Bí Cineálta (Be Kind) Policy



2025 – 2026

Principal: Tony Riley **August' 2024- June' 2025** **Roll Number: 17479D**

Introductory Statement

At Scoil Mhuire Lacken, we are committed to creating and sustaining a culture of kindness, inclusion and respect. Our Bí Cineálta (Be Kind) Policy is a core component of our whole-school approach to wellbeing and prevention of bullying behaviour, informed by the Department of Education's 2024 'Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post-Primary Schools'.

Statement of Commitment

The Board of Management affirms that bullying behaviour interferes with the rights of the child and is not acceptable in our school. We are committed to ensuring all students are safe, respected, included and supported in a positive and caring environment. This policy reflects our commitment to the principles of prevention, support, oversight, and community, as set out in the national 'Cineáltas' framework.

The Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire Lacken 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 Behaviour

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 can be physical, social or emotional. It is behaviour that is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power between individuals or groups. This definition includes direct and indirect forms of bullying such as exclusion, relational aggression, cyberbullying and identity-based bullying.

Development and Review of Policy

This policy has been developed in consultation with students, parents, staff and the wider school community. Annual reviews of the policy will involve input from the school community and will be noted by the Board of Management. A student-friendly version is displayed in classrooms and shared with parents and pupils annually.

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	27/05/2025	Staff meeting
Students	30/05/2025	In class discussion
Parents	30/05/2025	Email
Board of Management	09/06/2025	BOM meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus driver	27/05/2025	Face to face discusion
Date policy was approved:	09/06/2025	
Date policy was last reviewed: NA		

Prevention of Bullying Behaviour

At Scoil Mhuire Lacken, we believe that children's voices are central to creating a safe, respectful school environment. Pupils are actively involved in the review and implementation of our Bí Cineálta Policy through age-appropriate discussions, surveys, and contributions from our Student Council. Their insights and lived experiences help shape our approach to kindness and prevention of bullying behaviour. Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to express concerns, offer ideas for whole-school kindness initiatives, and share feedback on how safe and included they feel at school.

Preventative strategies are embedded within school life and include:

- Explicit teaching through SPHE and the Stay Safe Programme

- Integration into wellbeing and curricular planning
- Use of kindness weeks, assemblies and displays (e.g., kindness wall)
- Active pupil voice via student council
- Engagement in initiatives such as Internet Safety Week, Friendship Week, and use of Webwise resources
- Creating safe physical environments with supervision and clear visibility
- Whole-staff training on empathy, inclusion and anti-bullying approaches.

Responsibilities of the School Community

Preventing and addressing bullying behaviour is a shared responsibility across our entire school community. At Scoil Mhuire Lacken, we recognise that creating a culture of kindness and inclusion is not the job of one person or role, but a collective effort that involves pupils, staff, parents, the Principal, and the Board of Management. Each member of our community plays a crucial part in building and maintaining respectful relationships, promoting empathy, and ensuring that children feel safe to speak up. By working together openly and consistently, we strengthen our capacity to prevent bullying before it occurs and to respond effectively when it does.

Everyone in our school has a role to play:

- Students: Support one another, report bullying, and show kindness
- Teachers: Model empathy and respond to all concerns seriously and appropriately
- Parents: Partner with the school in prevention and support
- Principal and BOM: Oversee implementation, review and ensure effectiveness.

Responding to Reports of Bullying Behaviour

Every report of bullying behaviour at Scoil Mhuire Lacken is taken seriously and approached with care and fairness. In the first instance, the class teacher or relevant staff member will investigate and respond to any concern, as they are best placed to act

quickly and sensitively. Our response process prioritises the wellbeing of all students involved, focusing on early intervention, restoration of relationships, and minimising any further harm. Staff use professional judgement and discretion when gathering information, ensuring that pupils feel listened to and supported. We understand that reporting bullying can be difficult, and so we foster an environment where pupils are encouraged to speak to trusted adults, and where follow-up is timely, discreet, and solutions focused.

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.

If bullying is reported or witnessed:

- The student who reports it will be listened to and supported
- Investigations will be conducted promptly and sensitively
- Parents will be informed and engaged in the process
- Supports will be offered to both the child affected and the child displaying bullying behaviour
- All incidents will be recorded using the online Aladdin recording template (see Appendix C)
- If child protection concerns arise, the Child Safeguarding Statement will be followed and DLP informed.

Oversight and Monitoring

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 (see Appendix D. 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 (see Appendix A and B), 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.

Related Policies

This policy complements and supports:

- Code of Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- SPHE and Stay Safe Programmes
- Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)
- Health & Safety Policy
- Child Protection Procedures
- Home-School Partnership Policy

Ratified by the Board of Management on: 09/06/2025

Signed: John Donohoe (Chairperson, Board of Management)

Signed: Tony Riley (Principal)

Review Date: 08/06/2026

Appendix A: Review of the Bí Cineálta Policy

This template is used to complete the Board of Management's annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy and its implementation.

