

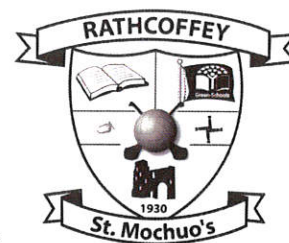
St. Mochuo's School

Rathcoffey, Donadea, Naas,

Co. Kildare

Tel/Fax 045 868721

E-mail: rathcoffeyschool@yahoo.ie



2

School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Rathcoffey N.S 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	25/09/2024.	Staff Meeting
Students	20/03/2025	Individual Pupil Survey
Parents	11/02/2025.	Document sent on Aladdin for consultation
Board of Management	30/09/2024.	Discussion at Board Meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	31/03/2025.	Document shared with Secretary
Date policy was approved:		
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):

School-wide approach

- 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 highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- **Code of discipline** was recently restructured to promote a greater level of respect across the school.
- Creating **open lines of communication** between the patron, boards of management, school staff, students and parents as well as the wider school community and foster a sense of responsibility among us all in preventing bullying behaviour
- **Collaborating with all of the above on this policy** and creating a student-friendly Bí Cineálta policy which is displayed and discussed frequently
- Frequent **discussions with pupils** in a safely established environment
- The fostering and **enhancing of the self-esteem** of all our pupils through both **curricular and extracurricular activities**. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a **positive sense of self-worth** through formal and informal interactions. Such activities also encourage the active participation of pupils in school life.

- Carrying out strategies recommended by the **PDST in the RESPECT Guidelines, 2015** (addressing use of improper language / pejoratively **homophobic terms**, explaining that most people fall in love with people of the opposite gender but some people fall in love with people of the same gender)
- **Conducting workshops** and seminars to **raise awareness of racism** for students and, where possible, to staff and parents also
- Develop and ensure that **library** reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural background

Implementation of curricula

- The full implementation of the **RSE programme (themes 6,7,8), Stay Safe, Weaving Wellbeing, Webwise lessons and KIVA** Programmes over a two-year cycle.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence-based programme. These may include:
 - o KIVA
 - o Stay Safe Programme
 - o Weaving Wellbeing Programme
 - o Be Safe-Be Web Wise
 - o HTML Heroes
 - o Give Racism the Red Card
 - o Teaching about responsible online behaviours and digital citizenship
 - o Incredible Years
- A focus on pupils' social and emotional learning skills through these programmes
- Teaching problem solving
- Internet Safety Day initiatives
- The school will specifically consider the **additional needs of SEN pupils** with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.

- An open and inclusive environment is encouraged. A **culture of telling**, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. Emphasising that this includes racist and homophobic behaviour. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. 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.:
 - o Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
 - o **Anti-bully or Niggle box? Worry Box (Will consult with Student Council)**
 - o Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
 - o Administer a **confidential questionnaire** to pupils in senior classes.
- Promoting acts of kindness through our '**Catching Kindness Wall**' and awarding '**Kindness Awards**' and '**Golden Awards**' monthly at assembly.
- **School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying**, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
- The school's **Bí Cineálta policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) of incoming pupils** are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour.
- The school's **Bí Cineálta policy will also be available to view in the principal's office and on school website.**
- Developing and communicating with pupils and parents an **acceptable use policy for technology**
- Referring to **appropriate online behaviour** as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour
- **Reminding parents** through Aladdin messages that the **digital age of consent** in Ireland is 16 years of age, and that social media platforms require parental consent for pupils of 13 years and older, therefore pupils who are under 13 years of age should not have a social media platform.
- **Challenging gender stereotypes** and encouraging pupils to speak up if they witness **homophobic behaviour**
- Use of age appropriate **storybooks to promote awareness of homophobic/transphobic/racist or sexist behaviour or sexual harassment** (an exhaustive list of possible storybooks which may be used by a class teacher is detailed in this policy in Appendix)
- Regular whole school awareness strategies to be implemented are:
 - o **Give Racism the Red Card** Awareness Day with lessons
 - o **International Day** biannually.
 - o **Discussions with student council members**
 - o **Agreed whole school SPHE plan & time-tabling of lessons on anti-bullying**
 - o **Assemblies**
 - o Trial & Implementation of the **KIVA Programme** from 1st-6th class pupils from September 2025.
 - o **Neurodiversity Day** to begin in June 2025.
 - o Local **Community Garda** Visit
- The implementation of **Incredible Years positive behaviour reinforcement strategies**
- **Buddy Systems** in place in certain circumstances and classes.
- **Junior Yard assistants** in place.
- Displaying **posters/material** with anti-bullying messages around the school.
- Displaying "**Different Families / Same Love**" Poster and other posters at different times **which relate to homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour**

- the record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour

Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred

- the teacher must engage with the students involved and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement
- important factors to consider as part of this engagement are the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the students involved
- the teacher should document the review with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and their parents in relation to this
- the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased should also be recorded
- any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted
- ongoing supervision and support may be needed for the students involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased
- if the bullying behaviour has not ceased the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents. A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased
- if it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school consideration should be given to using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school
- if a parent(s) is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, they should be referred to the school's complaints procedures
- if a parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been 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

Requests to take no action

If a child reports bullying behaviour but requests that no action be taken, the staff member will show empathy to the student, deal with the matter sensitively and speak with the student to work out together what steps can be taken to address the matter and how their parents will be informed of the situation.

If a parent reports bullying behaviour but requests that no action be taken, the parent will be asked to put this in writing, but the teacher will explain that the school may still investigate this.

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.
- All bullying behaviour will be recorded.
- Open & Welcoming environment
- SPHE programmes
- Webwise program
- NEPS Psychological Support
- CPD provided by Oide
- National Parents Council
- Tusla
- DCU Anti- Bullying Centre

All bullying behaviour will be recorded (Appendix A). 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

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):

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour you should 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 should be addressed using the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

Note: Oneoff incidents may be considered bullying such as a single hurtful message posted on social media (this 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 teachers should 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

- parents are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with schools, in addressing bullying behaviour. Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the students involved must be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to consult with them on the actions to be taken to address the behaviour
- it is important to listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- a record should be kept of the engagement with all involved (Appendix A)
- this record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known (see Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the Bi Cineálta procedures), where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students involved and their parents

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 of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extracurricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- Certain areas are **out of bounds** on the school grounds during breaks due to lack of visibility i.e. school garden, behind building etc

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

- Mr. Eugene Riordan (Principal)
- Ms. Claire Mahon (Acting Deputy Principal)
- Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.
- SNAs should report any bullying concerns to the child/children's class teacher/s.
- Parents can report bullying to any teacher. All teachers have a responsibility with regard to these reports.

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

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: John Geary
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: 26/5/2025

Signed: Eugene Lourd
(Principal)

Date: 27/5/25

Appendix A

Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour

1. Name of pupil experiencing alleged bullying behaviour and class group

Name _____ Class _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) involved in alleged bullying behaviour:

3. Source of Concern Came From:

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

4. Name of this person(s) (above) who reported the alleged bullying behaviour: concern:

--

5. Location of alleged Bullying Behaviour:

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

6. DATES

	Dates
Date of alleged bullying behaviour:	
Date of when the bullying behaviour was reported:	
Date of engagement with pupils involved:	
Date of engagement with their parents:	
Date of review (when follow up has been completed)	

7. FORM of bullying behaviour:

Bullying behaviour can take many forms, which can occur separately or together. Tick any/all relevant.

Form of Bullying		Tick ✓
<u>Direct bullying behaviour:</u>	Physical bullying behaviour (person or property)	
	Verbal bullying behaviour	
	Written bullying behaviour	
	Extortion	
<u>Indirect bullying behaviour:</u>	Exclusion	
	Relational	
<u>Online bullying behaviour</u>	Online bullying behaviour	
Other (explain)		

8. TYPE of bullying behaviour:

Type of Bullying	Tick ✓
Disablist bullying behaviour	
Exceptionally able bullying	
Gender identity bullying	
Homophobic/transphobic (LGBTQ+) bullying	
physical appearance bullying	
Racist bullying	
Poverty bullying	
Religious identity bullying	
Sexist bullying	
Sexual harassment	
Other - explain	

9. The views of the students regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour:

--	--

--	--

10. Contact with parents of all involved. The views of the students' parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour

Parents of those who have experienced bullying:	Parents of those who have been involved in bullying behaviour:

FOLLOW UP

(no more than 20 days after initial engagement)

Date(s) of follow up with pupils: _____

Date(s) of follow up with parents: _____

Any engagement of with external services/supports:

Views of pupils, if bullying behaviour has ceased, effectiveness of strategies and their relationship with the other pupils involved now

Views of parents, if bullying behaviour has ceased, effectiveness of strategies

	Yes	No
Has the bullying behaviour ceased?		

If yes, on what date? _____

If not,

Review of strategies with pupils involved

Review of these strategies with parents involved

When are we meeting pupils again?	
When are we talking with parents again?	

If yes, what action is now needed? (Ongoing supervision, move to code of behaviour / Gardaí / NEPS, etc)

--

Signed _____ Date _____
(Relevant Teacher)

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____