



# **Belmayne Educate Together Secondary School**

**Roll Number 68346 T**

**Belmayne Avenue**

**Dublin 13**

## **School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour**

## Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Belmayne ETSS 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 behaviour

#### 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.

The core elements of the definition are further described below:

**Targeted 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** - 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.

#### Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour

A one off instance of negative behaviour towards another student is not bullying behaviour.

**However, a single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as**

**it may be visible to a wide audience and has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times** and so becomes a repeated behaviour.

Disagreement between students, or instances where students don't want to be friends or to remain friends, is not considered bullying behaviour unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others including deliberate manipulation of friendship groups. Some students with special educational needs may have social communication difficulties which may make them communicate their needs through behaviours that can hurt themselves or others. It is important to note that these behaviours are not deliberate or planned but, in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they can't control.

**Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying.**

Bullying interferes with the following rights of the child set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:

- the right to freedom of expression (Article 13)
- the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 14)
- the right to freedom of association and freedom of peaceful assembly (Article 15)
- the right to privacy (Article 16)
- the right to be protected from all forms of abuse and neglect (Article 19)
- the right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health (Article 24)
- the right to education (Article 28)
- the right to enjoy their own culture, religion or language (Article 30)

## 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	01/05/2025	Staff Meeting
Students	During May 2025	Google Form during SPHE class
Parents	27/05/2025	Focus group - parents council
BOM	19/11/2024 &17/06/2025	Summary of guidelines presented and discussed, policy ratified
Wider School Community	Various dates	Community Gardai, Local primary school - discussions
Date policy was approved:		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

## Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by the school under the headings of the Key Areas of Wellbeing Promotion. 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 Cinealta procedures):

### Culture & Environment

#### **Ethos & Vision**

Our ethos and vision promote a positive, inclusive environment where students feel safe, connected and supported. This encourages a telling environment in which students feel empowered to report bullying behaviour.

#### **Trusted Adult**

The trusted adult (staff or parent) should reassure the student that they have done the right thing by reporting the behaviour. The trusted adult should, without delay, inform a staff member who has responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour.

### **Effective leadership**

The role of all those in leadership within the school is of great importance in supporting a school-wide approach to preventing and tackling bullying. All teachers should strive to engender an ethos under which **bullying is unacceptable**. School leaders should also involve both staff and students in developing and implementing a vision of the school where diversity is accepted and celebrated. Staff should be fair, respectful, clear and consistent in their behaviour for learning measures.

### **Consistent Approach**

It is the responsibility of all school staff to develop and maintain a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and to take a consistent approach by promoting kindness and inclusion.

### **Safe Physical Spaces**

Ensure all spaces in the school are visible. Visual barriers from windows such as posters to be removed.

### **Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils**

Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology/devices within the school. BETSS will work to raise the awareness of bullying so that all members of the school community understand what bullying is and how it is dealt with. A high degree of vigilance is used throughout the school to ensure that bullying behaviour is identified and tackled.

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

- Yard, corridors, toilets and in class - A weekly schedule of student supervision is developed to monitor student behaviour and wellbeing. Any causes for concern are dealt with and reported to the leadership team.
- All staff are actively supervising and observe relationships between students in class, note absence patterns and ensure students are aiming high in terms of behaviour with others
- Survey of Students - Students are surveyed through an online form regularly throughout the year regarding bullying behaviour as part of the school's wellbeing processes.
- Student Support Team – the student support team meet weekly and operate a check and connect system where teachers meet students where concerns may have been brought to their attention

## **Relationships & Partnerships**

### **A school-wide approach**

A high degree of school-wide vigilance and openness is important in ensuring that bullying behaviour can be adequately tackled. The promotion of relevant home/school/community links is important with regard to countering bullying behaviour and should be encouraged as a normal part of the school's effective operation. It may be necessary for the school to seek

the assistance of other local persons and formal agencies such as NEPS, HSE, social workers, community workers, Gardaí etc.

### **Wider Community**

Those members of the wider community who come directly into daily contact with pupils are encouraged to play a positive role in assisting the school to counter bullying behaviour by reporting any such behaviour.

### **Committees/Teams**

The school operates a Student Council and each class is assigned a student representative and there is also an Amber committee promoting kindness in the school.

### **Extra-curricular**

Providing extra curricular clubs for students to feel safe in and to support the active participation in school life such as sports clubs, debating, lunchtime games clubs etc.

### **Mentoring**

TY/1st year mentoring programme and the life leadership module to promote peer support.

### **Parents Council and Parents Evenings**

Supporting an active parents council and running information evenings and workshops to support the active participation of parents in school life, including those who may find it difficult or daunting to engage with the school due to being unfamiliar with the education system or due to language or cultural barriers

## **Curriculum (Teaching & Learning)**

### **Education and prevention strategies**

- SPHE, CSPE & Ethical Education classes are mandatory for all students discussing issues of inclusion
- 1st year Induction programme educates all students on inclusion, diversity and acceptance
- DCU FUSE programme is delivered in 2nd year to all students
- MyFriends Youth programme is delivered to all 1st years to build resilience
- A whole school approach involving staff, students and parents is adopted to prevent bullying in school. Through curricular and extracurricular programmes BETSS provides students with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth.
- The school encourages a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In this way pupils gain confidence in 'telling'. It is made clear to pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- The school's Bí Cinealtas policy is discussed with pupils and parent(s) are asked to read and sign an extract from the Bí Cinealtas Policy on enrolment from 2025 and annually thereafter on re – registration.
- Be Respectful Week/Random Acts of Kindness take place and students are involved in structured activities and workshops to facilitate the development of a positive school culture.

- The fostering of positive working relationships within the school community is supported by Restorative Practice (RP) workshops. RP will underpin all interactions and conversations and staff and students will be supported in its use where applicable. All subjects attempt to foster an attitude of respect for all by promoting the value of diversity, addressing prejudice and stereotyping and highlighting the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- Relationship Keepers TY module
- Bullying behaviour is addressed at tutor time and whole school assemblies if necessary.
- Outside speakers are brought to the school e.g. Barnardos, Jigsaw, Webwise, Connect RP.

## Policy & Planning

- This policy is published on the school website and is available to all staff on the shared drive.
- Supervision takes place before school, during morning break, at lunch-time and after school. All teaching and non-teaching staff are aware of the importance of noting any unacceptable behaviour.
- The school has an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) of Internet and Communications Technology in the school.
- Whole School Guidance Plan

## Preventing Cyber Bullying

- Implementing the SPHE curriculum and Digital Media Literacy curriculum
- 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.
- Educating students on appropriate online behaviour as part of our Behaviour for Learning policy
- Cyber Safety Talks: Regular talks to educate students about the dangers of cyber-bullying and how to stay safe online.

## Preventing Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying Behaviour

- Stand Up Week: Focuses on promoting inclusion and respect for all students, particularly those from the LGBTQ+ community.
- LGBTQ+ committee to encourage peer support and to maintain the LGBTQ+ noticeboard
- SPHE & Ethical Education modules: 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.

## Preventing Racist Behaviour

- Diversity/Yellow Flag committee to celebrate diversity

- Ethical Education modules
- CSPE place in the world module: Addresses issues of bullying and social responsibility, including racism. wellbeing, addressing issues related to sexist bullying.
- Assemblies: Regular assemblies to reinforce the school's anti-bullying message and promote a positive school culture.
- Ensuring the library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds

### Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour

- RSE Policy: Addresses issues related to bullying, respect, and healthy relationships, including sexist bullying.
- SPHE & Ethical Education modules: Include elements of anti-bullying education and overall wellbeing

### Preventing Sexual Harassment

- Child Protection Policy: Outlines the procedures for safeguarding students and addressing any child protection concerns, including sexual harassment.
- RSE in SPHE: Addresses issues related to bullying, respect, and healthy relationships, including sexual harassment.
- Wellbeing Plan: Outlines the school's approach to promoting the mental and emotional health of students and staff, which includes preventing sexual harassment.

## Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

It is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that the Belmayne Way is followed and that the students behave appropriately. They will respond sensitively and in a caring capacity to students who disclose incidents of bullying behaviour. The reported incidents will be noted, dealt with promptly and followed through irrespective of who is involved. **Teachers will deal with parental concerns in a timely, respectful, sympathetic and professional manner, involving the Principal as appropriate. Teachers expect that parents will behave in a respectful manner towards them and that all issues will be dealt with in a calm and reasonable atmosphere.**

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

- All staff should address bullying behaviour and report it to the year leader
- Year Leader for each year group assisted by principal and 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 their own child's involvement

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame); Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s) understand this approach from the outset.

**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):**

1. In **investigating** and dealing with bullying, the relevant teachers (Year Head, Guidance counsellor, DP) will exercise their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved. Also, the staff in BETSS will use the three questions outlined in the Bí Cineálta procedures to make a preliminary assessment of whether bullying behaviour has occurred:

- Is it targeted?
- Is it repeated?
- Is it causing harm?

The relevant teacher will gather relevant information from students involved in order to make this preliminary assessment. It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

2. All staff will keep a **record of any incidents** witnessed by them or notified to them. Reports will be put on VSWare and passed on to the Year leader.
3. The relevant teacher will **interview** the parties involved. All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all students concerned. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This will be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
  - If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;
  - Each member of a group will be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s)

4. In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the **parent(s) of the parties involved will 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.
5. Where the relevant teacher has determined that a student has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to the student(s) how they are in breach of the school's Bí Cinealtas policy and efforts will be made to help both parties understand the situation from each other perspective using a restorative approach. If both parties are agreeable a **restorative conversation** will be facilitated. It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s) that in any situation where **disciplinary sanctions are required**, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, their parent(s) and the school;

Parents may also make schools aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action. Parents must make this request in writing to BETSS. It may be the case that the school forms the view that the behaviour still needs to be dealt with.