1. When did the Board formally adopt its Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools? Insert date when the Bí Cineálta policy was last adopted by the school. _____/_____/20_____

2. Where in the school is the studentfriendly Bí Cineálta policy displayed?

_____

3.What date did the Board publish the Bí Cineálta policy and the studentfriendly policy on the school website? _____/_____/20_____

4. How has the student friendly policy been communicated to students?

_____

_____

5. How has the Bí Cineálta policy and studentfriendly policy been communicated to parents?

_____

_____

6. Have all school staff been made aware of the, school's Bí Cineálta policy and the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools? Yes □ No □

7. Does the Bí Cineálta policy document the strategies that the school uses to prevent bullying behaviour? Yes □ No □

8. Has the Board received and minuted the Bullying Behaviour Update presented by the principal at every ordinary board meeting over the last calendar year?

9. Has the Board discussed how the school is addressing all reports of bullying behaviour.
Yes □ No □

10. Is the Board satisfied that all incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed in accordance with the school's Bí Cineálta Policy? Yes □ No □

11. Have the prevention strategies in the Bí Cineálta policy been implemented?

Yes □ No □

12. Has the Board discussed the effectiveness of the strategies used to prevent bullying behaviour? Yes □ No □

13. How have (a) parents, (b) students and (c) school staff been consulted with as part of the review of the Bí Cineálta Policy?

_____

_____

14. Outline any aspects of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and/or its implementation that have been identified as requiring further improvement as part of this review:

_____

_____

15. Where areas for improvement have been identified, outline how these will be addressed and whether an action plan with timeframes has been developed?

_____

_____

16. Does the student friendly policy need to be updated as a result of this review and if so why?

_____

_____

17. Does the school refer parents to the complaints procedures if they have a complaint about how the school has addressed bullying behaviour? Yes □ No □

18. Has a parent informed the school that a student has left the school due to reported bullying behaviour? Yes □ No □

19. Has the Office of the Ombudsman for Children initiated or completed an investigation into how the school has addressed an incident of bullying behaviour?

Yes □ No □

Signed: _____ (Chairperson, Board of Management)

Date: _____

Signed: _____ (Principal)

Date: _____

Next review date: _____

Appendix B: Notification Regarding the Annual Review

The Board of Management of Scoil Mhuir4 Lacken confirms that the board of management's annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour and its implementation was completed at the board of management meeting of [date].

This review was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the *Department of Education's Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed: _____ (Chairperson, Board of Management)

Date: _____

Signed: _____ (Principal)

Date: _____

Appendix C: Bullying Behaviour Recording Template

This template is used to record all incidents of bullying behaviour in line with the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2024).

1. Date of Report: _____

2. Name(s) of Student(s) Involved (Initials Only):

_____

3. Class/Year Group: _____

4. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick all that apply):

☐ Physical ☐ Verbal ☐ Relational ☐ Cyber ☐ Identity-Based (e.g. racist, homophobic, disablist)

☐ Sexual Harassment ☐ Other: _____

5. Description of Incident (include what, where, when, and any witnesses):

_____

_____

6. Initial Actions Taken by Staff:

_____

_____

7. Parents/Guardians Notified: Yes ☐ No ☐ Date: _____

8. Follow-Up Actions and Supports Provided:

_____

_____

9. Review with students and parents conducted (within 20 school days): Yes ☐ No ☐

Date of Review: _____ Outcome:

_____

10. Has the bullying behaviour ceased? Yes ☐ No ☐

11. Was external support or referral required (e.g. Tusla, NEPS)? If yes, please specify:

_____

_____

12. Name and Role of Staff Member Completing Record:

_____

13. Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix D: Bullying Behaviour Update for Board of Management meeting

Having reviewed the details of the incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the previous board of management meeting, the principal will provide the following information at each ordinary meeting of the board of management:

Total number of new incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the last board of management meeting.	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour currently ongoing.	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the beginning of this school year.	

Where incidents of bullying behaviour have been reported since the last meeting, the update will include a verbal report which should include the following information where relevant:

- the trends and patterns identified such as the form of bullying behaviour, type of bullying behaviour if known, location of bullying behaviour, when it occurred etc
- the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour
- any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour
- if any serious incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred which have had a serious adverse impact on a student
- if a parent has informed the school that a student has left the school because of reported bullying behaviour
- if any additional support is needed from the board of management
- if the school's Bí Cineálta policy requires urgent review in advance of the annual review.

This update will not include any personal information or information that could identify the students involved.