Appendix A   Gaelscoil na Dúglaise
Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Gaelscoil na Dúglaise 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 pupils who attend our school are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our pupils is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our pupils 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 pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveler community.

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	21 March 2025	Questionnaire and discussion
Pupils	School Year 2024-'25	Questionnaire and discussion
Parents	June 2024	Questionnaire
Board of Management	22 May 2025	Discussion
Date policy was approved: 4th September 4, 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.

Culture and Environment
Telling Environment
The school community supports a 'telling' environment. From the outset of their time in the school, pupils are encouraged to report bullying incidents. Every effort is made to help children feel comfortable talking about concerns regarding bullying behaviour. Group dynamics are closely monitored and nurtured so that pupils feel safe reporting bullying behaviour.

A Trusted Adult
Pupils are made aware of the significant role they can play by raising concerns around bullying behaviours with adults that they trust within their school community. This trusted adult will reassure the pupil that they have done the right thing in making their concerns known to them, inform the member of staff who has responsibility for addressing the bullying behaviour and continue to support the pupil while the behaviour is being addressed by the relevant member of staff.

Safe Physical Spaces
The spaces in our school are safe, clearly lit and allow for a clear line of sight to facilitate effective supervision.

Supervision
Pupils are supervised appropriately at all times to ensure their safety.

Curriculum
A sense of collaboration and respect is central to all teaching and learning in our school. Every opportunity is taken to build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy amongst pupils. Inclusivity and respect for diversity is fostered through the curricular areas i.e. Social, Personal, Health Education, Relationships and Sexuality Education, Religion, History, Geography etc.

Policy and Planning
The wellbeing of the school community is at the heart of school policies and plans.

Bullying behaviour is not acceptable and the school is committed to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

A pupil friendly version of the Bí Cinealta policy has been developed and is displayed throughout the school and in every classroom.

The Bí Cinealta Policy has been published on our school website.

Relationships and Partnerships
Interpersonal connections are fostered to prevent and address bullying behaviour. This is done through

- Comhairle na nÓg

- School clubs

- Cumann na dTuismitheoirí

- Exploration of the causes and impact of bullying in every class

- Active participation of pupils in school community

- Active participation of parents in school community

Preventing cyberbullying behaviour
Despite the many benefits that have come with the development of technology and social media we are mindful in this school that the increase in the use of technology has led to pupils becoming increasingly vulnerable to cyberbullying or unacceptable online behaviour.

This school proactively promotes digital literacy, digital citizenship, and fosters safe online environments to address the challenges of cyberbullying. Strategies employed to prevent cyberbullying include the following

- implementing the SPHE curriculum

- having regular conversations with pupils about developing respectful and kind relationships online

- developing and communicating an acceptable use policy for technology
- referring to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour
- promoting or hosting online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online
- holding an Internet safety day to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour
- No phones or smart watches during the school day. (Conradh le Chéile)

Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour
This school asserts the importance of all pupils including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender pupils feeling safe and supported at school.
Strategies to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying include the following -

- maintaining an inclusive physical environment such as by displaying relevant appropriate posters

- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- challenging gender–stereotypes

- encouraging pupils to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour

Preventing racist bullying behavior

This school celebrates the cultural diversity which is evident in our society. It welcomes pupils from different cultures and backgrounds.
Strategies to prevent discrimination, prejudice and racist bullying behaviour include the following

- fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where pupils "see themselves" in their school environment
- having the cultural diversity of the school visible and on display
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour

- ensuring that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of pupils and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds

Preventing sexist bullying behaviour

This school focuses on gender equality as part of the school's measures to create a supportive and respectful environment.
Strategies to prevent sexist bullying behaviour include the following

- ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat pupils equally irrespective of their sex
- ensuring all pupils have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex

- celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contributions of all pupils
- encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home

Preventing sexual harassment

This school has a zero–tolerance approach to sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is never dismissed as teasing or banter.
Strategies to prevent sexual harassment include the following

- promoting positive role models within the school community
- challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour is (are) as follows: The class teacher and co-ordinator.

When bullying occurs, the school will:
- ensure that the pupil 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 pupil who is experiencing bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- take action in a timely manner
- inform parents of those involved

The following steps will be taken by the school to determine if bullying behaviour has occurred. Included also are the approaches taken to address bullying behaviour.

Definition of bullying behaviour
Bullying is targeted behavior, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behavior is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society.

