

Tallaght Hospital School

Bí Cineálta

■ Introductory Statement

The Board of Management of Tallaght hospital school has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviours. This policy fully complies with the requirements of *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2024*.

■ Persons affected.

The Board of Management recognises that its statutory obligations under legislation extend to employees, pupils, nursing staff, parents and any person legitimately conducting school business and the public.

■ Rationale

The Board of Management acknowledges that bullying behaviour interferes with the rights of the child as set out in the United Nations Conventions 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. Ireland ratified the United Nations (UN) Convention of the Rights of the Child in September 1992. In doing this we are committed to promote, protect and fulfil the rights of children. Bullying is a children's right issue and interferes with the following 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).

■ Aims

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 we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying can have on the lives of our students and we are fully committed to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

We endeavour to:

- To create a positive and caring learning environment where all pupils can benefit from the education system and achieve their best.
- To create an environment based on respect and tolerance, promoting respectful relationships across the school community.
- A positive school culture and climate which is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity.
- To ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community.

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 or any of the nine grounds specified: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the travelling community.

■ Guidelines:

Definition of bullying

Bullying is defined in *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying* and *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* as;

targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society.

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

Each school is required to develop and implement a *Bí Cineálta* policy that sets out how the school community prevents and addresses bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour

A once-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.

Pupils with additional/special education needs

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 automatic which they can't control.

Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

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		Whole staff discussions- half day closure Staff questionnaire Sharing of draft policy
Students		Pupil questionnaire
Parents		Staff questionnaire
Board of Management		
Wider school community		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by the school. These include strategies specifically aimed at preventing online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

This school is committed to creating and maintaining a positive school culture and environment, where pupils are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying to a trusted adult and staff members model positive, respectful behaviour to all.

This school ensures that the SPHE curriculum is taught correctly in its entirety as per the table below.

Ref: Making the Links and Beyond

Month	Year 1	Year 2
September / October	Self-identity (Myself)	Myself and my family (Myself and others)
November / December	My friends and other people (Myself and others)	Relating to others (Myself and others)
January / February	Safety and protection (Myself)	Growing and changing (Myself)
March / April	Making decisions* (Myself)	Taking care of my body (Myself)
May / June	Media education (Myself and the wider world)	Developing citizenship (Myself and the wider world)

Education and Prevention Strategies - Bí Cineálta/ 4 Key Areas of Wellbeing

<p style="text-align: center;">Relationship and partnership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * age appropriate awareness initiatives (e.g. anti-bullying week). * SPHE methodologies to promote empathy and respect e.g. circle time. * Links with external agencies e.g. SENO/NEPS/NCSE/OIDE. *Staff wellbeing 	<p style="text-align: center;">Partnership and planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Code of behaviour *Anti bullying policy *Attendance policy *SSE/Wellbeing *SPHE/ PE (wellbeing) *Teacher professional learning *Health and safety *Child safeguarding *Acceptable use policy *Inclusion policy *post-primary pupils
<p style="text-align: center;">Culture and Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Inclusive mission and ethos *A telling environment *Promoting the idea of a trusted adult *Positive school climate *Collaborative and cooperative environment 	<p style="text-align: center;">Curriculum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Social Personal Health Education (SPHE). *Wellbeing/School self-evaluation *Pupil participation/voice *Special education policy *Inclusive and diverse range of teaching resources

Preventing Cyber Bullying

Acceptable Use Policy

Webwise Resources (HTML Heros, All Aboard for Digitown)/CyberSafe Kids

FUSE Programme

Implement the SPHE curriculum

Hold a safer internet day to promote awareness and education on safe online practices

Information sessions for staff

Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour

RESPECT guidelines for staff

Maintaining and inclusive physical environment

Challenging gender stereotypes

Diverse and inclusive school resources- books, posters

Preventing Racist Bullying Behaviour

Fostering a school culture which celebrates diversity and is representative of the diverse cultures in the school

