Scoil Mhuire Allenwood

Allenwood

Naas

Co. Kildare

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School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire Allenwood 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.

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	Staff meeting in January Staff survey March 18th Draft policy compiled and agreed with staff in late March May 2nd August 26 November	Stage 1: Staff Meeting – staff provided with the opportunity to discuss the new Bi Cinealta action plan. Staff informed of the important points in dealing with an incidence or report of bullying – notice board in staff room with the relevant information displayed as well as resources and record form. Staff given time to discuss and relay feedback. Sharing of draft policy with staff to discuss / consult and make any amendments ½ day closure for Bí Cineálta staff training All staff provided with KiVA training KiVA committee established Staff surveyed Review of Supervision Policy Review of AUP Improving culture of telling and the role of bystanders
Students	Survey end of February – beginning of March Art competition - mid November June 2026 November	Students given a questionnaire to seek their input in developing an Anti-Bullying policy. Art competition for children to design a child friendly policy – their wording, examples and suggestions were all taken into account when drafting this Policy. This policy will be sent digitally to each family and children given the homework of reading through their policy with parents. Students in 2nd and 5th surveyed AUP circulated for parents and
Parents	February March May	Draft policy created and sent out to parents/children to review together Feedback sought from parents and children in formation of a Child Friendly Anti Bullying policy. Attention drawn to our policy and Child Friendly policy, resources and initiatives in the school. This will be sent out via newsletter and

	May November	placed on school website Bi Cinealta policy draft shared with parent body and parent association for feedback. Updated Bí Cineálta Policy circulated to parents and feedback invited AUP circulated to Parents to sign and return
Board of Management	February June November	Review new policy draft – leading to consultation and final ratification after amendments made where necessary. BOM reviewed AUP, Bí Cineálta, Supervision Policy
Date policy was approved: **16/06/2025**		
Date policy was last reviewed: 17/11/2026		

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):

Scoil Mhuire Allenwood N.S. adopts a school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community. The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlighting the unacceptability of bullying behaviour. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are

Creating a culture of telling:

- The staff of Scoil Mhuire Allenwood N.S repeatedly reinforces the message that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported. Reassurance is given that all incidents of bullying will be dealt with in a safe manner. Pupils will gain a confidence in telling, which is of vital importance.
- Bystanders can be the key to resolving bullying. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
  - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
  - Hand note up with homework.
  - Ask a parent(s)/guardian(s) to tell on your behalf.
  - Ask a friend/ peer to tell on your behalf.

- Administer a confidential questionnaire.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

Supervision and monitoring:

- Effective supervision and monitoring systems facilitate early intervention.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, hall, playgrounds, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities.
- Non-teaching staff encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers.
- Supervision also applies to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.

Professional Development:

- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it prevention and intervention.
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s).

Raising the awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour by:

- The development of dedicated display boards and posters in the school promoting friendship and bullying prevention.
- Holding a competition in which students create an anti-bullying slogan for our school. This will be displayed around the school.
- Displaying the school's Anti-Bullying charter in classrooms, common areas of the school see appendix 4.
- The anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and is also available on the school's website. Anti-Bullying week held in Scoil Mhuire Allenwood N.S
- Sanctions will be imposed in line with the school's behaviour policy but there may be some variation on the sanctions imposed depending on where the incident took place,

Promoting a positive sense ofself-worth and building empathy and resilience in pupils:

- Random Acts of Kindness read out at assembly.
- Rewarding incidents of good and improved behaviour at a whole school level through the presentation of student awards and during assembly. Extracurricular activities available for all pupils.
- Formal and informal interactions.

- Celebration of Anti-Bullying week Celebration of Friendship Week.
- Development of Buddy Programmes in order to help support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Development of the use of a Friendship/ Buddy Bench.