Our aim in addressing reports of bullying is to stop the bullying behaviour, and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the pupils involved, rather than to apportion blame.

The steps that will be taken by the school to determine if bullying behaviour has occurred, the approaches taken to address bullying behaviour and to review progress are as

Identifying if bullying has occurred

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the following questions are explored - what, where, when and why?

The following questions are considered by the teachers

- Is the behaviour targeted?
- Is the behaviour repeated?
- Is there an imbalance of power?

If the answer to each of these questions is Yes then the behaviour is bullying behaviour and is addressed using the Bí Cinealta Procedures.

When a group of pupils is involved, each pupil is engaged individually at first. Thereafter, all pupils involved are met as a group.

At the group meeting, each pupil is asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views. Each pupil is supported, as appropriate, following the group meeting. The pupils involved may be asked to write down their account of the incident.

We acknowledge that incidents can occur where behaviour is unacceptable and hurtful but the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies that deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

Where bullying behaviour has occurred

- Parents are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with schools, in addressing bullying behaviour. Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the pupils are 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 pupil who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation are listened to
- a record is kept of the engagement with all involved
- This record documents the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known, where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the pupils involved and their parents
- The record includes the views of the pupils and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour

Follow up where bullying has occurred

- The teacher engages with the pupils involved and their parents again within 20 school days of the initial engagement
- important factors considered as part of this engagement are the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the pupils involved
- The teacher documents the review with pupils and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of pupils and their parents in relation to this
- the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased is also be recorded
- any engagement with external services/supports is noted
- Ongoing supervision and support is provided, if necessary, for the pupils involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased

- if the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the teacher reviews the strategies used in consultation with the pupils involved and their parents. A timeframe is agreed for further engagement until the bullying has ceased

- if it becomes clear that the pupil who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school considers dealing with the inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant pupil, their parents and the school

- if a parent(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 are referred to the school's complaints procedures

- if a parent 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 pupil

School staff are aware of what to do when bullying behaviour is reported to them or when they witness bullying behaviour.

Our school does not deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when pupils are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, our school does support the pupils involved. If the bullying behaviour continues in school, the school deals with it in accordance with the Bí Cineálta policy.

If the pupil displaying bullying behaviour is not a pupil in the school, but the pupil who is experiencing the bullying behaviour is a pupil in the school, the school supports the pupil who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as appropriate and engages with them and their parents to determine what steps can be taken.

School staff are fair and consistent in their approach to addressing bullying behaviour.

The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour

The school recognizes that both the pupil who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the pupil who is displaying bullying need support. The pupil who is experiencing bullying is engaged without delay so that they feel listened to, supported and reassured. School staff identify the support needed for the pupil who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties and ensure that their needs are met.

The school staff understand that a pupil's agency or sense of power can be decreased when they experience or witness bullying behaviour. A pupil who tells an adult that they feel that they are experiencing bullying behaviour may feel that they are taking back some control over what is happening to them .School staff understand and make every effort to ensure that a pupil's agency is not decreased further by adults deciding what will happen next without listening to the pupil and involving them in deciding on the actions that will be taken.

In circumstances where a pupil expresses concern about their parents being informed, the school has developed an appropriate plan to support the pupil and for how their parents will be informed.
The school takes into consideration communication barriers that may exist when communicating with parents, for example, literacy, digital literacy or language barriers.

Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, we acknowledge that no one approach works in all situations. International and national research also continues to evolve in this area and the effectiveness of approaches continues to be reviewed by our school.

Requests to take no action
Where this occurs, the member of staff will show empathy to the pupil, deal with the matter sensitively and speak with the pupil to work out together what steps can be taken to address the matter and how their parents will be informed of the situation. We acknowledge that it is important that the pupil who has experienced bullying feels safe.

Parents may also make the school aware of the bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action. Parents can put this request in writing to the school or be facilitated to do so where there are literacy, digital literacy or language barriers. However, while acknowledging the parent's request, schools may decide that, based on the circumstances, that it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

Recording bullying behaviour
All incidents of bullying behaviour are recorded. The record will document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known, where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the pupils and their parents.

Forms of bullying
The school understands that bullying behaviour can take many forms, which can occur separately or together. These can include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

Direct bullying behaviour:
Physical bullying behaviour:

- Physical bullying behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping pupils. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils can often engage in "mess fights"

they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.

- Personal property can be a focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, schoolbooks and other learning material or interference with a pupil's locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

Verbal bullying behaviour:

- Continual name–calling directed at a pupil which hurts, insults or humiliates the pupil should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name–calling of this type refers to physical appearance; for example, size or clothes worn or gender identity. It can also refer to a pupil's accent, distinctive voice characteristics, academic ability, race or ethnic origin.

Written bullying behaviour:

- Written bullying behaviour includes writing insulting remarks about a pupil in public places, passing around notes about or drawings of a pupil.

Extortion

- Bullying can involve extortion. Extortion is where something is obtained through force or threats.

Indirect bullying behaviour:

Exclusion

- Exclusion bullying behaviour occurs where a pupil is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded or ignored by a pupil or group of pupils.

Relational

- Relational bullying behaviour occurs when a pupil's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. Common forms include control: "Do this or I won't be your friend anymore"; a group of pupils ganging up against one pupil; non–verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a pupil; giving a pupil the "silent treatment"; and the deliberate manipulation of friendship groups to make someone unpopular.

Online bullying behaviour:

Online bullying behaviour (cyberbullying) is carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text or direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, e–mail, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chatrooms and other online technologies.

This form of bullying behaviour can include:

- sending or sharing nasty, insulting, offensive, and/or intimidating messages or images via text messages, emails, direct messages or other websites or apps

- posting information considered to be personal, private and sensitive without consent

- making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other pupils

- excluding or disrupting access to a pupil on purpose from online chat groups, access to accounts or from an online game

Even though a message may be posted online just once by a pupil it can be considered bullying behaviour as

it may be seen by a wide audience where it is intended to be shared or has a likelihood of being shared multiple times and is thus repeated.

As online bullying uses technology to carry out bullying behaviour and does not require face–to–face contact it can occur at any time. Many types of bullying behaviour can be facilitated through online bullying. In many cases online bullying can relate to an "offline" experience with someone known to the pupil. This type of bullying may involve forms of sexual exploitation including but not limited to, sextortion and the non–consensual sharing of intimate images. The sharing or threatened sharing of images without consent is a criminal offence.

Types of bullying behavior

This is not an exhaustive list:

- disablist bullying behaviour: behaviour or language that intends to harm a pupil because of a perceived or actual disability or additional need

- exceptionally able bullying: behaviour or language that intends to harm a pupil because of their high academic ability or outstanding talents

- gender identity bullying: behaviour or language that intends to harm a pupil because of their perceived or actual gender identity

- homophobic/transphobic (LGBTQ+) bullying: behaviour or language that intends to harm a pupil because of their perceived or actual membership of the LGBTQ+ community

- physical appearance bullying: behaviour or language that intends to harm a pupil because of their physical appearance. Pupils 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 pupil 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

- poverty bullying: behaviour that intends to humiliate a pupil because of a lack of resources

- religious identity bullying: behaviour that intends to harm a pupil because of their religion or religious identity

- sexist bullying: behaviour that intends to harm a pupil based on their sex, perpetuating stereotypes that a pupil or a group of pupils are inferior because of their sex

- sexual harassment: any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on sex which affects the dignity of the pupil

The record will include the views of the pupils and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour. It will document the review with pupils and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of pupils and their parents in relation to this. The date of each of these engagements and the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour   has ceased is documented.

Any engagement with external services/supports will also be noted.
These records are retained in accordance with the school's record keeping policy and in line with data protection regulations.
Where a Pupil Support File exists for a pupil, the school places a copy of the record on the pupil's support file. This assists the school's pupil support team in providing a consistent and holistic response to support the wellbeing of the pupils involved. Where a Pupil Support Plan exists, the plan is updated to incorporate response strategies and associated supports.

Complaint process

If a parent is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with these procedures, they are referred to the school's complaints procedure.

Additional Information relating to schools' complaint procedures are available at the following link: Complaint Procedures for Schools.

In the event that a pupil and/or parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, a pupil 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 pupil.

The Office of the Ombudsman for Children can be contacted at ococomplaint@oco.ie.

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. If bullying 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 pupil-friendly version of this policy is displayed in the school and is also available on our website and in hard copy on request.
This policy and its implementation will be reviewed, following input from our school community, each calendar year or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this policy refers.

Signed: _   Date: 4th September 2025
(Chairperson of board of management)

 Signed: Date: 4th September
(Principal)