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Powerstown Educate Together National School

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

This policy has been formulated by Powerstown ETNS to comply with legislation and Department of Education and Skills circulars.

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Adoption of Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management of **Powerstown Educate Together 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.

Our school community voted for their preferred child-friendly definition of bullying. ***Bullying is when someone hurts, upsets, or scares another person on purpose, over and over again. It's not an accident or just a one-time thing. The person doing the bullying usually has more power, like being stronger, older, or having more friends. Bullying can happen in different ways—saying mean things, hurting someone, leaving them out, or even being unkind online. It can make the person being bullied feel really sad, scared, or lonely.***

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.

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	October 2024, January 2025	SM and invite to focus group Staff Meeting (all staff)

	Nov 24 – June 2025 May Staff meeting June 2025	Staff Subcommittee All staff – present resources & policy & feedback request Staff support policy
Students	November 2024 10th March 2025 March – June 2025	Wellbeing survey Bí Cineálta specific survey Student focus group
Parents	November 2024 10th March 2025 7th May 2025 10th May 2025	Well-being survey Bí Cineálta specific Survey Survey re preferred definition Focus group & approval of procedures
Board of Management	21/10/24, 2/12/24, 23/1/24, 26/2/25, 20/5/25, 1/7/25	New procedures discussed School half closure agreed Policy focus group feedback Parent, student and staff feedback Policy ratified
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	10th March 2025	Survey to secretary, caretaker, bus escorts and drivers
Date policy was approved: 1/7/2025		
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):

Powerstown ETNS is committed to promoting a school culture rooted in kindness, equality, inclusion, and respect for diversity. In line with the Bí Cineálta procedures, our prevention strategies actively work to prevent bullying, including online bullying, and bullying based on homophobic, transphobic, racist, sexist or sexual harassment grounds. Our proactive, whole-school strategies include:

- **Trauma-Informed Practices**
  All staff are trained in trauma-informed approaches, including BSEM (Behaviour Support for Emotional and Social Needs), WSN (Wellbeing Support Network), and Nurture principles, ensuring relational and regulation-first responses to behaviour and wellbeing.
- **Evidence-Based Anti-Bullying Programmes**
  Programmes such as FUSE, Stay Safe, and Webwise are implemented to address bullying, online safety, and the development of respectful relationships.
- **SPHE Curriculum Implementation**
  The SPHE curriculum, as outlined by the NCCA & Oide support service, is taught comprehensively and includes lessons on respect, personal safety, relationships, and identity.
- **Learn Together Curriculum**
  As an Educate Together school, we teach the Learn Together curriculum, which explicitly addresses ethical education, equality, beliefs and moral decision-making.
- **Whole-School Flag Initiatives**
  We participate in and integrate learning from initiatives such as the Yellow Flag (diversity

and anti-racism), Amber Flag (mental health and wellbeing), and Active Flag (physical wellbeing).

- **Wellbeing and Emotional Regulation Programmes**
  A range of wellbeing initiatives support emotional literacy and regulation, including Zones of Regulation, Autism Level Up!~~,~~ and You Can Do It!. These are used with both individual pupils and whole classes.
- **Diversity and Inclusion Awareness**
  We run annual and ongoing initiatives such as Intercultural Month, DLD Awareness Day, Autism Awareness Week, Neurodiversity Celebration Month, and World Down Syndrome Day to promote understanding and appreciation of all learners.
- **Inclusive Visual Environment**
  Our school environment celebrates diversity through multilingual signage, global maps, visual displays promoting inclusion, and a dedicated Yellow Flag board. Classrooms and communal spaces include culturally diverse books and resources from our intercultural pop-up library.
- **Permanent Intercultural Library and Resources**
  Our Intercultural Library, open all year round, supports representation, inclusion, and identity-affirming resources for pupils and families.
- **Monthly Values Assemblies**
  Our school values, rooted in respect, equality, and kindness, are explored and celebrated through whole-school monthly assemblies, pupil voice, and classroom discussion.
- **LGBTQ+ Inclusion and Pride Celebration**
  Powerstown ETNS celebrates Pride Day in June and ensures representation of LGBTQ+ identities through age-appropriate teaching in both the SPHE and Learn Together curricula throughout the school year. This includes respectful exploration of diverse families, gender identity and equality.