Integration with SESE – projects on countries

Encouraging a telling environment

English as an Additional Language Supports

Diverse library reading materials, textbooks, resources

Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour/Sexual Harrassment

Staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally

Equal opportunities for both sexes

Celebrate diversity and acknowledge the contributions of all

Encourage parents to reinforce these values at home

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):

In alignment with the Bí Cineálta procedures and our commitment to fostering a safe and inclusive environment for all pupils, this procedure outlines the supervision and monitoring strategies implemented to prevent and address bullying behaviour in Tallaght Hospital School. Effective supervision and monitoring are critical components in ensuring a positive school climate where all students feel safe and respected.

1. Supervision During Transition Times

Arrival and Departure:

- Teachers will supervise pupils on route, as they arrive at and leave the school classroom
- Teachers will walk students to/from the classroom when needed.
- Any incidents or patterns of concern observed during these times will be logged and reported to the relevant staff for follow-up.

2. Classroom supervision

- Teachers will remain vigilant during classroom time, observing interactions among pupils and addressing any inappropriate behaviour.
- Teachers will monitor communal areas such as on route to and from the ward to classroom, as appropriate to ensure these spaces remain safe.
- Teachers must not leave pupils unattended.
- If a teacher needs to leave the classroom for toilet breaks or urgent medical reasons, they must ensure that another teacher, SNA, parent or School Principal is present.

3. Use of Monitoring Tools

Incident Logs:

- A record of all incidents involving bullying behaviour will be maintained, noting the time, location, individuals involved, and actions taken.
- Patterns of bullying behaviour will be reviewed periodically to inform proactive measures and interventions.

Pupil Surveys and Feedback:

- Anonymous surveys may be conducted periodically to gauge pupil experiences and identify areas of concern.

- Feedback from pupils will be used to adapt supervision strategies and address any blind spots in current practices.

4. Staff Training and Awareness

All staff will receive regular training on:

- Recognising signs of bullying behaviour, including subtle and indirect forms.
- Effective intervention strategies to de-escalate and address incidents.
- Promoting inclusive and respectful behaviour among students.

5. Parental and Community Involvement

- Parents and other hospital staff will be encouraged to report concerns about bullying behaviour, whether observed or reported by their children.
- Communication channels will be established to ensure that parental input informs supervision and monitoring practices.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

Outside School:

A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care and responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, the school is required to support the students involved.

Inside School:

- The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour are the class teachers.
- 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 DDLP will follow up after twenty days to investigate if bullying has ceased.
- All staff will be vigilant to bullying behaviour.
- Principal will inform Board of Management of incidences of Bullying.
- Deputy principal /SENCO

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
- Inform hospital staff

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:

Steps to Determine if Bullying Behaviour Has Occurred

1. Initial Inquiry

- Teachers consider what, where, when, and why during the investigation.
- Interview individuals separately if multiple pupils are involved.

2. Group Discussion

- After individual interviews, hold a group meeting to clarify everyone's perspective.
- Encourage each pupil to share their account to foster mutual understanding

3. Written Accounts

- Request pupils to write down their accounts to ensure clarity and provide documentation.

4. Defining Bullying

- Refer to the definition of bullying in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures to and use the questions in Appendix C to assess if the behaviour meets the criteria.

5. Consideration of Context

- Distinguish between hurtful or unacceptable behaviour and bullying, referencing the School's Code of Behaviour for non-bullying issues.

Approaches to Address Bullying Behaviour

1. Engagement with Pupils

- Meet promptly with pupils involved to ensure they feel listened to, supported, and reassured.
- Maintain privacy and conduct sensitive conversations appropriate to the age and ability of the students.

2. Support Mechanisms

- For the pupil experiencing bullying: Provide emotional support and involve them in deciding the next steps.
- For the pupil displaying bullying behaviour: Address underlying relational issues and provide strategies for improved behaviour.

3. Involvement of Parents

- Notify and consult parents at an early stage while addressing communication barriers (e.g., literacy or language challenges).
- Acknowledge requests for no action but balance these with the need to address behaviour appropriately.

4. Timely and Tailored Actions

- Take prompt action, ensuring measures align with the Bí Cineálta policy.
- Avoid actions that diminish the pupil's agency.

5. Strategies and Training

- Utilise restorative practices, mediation, or other approaches where staff have been trained, and students consent to the process.
- Refer to external supports like NEPS, Webwise, or the DCU Anti-Bullying Centre for guidance and training.

6. Addressing Complex Cases

- Handle cases involving external parties or off-campus bullying impacting school life through supportive interventions.

- Use the school's Code of Behaviour for ongoing or severe issues requiring disciplinary action.

Steps to Review Progress

1. Follow-Up Review

- Engage with students and parents within 20 school days of the initial intervention.
- Consideration will be given to contacting the pupil's base school
- Assess the nature of the bullying, effectiveness of strategies, and current relationships.

2. Continuous Monitoring

- Supervise both the pupil experiencing bullying and the pupil displaying the behaviour to ensure ongoing support.
- Address lingering relational difficulties proactively.

3. Adjustments as Needed

- If bullying persists, revise strategies with input from pupils and parents and schedule further reviews.
- Apply the school's Code of Behaviour where necessary.

4. Documentation

- Maintain detailed records of incidents, actions taken, and follow-ups.
- Update Student Support Files or Plans as applicable, ensuring consistency in addressing the issue.

5. Final Assessment

- Confirm if the behaviour has ceased.
- Document all engagements, including dates of resolution and any consultations with external services.

7. Complaint and Support Resources

- If parents are dissatisfied, guide them to the school's complaint process or external bodies like the Ombudsman for Children.
- Highlight supports available through NEPS, Oide, Webwise, NPC, and the DCU Anti-Bullying Centre for long-term resolution and prevention.

This approach ensures fairness, sensitivity, and clarity while addressing bullying effectively and promoting a safe school environment.

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 so, they must submit in writing that they require no further action to be taken, but even so, the school may still deem it necessary to be investigated and handled appropriately

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

Supporting Bullied pupils:

- Ending the bullying behaviour,
- Fostering respect for bullied pupils and all pupils,

- Fostering greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils,
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through annual awareness-raising programmes,
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations,
- Making adequate counselling facilities available to pupils who need it in a timely manner (subject to available funding)
- 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:

- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a ‘clean sheet,’
- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honorable thing and giving them praise for this,
- Making adequate counseling facilities available to help those who need it learn other ways of meeting their needs besides violating the rights of others,
- Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that 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),
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils’ feelings of self-worth,
- In dealing with negative behavior in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child,
- In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a ‘clean sheet’ and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.

School-Wide Supports

- **Professional Development:** Leverage Oide to train teachers and staff on strategies to prevent and address bullying, including restorative practices and effective intervention methods.
- **Promotion of Digital Citizenship:** Use Webwise resources to teach pupils about responsible online behaviour, cyberbullying prevention, and digital wellbeing. 10
- **Community Collaboration:** Partner with external organizations, such as the National Parents Council (NPC), DCU Anti-Bullying Centre, and Tusla, to access additional training, resources, and expert guidance.
- **Inclusive and Safe Environment:** Actively promote a positive school culture where respect, empathy, and kindness are valued and encouraged across all interactions.

By implementing these approaches, the school aims to create a supportive environment where every pupil-whether they experience, witness, or display bullying behaviour-receives the necessary guidance and resources to thrive and contribute positively to the school community.

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.

■ Timeframe for Implementation

The revised policy will be implemented from January 2026.

■ Timeframe for Review

This policy is reviewed annually.

■ Ratification and Communication

The Board of Management ratified this policy on the _____ of _____.

Signed: _____, (Chairperson, BOM)

Signed: _____, (Principal).