Cyber bullying:

- Promoting awareness of Scoil Mhuire Allenwood Acceptable Use Policy and ensuring that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.
- Communicating the message that unlike other forms of bullying, a once-off posting can constitute bullying.
- Advice will be communicated to help students protect themselves from being involved in bullying and to advise them on reporting any incidents. A telling atmosphere is created, so that pupils will report cyber bullying where they see it.
- Publicising ways of dealing with cyber bullying in the school.
- Don't reply.
- Keep the message.
- Block the sender.
- Tell someone you trust.
- Promoting 'Internet Safety Day' annually and activities to celebrate this awareness. Teaching of lessons to deal with the issues of cyber bullying and internet safety. Gardaí will visit the school to talk about cyber bullying.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) of children from 5th and 6th classes to receive 'A Parents' Guide to a Better Internet', published by Webwise.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) and students are advised that it is illegal for a child under 13 to register with and use many social media networks.

Our school's approach to tackling and preventing bullying takes particular account of the needs of pupils with SEN. This links in with other relevant school policies and supports and will ensure that all services and supports that provide for such pupils work together. Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for pupils for pupils with SEN include improving inclusion, focusing on developing social skills, paying attention to key moments such as transitioning from primary to post-primary and cultivating a good school culture which has respect for all and helping one another as central.

Initiatives and programmes focused on developing pupils' awareness and understanding, including its causes and effects, will deal with explicitly with the issue of identity-based bullying. Where issues of identity based bullying arise, the school will deal with them at an individual, group, class, or whole school context in

consultation with the parents/guardians of the children involved. The ethos of the school and the age and stage of the children's development will be taken into consideration.

The development of an Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones. Smart watches are prohibited in Scoil Mhuire Allenwood.

Curriculum

- Teachers influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner through a range of curricular initiatives. There are a number of curriculum components and programmes which are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying and the promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness.
- SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the interrelated areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships.
- The Stay Safe programme is a personal safety skills programme which seeks to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying. Each teacher signs off on a sheet when they have taught all thirteen Stay Safe lessons. This content is also shown in Cuntas Míosúil.
- RSE aims to provide opportunities for children to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way.
- Other resources and programmes include: PDST Anti-Bullying Support Material, Prim-Ed Cyber Bullying Packs, Webwise Cyber Bullying Pack, Webwise My Selfie Lessons, Fun Friends, Walk Tall.

Links to other policies:

The school policies which support the Anti-Bullying policy are:

· Code of Behaviour
· Child Protection Policy
· Supervision of pupils
· Acceptable Use policy
· RSE Policy
· SPHE Policy

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):

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible. The school has an up to date Supervision Policy and is satisfied with the amount of staff that are on supervision

duty each day during break times.

- It is the policy of the school to supervise the school yard at all times during regular lunch breaks i.e. 10:45 am to 10:55 am, 12.30 pm to 1.00 pm. Teachers assume a duty of care at 9:00 am.
- The Board of Management informs parents that the school does not accept responsibility for pupils dropped off earlier than 8:50am
- Rules of the school yard are reviewed and revised continually and communicated to children regularly
- Inappropriate behaviours are documented on the 'Yard Book' where patterns of behaviours can be viewed
- If parents indicate a worry about a particular child on the yard all teachers rostered for yard duty are informed of the concern so that the particular concerns can be addressed satisfactorily
- Teachers on yard duty remain with the classes until the class teacher returns from break. Teachers taking a course day can swap supervision duties with a willing colleague. If a teacher is unexpectedly absent a volunteer colleague will assume his/her duties in a reciprocal arrangement
- At dismissal time in the evening the Principal, Deputy Principal and Assistant Principal supervise the outside of the school, at the school gates and down the avenue, to see children safely off the premises. No supervision is provided outside the school gate.
- Unless unavoidable, teachers should never leave their classroom unsupervised.
- Children who are withdrawn from their mainstream classroom for Learning Support should be collected at the classroom door by the relevant teacher.

Special Provisions

a) Out of school activities such as games, swimming, tours, back up provisions are put in place to ensure adequate levels of supervision are put in place. The level of supervision is usually one adult per 15 children with individual teachers in charge of specific groups

b) If a teacher is called from his/her classroom to meet with a parent, another member of staff may be released to cover. However, it is school policy to request parents to make appointments

c) On wet days children remain in their classes under the normal supervision Rota.

d) When visiting teachers such as P.E., Music, etc take over a class, the school encourages teachers to maintain a presence.

