



# Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour Scoil Mhuire Junior

The Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire Junior School, Newbridge, Co. Kildare 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.

Furthermore, as a Catholic school, we are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual. No human individual is to be devalued and everybody has a part to play in the school community, regardless of difference.

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 minority groups.

## 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.

## 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	29/5/2025 30/5/2025	Staff meeting Staff survey
Students	23/5/2025	Student questionnaire and focus group
Parents/Guardians	21/5/2025	Parent Survey
Board of Management	27/9/2025	Board of Management meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	29/5/2025	Meeting
Date policy was approved: 17/6/2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: 16/6/2025		

## 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):

In following the preventative strategies which our school will adopt, we come from the context of our Catholic ethos, where inclusivity permeates our school in a real way.

This school uses the KiVa Anti Bullying Programme as its primary mechanism for preventing bullying. KiVa is an anti-bullying programme that has been developed in the University of Turku, Finland, with funding from the Ministry of Education and Culture. This school has been trained in the KiVa anti bullying programme by Archways, who are licenced to deliver the KiVa programme to schools in Ireland. As a KiVa school, we use several universal actions as part of a whole school, participatory approach, with a focus on preventing bullying. School staff (including admin and auxiliary staff) have been trained in the KiVa Anti Bullying Programme and the KiVa screening process for bullying. KiVa utilises a variety of strategies to prevent bullying behaviour, listed below.

#### 1. Staff meeting:

Each year, a staff meeting is held at the beginning of the school year to ensure that everyone working at the school knows that we are a KiVa school. At the staff meeting, we reiterate what this means in practice:

- ✓ Delivering KiVa lessons to specific classes
- ✓ Having a KiVa team to deal with cases of bullying
- ✓ Posters on walls

#### 2. KiVa Kick Off event:

The KiVa kick-off event at the start of the school year is a whole school event (often during assembly) whereby the message that 'we are a KiVa school' is reiterated. It helps to create a participatory culture as students are involved through displays of art, music, poetry with an anti-bullying message.

#### 3. Posters and Logo:

KiVa posters are displayed in prominent places in the school to remind students that we are a KiVa school and do not tolerate bullying. The KiVa logo is recognisable to all children and reminds them that school staff are there to ensure the safety of all students; along with reducing opportunities for bullying.

#### 4. Guide for Parents and Parents' meeting:

All parents are provided with a copy of the KiVa Parents' Guide (in electronic or printed format). The guide provides basic information about bullying and how parents can help to prevent it. The materials inform parents about how to discuss bullying at home and how to deal with situations where they find out that their child has taken part in bullying. We also discuss KiVa at a parents' meeting for incoming students and at a Parents' Evening at the start of the school year to tell parents about the programme.

#### 5. Delivery of KiVa lessons in classrooms:

We deliver KiVa lessons throughout the year to 2<sup>nd</sup> class students. The lessons are a key part of the universal actions of the KiVa anti-bullying programme. The aim is to increase socio-emotional skills and to promote the children's awareness of the importance of the group and bystanders in bullying and stopping bullying. The lessons strive to inspire empathy towards bullied students and provide safe ways to help and support the students who are treated badly. Within the lessons, bullying prevention is based on inspiring a shared sense of responsibility and changes in the norms of the whole group.

KiVa lessons are delivered approximately once a month and involve discussions, group assignments and videos, as well as active exercises, involving games and assignments. See below the themes of each lesson:

Unit 1:

1. Let's get to know each other.
2. Emotions
3. Our class – everyone is include
4. Difference is richness
5. We say NO to bullying
6. We will not join in on bullying
7. The bullied child will be supported
8. I will not be bullied
9. Literature lesson
10. The KiVa contract

6. KiVa Online Games:

Students play online games which allow them to practice and revise what has been learned in KiVa lessons.

7. Student and Staff Surveys:

Each year, students complete a KiVa survey online, which provides information to us about the prevalence of bullying in the school and what students feel the school is like. There is a separate survey for staff members with questions about implementing the programme. We use the survey responses to monitor the implementation of the programme and its impact.

8. Annual review eliciting new strategies from the school community and implementation as appropriate.

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):

Staff in our school have been trained in the KiVa anti-bullying programme, including the screening process for bullying. This means that all staff members can screen for potential bullying before passing suspected cases to the KiVa team. The KiVa Team are a group of 4 school staff who investigate cases of bullying. The KiVa programme includes documentation for each part of the screening and investigation process, which ensures clear documentation of suspected bullying cases.

