



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

## **Holmpatrick National School**

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

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

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

We are committed to ensuring that all students who attend our school are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our students is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our students and we are fully committed to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

We confirm that we will, in accordance with our obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the harassment of students or staff on any of the nine grounds specified: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

### **Definition of bullying**

Bullying is defined in *Cineáltas: 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 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 has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and thus becomes a repeated behaviour.

Disagreement between two students, or instances where students don't want to be friends or to remain friends, is not considered bullying 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 additional 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 their behaviours are not deliberate or planned, but, in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they can't control.

### **Bullying behaviour that occurs outside of school**

As per the *Bí Cineálta* Procedures, 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 bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved.

Examples of prohibited bullying behaviours that can occur outside of school (non-exhausted list):

- Bullying behaviour that occurs in the area immediately outside the school, and the wider local area.
- Bullying behaviour that occurs on the journey to and from school.
- Bullying behaviour that occurs in organised clubs and groups outside of school such as sports clubs.
- Online bullying (cyberbullying) behaviour, along with other types of bullying behaviour can cause significant harm and have a lasting impact on students who experience this behaviour. Access to technology means that online bullying behaviour can happen any time and that the student's home is no longer a safe place. The nature of these technologies means that digital content can be shared and seen by a very wide audience almost instantly and the content is almost impossible to delete permanently.

## 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	23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2025	Half-day closure for training day and to get input.
Students	04 <sup>th</sup> June 2025	Questionnaire
Parents	04 <sup>th</sup> June 2025	Questionnaire
Board of Management	09 <sup>th</sup> June 2025	BOM Meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	n/a	
Date policy was approved: 09 <sup>th</sup> June 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: n/a		

## 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):

Prevention Strategies:

Culture and Environment

- Create a positive school climate where all students and staff feel safe, respected, and valued.
- Promote diversity and inclusion in all aspects of school life.
- Using circle practice in the classroom to build a positive culture and environment.
- Encourage open communication between students, staff, and parents.
- Encourage pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- Establish clear expectations of behaviour and enforce them consistently.
- Promote respectful relationships across the whole school community.

- Effective routines/transitions
- Antibullying signs and messages will be displayed around the school. Positive messages that promote friendship and a caring attitude will also be displayed.
- Calm zones within the school.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school –this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with additional needs and/or differences.
- Systems of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines may be used where appropriate.
- Promote acts of kindness on the Wellbeing Wall.

#### Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

- Integrate antibullying messages into the school curriculum.
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Teach students about bullying and its effects.
- Provide opportunities for students to develop social and emotional skills.
- Incorporate lessons on respect, empathy, and diversity into the curriculum
- An annual Anti-Bullying and Kindness Week
- Safe internet use promoted in the classroom with explicit teaching about the appropriate use of social media.
- The Stay Safe programme is implemented with Junior Infants to 6<sup>th</sup> Classes.
- Zippy's Friends programme use to promote emotional wellbeing in Junior and Senior Infants. Walk Tall is used in older classes.
- Code of conduct for the classroom and playground drawn up with children in September
- Explicit teaching of appropriate communication and emotional literacy.
- Group Work/Collaboration
- Zen Den available for pupils outside the classroom and Calm Boxes available within the classroom.
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.

#### Policy and Planning

- Develop a clear and consistent Bi Cinealta policy that is enforced by all staff members.
- Review and update the Bi Cinealta policy annually.
- Have our child-friendly Bí Cineálta Policy on display prominently around the school.
- If pupils bring mobile phones or other smart devices to school, they should be switched off at all times.
- Provide training for staff on how to recognize and respond to bullying.
- Establish clear procedures for responding and reporting bullying incidents.
- The Acceptable Use Policy was established in school to include the necessary steps to ensure that access to technology within the school is strictly monitored.

- School policies: The following policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant include, Code of Behaviour, Child Safeguarding Statement, Risk Assessment, Acceptable Use Policy, Attendance Policy, SPHE, RSE, SEN/Inclusion Policy.
- Pupil Voice

#### Relationships and Partnerships

- Encourage open communication between staff, parents, and students.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Build positive relationships with students and families
- Support the active participation of students in school life through formal and informal structures, e.g. circle-time activities, assemblies, sports' teams, student council.
- Support the active participation of parents in school life, e.g. being a member of the Parents' Association, volunteering on school trips etc.
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies including awareness raising measures that build empathy and resilience in pupils.
- General Parent Meetings
- Teacher Professional Learning
- Guest speakers may be invited to address staff students and parents in relation to various types of bullying.
- Collaborate with parents to educate them on the dangers of cyberbullying by facilitating outside speakers.
- The programme Webwise will be taught on a regular basis in the school to teach safe and responsible internet use.
- Buddy systems and peer learning within the school
- After school clubs.

#### Preventing Cyberbullying

- having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- developing and communicating an acceptable use policy for technology.
- referring to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour.
- regularly reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour.

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):

- Supervision Policy
- Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment

### Supervision

- **Staff-** All staff members should be trained to recognise and respond to bullying behaviour. They should be present and visible in common areas and playgrounds during break times.
- **Students-** Class teachers should supervise students during class time and breaks. They should be aware of what is happening in their classrooms and on the playground.
- **Visitors-** Visitors to the school should be supervised at all times. They should not be left alone with students.

### Monitoring

- **Incident Reporting-** The class teacher investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour with a view to establishing the facts and records on an incident report form.
- **Incident Investigating-** All reports of bullying should be investigated promptly and thoroughly. The investigation should include interviews with the student who reported the incident, the student who was allegedly bullied and any other witnesses.
- **Follow up-** The school will take appropriate action to address the bullying behaviour.

## Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

- Mainstream class teachers and SETs (where appropriate).
- The Principal/Deputy Principal will provide support and advice and will become involved, where appropriate.

The whole school community has a responsibility to prevent and address bullying behaviour. The following approach and steps are *based on the information contained in Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

### Approach

The primary aim in addressing reports of bullying behaviour should be to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the students involved, rather than to apportion blame.

When addressing bullying behaviour, the teachers with responsibility will:

- ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured
- seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- consider the age and ability of the students 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 investigations, follow up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established prevention strategies that may be used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

**Stage 1** - Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

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.

- The class teacher investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour with a view to establishing the facts and managing the behaviour.
- To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour, the following questions will be considered:
  - Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?
  - Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?
  - Is the behaviour repeated?

If the answer to each of the questions above is **Yes**, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour, and the behaviour should be addressed using the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

*Note: One-off incidents may be considered bullying behaviour in certain circumstances. A single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and thus becomes a repeated behaviour.*

If the answer to any of these questions is **No**, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour.

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

- In investigating and dealing with bullying the class teacher will exercise his/her professional judgment to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved. Class teachers should consider the following: who, what, where and when?
- Interviews will be conducted outside the classroom in a fair and consistent way. If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first and, thereafter, as a group when each child will be asked for his/her account of what has happened. It may be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident.

The following principles must be adhered to when addressing bullying behaviour:

- Ensure that the student experiencing the bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured.
- Seek to ensure the privacy of those involved.
- Conduct all conversations sensitively.
- Consider the age and ability of those involved.
- Listen to the views of the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation.
- Take action in a timely manner.
- Inform parents of those involved.

- Non-teaching staff such as special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners, are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them, to a class teacher.
- School staff should know what to do when bullying behaviour is reported to them.
- A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when children are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved. Where bullying behaviour continues in school, schools should deal with this in accordance with their BÍ Cinealta policy.

## **Stage 2: Where bullying behaviour has occurred**

- The primary aim of the class teacher investigating bullying behaviour is to resolve issues and to restore relationships. Ongoing supervision and support may be required for both the student who has experienced bullying behaviour as well as the student displaying bullying behaviour.
- Parents are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with schools, in addressing bullying behaviour. Where bullying behaviour has occurred the parents of the students involved must be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to consult with them on the actions to be taken to address the behaviour.
- It is important to listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation.
- All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the form and type of behaviour if known (see pages 20-24, Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the BÍ Cinealta procedures for descriptions/examples of the forms and types of bullying 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*.
- The record should be shared with the Principal.
- It must be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent/guardians) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required this is a private matter (under GDPR) between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.

## **Stage 3: Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred**

- The teacher must engage with the students involved and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement. Important factors to consider as part of this engagement are the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the students involved.
- The teacher should document the review with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and their parents in relation to this the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased should also be recorded.
- Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted.
- Ongoing supervision and support may be needed for the students involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased.



- If the bullying behaviour has not ceased the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents. A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- If it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then consideration should be given to using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for 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.
- If a parent(s) is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools they should be referred to the school's complaints procedures.
- If a parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been managed, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe the school's actions have had a negative effect on the student.

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 collaborating with pupils affected by bullying behaviour is as follows:

- Promoting a positive school culture where pupils feel safe, respected, and valued.
- Managing bullying behaviour.
- Supporting the pupils who have experienced bullying behaviour, displayed bullying behaviour, and witnessed bullying behaviour.
- Raising awareness of the appropriate programmes and teacher training including those developed by NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service), Oide (support service for schools) and from programmes/sites such as Webwise and FUSE.
- Helping pupils 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, team activities during or after school, small social groups with SET.
- In dealing with challenging behaviour, teachers and parents focus on positive reinforcement and restorative practices.

## 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.

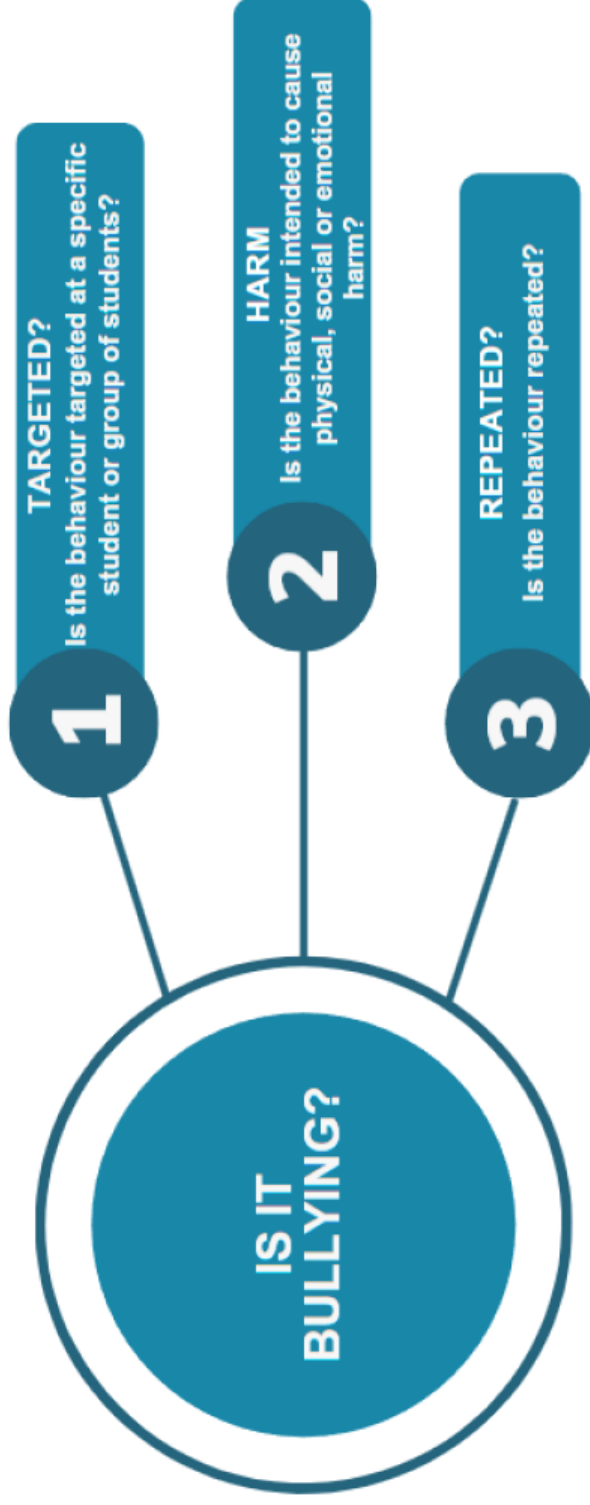
This policy and its implementation will be reviewed, following input from our school community, each calendar year or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this policy refers.

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

(Chairperson of board of management)

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

(Principal)



If the answer to each of the questions is **Yes**, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour and the behaviour should be addressed using the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

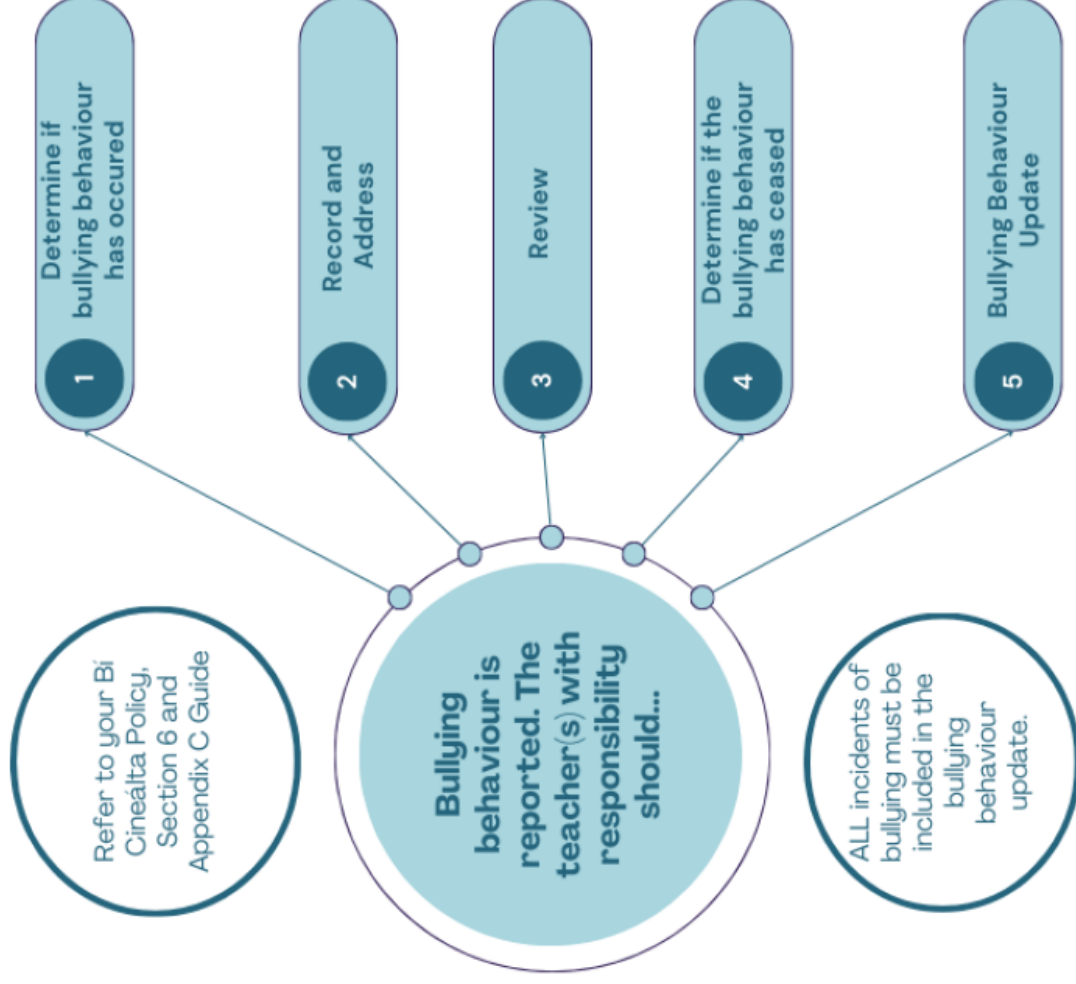
If the answer to any of the questions is **No**, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.



**Oide**

Táil leis an bhFoghlaim  
Gluannail / Innealt Ceannail  
Scoilte agna Hálmeóidí  
Supporting the Professional  
Learning of School Leaders  
and Teachers

# Bí Cineálta: Addressing Bullying Behaviour



Teacher(s) investigate as per school policy. Record as per Section 6.5.

If the behaviour **IS NOT** bullying, deal with in line with your Code of Behaviour.

If the behaviour **IS BULLYING**, proceed to Step 2.

Record as per Bí Cineálta policy and Section 6.5, Bí Cineálta.

Inform parent(s) of parties involved at an early stage.

Complete agreed actions, as per your Bí Cineálta policy, monitor and evaluate.

No more than **20 school days** after **initial engagement**, review with student(s) and parent(s).

If bullying has ceased, continue to monitor.

If bullying has **not ceased**, review strategies, seek external support, if appropriate, and review within the agreed timeframe.

Principal must include all bullying behaviour in their update to the board.

Principal provides verbal update to the board.

Review policy, if needed.



**Oide**

Supporting the Professional  
Development of School Leaders  
and Teachers

# APPENDIX ONE:



## Holmpatrick NS Bullying Incident report form

### 1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

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### 3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))\*

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

### 4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))\*

Yard	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
Other	

### 5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern \_\_\_\_\_

### 6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) \*

Physical Aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Other (specify)	

**7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:**

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)

**8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact**

**9. Details of actions taken**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Relevant Teacher)    Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal \_\_\_\_\_

Date parents were notified; \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parents: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents' signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX TWO:



### Holmpatrick NS **Interview report form**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Details of incident:

Details of actions taken

Are there any actions which needs further investigation or follow up:

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please details actions to be taken and date for next follow up interviewing:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date parents were notified : \_\_\_\_\_

Parents' names \_\_\_\_\_

Parents' signatures: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX THREE:



### Holmpatrick NS: **Behavioural reflection form**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_

What was I doing:

Why was my behaviour/ were my actions a problem?

What would I do differently the next time?

Child's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Teachers signature \_\_\_\_\_

Principal's signature \_\_\_\_\_