STRATFORD NATIONAL SCHOOL

(under the auspices of Dublin Talmud Torah)

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Stratford National 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 children who attend our school are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our children is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our children, 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 children 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.

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	1st May 2025	Whole staff meeting

Children	2nd May	Questionnaires
Parents	8th May 9th June	Online survey Emailed home for consultation
Board of Management	To be completed after parent consultation	
Wider School Community, eg bus escorts	11th May	Online Survey
Date policy was approved: 26th November 2025		
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):

Stratford National School will promote the prevention of bullying behaviour in the following ways:

Culture and Environment

- Providing a listening ear for all and by being available.
- Encouraging positive friendships
- Using assemblies to discuss anti-bullying in school.
- Developing a 'telling environment', where students are encouraged to tell if they see bullying behaviour.

Curriculum

- Through the teaching of the SPHE programme to promote resilience, confidence, respect in our interactions with others and empathy.
- Helping the children to identify their own emotions
- Through the teaching a digital literacy programme to promote internet safety (https://www.webwise.ie/teachers/resources/)
- Organising a whole school 'Internet Safety' week.
- Organising a 'Friendship February' week.
- Fostering inclusion and respecting diversity when opportunities arise in the different curricular subjects, eg comparing how different festivals are celebrated
- Using visual aids (e.g., picture symbols, social stories, posters) to explain what bullying is and how to report it.
- Translating key parts of the policy and reporting process into common home languages to ensure understanding.

- Creating simplified versions of the policy (e.g. Easy Read or visual story format) for students with additional needs.

Policy and Planning

- Reviewing and revising other relevant policies, including but not limited to
  - Acceptable Use Policy
  - Supervision Policy
  - Special Education Teaching Policy
  - Code of Behaviour
- Supporting the involvement of parents and children in the revision of policies, to increase awareness and ensure effective implementation
- Supporting the staff to attend relevant professional development opportunities to receive training on recognising subtle forms of bullying, particularly for students with additional needs.
- Ensure the Bí Cinéalta plan is available on the school website and the link is shared with all parents of children being enrolled in the school.

Relationships and Partnerships

- Encouraging the children to speak with their trusted adults outside of school.
- Organising a whole school 'Bullying Awareness' week twice a year. The school will include EAL and SEN perspectives while planning these weeks.
- Supporting the participation of parents in school life
- Introducing Cineáltas cards to identify and acknowledge acts of kindness

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):

- There are designated staff members on duty during break times, who wear high vis vests to improve visibility
- Good lighting is present to avoid dark corners or spaces
- Visual barriers from windows such as posters are reduced to increase visibility in the school
- Implementation of the school's Code of Behaviour
- Use of recording documentation (Appendix A) to ensure tracking of incidents of bullying behaviour and informing parents and the principal
- The school's Acceptable Usage Policy will be reviewed during the academic year 2025-2026 and will be shared with parents for comment
- Regular surveys and sociograms will take place during the school year, to determine if there have been incidents of bullying behaviour which have not been notified to the school staff (Appendix 5).
- Staff will be assigned to check in on vulnerable children, eg those with SEN, EAL, or known social difficulties using tools like visual emotion check-ins or simple daily

wellbeing logs. They will keep records of these check-ins to monitor patterns or emerging concerns.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour is (are) as follows:
Class Teachers, SET team, Killian Boland (DDLP), Beryl Healy (DLP)

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

- ensure that the child 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 child 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, Appendix 4):

- Flow-charts will be used to determine if the behaviour is targeted, causes intentional harm and is repeated (Appendix 3). If yes to all 3, it is identified as bullying behaviour.
- The teacher speaks with the children individually first, before meeting with the group, to hear each other's account of the event.
- The children can report bulling and record their account of the incident in a variety of ways, such as verbally, written, drawing, using digital tools or any other way which helps them to report and record incidents of bullying behaviour.
- Incidents are recorded (see appendix 1) and the parents of both parties are informed of the incident. The school will consult with parents on the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour and to support all the students involved.
- The staff support the children to restore relationships within the group.
- If parents report bullying behaviour, but request no further action be taken, the parents will be asked to submit this request in writing.
- 20 school days after the incident was reported, the relevant staff will meet with the children and parents to review progress, including the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the children.
- If the child displaying the bullying behaviour continues to display this behaviour, the strategies in the school's Code of Behaviour will be followed and disciplinary sanctions may be imposed, as per the Code of Behaviour.