## Section C:

### Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The KiVa team is made up of the following staff members:

Bairbre Elwood, Áine O'Callaghan, Kevin O'Sullivan, Maeve Keogh

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):

As we use the KiVa anti-bullying programme, members of the KiVa team address cases of bullying in cooperation with the class teacher. Below is a step-by-step description of the process that is followed when bullying is suspected or known to be taking place.

The KiVa programme materials include a specific form for each step of the process for documenting the cases. The forms can be completed on paper or electronically.

#### 1. Screening: Is this bullying?

All school staff have been trained in the KiVa programme and can screen for cases of bullying. Incidents that meet the criteria of systematic bullying are directed to the KiVa team.

#### 2. Discussion with the bullied student

One or two KiVa team members tackle each case of bullying. One KiVa team member meets with the bullied student, as a conversation between two people promotes a confidential atmosphere and connection. In the meeting, the KiVa team member finds out what happened, how long the bullying has continued, and which students have taken part in the bullying. The conversation is intended to increase the bullied student's sense of safety and let them know that adults are on their side and intend to stop the bullying. The

bullied student is also asked to identify classmates who may support them.

It is agreed that there will be a follow-up discussion to ensure that the bullying has stopped. After the discussion the bullied student's class teacher is informed.

### 3. Individual discussions with students who have taken part in bullying

Next, two KiVa team members have separate individual discussions with the students who have taken part in the bullying. The students are called in for a discussion the same day and, if possible, during the same lesson so that they do not have the chance to speak with each other between the discussions. The individual discussions are short (5–10 minutes). The focus of this meeting is simply to highlight that bullying has happened and that it must stop. One of two approaches may be used: confronting or non-confronting.

- The confronting method is direct and lets the student know that school staff are aware of the bullying and that it must end immediately. The student must commit to changing their behaviour .
- The non confronting method involves creating a shared concern for the child who has been bullied. Students are asked what they can do to improve the bullied child's situation.

### 4. Group discussion with the students who have taken part in bullying

A group meeting takes place with all the students who have taken part in the bullying as soon as possible after the individual discussions. The aim of this brief meeting is to reinforce the decisions that the individual students have already agreed on with the KiVa team. In this group discussion:

- What each student has committed to do is reviewed
- The date and time of a follow-up discussion with the same group is agreed on

### 5. Discussion between the class teacher and a few classmates

Where bullying is investigated by the KiVa team, the class teacher arranges a situation where they can calmly discuss with a few select students how they can help support the bullied student. For this discussion, the class teacher either talks to students identified by the bullied student, or if none have been identified the teacher picks prosocial students with good social skills. The class teacher talks to these students about how they can support the bullied student.

### 6. Follow up discussion with the bullied student

The follow-up discussion is held at the time and date agreed during the initial discussion.

The purpose is to ensure that the bullying has stopped. The student is also encouraged to immediately report if the bullying keeps happening.

7. Follow up discussion with the student/ students who have taken part in bullying

Finally, there is a group meeting with the students who have taken part in bullying to check if they have done what they agreed. If they have, they are praised. If the bullied student wants to attend this discussion, this is accommodated.

8. Informing parents

As recommend by the KiVa programme, cases of bullying are first tackled in discussions between the KiVa team and the students. Parents are always informed of cases of bullying. We have informed all parents of the procedure for cases of bullying in advance, both through the parent meetings and providing them with the KiVa parents' guide.

All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, and the dates of the engagement with students and parents. The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented. KiVa documentation will be recorded using the KiVa templates and confidentially stored with the Principal. 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*.

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 will engage with the following agencies, where necessary, to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour:

National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)

Oide

Webwise

National Parents Council

Dublin City University (DCU) Anti-Bullying Centre

Tusla

## Section D: Oversight

The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting. This update will include the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting, the number of ongoing incidents and the total number of incidents since the beginning of the school year. Where incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred, the principal will also provide a verbal update which will include where relevant, information relating to trends and patterns identified, strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant. This update does not contain personal or identifying information. See Chapter 7 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

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

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed, following input from our school community, each calendar year or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this policy refers.

Signed: Frank Oa

(Chairperson of board of management)

Date: 17/6/2025

Signed: [Signature]

(Principal)

Date: 17/6/25



Scoil Mhuire Junior



# Bí Cineálta!

We want everyone at our school to feel safe and happy!

Bullying behaviour is when someone is hurtful to others on purpose over and over again.



Our school has a Bí Cineálta policy to try to stop bullying behaviour. Every year we will ask you what you think.

If you think that you are being bullied or someone else is being bullied, you need to tell a teacher or another adult you trust. They will know what to do to help!



**SAY NO,  
GET AWAY,  
TELL!**

If someone is being bullied KiVa is here to help. We will follow the KiVa steps.



Frank line 17/6/2025

BEH 17/6/25