

Draft Policy
Glencovitt National School
Bí Cineálta: School Policy To Prevent and Address Bullying
Behaviour

The Board of Management of Glencovitt 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.

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.

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:

- A targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm.

The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature.

- Physical (e.g.: personal injury, damage to or loss of property)

- Social: (e.g.: withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion)

- Emotional: (e.g.: low self-esteem, depression, anxiety)

- Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society.

Section A: Development/review of our Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour

All members of our school community (will be provided with the opportunity to input into the development/review of this policy. This will be detailed below when it has taken place)

Date consulted Method of consultation

Teachers

School Staff

Pupils

Parents

Board of Management

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management has overall responsibility to ensure that this policy is effective. The Board of Management must ensure that accountability is of the highest standard and frequently appraise the outcomes of the strategies and measures contained within this policy. All staff are responsible for ensuring that there is a whole school approach to modelling appropriate behaviour and preventing and tackling bullying. Glencovitt National School endeavours to put in place appropriate

systems to ensure that ALL relevant members of the school community (pupils, parents, staff and wider community) have a shared understanding of what constitutes 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 procedures state on p.23: “A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved”. Where the bullying continues in school, schools should deal with it in accordance with this policy.

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by the school to educate pupils around bullying behaviour. The strategies will be explored under the following headings; Culture and Environment, Curriculum (Teaching and Learning), Policy and Planning, Relations and Partnerships and Preventing Cyberbullying Behaviour, Homophobic/Transphobic Bullying, Racist Bullying, Sexist Bullying and Preventing Sexual Harassment.

Culture and Environment:

We strive to:

- Create a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour
- Involve parents as active partners in fostering an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated
- Support the idea that our school is a telling environment. We ensure to revisit the key messages of the Stay Safe Programme regularly
- Promote the concept of a trusted adult – stay safe linkage – who to tell and who can help
- Create safe spaces in our school building and yards –ensuring adequate supervision and inclusion of pupil voice when completing our annual reviews

- Remove barriers that would impinge on visibility of all pupils e.g., in classrooms/ corridors/ on yard etc. Staff circulating during supervision on yard
- Incorporate artwork and signs to promote our school values – creation of a school charter promoting rights – equality, inclusion and respect
- Encourage a sense of belonging with ownership over their own space through art and creativity
- Create a positive school culture and climate which:
 - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
 - promotes respectful relationships across the school community.

Glencovitt National School is a Bí Cineálta School. We follow these anti-bullying procedures (2024) and we consider the following to be key elements of a positive school culture:

- We acknowledge the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment
- We acknowledge the uniqueness of each individual and their worth as a human being
- We promote positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members
- We have a clear commitment to promoting equity
- We have the capacity to change in response to our pupil's needs
- We identify elements of the curriculum through which positive and sustainable influences can be exerted towards forming pupil's attitudes and values
- We take particular care of 'at risk' pupils and use systems to identify needs and facilitate early intervention where necessary – thus responding to the needs, fears/ anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner
- Staff are briefed on the uniform approach we must take to handle all reports of bullying – this is distributed to staff and a copy is displayed in all classrooms
- Friendship week and/or Wellbeing Days (Thoughtful Thursdays, Mindful Mondays etc) events and activities such as Random acts of

Kindness homework, Poster making, slogan making, well-being homework etc. form part of the school's initiatives to support an anti-bullying culture

- Playground helpers – students in higher classes volunteer to support younger classes on yard to help with games and positive interactions
- Stay safe and SPHE lessons focusing on positive behaviour form part of curricular content in all classes.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils
- Class and School Behaviour Expectations (Rules/ Charter) development as well as notice board to promote kindness and build responsibility amongst pupils
- Glencovitt National School recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships within the school community
- We recognise the rights of parents to share in the task of equipping pupils with a range of life skills
- We recognise the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying (**Child Friendly Anti- Bullying Policy will be formed with pupil and parent input and will be distributed to parents, children and staff to discuss. This policy outlines various ways to tell. Parents receive information at times regarding useful information on Anti Bullying**) We understand that the assistance of Gardaí, Tusla and Community Workers may be required in some cases
- We promote habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities
- We promote qualities of social responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying behaviour/ aggressive behaviour by ANY MEMBER of the school community.