**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):**

#### **Support for Students Who Experience Bullying**

- Open Access to Guidance Counsellor: Students have easy access to the Guidance Counsellor, who play significant roles in preventing and addressing bullying. Where possible, necessary counselling is provided within the school for students affected by bullying, with referrals made when appropriate.
- Anti-Bullying Workshops: Workshops are provided to all year groups by tutors during designated tutor times, helping students understand and cope with bullying.
- Restorative Conversations: Follow-up meetings are arranged with the involved parties separately, with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the target is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect.
- Check and Connect Program: Staff members/Tutors regularly check in with students to provide support and ensure their wellbeing.
- Cyber Safety and Anti-Bullying Information Session: Information sessions for parents to educate them about the school's anti-bullying efforts and how they can support their children.

#### **Support for Students Who Witness Bullying**

- Encouraging Disclosure: The school promotes a culture where students are encouraged to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying in a non-threatening environment.
- Education and Prevention Strategies: Implementation of education and prevention strategies that build empathy, respect, and resilience in pupils, explicitly addressing issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying.

- SPHE and Ethical Ed Classes: Discussions in SPHE (Social, Personal, and Health Education) and Ethical Ed classes include the Anti-Bullying Programme FUSE helping students understand the impact of bullying and how to respond.
- Assemblies and Themed Weeks: Regular assemblies and themed weeks, such as Anti-Bullying Week and Stand Up Week, raise awareness and promote anti-bullying initiatives.

### **Support for Students Who Display Bullying Behaviours**

- Investigation and Follow-Up: All reports of bullying are noted, investigated, and dealt with by teachers. The Guidance Counsellor meets with both parties individually to discuss the matter and seek possible solutions. Referrals made when appropriate.
- Restorative Practice: BETSS employs Restorative Practice to resolve conflicts and restore relationships, promoting a positive and respectful school environment.
- Behaviour for Learning Support: The school offers Behaviour for Learning Support to help students develop positive behaviours and attitudes towards learning.
- Sanctions: Students involved in bullying are warned to stop immediately. If further incidents occur, they are referred to the Year Head and Deputy Principal as a discipline matter. More serious sanctions, ranging from suspension to exclusion, apply to students who engage in continual serious bullying incidences.

### **Other Supports**

- NEPS
- Oide
- Webwise
- National Parents Council
- DCU Anti-bullying Centre
- Tusla

### **Determining if the bullying behaviour has ceased**

In cases where bullying behaviour is determined to have taken place, the relevant teacher will 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 will include

- the nature of the bullying behaviour
- the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the students involved.
- 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.

### **Recording Bullying Behaviour**

All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, and the date of the initial engagement with students and parents. The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented. The record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying

behaviour. 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.

Where a student support file exists for a student it is recommended to place a copy of the record on the student's support file. This will assist the school's SST in providing a consistent and holistic response to support the wellbeing of students involved.

[Record of Bullying Behaviour Incident Form 2025/2026 - Google Forms](#)

## 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: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal)

## Appendix D

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.

## Appendix E

### Review of the Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual (calendar) review of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and its implementation in consultation with the school community. As part of the review, this document must be completed.

1. When did the Board formally adopt its Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools? *Insert date when the Bí Cineálta policy was last adopted by the school.*
2. Where in the school is the student-friendly Bí Cineálta policy displayed?
3. What date did the Board publish the Bí Cineálta policy and the student-friendly policy on the school website?
4. How has the student-friendly policy been communicated to students?
5. How has the Bí Cineálta policy and student-friendly policy been communicated to parents
6. Have all school staff been made aware of the, school's Bí Cineálta policy and the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post- Primary Schools? Yes/No
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? Yes/No

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?
16. Does the student-friendly policy need to be updated as a result of this review and if so why?
17. Does the school refer parents to the complaints procedures if they have a complaint about how the school has addressed bullying behaviour? Yes/No
18. Has a parent informed the school that a student has left the school due to reported bullying behaviour? Yes/No
19. Has the Office of the Ombudsman for Children initiated or completed an investigation into how the school has addressed an incident of bullying behaviour? Yes/No

## Appendix F

Notification regarding the board of management's annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management of confirms that the board of management's annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour and its implementation was completed at the board of management meeting of [date].

This review was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Education's Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

(Chairperson of board of management)

Date:

Date of next review: