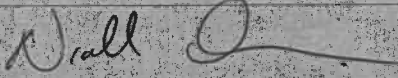
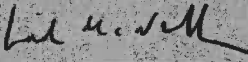




School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Created Date	June 2025
Created By	Niall Quinn (Principal)
Signed by Principal	
Version	V1_23June2025
Approved by Chairperson name	Linda McNulty
Approved by Chairperson signature	
Approved by Board Date	23/6/25
Date of next review	2029

1. Introduction

The Board of Management of Westport Educate Together NS 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.

2. 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.

4. 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):

Culture & Environment

- **School Values** - A clear, shared set of school values (Ready to Learn, Safe, Respect) sets the foundation for behaviour expectations. When these values are consistently taught, modelled, and reinforced, they help create a culture where bullying is less likely to occur and more likely to be challenged by peers and staff.
- **Displays** - Visual displays around the school—such as posters promoting kindness, student work reflecting inclusive themes, or anti-bullying messages—serve as constant, visible reminders of the school’s stance on respectful behaviour. These displays help normalise positive social behaviours and celebrate diversity.
- **Survey** - Regular anonymous surveys allow students to voice their experiences and perceptions regarding bullying and school climate. This empowers students, helps identify patterns, and shows the school’s commitment to listening and acting on student feedback, which can deter bullying behaviour.
- **Circle Time** - Circle time creates a structured, respectful space for students to express feelings, discuss issues, and build empathy. Regular sessions build trust, encourage open communication, and help children develop the social and emotional skills necessary to resolve conflicts peacefully.
- **Nurture** - Nurture approaches focus on emotional development and wellbeing, especially for students who may be vulnerable or experiencing difficulties. This provision reduces emotional distress—a known trigger for both being bullied and bullying others—and promotes resilience, self-regulation, and peer empathy.
- **Assembly** - School assemblies provide opportunities to reinforce shared values, celebrate positive behaviour, and educate about bullying prevention. They can include themed messages, role plays, or student-led presentations that promote unity, kindness, and respect among the wider school community.
- **Awards** - Recognition systems (e.g. for kindness, teamwork, or respect) encourage and reinforce positive social interactions. Celebrating students who demonstrate pro-social behaviours helps establish these as norms, indirectly discouraging bullying by promoting desirable alternatives.
- **Seat Changes** - Regular, purposeful changes in seating arrangements encourage students to interact with a wider range of peers. This prevents exclusionary dynamics and provides opportunities to build empathy and relationships with classmates they might not typically engage with.
- **Staff Modelling** - Staff consistently modelling respectful, kind, and inclusive behaviour is key to setting the tone for the school. When adults demonstrate how to handle conflict calmly

- **Forest Bathing, Swimming, Drumming** – Extra-Curricular Activities - These holistic activities promote wellbeing, confidence, and peer connection outside the classroom. Participation in such inclusive experiences builds self-esteem and broadens social circles.
- **Excursions** - Class trips and school outings provide shared experiences that strengthen bonds among students and between students and staff. These less formal settings allow children to engage positively with peers they may not usually interact with, fostering a sense of community.
- **I.S.L. (Irish Sign Language)** - Introducing students to ISL fosters empathy, inclusion, and respect for different communication needs. It challenges ableism and promotes a culture where diversity is not just accepted but celebrated—an important step in preventing bullying of students with disabilities.
- **Re-tracking** - Re-tracking allows for flexible support and differentiated pathways, particularly for students who may be struggling emotionally, socially, or academically. Providing appropriate interventions reduces behavioural issues that may lead to or result from bullying, while keeping students connected to their peers.
- **Secondary School Visits** – Transition Programme - Transition programmes help reduce anxiety around moving to secondary school by equipping students with coping strategies and familiarity. A smoother, supported transition can prevent bullying that sometimes emerges from power imbalances or uncertainty in new social environments.

Relationships & Partnerships

- **Staff/Parent** - Strong, respectful partnerships between staff and parents create a united front against bullying. Open, two-way communication ensures that concerns are addressed early, children receive consistent messages at home and school, and families feel involved in promoting kindness and respect.
- **Pupil to Pupil Relationships** - Encouraging healthy, respectful peer relationships is central to bullying prevention. When students are taught to cooperate, resolve conflict, and show empathy, they are more likely to include others and stand up against bullying. Positive peer bonds also create a natural support network.
- **Pupil to Staff Relationships** - Positive, trusting relationships between students and staff help children feel safe, seen, and valued. When students know they can approach adults for support, bullying is more likely to be reported early and dealt with effectively, and less likely to persist in silence.
- **Group/Pair Work** - Collaborative tasks foster communication, empathy, and shared responsibility. Regular opportunities for group or paired learning build respect among peers and teach students how to navigate social interactions respectfully — important skills in bullying prevention.
- **Buddies/Kindness Keepers** - Buddy systems pair younger or more vulnerable students with older or more socially confident peers. This provides students with a sense of connection and support, reducing isolation and the likelihood of being targeted by bullies. It also fosters empathy and responsibility in older students.
- **Valued Voice** - When students feel their opinions are heard and respected, they are more likely to engage positively in school life. A culture that values student voice empowers

- Classroom teachers actively encourage students to report any incidents of bullying they witness or experience, promoting a culture of trust and responsibility.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Non-teaching and ancillary staff are encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers.
- School assemblies are used to emphasise the importance of positive behaviour and looking after one another.
- SPHE lessons play a crucial role in promoting positive behaviour and providing students with strategies to address negative behaviour when it arises.

5. Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

What is Bullying?

Bullying is defined 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.)

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred:

- o Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?
- o Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?
- o Is the behaviour repeated?

If the answer to each question above is YES, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour, and the behaviour will be addressed using the procedure laid out below. If the answer to any of the above questions is no, then the behaviour may be negative behaviour but is not considered bullying behaviour and will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

- The teacher will document the review with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of the student 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 it is determined that the bullying behaviour has not ceased, then the process will proceed to Stage 2 outlined below.

Stage 2 – Principal

If the bullying behaviour has not ceased following initial interventions, the Principal will take additional steps to address the issue. These will include:

- Meeting with the students involved to review the situation in detail, ensuring that all parties have an opportunity to express their concerns and perspectives.
- A thorough assessment of the situation will be conducted to determine whether further strategies or additional supervision measures need to be implemented to prevent further incidents of bullying.
- The Principal may also arrange meetings with the parents or guardians of the students involved. These meetings will serve to collaboratively discuss the ongoing issues, put in place further interventions, and develop a tailored plan of action aimed at addressing the bullying behaviour. The focus of the plan will be on fostering positive behavioural change, promoting respect, and ensuring the well-being of all students.
- A second promise form may be signed by the child displaying bullying behaviour if the Principal deems it to be appropriate (It may be counter signed by the parents if the Principal deems appropriate)
- The school will work closely with parents to monitor progress, provide ongoing support, and ensure that both the student experiencing the bullying behaviour and the student displaying bullying behaviour receive the necessary guidance and support to resolve the situation effectively.
- Continuous monitoring and follow-up will be conducted to assess the effectiveness of the interventions, with the aim of ending the bullying behaviour.
- If, after all interventions and supports have been implemented at this stage, it is determined that the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the process will proceed to Stage 3, as detailed below.

Stage 3 – Code of Behaviour

The school has a fundamental responsibility to ensure a safe and supportive environment for all students. If initial interventions and supports do not effectively address bullying and the behaviour persists, a more structured program of appropriate sanctions may be implemented. This will be done by the Principal in consultation with the student's parents and the Board of Management. The sanctions will be designed to not only address the bullying behaviour but also to encourage positive behaviour, promote personal growth, and uphold the dignity and self-esteem of the child. The aim is

6. Complaints Procedure

- If a parent is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with these procedures, they should be referred to the school's complaints procedure.
- In the event that a parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, a 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 student.

