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
- 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 (see Appendix C) or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this policy refers.

Date:

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date:

(Principal)

Appendix A



Our Lady of Good Counsel GNS
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Bí Cineálta - Initial Recording Template

Date of Initial engagement			
Reported by			
Reported to			
Initials of Child Concerned		Class	
Initials of Child(ren) involved		Class(es)	
Form(s) of Bullying (Tick)			
Direct	Physical		Indirect
	Verbal		
	Written		
	Extortion		
Type(s) of Bullying	Disablist, exceptionally able, gender identity, homophobic/ transphobic/ LGBTQ+, Physical appearance, racist, poverty, religious, sexist, sexual harassment (Bi Cineálta Procedures P.24)		
Recount of Initial Engagement including Dates and Locations of Incidents			

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Record of Investigation

Date	Pupil	What pupil said

Further School Staff Observations

--



Is this bullying? Tick	Yes	No
	Bullying Behaviours to be addressed using Bí Cineálta Procedures	Inappropriate behaviours addressed through Code of Behaviour
Signed		
_____	Date: _____	
_____	Date: _	

Appendix B



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Bí Cineálta – Record of Actions			
Initials of Child Concerned		Class	
Initials of Child(ren) involved		Class(es)	
<u>Date</u>	<u>Actions Agreed</u>		
	<u>Sanction:</u>		
Views regarding actions to be taken			
1. Views of child concerned:			

2. Views of parents / guardians of child concerned:

3. Views of child / children involved in the behaviour:

4. Views of parents / guardians of child /children involved in the behaviour:

Date of Review to determine has bullying ceased (within 20 days) :

Views in relation to this review:

1. Views of child concerned:

2. Views of parents / guardians of child concerned:

3. Views of child / children involved in the behaviour:

4. Views of parents / guardians of child /children involved in the behaviour:

If bullying has not ceased :

Strategy review:

Date of further review and outcome / referral to school Code of Behaviour :

Engagement with External Services/Supports (if any)

	Signed	Date
Teacher		
Principal		

Appendix C



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Our Lady of Good Counsel G.N.S

Annual Review - Bí Cineálta Policy

School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management will undertake an annual (calendar) review of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and its implementation in consultation with the school community. As part of the review, this document must be completed.

Bí Cineálta Policy Review

1. When did the Board formally adopt its Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools? _____/_____/20_____

2. Where in the school is the student friendly Bí Cineálta policy displayed?

3. What date did the Board publish the Bí Cineálta policy and the student friendly policy on the school website? _____/_____/20_____

4. How has the student friendly policy been communicated to students?

5. How has the Bí Cineálta policy and student friendly policy been communicated to parents?

6. Have all school staff been made aware of the, school's Bí Cineálta policy and the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools?

Yes / No _____

7. Does the Bí Cineálta policy document the strategies that the school uses to prevent bullying behaviour?

Yes / No _____

8. Has the Board received and minuted the Bullying Behaviour Update presented by the principal at every ordinary board meeting over the last calendar year?

Yes /No _____

9. Has the Board discussed how the school is addressing all reports of bullying behaviour.

Yes/ No _____

10. Is the Board satisfied that all incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed in accordance with the school's Bí Cineálta Policy?

Yes / No _____

11. Have the prevention strategies in the Bí Cineálta policy been implemented?

Yes / No _____

12. Has the Board discussed the effectiveness of the strategies used to prevent bullying behaviour?

Yes / No _____

13. How have (a) parents, (b) students and (c) school staff been consulted with as part of the review of the Bí Cineálta Policy?

14. Outline any aspects of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and/or its implementation that have been identified as requiring further improvement as part of this review:

15. Where areas for improvement have been identified, outline how these will be addressed and whether an action plan with timeframes has been developed?

16. Does the student friendly policy need to be updated as a result of this review and if so why?

17. Does the school refer parents to the complaints procedures if they have a complaint about how the school has addressed bullying behaviour?

Yes / No _____

18. Has a parent informed the school that a student has left the school due to reported bullying behaviour?

Yes / No _____

19. Has the Office of the Ombudsman for Children initiated or completed an investigation into how the school has addressed an incident of bullying behaviour?

Yes / No _____

Signed:

(Chairperson of board of management)

Date:

Signed:

(Principal)

Date:

Date of next review:

Appendix D



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Our Lady of Good Counsel G.N.S

Notification of Board of Management's Annual Review Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management of Our Lady of Good Counsel G.N.S confirms that the board of management's annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour and its implementation was completed at the board of management meeting of _____[date].

This review was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Education's Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Appendix E

Child-Friendly Anti-Bullying Policy



✓ We want our school to be a place where everyone can feel safe and happy.

That means that no bullying is allowed.

In this policy, we want the school, the staff, and the students to work together to keep our school a welcoming, happy place for everyone.

This policy was made for our students, and with their input.

Every child has the right to be who they are.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is a deliberate behaviour that can hurt you on the inside or on the outside and is repeated over time. It can be:

- **Verbal:** name calling, teasing, spreading rumours
- **Emotional:** leaving you out, saying nasty things about you to others, hurting your feelings, making threats
- **Physical:** punching, kicking, hitting, pushing, spitting
- **Cyber:** saying unkind things online, via text, group chat

If you feel that you are being bullied:

1. **Say NO**
 - ✓ Ask them to STOP
2. **Move away**
 - ✓ Walk away and ignore them
3. **Tell**
 - ✓ Tell SOMEONE
 - ✓ Talk to a friend
 - ✓ Tell a teacher
 - ✓ Tell a parent

What should I do if I see someone else being bullied?

- ✓ Tell an adult straight away
- ⚠ Don't stay silent. Saying nothing means the bullying can keep happening.

Remember:

- Speak up – tell a parent or a teacher or a friend
- Screenshot evidence of online bullying and show an adult you trust
- Don't share personal information with anyone online
- Tell if you see someone is being treated badly. Help others
- Treat others kindly
- If you hurt someone, think about how it would feel if it happened to you or someone you care about

S.T.O.P.

Start
Telling
Other
People