The Board of Management of Ardscoil Rís 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

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 offine 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.

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	14/3/2025	Staff Development Day
Students	8/4/2025 & 6/5/2025	Focus Groups
Parents	13/5/2025	Focus Group
Board of Management	5/6/2025	Presentation & Meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	13/5/2025	Letter & invitation to meeting

Date policy was approved: 5/6/2025

Date policy was last reviewed: 5/6/2025

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):

The Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice provides the following four key areas that are essential for a holistic, whole school approach to wellbeing promotion: Culture and Environment; Curriculum (Teaching and Learning); Policy and Planning; and Relationships and Partnerships. These four areas are considered by the school when developing measures to prevent bullying behaviour.

Culture/Environment
This policy is underpinned by the expectation that all members of our school community practice our core values consistently. Being kind, empathetic, inclusive and creating a sense of belonging and safety is crucial to the successful implementation of the policy.

- Our School culture is focused on building positive relationships through our Restorative Practice commitment and values (respect, empathy, safe, personal accountability, equality, community and trust).

- School values: Live our ethos by creating a caring Christian Community

- Belonging: Embed a school environment where students and staff experience a sense of belonging through a variety of curricular and extra-curricular choices, clubs and activities.

- Safe spaces: High levels of staff visibility through our supervision rota and accessibility to the student support team.

- Visual reminders: Artwork and signage that promotes our school ethos and values

- Parental engagement: Involving parents as active partners in fostering an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated.

- Inclusivity: Maintaining a positive school culture and climate which is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;

- Open communication between the Trust, board of management, staff, students and their parents help to foster a collaborative approach and shared responsibilities in relation to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

- Support the idea that our school is a telling environment

- Staff will support the strategy of "a trusted adult" by letting students know that they can talk to them.

Curriculum and Teaching

The school implements education and prevention strategies that are integrated into the curriculum. This includes discussions in SPHE and R.E. Additionally, the school provides anti-bullying workshops and information sessions for students and parents. The curriculum also includes a focus on cyber-bullying and training for all year groups.

- All classroom teachers play a key role in delivering the anti-bullying programme and supporting students throughout their school journey.
- The SPHE programme include elements of anti-bullying education and overall wellbeing, helping students develop social and personal skills.
- Teachers CPD ensures they are equipped with the latest strategies and knowledge to prevent and address bullying.
- The CSPE curriculum includes the "Place in the World" module, which addresses issues of bullying and social responsibility.
- Various theme weeks and days such as Stand Up Awareness week, Diversity week, Culture Day, Human Rights Day etc. are celebrated in the school.

Policy and Planning

The Board of Management has adopted the Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour as its anti-bullying 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 policy outlines clear procedures for noting, reporting, investigating, and dealing with bullying behaviour. It includes strategies for effective supervision and monitoring of pupils, supports for staff, and ongoing evaluation of the policy's effectiveness.

- The policy is reviewed annually by the Board of Management.

- Code of Behaviour: The school's code of behaviour sets out the standards and expectations for student behaviour and the procedures for addressing behavioural issues.

- Acceptable Use Policy: This policy governs the use of technology and the internet within the school, addressing issues such as cyber-bullying.

- Wellbeing policy: The Wellbeing policy outlines the school's approach to promoting the mental and emotional health of students.

- Health & Safety: The Health & Safety policy outlines the measures in place to ensure a safe and secure environment for all students and staff.

- The Whole School Guidance Plan provides a framework for the guidance and support services available to students, including career advice and personal counselling.

- Subject Planning ensures that anti-bullying education is integrated into the curriculum across various subjects.

- The Child Protection Policy outlines the procedures for safeguarding students and addressing any child protection concerns.

- The Mobile Phone Policy sets out the rules for the use of mobile phones within the school, addressing issues such as cyber-bullying.

- RSE Policy: The Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) policy addresses issues related to bullying, respect, and healthy relationships.

- The Uniform Policy sets out the expectations for student dress and promotes a sense of equality and belonging.

- Staff Meetings: Regular staff meetings and other staff group meetings are held to discuss and address any issues related to bullying and student wellbeing.

- Student Support Meetings are held to review and address the needs of students, ensuring they receive the necessary support.

