Board of Management,
Scoil Bhríde, Kilbride, Clonee, Co. Meath, D15 XA32
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Registered Charity No.: 20131135

Scoil Bhríde Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Scoil Bhríde 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.

Catholic schools have a distinctive understanding of the human person, recognising that every person is created in God's image and likeness and has inherent dignity as a child of God. This is the basis for ensuring that each person in our school is treated with respect and care, in accordance with the Catholic Schedule. As a Catholic school, we are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual. No human person is to be devalued, and all have an indispensable part to play in the school community, regardless of difference.

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.

Types of Bullying behaviour:

Bullying behaviour can take many forms, which can occur separately or together. These can include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

Direct bullying behaviour:

Physical bullying behaviour:

> Physical bullying behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping students. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While students can often engage in "mess fights" they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.

> Personal property can be a focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, schoolbooks and other learning material or interference with a student's locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

Verbal bullying behaviour:

> Continual name-calling directed at a student which hurts, insults or humiliates the student should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance; for example, size or clothes worn or gender identity. It can also refer to a student's accent, distinctive voice characteristics, academic ability, race or ethnic origin.

Written bullying behaviour:

> Written bullying behaviour includes writing insulting remarks about a student in public places, passing around notes about or drawings of a student.

Extortion:

> Bullying behaviour can involve extortion. Extortion is where something is obtained through force or threats.

Indirect bullying behaviour:

Exclusion:

> Exclusion bullying behaviour occurs where a student is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded or ignored by a student or group of students.

Relational:

> Relational bullying behaviour occurs when a student's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. Common forms include control: "Do this or I won't be your friend anymore"; a group of

students ganging up against one student; non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a student; giving a student the "silent treatment"; and the deliberate manipulation of friendship groups to make someone unpopular.

Online bullying behaviour:
Online bullying behaviour (cyberbullying) is carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text or direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, e-mail, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chatrooms and other online technologies.

Online bullying behaviour can include:
> sending or sharing nasty, insulting, offensive, and/or intimidating messages or images via text messages, emails, direct messages or other websites or apps
> posting information considered to be personal, private and sensitive without consent
> making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other students
> excluding or disrupting access to a student on purpose from online chat groups, access to accounts or from an online game
>Even though a message may be posted online just once by a student it can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be seen by a wide audience where it is intended to be shared or has a likelihood of being shared multiple times and is thus repeated.

Each of the above sections may involve:
> disablist bullying behaviour: behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of a perceived or actual disability or additional need
> exceptionally able bullying: behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their high academic ability or outstanding talents
> gender identity bullying: behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual gender identity
> homophobic/transphobic (LGBTQ+) bullying: behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual membership of the LGBTQ+ community
> physical appearance bullying: behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their physical appearance. Students who "look different" can be mocked or criticised about the shape, size or appearance of their body
> racist bullying: behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their race or ethnic origin which includes membership of the Traveller or Roma community
> poverty bullying: behaviour that intends to humiliate a student because of a lack of resources
> religious identity bullying: behaviour that intends to harm a student because of their religion or religious identity

> sexist bullying: behaviour that intends to harm a student based on their sex, perpetuating stereotypes that a student or a group of students are inferior because of their sex

> sexual harassment: any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on sex which affects the dignity of the student

Where Bullying Behaviour Can Occur:

Inside school:

-School yard

-Classroom

-Other areas, for example: toilets, corridors, assembly hall

Outside school:

-Coming to and from school

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 behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, schools should deal with it in accordance with their Bí Cineálta policy.

Signs that may indicate that a student is experiencing bullying behaviour include but are not limited to the following:

> anxiety about travelling to and from school; for example, physical illnesses
> not wanting to go to school, refusal to attend
> a change in how the student performs in school, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school
> pattern of physical illnesses for example; headaches, stomach aches
> unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour which may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or after school holidays
> visible signs of anxiety or distress for example; stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting
> spontaneous out of character comments about either students or teachers
> possessions missing or damaged
> increased requests for money or stealing money
> unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing
> reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling them

The signs listed do not necessarily mean that a student is experiencing bullying behaviour. However, if these signs occur over a period of time or if a number occur together, it may be an indication that the student is experiencing bullying 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	02/10/24 21/03/25 28/03/25	Feedback to staff on Bí Cineálta training at staff meeting on the 3 q's to ask about bullying. Survey sent to staff Half Day School Closure on Bí Cineálta
Students	21/03/25	Online Survey
Parents	20/03/25	Online Survey Parents' Council
Board of Management	13/06/2025	Document sent via email to all members of the Board of Management for their input and opinion
Wider school community as appropriate	21/03/25	Online Survey to bus escorts
Date policy was approved: 23rd June 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

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):

Culture and environment:

- Both verbal and non- verbal strategies for telling, such as leaving a note on teacher's desk, discussed with children to ensure clarity around reporting bullying behaviour
- Good communication with parents
- Nurture and skills groups for building relationships
- Through SPHE lessons and culture, children to have a clear understanding of what is and is not acceptable behaviour.
- Outlined boundaries for all children on yard, buddy benches are available.
- Children have access to a chill out space and the social space when needed and deemed appropriate to use
- Sensory walks provided to provide sensory regulation where appropriate
- Classes have agreed rules which are displayed
- Boomerang book, Pastoral theme of the month and the achievement board all assist in the promotion of positive relationships
- Student voice through surveys and student council
- Appropriate adult/child ratio supervision on duty at each break on school yards
- Appropriate adult/child ratio supervision on school trips – to church/school tours/swimming/ and matches etc
- Corridors and entrance doors supervised/attended by teachers and SNAs to ensure safe transition to and from classrooms morning/lunchtime and home time
- Class teacher accompanies class to school yard and hands class over to teacher on duty
- Children let supervising adults know on yard if they are leaving the yard for the toilet or going home early
- Resource teachers (SET) collect children from classrooms for learning support
- Communication around supervision rota provided by management

Curriculum and planning:

- Inclusive curriculum with an emphasis on diversity and respect for other cultures
- Using achievement board, Inter-Cultural day, class readers and library books to depict diversity, integrate with History, Geography and PLC learning about other cultures
- School wide awareness on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community
- Evidence based Anti-bullying programmes taught through SPHE Plan
- Books and lessons which reinforce messages of inclusivity and equality identifies aspects of the curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupils' attitudes and values
- Avail of additional resources recommended by Oide where necessary: https://oide.ie/primary/home/wellbeing/bi-cinealta/resources/
- Yearly review of Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour
- Policies such as The Acceptable Use Policy and The Code of Behaviour Policy will support the implementation of this policy

- The Student voice plays a central role in the development of this policy, through the creation of a student friendly poster version of these procedures to increase awareness and understanding of its importance in the children's lives. The children will collaborate with staff on this, through the student council
- Staff can avail of continued professional development opportunities in the area of well-being, diversity, anti-bullying strategies as deemed appropriate

Relationships and Partnerships:

- Creating a platform to celebrate the diversity, religious and cultural practices within out school community, such as Intercultural Day
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary level. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying
- Time dedication through the Croke park hours for Wellbeing initiatives as appropriate
- Community partnerships through collaboration with groups like the Tidy Towns
- External speakers come to discuss bullying with students such as Ashbourne Gardaí visit each class to discuss bullying, on and offline with students
- Communicating with bus escorts and bus drivers as appropriate

Preventing Cyberbullying Behaviour

- Adherence to relevant school policies such as the Acceptable Use Policy
- Sharing supportive resources with parents
- Internet Safety Day to encourage online safety awareness
- SPHE lessons on internet safety
- Visits from the Community Gardaí or external professional experts as appropriate
- Stay Safe programme
- Teaching strategies such as: Circle Time to promote discussions in class

Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour

- Create a safe and inclusive environment for all students regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity
- Educate students on the importance of respecting all people and using suitable programmes such as RSE/Fuse Anti Bullying/Belongto where appropriate.
- Encourage peer support amongst students and peer mentoring activities such as Altogether Now
- Staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally

Preventing Racist Bullying Behaviour:

- Through the celebration of diversity, we aim to provide an environment where students 'see themselves' in their environment
- Provide library material and teaching resources which represents children's lived experiences
- Use SESE such as history lessons to teach about the impact and influence racism has had on minority groups
- Staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally

Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour:

Staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally

>Children are given the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their gender

>We celebrate the diversity of all students and acknowledge the contributions of all students

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 and Monitoring:

- All staff to be trained and upskilled to recognise and respond appropriately to bullying behaviour
- Staff should be present and visible during breaktimes in common areas and on yard
- Teacher and SNAs on duty at each break on school yards. On rainy days Teacher and SNAs still supervise classroom area
- In exceptional circumstances, If teacher must leave their classroom, another teacher takes on the responsibility of class supervision
- Adequate adult/child ratio supervision on school trips – to church/school tours/swimming/ and matches etc
- Corridors and entrance doors supervised/attended by teachers and SNAs to ensure safe transition to and from classrooms morning/lunchtime and home time.
- Class teacher accompanies class to school yard and hands class over to teacher on duty
- Children let supervising adults know on yard if they are leaving the yard for the toilet or going home early

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

All Class Teachers supported by the Special Education Teacher, Deputy Principal and 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 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):

- Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset

Reporting bullying behaviour

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to the notice of any teacher in the school
- All reports will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretary, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus drivers, caretaker, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, to the relevant teacher

In investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant) teacher will exercise their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be re- solved.

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).

- Relevant teacher investigates all incidences of reported or suspected bullying and with a view to establishing facts and managing the behaviours

- When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the teacher should consider the following: what, where, when and why? They should also refer to the 'Addressing Bullying Behaviour' poster provided by Oide as a guide Appendix 2

- To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour the following should be considered.

  - 1. Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?
  - 2. Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?
  - 3. 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

- If a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first. Thereafter, all students involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each student should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements

- Each student should be supported, as appropriate, following the group meeting. It may also be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident and the use of reflection sheets may be beneficial

All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way

- 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

- Each member of a group will be supported through the possible pressures that may face him/her 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 his/her account of the incident(s)

>Incidents can occur where behaviour is unacceptable and hurtful, but the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies that deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour

>The following principles must be adhered to when addressing bullying behaviour:
> 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 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 teacher must engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress following the initial intervention

> Even though the bullying behaviour may have ceased, 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

> If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students and parents and agree to meet again over an agreed timeframe until the bullying behaviour has ceased.

> Where it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, and all interventions have been exhausted, then the school may require using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the Code of Behaviour.

Follow up

> In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
  - Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased
  - Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable
  - Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable
  - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s)s or the school Principal or Deputy Principal
> Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable
> Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.

- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children

Recording Bullying Behaviour:

- All incidents of bullying behaviour should be recorded, and the template Appendix 1 should be used
- Where a Student Support File exists for a student, teachers are encouraged to place a copy of the record on the student's support file. This will assist the student's support team, where they exist, in providing a consistent and holistic response to support the wellbeing of the students involved. Where a Student Support Plan exists, the plan should be updated to incorporate response strategies and associated supports
- When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal in the filing cabinet in the principal' s office
- The record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour
- It 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
- It is important to document the date of each of these engagements and the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased
- Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted

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):

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.
  - -Pastoral care system
  - - Buddy / Peer mentoring system
  - - Group work such as circle time
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s)s to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- Implementing sociogram questionnaires
- The traditional disciplinary approach
- Strengthening the victim

- Additional supports are available in section 6.7 of the Bí Cineáltas Procedures including,

  -NEPS: https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/services/national-educational-psychological-service-neps/

  - Tusla, https://www.tusla.ie/

  - Oide https://oide.ie

  - Webwise https://www.webwise.ie/

  - National Parents' Council https://www.npc.ie/

  - DCU Anti-Bullying Centre https://antibullyingcentre.ie/

- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with NEPS, HSE and other appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour

- Pupils are taught to understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher

- The student council were asked to give any suggestions they might have on the schools anti-bullying policy. They came up with the following suggestions:

  a) Have a buddy bench on the yard so if your friends are out you can sit on it and someone will ask you to play.

  b) Move seats more often in the classroom so you get a chance to become friends with more people.

  c) Promote kindness in the yard e.g. asking people if they are OK if they fall over.

  d) Make it more well known that you can tell a teacher something anonymously so that other children don't call you a 'snitch'.

  e) Encourage children once a week to play with someone they don't usually play with to encourage and promote wider friend groups.

  f) Include everyone so nobody is on their own.

  >Parents' Council suggestions

  a) Put a box in the classroom so that if someone who is being bullied or is reporting an incident does not feel comfortable approaching a teacher, they can leave a note in the box. Student Council can design the box.

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: Fr. P. O'Connor* Date: 23.06.2025

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: Sheila Dempsey* Date: 23.06.2025

(Principal)

*Signed hard copy on File

Appendix 1 Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____Class_____

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

_____ _____ _____

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

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent/Guardian	
Teacher	
Other	

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

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

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

6. Form of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)

Physical		Exclusion	
Verbal		Relational	
Written		Online	
Extortion		Other (specify)	

7. **Type** of Bullying Behvaiour (Tick Relevant Boxes)

Disablist bullying		Sexist bulllying	
Exceptionally able bullying		Physical appearance bullying	
Gender identity bullying		Racist bullying	
Homophobic/transphobic bullying		Religious identity bullying	
Poverty bullying		Sexual harassment	
Other (specify)			

8. Date and description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Log of actions taken	**Date**

Parent/ Guardian comments:	
Student comments:	

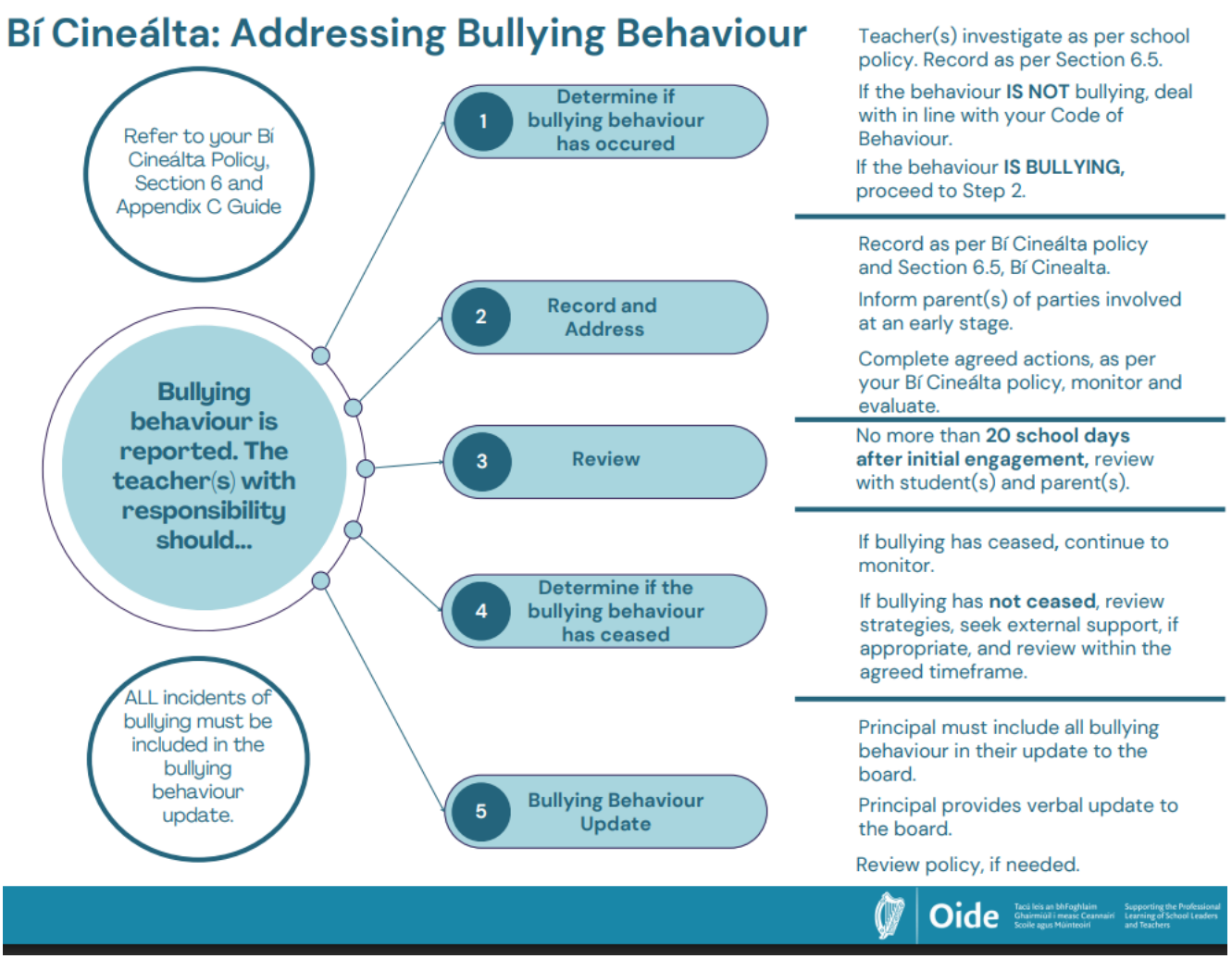
Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

10. Review Record:

Input by	Outcome	Date of Review
Teacher		
Student		
Parent/Guardian		

Appendix 2 Poster:



Appendix 3 Child Friendly Poster: