Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Newpark Comprehensive School has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

This policy fully complies with the requirements of Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2024.

The board of management acknowledges that bullying behaviour interferes with the rights of the child as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We all, as a school community, have a responsibility to work together to prevent and address bullying behaviour and to deal with the negative impact of bullying behaviour.

We are committed to ensuring that all 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: 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._

Once off incidents may be considered bullying in certain circumstances, for example a single hurtful message posted on social media as there is a likelihood of it being shared.

The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

What is not bullying behaviour?
- A once-off instance of negative behaviour
- Disagreement between students
- Instances where students don't want to remain friends
- Non-deliberate behaviours of students with special educational needs

While these do not fall within the definition of bullying, they may be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's Relationships and Behaviour policy.

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	1 May 2025 2 May 2025 12 May 2025 August 2025	All staff email. Year Leaders' meeting Student Support Team meeting. Staff training sessions.
Students	15 May 2025 September 2025	Focus group, Student Council. Assemblies; policy dissemination/promotion.
Parents	25 April 2025 14 May 2025 September 2025	All parent/guardian email. PTA meeting. Policy dissemination/promotion.
Board of Management	30 April 2025 6 May 2025 18 June 2025	Board meeting. All Board email. Board meeting.
Wider school community	16 May 2025 September 2025	Website consultation. Policy dissemination/promotion.
Date policy was approved: 18 June 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: 8 May 2024		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

Prevention strategies that will be used by the school.

- Full implementation of the SPHE, RSE, and CSPE programmes and curricula like digital literacy to ensure that school culture supports a safe social and personal environment.
- Teachers of SPHE are supported and encouraged to attend CPD on anti- bullying, RSE etc
- SPHE syllabus includes anti-bullying, and many issues related to bullying behaviour. SPHE teachers use programmes such as DCU FUSE
- Senior Cycle Life-Skills delivery of lessons on gender identity, healthy relationships, mental health
- Diversity, Interculturalism and positive behaviour promoted, posters displayed, lunchtime clubs, Transition Year guest speakers
- Pride lunchtime club, LGBT+ flag displayed, gender neutral toilet signage, posters displayed on notice boards and on office walls

- Encouragement of the Student Council to become involved in contributing to a safe school environment
- Interventions by staff where needed (Bullying, Internet Safety, Acceptable Behaviour)
- Pastoral Care system (form teachers, year heads, SST)
- Student Support weekly meetings
- Chat with the Chaplin for all 1st years
- Majority of teachers trained in Restorative Practices
- The implementation of whole school awareness measures: Wellbeing Week, *StandUp* Week, Wear Red Anti-Racism Day, Amber Flag, 1st year anti-bullying poster competition and regular school or year group assemblies by principal, deputy, year heads
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying Policy for the school – posters on walls, on the school website, in student journals and all 1st years are made aware of the policy in SPHE
- Anti-Bullying Policy is promoted at various occasions: Parent evening for incoming 1st years and information evenings for junior cycle parents
- Blocking of social networking sites on the school network
- Lunch time ECAs including anti-racism, Pride, Lego, CU
- Lunchtime library supervision for students
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and ECA activities. Black Spots identified using 2nd year annual bullying survey. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school alongside the I.T. Acceptable Use Policy
- Buddy system - 1st years with prefects helps to support 1st year students transition confidently and encourage a culture of peer support
- Ensuring that students know who to talk too e.g. Who is Who SST posters around the school, student friendly version of the Anti-Bullying Policy on walls around the school
- Administer a confidential questionnaire once a year in 2nd year
- There are a range of other policies such as the school's IT Acceptable Use Policy, Inclusion Policy Additional Educational Needs, Mobile Phone Policy, Wellbeing Policy, Relationships & Behaviour Policy (see school website)
- Will continue to work with outside agencies facilitating the piloting of relevant resource material.

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour:

- School S & S Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and ECA activities. Black Spots identified using 2nd year annual bullying survey
- Lunchtime supervised ECAs
- There are a range of other policies such as the school's IT Acceptable Use Policy, Inclusion Policy Additional Educational Needs, Mobile Phone Policy, Wellbeing Policy, Relationships & Behaviour Policy (see school website)
- Stage Zero in the policy

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teachers with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour are year leaders supported by form teachers and the SST.

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:

Stage Zero

- A staff member observes or is informed of once off negative "student – student interaction", i.e., name calling, pushing, writing notes
- The observed behaviour usually will not require an M.D
- The observed behaviour is not deemed to be bullying

Actions:
1. The observed behaviour, or information is reported to the form teacher via email. The subject line of the email should read "Student-Student Interaction". The form teacher will log this behaviour in the "Stage Zero Bullying Record" spreadsheet in their year group Team. This facilitates monitoring patterns of negative behaviour. It will help identify if a particular student is on the receiving end of negative behaviour from a number of different students
2. A restorative approach is the preferred intervention for this negative behaviour. (see Appendix 1)

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred
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 should be referred to the Year Leader, and the behaviour should be addressed using the Bí Cineálta Procedures/Anti-Bullying Policy & Procedures. A negative behaviour that does not meet the definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Relationships & Behaviour Policy.

A one off incident may be considered bullying in certain circumstances for example a single hurtful message on social media as it has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times.

When identifying whether it is bullying or not teachers should consider what, where, when and why?
- If a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually first
- Thereafter, all students involved should be met as a group. At the 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
- If it is helpful ask the students to write down their account of the incident(s)

Where bullying behaviour has occurred
- Parents/guardians must be 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
- Listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- A Bullying Record Form (see appendix II) must be filled out and be stored on the student's file in the front office and on the anti-bullying record file in the front office. The Student Support Team will review the Anti-Bullying Record File once per term to identify issues, trends or patterns and then update the Secretary of the Board of Management accordingly, in order that appropriate oversight arrangements may be followed
- If a parent/guardian requests no action they must put it in writing. However, while acknowledging their request, the school may decide it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour. If a student requests no action they must still be supported and parents may need to be informed
- 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*

Follow Up
- The Year Leader must engage with the students involved and their parents no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement and see if the bullying has stopped, if the strategies have been effective and how is the relationship with those involved
- A Follow Up Bullying Record Form (see Appendix III) must be filled out
- If the bullying behaviour has not ceased the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students and their parents/guardians and agree a timeframe for further engagement
- If the bullying behaviour continues the school will use the Relationship & Behaviour Policy. If disciplinary sanctions are considered this is a matter between the student, their parents/guardians and the school

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

- Pastoral care system
- Student Support Team
- Individual counselling with a guidance counsellor for students where appropriate
- Interventions/ workshops with groups where appropriate
- SPHE classes address concerns or issues that need attention
- Restorative meetings
- Working with outside agencies where necessary

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*.

Complaints process
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. If a student and /or parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

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.

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.

This policy was initiated during the academic year 2024/2025 in line with Circular Letter 0055/2024, *Publication of Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* for implementation from the start of the academic year 2025/2026.

It will be reviewed again in term three 2025/2026, in line with changing information, guidelines, legislation and/or feedback from school stakeholders and in accordance with Department of Education review and notification templates available on gov.ie/en/department-of-education/policy-information/bí-cineálta-procedures-to-prevent-and-address-bullying-behaviour-for-primary-and-post-primary-schools/#implementation.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management, Newpark Comprehensive School at its meeting on 18 June 2025.

Appendix I - Outline of Restorative Practice

A restorative approach will be used if all parties agree.

- A restorative approach deals with inappropriate behaviour by addressing harm done to relationships and people as opposed to the need for assigning blame. It focuses on building and repairing relationships rather than managing and controlling behaviour
- A restorative approach focuses on: – What happened? – Who has been affected and how? – How can we put right the harm that has been done? – What have we all learnt to allow us to make different choices the next time?
- The emphasis is on "we" because all those affected by what has happened are also involved in finding a solution to move forward
- The process includes restorative enquiry and language, restorative discussion, mediation and problem-solving circles
- The aim is to make the situation as right as possible after some behaviour or event which has adversely affected people. Everyone affected has the opportunity to talk about what has happened, how they have been affected and how they are feeling
- They also say what they want to do to repair the damage

Appendix II Bullying Record Form

Date:

Name and form group of student allegedly being bullied: _____

_____

_____

Name and form group of students(s) allegedly engaged in bullying behaviour: _____

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_____

Where and when it took place: _____

_____

Types of alleged bullying behaviour tick(s) where relevant

- Disablist
- Exceptionally able
- Gender identity
- Homophobic/transphobic (LGBTQ+)
- Physical appearance bullying
- Racist
- Poverty
- Religious identity
- Sexist
- Sexual harassment
- Other

Form of alleged bullying behaviour tick(s) where relevant

- Physical
- Verbal
- Written
- Extortion
- Exclusion
- Relational
- Online

Date of the initial engagement with the students involved and their parents/guardians:

_____

Views of the student and parents/guardians regarding the action to be taken:

_____

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_____

_____

Details of actions taken / supports offered: _____

_____

_____

_____

Attach students written accounts: Yes/No

Signed _____

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*

Copy to student file and to anti-bullying record file (both in School Office)

Appendix III Follow Up Bullying Record Form

Date:

Name and form group of student allegedly being bullied: _____

Name and form group of students(s) allegedly engaged in bullying behaviour: _____

_____

_____

Has the bullying behaviour ceased? Yes/No

If it has ceased, what date did it cease? _____

Were external agencies involved? Yes/No

If yes, what supports were given _____

Details of the review with the parents/guardian and student/s _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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_____

_____

_____

_____

Is ongoing support needed? Yes/No

If yes, what supports are needed? _____

_____

_____

Copy to student file and to anti-bullying record file (both in School Office)

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*