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):

Powerstown ETNS implements robust supervision and monitoring strategies to proactively prevent and respond to bullying behaviour. These measures ensure pupil safety, foster respectful relationships, and promote a culture of kindness and inclusion across the school. The following structures are in place:

- **Morning Supervision**
  Supervision is provided from 8:20am to 8:30am daily to ensure safe and orderly arrival to school.
- **Staff Supervision Rota**
  A comprehensive staff rota is maintained to ensure adequate adult supervision during morning breaks, lunch periods, and wet-day breaks, with designated responsibilities clearly communicated.
- **Designated Yard Zones**
  Each class group is assigned to specific yard spaces to support structured play and effective supervision.
- **Bí Cineálta Integration in Induction and September Culture**
  The Value of the Month for September is “Friendly and Welcoming”, which sets the tone for positive behaviour and understanding of the Bí Cineálta policy. All classes co-create Bí Cineálta class and school contracts, embedding kindness and inclusion as core expectations.
- **Staff Induction and Ongoing Training**
  All staff receive Bí Cineálta policy training during August induction. The policy and accompanying procedures are revisited termly to ensure consistent implementation and shared understanding.
- **Monitoring and Record Keeping**
  The school maintains clear structures for recording and responding to behaviours of concern,

including bullying behaviours. Records are securely stored, and follow-up actions are tracked to ensure resolution and support.

- **Curriculum Delivery Expectations**
  All staff are expected to deliver curriculum content that reinforces respect, inclusion, and anti-bullying messages, particularly through SPHE, Learn Together, and wellbeing initiatives.
- **Parent Communication Pathway**
  A transparent communication process is in place for parents to raise and resolve concerns. Staff respond promptly and collaboratively to ensure pupil wellbeing.
- **Accessibility of Policy**
  The Bí Cineálta Policy is published on the school website and is actively promoted within the school community.
- **Child-Friendly Version of Policy**
  A child-friendly version of the policy is displayed in every classroom to ensure that pupils understand their rights and responsibilities in a language appropriate to their age and stage.
- **Pupil Bí Cineálta Committee**
  A student-led Bí Cineálta Committee promotes kindness, supports peer voice, and helps develop initiatives to foster a respectful school environment.
- **Staff Bí Cineálta Committee**
  A staff committee oversees the implementation of the policy, monitors effectiveness, and supports a whole-school approach to prevention and intervention.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour is (are) as follows:
class teacher, principal teacher (deputy principal in their absence)

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):

Powerstown ETNS follows a structured and supportive process when responding to suspected bullying behaviour. Our aim is to ensure fair investigation, relational resolution, pupil and parent engagement, and continuous review. The steps below outline our school's approach:

1. Initial Incident Response

- When an incident occurs, staff respond in line with the Code of Behaviour, using a mediation script to support restorative dialogue.

- A Behaviour Reflection Sheet is completed by the pupil(s) involved to encourage personal accountability.
- The Principal and relevant parents/guardians are informed.

2. Bullying Concern Raised

- If a staff member, pupil, or parent expresses concern that bullying may be occurring, the class teacher begins an initial investigation.
- A class survey is completed by all pupils to gather contextual information in a non-identifying manner.
- The teacher speaks with individual pupils or small groups to clarify information and patterns.
- Surveys and conversations are reviewed with reference to the four guiding questions:
  - ✓ Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group?
  - ✓ Is the behaviour intended to cause harm (physical, social, or emotional)?
  - ✓ Is the behaviour repeated over time?
  - ✓ Is it a once-off incident of significant harm, e.g. via social media?
- If the answer to any of these indicates that bullying has occurred, the teacher proceeds with the Bí Cineálta procedures.

3. Direct Follow-Up with Pupils

- A one-to-one meeting is held with the child(ren) engaging in the concerning behaviour.
- The teacher explains that the Principal and parents will be informed, and that a plan will be developed to support positive behaviour change.
- Where multiple pupils are involved, a group meeting is held to clarify perspectives. Each pupil gives an account of "what happened" and listens to others.
- Pupils are given an opportunity to reflect on their one-to-one and group discussions and are invited to amend or add to their responses.

4. Support for the Child Experiencing Bullying Behaviour

- A meeting is held with the child experiencing bullying behaviour to ensure they are supported and heard.
- The school arranges two separate parent meetings to engage both families in collaborative planning.

5. Parent Conferences

- Meeting with Parents of the Child Engaging in Bullying Behaviour:
  - Attended by the child, parents/guardians, teacher, and Principal.
  - A plan of support and behaviour expectations is agreed upon.
  - Consequences are discussed in line with the Code of Behaviour.
  - A review date is scheduled within 20 days.
- Meeting with Parents of the Child Experiencing Bullying Behaviour:
  - Attended by the child, parents/guardians, teacher, and Principal.
  - A support plan is co-developed to promote safety, confidence, and inclusion.
  - A review/check-in date is agreed within 20 days.

6. Documentation and Review

- The "Record of Bullying Behaviour" form is completed and securely stored.
- Ongoing monitoring and follow-up are conducted to assess progress and ensure sustained resolution.
- Additional supports (e.g. SPHE lessons, peer supports, external services) may be initiated as needed.

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):

Powerstown ETNS is committed to ensuring that all children are supported following any incident involving bullying behaviour—whether as the child experiencing harm, the child displaying the behaviour, or a witness. A whole-school, relational and trauma-informed approach is used to restore safety, support wellbeing, and strengthen a culture of kindness.

1. Support for the Child Experiencing Bullying Behaviour

- The child is offered access to a trusted adult with whom they can speak safely and confidentially.
- The Continuum of Support is implemented as required to provide targeted wellbeing or emotional support.
- The child's emotional wellbeing and sense of safety are monitored consistently by the class teacher or support team.
- Parents/guardians are involved in a collaborative and supportive manner, with regular communication and agreed next steps.

2. Support for the Child Engaging in Bullying Behaviour

- A safe, non-judgemental space is provided for the child to talk openly with a trusted staff member.
- The behaviour is addressed through a trauma-informed and restorative lens, focusing on learning and accountability rather than blame.
- A support plan is developed in collaboration with the child, parents/guardians, and class teacher, promoting behaviour change and relational repair.
- Where appropriate, the Continuum of Support is activated to provide further intervention.

3. Support for Witnesses of Bullying Behaviour

- Witnesses are guided to reflect on the school's Values, Bí Cineálta Policy, and Code of Behaviour to build moral reasoning and empathy.
- Whole-class anti-bullying education (e.g. FUSE lessons, SPHE curriculum) is used to build understanding, compassion, and peer accountability.
- Reassurance and emotional support are provided, especially where the pupil feels distress or conflict about what they observed.
- Pupils are taught how to safely intervene or seek help in future situations through role-play, circle time, or values-based discussion.

4. Whole-School Preventative and Supportive Culture

- The school actively promotes a Bí Cineálta culture, where kindness, inclusion and respect are modelled and celebrated.
- All staff engage in ongoing Bí Cineálta training and professional learning related to positive behaviour, trauma-informed practice and restorative approaches.
- A dedicated Bí Cineálta noticeboard and a Child Bí Cineálta Committee provide pupil voice and visibility to the initiative.
- An annual Bí Cineálta Month spotlights key actions and themes across the school.
- Monthly assemblies grounded in our school values provide opportunities for whole-school reflection, recognition, and celebration of kind behaviour.

All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, and the date of the 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: _____ Date: _____

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Principal)