Relationships & Partnerships

Strong interpersonal connections are a vital part of effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. These interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as the student council, school clubs, the parents' association and the student support teams. The following, which is not an exhaustive list, help strengthen relationships and partnerships between members of the school community:

- 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, homophobic/transphobic bullying, sexism and sexual harassment
- Supporting the active participation of students in school life
- Supporting the active participation of parents in school life
- Conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying
- Encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring
- Promoting acts of kindness
- Pastoral Care: Staff working together to support students' wellbeing.
- Guidance Support: The Guidance Counsellor provides individual support to students, helping them navigate personal and academic challenges.
- NEPS: The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) collaborates with the school to offer psychological support and interventions for students.
- Community Gardaí: The school works with the local Community Gardaí to ensure a safe and secure environment for all students.
- The school collaborates with Tusla to support students' welfare and address any child protection concerns.
- Parents are encouraged to volunteer and participate in school activities, fostering a strong partnership between home and school.
- The Student Council provides a platform for students to voice their opinions and contribute to school policies and initiatives.
- Regular Parent-Teacher Meetings are held to discuss students' progress and address any concerns, fostering open communication between home and school.
- The Student Transfer programme provides an induction programme for first-year students to help them transition smoothly into the school environment and understand the anti-bullying policies and support systems in place. It also operates for students who transfer from another school into a Year Group other than First year.
- Guest Speakers: The school invites guest speakers to provide additional insights and education on bullying prevention and related topics, enriching the students' learning experience.
- Assemblies: Regular assemblies are held to reinforce the school's anti-bullying message and promote a positive school culture.
- The Gaisce programme encourages students to develop their personal skills and contribute positively to their community, including anti-bullying efforts
- Extra-Curricular Activities: The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular

activities during lunchtime and after school, supervised by teachers. These activities cater to various interests and provide students with opportunities to develop relationships and engage in positive and enriching experiences.

- When implementing a new prevention strategy, the school will consider engaging with members of the wider school community who are in regular contact with students, such as bus drivers, the education welfare officer, traffic wardens, local businesses that are close to the school etc. These members of the wider school community will be encouraged to report any bullying behaviour to the school as appropriate.

In order to address specific types of bullying, we identify the following strategies.

Preventing Cyber Bullying	Preventing Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying Behaviour
- Acceptable Use Policy: Governs the use of technology and the internet within the school, addressing issues such as cyber-bullying. - Mobile Phone Policy: Sets out the rules for the use of mobile phones within the school, addressing issues such as cyber-bullying. - Cyber Safety Talks: Regular talks to educate students about the dangers of cyber-bullying and how to stay safe online.	- Stand Up Week: Focuses on promoting inclusion and respect for all students, particularly those from the LGBTQ+ community. - SPHE Programme: Include elements of anti-bullying education and overall wellbeing, addressing issues related to homophobic and transphobic bullying. - RSE in SPHE: Addresses issues related to bullying, respect, and healthy relationships, including homophobic and transphobic bullying. - Workshops for students - Challenging gender stereotypes
Preventing Racist Behaviour	Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour
- Promoting our school community as a safe space. This is achieved through open and transparent communication which emphasises the dignity of every member of our school community. - Promoting activities to celebrate the different cultures in the school e.g. Culture Day - Awareness of diversity through print media on the walls, celebrating the different nationalities in the school through photos, information, flags. - Inviting speakers from various ethnic backgrounds for all year groups	- Educating students through curriculum and assemblies on appropriate language use. - Creating a relationship with local female schools to run events together to raise awareness of gender equality. - Promoting female role models in subjects/extra-curricular activities. - Inviting female speakers or female leads for workshops, for all year groups - Model staff behaviours to show respect and equality among sexes. - Students need to be aware of sanctions for sexist behaviour.

• Highlighting and promoting the Bi Cinealta policy among all students and members of the wider school community. • Encouraging study of literature that details different cultures and experiences in class.	• RSE Policy: Addressing issues related to bullying, respect, and healthy relationships, including sexist bullying. • SPHE Programme: Include elements of anti-bullying education and anti sexism

Preventing Sexual Harassment

• Cross Curricular approach focusing on respect, personal space and consent.

• Kindness and respect underpin practice in all classrooms

• Clear message, repeated regularly, of zero tolerance response within the Code of Behaviour

• Ensuring students are aware and educated on the types of sexual harassment (e.g. physical, verbal, image based, etc.) particularly through SPHE but cross curricular approach where appropriate.

• Clear, effective education on image based sexual harassment both physically and online.

• Consistent visibility of staff on supervision

• Teachers aware of where and when supervision is needed

• Awareness of less visible spaces and the need to physically check spaces

• Greater focus on ensuring the classrooms are properly cleared at breaks or during lesson times where a room may be unused.

• Print environment can be used to maintain clear messages for staff and students

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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 and Corridors at break times: A weekly schedule of student supervision on corridors and yard is in place to monitor student behaviour and wellbeing. Any causes for concern are dealt with and reported to school management.

• All staff are watchful and observe relationships between students in class, note absence patterns and let it be known that high standards of behaviour are always expected.

• Teachers during supervision are responsible for the following:
  o Ensuring the students are following the code of behaviour at all times

- o Clearing the building and locker areas during good weather days and then supervising students outside
- o Ensuring that all areas are kept clean and tidy by students at all times
- o During days of bad weather, opening up a small number of classrooms, allowing students to eat inside and staying on the corridor to supervise
- o Those on duty at 08:15 are responsible for opening the school to students on time

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour is (are) as follows:

The relevant Year Head and/or the Deputy Principal

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 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):

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

The person identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred will most likely be the relevant Year Head or the Deputy Principal. That person will meet with the student (and parents, where required.)
To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour, the teacher will consider the following questions:
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.
When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the teacher should consider the following: what, where, when and why?

Groups

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.

It may be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident(s).

Where bullying behaviour has occurred

It is important for school staff to be fair and consistent in their approach to address bullying behaviour.

Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour need support.

It is important that the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour is engaged with without delay so that they feel listened to, supported and reassured.

School staff should identify the supports needed for the student who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties and ensure that their needs are met.

A student's agency or sense of power can be decreased when they experience or witness bullying behaviour. When a student tells an adult that they feel that they are experiencing bullying behaviour they may feel that they are taking back some control over what is happening to them.

It is very important that a student's agency is not decreased further by adults deciding what will happen next without listening to the student and involving them in deciding on the actions that will be taken.

The following principles must be adhered to when addressing bullying behaviour:

- Ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to 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 of those involved

The primary aim in addressing reports of bullying behaviour should be to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

Where the teacher has determined that a student has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him how he is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him to see the situation from the perspective of the student being bullied.

It must also be made clear to all involved (students and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the student being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.

Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the student who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.

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 this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, schools should deal with it in accordance with their Bí Cineálta policy.

Where the student displaying the bullying behaviour is not a student in the school, but the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour is a student in the school, the school will support the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as appropriate and engage with them and their parents to determine what steps can be taken.

Given the complexity of bullying behaviour it is generally acknowledged that that no one approach works in all situations. Each school must therefore decide on an approach that is best suited to its own circumstances.

Requests to take no action
A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than "look out" for them. The student may not want to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They may feel that telling someone might make things more difficult for them. Where this occurs, it is important that the member of staff shows empathy to the student, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the student to work out together what steps can be taken to address the matter and how their parents will be informed of the situation.

It is important that the student who has experienced bullying behaviour feels safe. Parents may also make schools aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action. Parents should put this request in writing to the school. However, while acknowledging the parent's request, schools may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

Determining if bullying behaviour has ceased

The teacher must engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress following the initial intervention.

Important factors to consider as part of the review are the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the students involved.

Even though the bullying behaviour may have ceased, ongoing supervision and support may be required for both the student who has experienced the bullying behaviour as well as the student who has displayed the behaviour.

It can take time for relationships to settle and for supports to take effect. In some cases, relationships may never be restored to how they were before the bullying behaviour occurred.

In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
- Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
- Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
- Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable.

If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students and parents and agree to meet again over an agreed timeframe until the bullying behaviour has ceased.

Where it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school should 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.

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 pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.

- Pastoral care system
- A Buddy/Peer monitoring system, if required
- Tutor/Year Head system
- Student Support team

School staff to be fair and consistent in their approach to address bullying behaviour.

Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour will require support.

It is important that the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour is engaged with without delay so that they feel listened to, supported and reassured.

Staff will identify the supports needed for the student who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties and ensure that their needs are met.

When a student tells an adult that they feel that they are experiencing bullying behaviour they may feel that they are taking back some control over what is happening to them. It is very important that a student's agency is not decreased further by adults deciding what will happen next without listening to the student and involving them in deciding on the actions that will be taken.

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- 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
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The primary aim in addressing reports of bullying behaviour will be to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

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It must also be made clear to all involved (students and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the student being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.

Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved will be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the student who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.

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*.
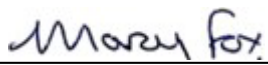
Section D: Oversight

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.)
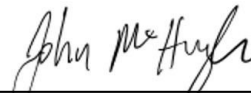
This policy is available to our school community on the school's website and in hard copy on request. A student friendly version of this policy is displayed in the school and is also available on our website and in hard copy on request.

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.

The Bí Cineálta policy was implemented by the Board of Management on 5th June 2025.

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Mary Fox   John McHugh
Chairperson   Principal
Board of Management