The school has up to date security access systems which ensure that children cannot walk freely around the school grounds. We organise activities for certain classes during break times.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

• The class teacher will oversee recording of bullying reports for students in their class

– this includes using the procedure guidelines to investigate reports of bullying and recording bullying behaviour on the correct form on Aladdin

• The DLP 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

• Assistant Principal 2 / Anti- Bullying Policy co-ordinator is available to provide up to date information and supports if needed to assist class teacher in addressing concern

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):

Scoil Mhuire Allenwood will work in partnership with our patron, board of management, staff, students and their parents to develop and implement their Bí Cineálta policy.

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. The school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach. Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardians) understand this approach from the outset.

In accordance with the Bí Cineálta procedures the 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.

It is important that the following principles are 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

<u>Identifying if Bullying Behaviour has Occurred:</u>

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour we will consider the following questions:

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 will be addressed using the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

Note: One off incidents may be considered bullying 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.
When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the school will consider what, where, when and why?

- 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 views
- each student should be supported as appropriate, following the group meeting
- it may be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident(s)

Where Bullying Behaviour has Occurred;

- 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 behavior
- a record will be kept of the engagement with all involved including the views of the child experiencing the bullying behaviour
- this record will document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known, where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students involved and their parents
- the record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behavior

Follow up to where Bullying Behaviour has Occurred:

- The teacher/Principal must engage with the students involved and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement
- Factors considered 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/Principal 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 will 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 handled, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that 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 working with pupils affected by bullying involves a whole school approach. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, no one intervention/support programme works in all situations.

• **Supporting Bullied pupils:**
- 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.

National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)
The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) of the Department of Education provides a comprehensive, school based psychological service to all primary and post primary schools to support the wellbeing, academic, social and emotional development of all students.
NEPS staff can support schools with issues around bullying through this direct or indirect case work service. In relation to bullying, NEPS psychologists often advise schools on best practice to prevent and address bullying when issues arise in schools and/or provide training in preventative initiatives, such as developing social and emotion skills, social skills, executive function skills, promoting resilience and skills in relationship repair between peers as appropriate.

Webwise
Webwise is the online safety initiative of the Department of Education. Webwise promotes safer, better internet use through awareness raising and education initiatives targeting teachers, students and parents. Webwise develops and disseminates resources that help teachers integrate digital citizenship and online safety into teaching and learning in their schools. Webwise also provides information, advice, and tools to parents to support their engagement in their children's online lives

National Parents Council
The NPC delivers online and in person courses to support parents of both primary and post primary students to prevent and address bullying behavior.

Dublin City University (DCU) AntiBullying Centre
The DCU AntiBullying Centre is a university designated research centre located in DCU's Institute of Education. The centre is known globally for its research in bullying and online safety. The AntiBullying Centre offers a range of modules as part of its FUSE programme for the entire school community that can be used to help to promote a positive school culture and assist in preventing and addressing bullying behaviours.

Tusla
Schools should contact Tusla directly for advice in cases where it is considered that bullying behaviour is a child protection concern

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)

Survey feedback

Staff

What's going well

Staff believe that there is a good culture of telling in the school

Knowledge and understanding of bullying

Relationships with the children

Good prevention strategies

Suggestions/Areas for improvement

Record keeping

Posters, murals around the school as well as student friendly policy

Creating a buddy system

Bringing older students to younger classes to talk about bullying

94% have not engaged in CPD in the area of bullying

Students

What's going well

94% feel that school is a happy and safe place. Among the reasons why include;

- there are teachers everywhere
- new door system
- teachers are nice and helpful

Suggestions/Areas for improvement

9% said they did not learn about Bullying behaviour in school

14% said they or someone in their class was being bullied in some form

20% said gossip is being spread online or offline

16% said there were areas in the school where they didn't feel said. These included;

- Basketball court and the adjacent hedge
- Car park

Bullying behaviour was predominantly witness on the yard, in the classroom and online

The children also suggested the following ideas;

- More awareness
- More lessons
- Teach the class about bullying
- Tell parents
- Make an anti bulling booklet

Parents

What's going well

93% said their child/children feel safe in school

96% know who to talk to if they have a concern

96% said their child never engaged in bullying behaviour

Suggestions/Areas for improvement

26% have not seen the school's Anti Bullying policy

30% said that their child has experienced bullying in this school

46% said their child witnessed bullying in this school