- If parents are not happy with how the bullying behaviour has been address, the Parental Complaints Procedure should be used to address these complaints.[1]

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 children 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 Children:

- Regular check-ins with a trusted staff member
- Fostering respect and empathy for all members of the school community through the use of circle time
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the completion of the Stay Safe Programme
- Helping bullied children 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).

Supporting Bullying Children:

- Supporting the children to change their behaviour through class programmes such as Stay Safe and praising them when they do so,
- Providing support from the SET team to help those who need it learn other ways of meeting their needs besides violating the rights of others,
- 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 extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school),
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance children's feelings of self-worth,
- In dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child.
- In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a 'clean sheet'.
- In the event the child accused of bullying behaviour has additional needs or is non-verbal, the school will work with parents and SNAs to investigate the accusation and to advocate for the rights of the student in this situation.

[1] https://www.cpsma.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Parental-Complaints-Procedure-Updated-Dec-2023.pdf

- Use of social skills board games in the classroom.

Bullying Outside School:
The school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school [2]. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, the school will support the children using the guidance in the section 'Supporting Bullied Children'.

All bullying behaviour will be recorded using Appendix A. This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with children 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: Children in the Autism Classes
At Stratford National School, we understand that some children in our autism classes may display behaviours that are not intended to cause harm. These behaviours can stem from communication or sensory needs and are often not planned or deliberate. Staff will recognise these different forms of communication and respond appropriately, to support the children involved. Such behaviours will be managed through the children's School Support Plan. If needed, the Principal and relevant support staff will assess whether the behaviour meets the criteria for bullying under this policy.

The children in the school will be supported to develop their understanding of neurodiversity, through events such as Autism Awareness Week, to help them to understand and respect sensory needs and routines, especially in shared spaces, such as the yard and the hall. The school will also ensure that any impact on other children is addressed with appropriate support and action.

The school's Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) are a key part of the school's bullying prevention and response strategies. They will be trained to recognise the signs of bullying in the whole school community, including our non-verbal or less communicative children. They may help the children to report incidents of bullying by reporting their observations or supporting the children to explain what happened. They may also scribe for the children or interpret drawing on the children's behalf.

Section E: 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

[2] Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools p23

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 child 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: Laurie Henry Date: 26th November 2025
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: Beryl Healy Date: 26/11/25
(Principal)

Appendix A: Template for recording bullying behaviour

Name of child being bullied and class

Name	Class

Name(s) and class(es) of students engaging in bullying behaviour

Name of person who reported the bullying incident

Membership of school community

Child concerned	Parent	Teacher
Other child	Other	

Location of incident (please tick relevant boxes)

Playground	Classroom	Toilets	Hall
Corridor	Outside school	Other:	

Type of bullying behaviour (p21 of guidelines, please tick relevant boxes):

Direct bullying behaviour			
Physical	Verbal	Written	Extortion
Indirect bullying behaviour			
Exclusion	Relational		
Online bullying behaviour			

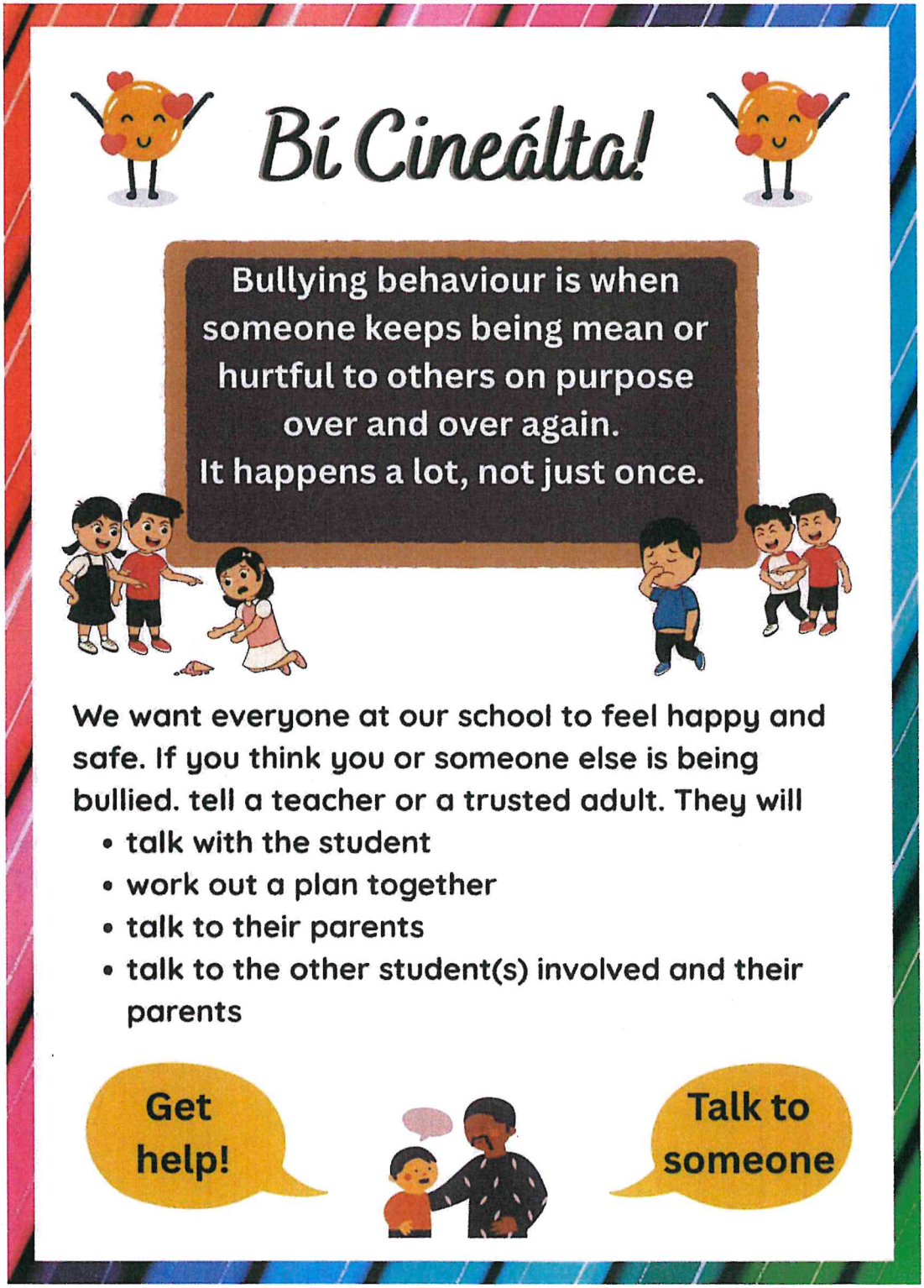
Brief description of the bullying behaviour and its impact:

Details of actions taken:

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Teacher

Date submitted to principal or deputy principal: _____

Appendix 2: Child-friendly Poster for Bí Cineálta



Appendix 3: Is It Bullying Flowchart?

Is it bullying?

1 **Targeted**
Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?