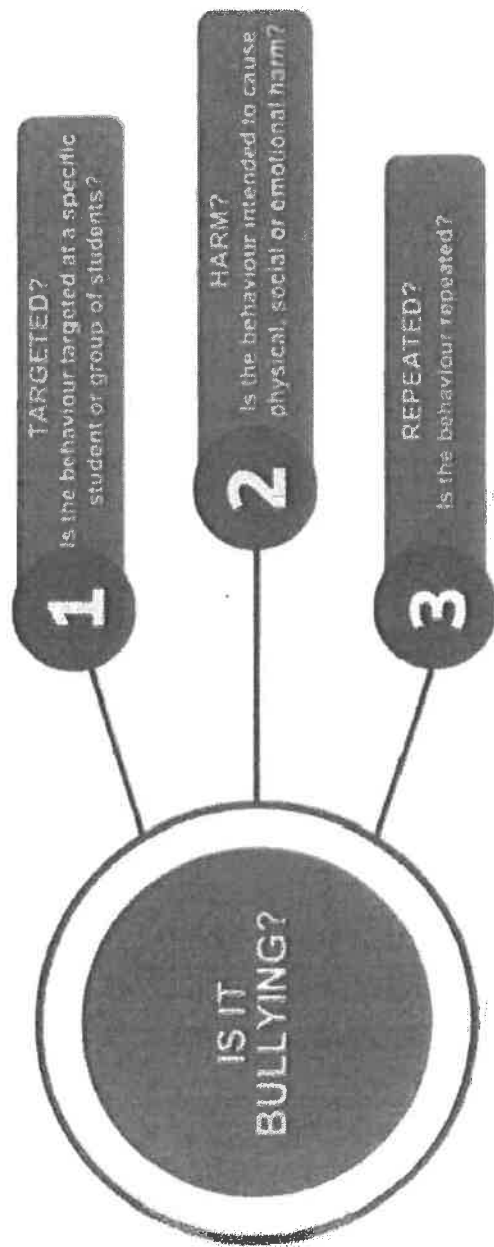
The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

- The school offers a range of programs and initiatives designed to support and promote students' wellbeing. These include the Nurture and Social Groups, Friends for Life Programme, wellbeing displays, school assemblies, the school garden, extracurricular activities, SPHE lessons, and the Learn Together Ethical Education Curriculum . Each of these initiatives plays a vital role in fostering a positive and supportive environment that prioritises the emotional, social, and mental well-being of all students.
- The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) provides a comprehensive range of supports including both direct supports; working with affected children, and indirect support in the form of CPD and advice.
- The NCSE has a range of supports available to schools in the form of advisors to visit the school and provide advice and support as well as providing a range of CPD opportunities for teachers and staff.
- Oide is the Department of Education support service for schools and it supports professional learning for primary teachers and school leaders.
- Webwise is the online safety initiative of the Department of Education and is used in the classes to help support the promotion of safer, better internet use through awareness raising and education initiatives targeting teacher's students and parents.

Supporting students who experience bullying behaviour:

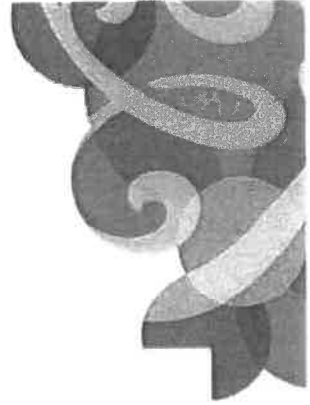
- Ensuring prompt identification of those responsible for bullying and swift resolution of bullying situations, reinforcing that the student experiencing bullying behaviour is not at fault.
- Promoting respect for all pupils, including those who are experiencing bullying.
- Encouraging empathy and providing support for students experiencing bullying.
- Supporting students who experience bullying behaviour in building self-esteem by encouraging participation in activities that foster friendships and social skills, such as group work in class or involvement in extracurricular activities, either during or after school.
- Implementation of social skills/Nurture groups, led by Special Education teachers, to support students affected by bullying behaviour. These groups aim to build confidence, improve self-esteem, and foster meaningful friendships. They provide a safe space for students to express emotions, learn conflict resolution, and practice communication skills. Additionally, these groups afford teachers the opportunity to 'check in' on students' well-being and offer personalised support to help them overcome the emotional impact of bullying behaviour and build social and emotional resilience.

Appendix A – Is it Bullying?



If the answer to any of the 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.

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



Appendix B Contd. Sample: Prevention/Awareness-Raising Exercises
from the *Anti-Bullying Campaign* – Fostering Friendship, Kindness and Respect
for Junior and Senior Infants and First Class (Age 4-7 years)

An Outline of Primary Strand 1 - Tools for Raising Awareness
Age 4-7 Years – Developing a Culture of Friendship, Kindness and Respect

*Before addressing the bullying issue in Second Class (age 7-8)
children should ideally have done all of the positive exercises below during the previous three school years*

Junior Infants (Age 4-5):

