



Brittas N.S

SAFE - HAPPY - CARING



Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Brittas N.S. 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 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 definition of bullying behaviour as outlined in the *Cineáltas: Action plan on Bullying*:

Core definition of Bullying Behaviour

Bullying is 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.

In summary, the core elements of this definition are that bullying is Targeted Behaviour, Repeated Behaviour and is concerned with an imbalance of power.

A more detailed analysis of these elements and other aspects of bullying behaviour are outlined in *Appendix 1* of this document.

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	16/01/2025 09/04/2025	Bí Cineálta Training (OIDE) Bí Cineálta Half Day Training Staff Meeting
Students	May '25	Class Discussions
Parents	September '25	Parental Workshop/OIDE Webinar
Board of Management	01/05/2025 11/06/2025	Board Meeting Board Meeting
Date policy was approved: Board Meeting 11 th June 2025		
Date policy will be reviewed: September 2026		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

Through the SPHE (*STAY SAFE*) Programme, children in St Martin's are introduced to Anti-Bullying Strategies. Following work with the children in May 2025, we will still incorporate the definition of **Deliberate**, **Hurtful** and **Repeated** as outlined in Stay Safe, as the children found this easier.

This is completed annually in the 1st term to all classes.

Our school rules encourage to be **SAFE**, **HAPPY** and **CARING** at all times.

Other strategies may be introduced via the Grow in Love Walk Tall and Smart Moves.

On an annual basis, classes will design their own Bí Cinealta Display Posters.

Senior Classes (5th / 6th) will produce a Whole School Poster. (*See Appendix 2*)

We are a telling school. We tell to keep others **Safe** and **Happy** and to show we **Care**.

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

Bullying may occur in unstructured times, so supervision may need to be more diligent at this time e.g. Yard time.

The school will ensure that children are supervised at all times, with easy access to approaches to members of staff.

Yard will be equipped with activities for children to share and enjoy in cooperative settings, as individuals, in pairs/small groups or larger groups.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

Each class teacher is responsible for investigation and dealing with bullying behaviour with the support of the principal, Deputy Principal and Support Teachers.

Approach

1. Where an incident of bullying is alleged, a teacher will exercise her/his professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best to resolve the situation, in a timely manner.
2. The primary aim of the relevant teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying is to restore as far as possible, the relationship of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame).
3. While investigating, the teacher should use the Bullying Incident Form (*See Appendix 3*). Each teacher should have blank copies of these.
4. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying, they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly. It should be ensured that any pupil experiencing bullying behaviour is heard and reassured.
5. Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs) and visiting teachers, must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.
6. Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
7. It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset.
8. Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
9. Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
10. All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.

Identifying if Bullying behaviour has occurred.

1. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.

2. If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.
3. Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.
4. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).
5. In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred; the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils.

When Bullying behaviour has occurred.

1. Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's *Bi Cinealta* policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
2. The teacher should listen to the views of the student who is experiencing bullying as to how to best address the situation.
3. It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.
4. If deemed appropriate, the parties involved with the class teacher and/or principal or deputy principal should fill in and enforce the Schools Behaviour Contract (*See Appendix 4*).

Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred.

1. Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together later if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect. This should occur within 20 days of the initial engagement.
2. In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed, the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
 - Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased. The date that has been determined should be recorded.
 - 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; and
 - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal.

3. If bullying behaviour has not ceased, the teacher should:
 - Review the strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents. A time frame should be agreed until the behaviour has ceased.
 - If it becomes clear that a student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school consideration should be given to using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided 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.
4. Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
5. In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

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 Appendix 5)

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 each classroom in poster form.

A whole school display poster is on display throughout the school and is also available on our website and in hard copy on request.

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

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Principal)

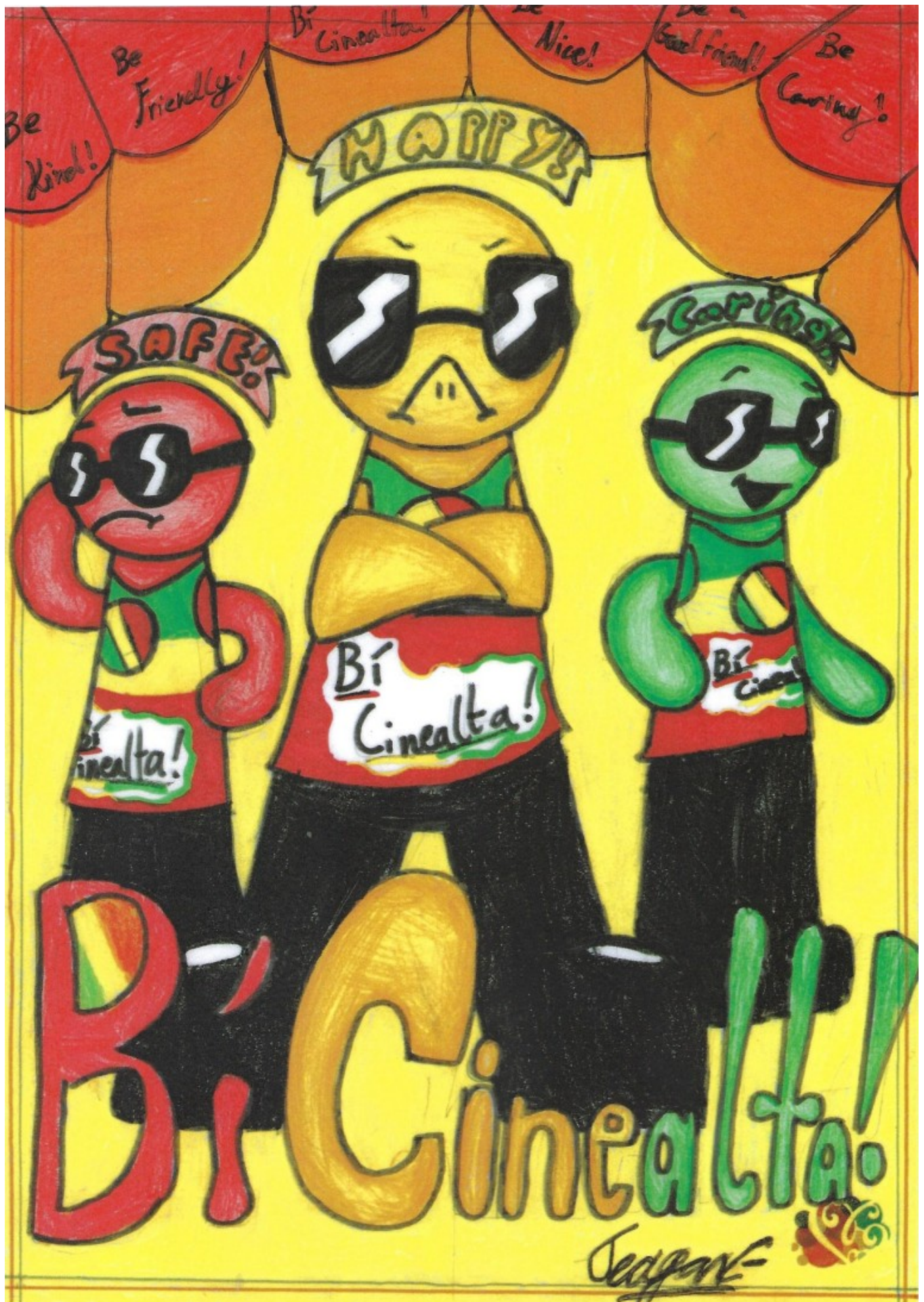
APPENDIX 1

➤ **Targeted behaviour Bullying** is deliberate, unwanted behaviour that causes harm to others, and where the student displaying bullying behaviour knows that their behaviour is or will be perceived as harmful by the child or young person experiencing the behaviour. Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. The harm can be physical (for example, personal injury, damage to or loss of property), social (for example, withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion) and/or emotional (for example, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety) and can have a serious and long-term negative impact on the student experiencing the bullying behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying but, importantly, must still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour.

➤ **Repeated behaviour Bullying** takes the form of a systematic pattern of behaviour which is repeated over time. Single offline incidents of intentional negative behaviour involving an imbalance of power are not considered bullying but must still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour. Posting a single harmful message/image/video online, and which is highly likely to be reposted or shared with others can therefore be seen as bullying behaviour.

➤ **Imbalance of power** In incidents of bullying, the student experiencing the bullying behaviour finds it hard to defend themselves as a result of the abuse of a real or perceived imbalance of power. This imbalance of power may manifest itself through differences in size, strength, age, ability, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, race, ethnic origin including membership of the Traveller and/or Roma communities, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, experience of the care system, disability or the receipt of special education. In incidents of online (or cyber) bullying, the imbalance of power may relate to online anonymity, technical proficiency and possession of information/images/video, and the inability of the targeted student to remove offensive online material or escape the bullying.

As outlined in Section B (Page) of this document, following class work with the children in May 2025, we will still incorporate the definition of **Deliberate**, **Hurtful** and **Repeated** as outlined in Stay Safe, as the children found this easier.





APPENDIX 3

Harassment Bullying Incident Report Form

Date: _____ Time: _____ Room/Location: _____

Student(s) initiating Bullying/Harassment:

Name: _____ Class: _____

Name: _____ Class: _____

Name: _____ Class: _____

Name: _____ Class: _____

Student(s) affected:

Name: _____ Class: _____

Name: _____ Class: _____

Witnesses (if any)

Name: _____ Class: _____

Name: _____ Class: _____

Check all spaces below that apply. An adult stated or identified inappropriate behaviours as:

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Name Calling | <input type="checkbox"/> Stalking | <input type="checkbox"/> Stealing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Demeaning Comments | <input type="checkbox"/> Staring/Leering | <input type="checkbox"/> Playing unfairly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate gesturing | <input type="checkbox"/> Damaging Property | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing/Graffiti |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shoving/Pushing | <input type="checkbox"/> Threatening | <input type="checkbox"/> Hitting/Kicking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Taunting/Ridiculing | <input type="checkbox"/> Flashing a weapon | <input type="checkbox"/> Intimidation/extortion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate Touching | <input type="checkbox"/> Exclusion from Games | <input type="checkbox"/> Cyber Bullying |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Malicious Gossip | <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |

Describe the incident:

Has this Happened before? YES/NO

Witnesses (if any): _____

Physical Evidence: (*Graffiti/Notes/damaged property*): _____

Would you consider this incident of a: **Minor** **Average** **Major**
(*please circle accordingly*) nature?

Staff Signature: _____ *Date:* _____

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Parents of victim contacted: **YES/NO** Time: _____ Date: _____

Parents of bully contacted: **YES/NO** Time: _____ Date: _____

Behaviour Contract agreed: **YES/NO** Time: _____ Date: _____

(If YES, please attach to Incident Report)

Action taken:

Follow up to take place on _____ (date) by _____ (name).

How are things now?

Subsequent Action (if necessary):

APPENDIX 4

BEHAVIOUR CONTRACT

1. On _____ (date(s)), I did _____

2. This upset _____ (name(s))
3. From now _____ (date) until _____ (date), I will do the following:

4. I will talk to _____ (Teacher) and _____ (Upset Child)
about this on _____ (date) to see how I have improved.
5. Signed: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX 5

Guide to providing Bullying Behaviour Update for Board of Management meeting of DD/MM/YYYY

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 the school year.	