Curriculum (teaching and learning)

We strive to:

- Provide teaching and promote learning which is collaborative and respectful fostering inclusion and respect for diversity
- Display a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact.

Ways in which we work to achieve this:

- Teach SPHE and RSE content which fosters student's well-being and self confidence as well as promoting personal responsibility for their own behaviours and actions. We do this in collaboration with parents
- Model respectful behaviour towards colleagues, pupils and visitors in our school environment
- Curricular and Extra-curricular activities can help to develop a sense of self -worth, working together, inclusion and respect
- Students are given regular opportunities to work in small groups with peers, which can help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy
- Acknowledgment of our diverse school population – celebrating diversity and culture in our school through art, displays, photographs, international events
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.

Supports for staff:

- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- On-going discussion/ evaluation/ review of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy
- All staff have a uniform interpretation of what is expected in relation to tackling bullying behaviour, how to identify bullying behaviour, how to manage disclosures and how to deal effectively with incidents of bullying within the classroom context
- Ongoing CPD in relation to anti-bullying is encouraged/ available to staff
- Staff are aware that supporting one another is a key aspect to the prevention of bullying behaviours.

Policy and planning

The aim of Glencovitt National School's Bí Cineálta policy is:

- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour wit

school management, teachers, pupils, parents/guardians

- To promote a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour
- To ensure appropriate supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation
- To develop procedures for noting, investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour
- To implement a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour
- To work with appropriate agencies in countering all forms of bullying and promoting anti-bullying behaviour.
- The Acceptable Use Policy, Supervision policy, Special Education Policy and Code of Behaviour all support the implementation of the Bí Cineálta policy
- Effective leadership is a key component with Principal (DLP), Deputy Principal (DDL), and all staff members focused on supporting the implementation of this policy.

Relationships and Partnerships

- Glencovitt National School recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships within the school community
- We recognise the rights of parents to share in the task of equipping pupils with a range of life skills
- We promote habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities
- We promote qualities of social responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying behaviour/ aggressive behaviour by ANY MEMBER of the school community
- Interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as our Parents' Association and our various and multiple student committees and groups
- Age and stage appropriate awareness initiatives that engage the student body in looking at their own behaviour – promoting acts of

kindness and friendship, being an active help to others and looking at the causes of and impact of bullying during SPHE lessons

- Conducting workshops and seminars for students, staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying
- Encouraging peer mentoring and peer support
- Supporting active participation of students in school life and active participation of parents in school life also
- Engaging parents and students in actively contributing to the formation of a Child Friendly Anti Bullying Policy to make them active participants in promotion of and discussion of useful ways to identify and reduce bullying behaviour and highlight procedure and how to deal with it if it does occur.

Preventing Cyberbullying Behaviour

Glencovitt National School aims to promote digital literacy, digital citizenship and safe online environments. We do this by:

Implementing the SPHE Curriculum

Having regular conversations with pupils about being respectful and kind online

Use visiting experts to talk about online experiences children may have, and taking part in the Internet Safety Day

Developing and communicating an Acceptable Use Policy and highlighting the Code of Behaviour guidelines with regards to the use of technology.

Homophobic/Transphobic Bullying

Inclusivity can be fostered by:

Maintaining an inclusive physical environment; displaying posters and sources of support

Challenging gender stereotyping and raising awareness of the impacts of homophobic bullying

Encouraging pupils to be kind and respectful towards themselves and others and to speak out if they witness homophobic behaviour in the school setting.

Racist Bullying

This can be countered by:

Fostering a school culture of the acceptance of diversity and ensuring signage, posters and reading material reflect this

Raise awareness of the effects of racist bullying, invite speakers from diverse backgrounds to speak to students

Use buddies to support students

Encouraging by-standers to report instances of bullying.

Sexist Bullying

The school can manage instances of this by:

Ensuring staff model the equal treatment of genders and that all students have the same opportunities

Celebrating the achievements and contributions of students and involving parents when suitable opportunities arise

Promoting awareness of the importance of equality as part of the school culture.