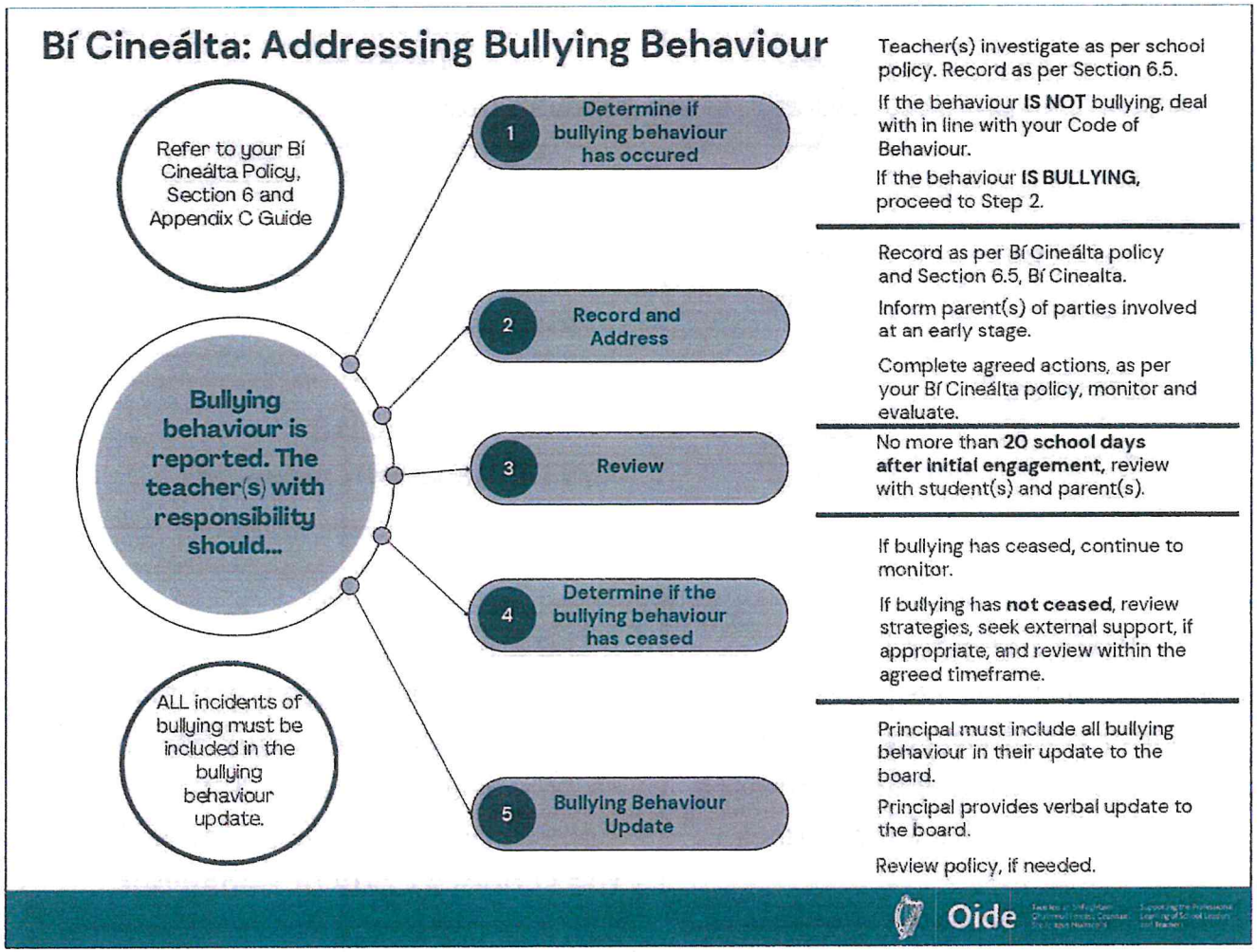
2 **Harm**
Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?

3 **Repeated**
Is the behaviour repeated?

Yes
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.

No
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

Appendix 4: Addressing Bullying Flowchart (Oide)



Appendix 5: Bullying Sociogram

Anti- Bullying Sociogram [3]

Are you happy with the atmosphere in your classroom?	
Who are your friends?	
Are you being bullied in any way?	
Is there anyone in class having a hard time or being picked on? What is happening?	
Is anyone being left out, or ignored?	
Is anyone spreading rumours, gossip, using notes, phone calls, text messages, or e- mails to make others feel bad about themselves?	
Is anyone being unfair to others?	
Is there a group of pupils making life difficult for others?	
Are pupils from other classes giving anyone in this class a hard time?	
Can you give examples?	
Who do you think is causing the problem?	

[3] Adapted from https://www.pdst.ie/sites/default/files/Anti-Bullying%20Support%20Materials.pdf

Friendship/Bullying Questionnaire[4]

Class	
Name	
Date	
Would you like to talk to someone about bullying?	Yes ___ No ___
Do you know anyone who is having a hard time?	Yes ___ No ___
Additional Information	

[4] Adapted from https://www.pdst.ie/sites/default/files/Anti-Bullying%20Support%20Materials.pdf