- Exercise 1.0.01** Board Game for Dice – Friendship, Kindness & Respect 1
- Exercise 1.0.02** "Sesame Street - What Is A Friend" – Video and Questions for Teacher to Ask
- Exercise 1.0.03** "Sesame Street - Because We're Friends" – Video and Questions for Teacher to Ask
- Exercise 1.0.04** "Sesame Street - I Am Your Friend" – Video and Questions for Teacher to Ask
- Exercise 1.0.05** "Grumpy Tree Story" – Video and Questions for Teacher to Ask
- Exercise 1.0.06** "Sesame Street - Looking For A Friend" – Video and Questions for Teacher to Ask
- Exercise 1.0.07** "Colour Your World With Kindness" – Video and Questions for Teacher to Ask
- Exercise 1.0.08** "Respect Explained" – Video and Questions for Teacher to Ask
- Exercise 1.0.09** "Sesame Street - Respect" – Video and Questions for Teacher to Ask

Senior Infants (Age 5-6):

- Exercise 1.0.11** Board Game for Dice – Friendship, Kindness & Respect 2
- Exercise 1.0.12** "Sesame Street - Get Along Together" - Video and Questions for Teacher to Ask
- Exercise 1.0.13** "A Random Act of Kindness" – Video and Questions for Teacher to Ask
- Exercise 1.0.14** "Be Responsible, Safe, Respectful Song" – Video and Questions for Teacher to Ask
- Exercise 1.0.15** "Simple Act of Kindness Creates Endless Ripple" – Video and Questions for Teacher to Ask
- Exercise 1.0.16** "Respect" – Video and Questions for Teacher to Ask
- Exercise 1.0.17** "Respect Song Video - Classroom Mix Version" – Video and Questions for Teacher to Ask
- Exercise 1.0.18** "Kindness Rhyme For Kids - You Are Amazing" – Video and Questions for Teacher to Ask
- Exercise 1.0.19** "Kindness Changes Everything" – Video and Questions for Teacher to Ask

First Class (Age 6-7):

- Exercise 1.1.01** Board Game for Dice – Friendship, Kindness & Respect 3
- Exercise 1.1.02** "Kid's Guide - Getting Along With Classmates" – Video and Questions for Teacher to Ask
- Exercise 1.1.03** "Inspirational Video – Pay it Forward" – Video and Questions for Teacher to Ask
- Exercise 1.1.04** "Life Lessons sharing and respecting others" – Video and Questions for Teacher to Ask
- Exercise 1.1.05** "Kids For Character: Respect" – Video and Questions for Teacher to Ask
- Exercise 1.1.06** "Kindness Speech by 10 Year Old Girl" – Video and Questions for Teacher to Ask
- Exercise 1.1.07** "Yes, That's Bullying" – Video and Questions for Teacher to Ask
- Exercise 1.1.08** "Stand Up~ Bullying Commercial" – Video and Questions for Teacher to Ask
- Exercise 1.1.09** "Bully-Free Zone! Song" – Video and Questions for Teacher to Ask

Sixth Class (Age 11-12):

- Exercise 1.6.1:** "Mean Girls"- *You Tube Video & Accompanying Worksheet*
- Exercise 1.6.2:** "How to UnMake a Bully, Vol. 2" – *YouTube Video to be followed by small group or class discussion*
- Exercise 1.6.3:** "Cyber-Bullying" – *YouTube Video & Accompanying Worksheet*
- Exercise 1.6.4:** "Childnet International – Cyberbullying" – *YouTube Video & Accompanying Worksheet*
- Exercise 1.6.5:** *Short Worksheet Exercise to avoid being cyberbullied & handout of tips re. phone & online bullying*
- Exercise 1.6.6:** "Tolerance PSA - Dear Parents" – *YouTube Video to be followed by discussion in school & at home*
- Exercise 1.6.7:** *Annual Anti-Bullying Drawing Competition (2 Weeks)*
- Exercise 1.6.8:** *Computerised Anti-Bullying Poster Competition or Annual Anti-Bullying Slogan Competition (2 Weeks)*
- Exercise 1.6.9:** *5th & 6th Class (Age 11-12) Anti-Bullying Snakes and Ladders - Game*
- + Surveys:** *From the "Resolving Situations" section with 'Reform, not Blame' approach explained before every survey*

All Classes: (Age 8 - 12):

- **Curricular Anti-Bullying Resources:** *Social, Personal & Health Education, Religious Education, and/or other subject area activities supporting anti-bullying work*
- **Teachers Section:** *13 – A Selection of Poems, some of which can help older pupils understand how bullied children might feel & maybe encourage further writing*
- **Literature:** *Any literature on themes of Friendship, Kindness, Respect, Bullying etc.*
- **School Visits:** *Visiting Anti-Bullying Drama/Speaker if available/affordable*

Staff Awareness of Bullying:

- **Primary & Post-Primary Level Videos:** *Sample Various Pupil Awareness-Raising Videos from our programme*
- **Teachers Section:**
 - 01 (a)** – *Powerpoint Presentation for Teachers on Bullying and how the Anti-Bullying Campaign works*
 - 01 (b)** – *Video Presentation for Teachers on Bullying and how the Anti-Bullying Campaign works*
 - 03 (a)** – *Powerpoint Presentation for Parents and Teachers on Bullying & Cyber-Bullying with an outline of the Anti-Bullying Campaign*
 - 03 (b)** – *Video Presentation for Parents and Teachers on Bullying & Cyber-Bullying with an outline of the Anti-Bullying Campaign*
 - 09** – *"Not in the Break Room, Not on the Playground" – YouTube Video*
 - 10** – *"To this Day Project – Shane Koyczan" – YouTube Video*
 - 11** – *Lucy's Story – Tragedy of teen son, taunted online, told by his mum*
 - 13** – *Poems to help Teachers understand how bullied children might feel*
- **Visiting Drama:** *Attend any Visiting Anti-Bullying Drama/Speaker with pupils*
- **Regular Reports & "Thank You's":** *Presented at staff-meetings, staff-days, in-school inservice etc.*

Parent Awareness of Bullying:

- **Teachers Section:**
 - Exercise 03 (a)** – *Powerpoint Presentation for Parents and Teachers on Bullying & Cyberbullying with an outline of the Anti-Bullying Campaign*
 - Exercise 03 (b)** – *Video Presentation for Parents and Teachers on Bullying & Cyber-Bullying with an outline of the Anti-Bullying Campaign*
- **Policy:** *Publication of Anti-Bullying policy in School Prospectus / School Website / Pupil Journals*
- **Newsletters:** *Regular parents newsletter items re. anti-bullying activities*

Whole School Awareness:

Display in central and/or public areas in school:

- (a) *Information re anti-bullying activities*
- (b) *Notice of upcoming anti-bullying events*
- (c) *Anti-bullying competition winners' names*
- (d) *Anti-bullying competition winning entries*



Appendix D – Reporting Template

This template is only to be used when bullying behaviour has been identified, in line with the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

1. Date of initial engagement with pupil(s) and parent(s)

2. Initials of pupil who has experienced bullying behaviour and class group

Initials _____ Class _____

3. Initials and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

Initials _____ Class(es) _____

4. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))*		5. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))*	
Pupil concerned		Yard	
Other Pupil		Classroom	
Parent		Corridor	
Teacher		Toilets	
Other		Other (specify)	

6. Initials of person(s) who reported the bullying concern and/or relationship to the pupil(s)

7. Dates of when the bullying behaviour occurred

8. Form of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es) See Section 2.5 of Bí Cineálta Handbook

Physical Bullying Behaviour		Exclusion Bullying Behaviour	
Verbal Bullying Behaviour		Relational Bullying Behaviour	
Written Bullying Behaviour		Online Bullying Behaviour	
Extortion		Other (specify)	

9. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es) See Section 2.7 of Bí Cineálta Handbook

Disablist Bullying Behaviour		Homophobic/Transphobic (LGBTQ+) Bullying Behaviour	
Exceptionally Bullying Behaviour		Physical Appearance Sexual Harassment	
Gender Identity Bullying Behaviour		Racist Bullying Behaviour	
Sexist Bullying Behaviour Sexual Harassment		Religious Identity Bullying Behaviour	
Poverty Bullying Behaviour		Other (specify)	

Appendix E – Guide to Providing Bullying Behaviour Update

Guide to providing Bullying Behaviour Update for board of management meeting of

Having reviewed the details of the incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the previous board of management meeting, the principal must provide the following information at each ordinary meeting of the board of management:

Total number of new incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the last board of management meeting.	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour currently ongoing.	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the beginning of this school year.	

Where incidents of bullying behaviour have been reported since the last meeting, the update must include a verbal report which should include the following information where relevant:

- the trends and patterns identified such as the form of bullying behaviour, type of bullying behaviour if known, location of bullying behaviour, when it occurred etc
- the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour
- any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour
- if any serious incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred which have had a serious adverse impact on a student
- if a parent has informed the school that a student has left the school because of reported bullying behaviour
- if any additional support is needed from the board of management
- if the school's Bí Cineálta policy requires urgent review in advance of the annual review

This update should not include any personal information or information that could identify the students involved.

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?