Preventing Sexual Harassment

Glencovitt National School has a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment. It is never minimised as joking or banter. In addition the school promotes:

An environment of respect for others and self and challenge to gender stereo-typing when it arises

Identifying positive role models to aspire to both inside and outside of the school community.

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

A Telling Environment/ A Trusted Adult

Glencovitt NS promotes by-standers telling adults about issues they have witnessed. This is done through:

SPHE and the Stay Safe Programme which emphasises the importance of telling

Who to tell? Teachers/SNA/Parents

If a teacher is told they will affirm the student and report the matter to the relevant class teacher to deal with. This teacher would also follow-up with the student to see if any further support was needed.

Drama/Role play to try out these roles

Teachers record any instances for discussion at review meetings.

Safe Physical Spaces at School and Supervision

Glencovitt NS is very aware that both of these aspects are inhibitors of bullying behaviour. Our yards are supervised by two staff members at each break and we endeavour to maintain a physical environment that is open and welcoming to all students and where all students will be safe.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

- The class teacher will oversee recording of bullying reports for students in their class – this includes using the procedure guidelines to investigate reports of bullying and recording bullying behaviour
- The DLP/DDLP will follow up after twenty days to investigate if bullying has ceased
- All staff will be vigilant to bullying behaviour.
- Principal will inform the Board of Management of any incidents of Bullying.

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):

The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

- a. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the Relevant Teacher(s).
- b. If it is established by the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' that bullying has occurred, the Relevant Teacher(s) must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved
- c. The Relevant Teacher(s) must record the bullying incident on the school template by adding an Alleged Bullying Behaviour Report to the relevant pupil's file
- d. The Relevant Teacher must inform the Principal.

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). With this in mind the school's procedures are as follows:

- In investigating and dealing with bullying the teacher(s) will exercise his/her/their judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type if it has and how best the situation might be resolved
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the Relevant Teacher(s). 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

instances of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly

- Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, SNAs, and cleaners are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them to the Class Teacher.
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents
- On being informed of an alleged incident of bullying, the teacher dealing with the report will first interview the victim(s) and discuss the feeling which the victim(s) experienced because of the bullying behaviour
- Initial investigations of bullying will be done in class where possible but some incidents might be best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the Relevant Teacher(s) should seek answers to questions of what, where, who, when and why. This should 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 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 the other's statements
- 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
- Where the Relevant Teacher(s) has/have 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 anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the perspective of the pupil being bullied
- The Relevant Teacher does not apportion blame but should make an effort to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek an undertaking that it will stop.

- When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the Relevant Teacher will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information
- If a pupil chooses to continue the bullying behaviour, their parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted. 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 the pupil
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may be arranged separately with a view to bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable
- Repeated incidents of bullying behaviour will result in the imposition of sanctions. Such sanctions will be proportionate to the seriousness of the bullying behaviour. It must be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required that this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school
- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent must be referred to the school's complaints procedure
- 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 rights to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children
- The School will maintain care for individuals involved over time. This will be done by maintaining contact with the pupils and checking on their continuing welfare. The child's parents will also be consulted
- If a child makes a report of bullying, but asks that nothing is to be done about it, the relevant teacher will support the child appropriately to explore how it will be handled sensitively and how parents may be notified. If a parent does not want action to be taken by the school, they must submit this in writing. The school however may still deem it necessary to be investigated.

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's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves a whole school approach. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, no one intervention/support programme works in all situations.

Supporting Bullied pupils:

- The bullying behaviour stops and is resolved as far as is practicable
- Empathy and respect are directed towards the bullied pupils
- It is clearly indicated that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil
- Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).

Supporting Bullying pupils:

- It is emphasised that it is the behaviour of the child and not the child themselves that is being managed
- Pupils who rehabilitate are acknowledged and affirmed by staff
- Support will be made available to those who have bullied to ensure they find alternative ways of relating to others
- Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills in and out of school time (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school)

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 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: _____ Signed: _____

Principal

Chairperson

Date:

Review: Term 2 of 2025/2026