Caheragh National School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Caheragh 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. Ireland ratified the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child in September 1992. In doing this we committed to promote, protect and fulfill the rights of children. Bullying is a children's rights issue. Bullying interferes with the following rights of the child:

➢ The right to freedom of expression (Article 13)
➢ The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 14)
➢ The right to freedom of association and freedom of peaceful assembly (Article 15)
➢ The right to privacy (Article 16)
➢ The right to be protected from all forms of abuse and neglect (Article 19)
➢ The right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health (Article 24)
➢ The right to education (Article 28)
➢ The right to enjoy their own culture, religion or language (Article 30)

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 targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm.

- The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature and can have lasting effects on the child experiencing the behaviour.

- Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society.

- It is behaviour which is deliberate in nature and is unwanted. It is not accidental or reckless behaviour .

The harm can be :

➢ Physical (eg: personal injury, damage to or loss of property)

➢ Social: (eg: withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion)

➢ Emotional: (eg: low self esteem, depression, anxiety)

• A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards a student is not bullying behaviour. However, a single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be visible to a wide audience and has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and so becomes a repeated behaviour.

Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour:

o If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour, but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying, but, importantly, must be addressed under the school's Code of Behaviour.

o Some students with special educational needs may have social communication difficulties which may make them communicate their needs through behaviours that can hurt themselves or others. It is important to note that these behaviours are not deliberate or planned, but in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they cannot control.

o Disagreement between students is not considered bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Types of Bullying:

There are many different types of bullying behaviour. These can include directing bullying at someone focused on the following: disability, exceptional ability, gender identity, LGBTQ+ , physical appearance, racism, poverty status, religious identity, sexism and sexual harassment. This is not an exhaustive list.

Bullying can be: Direct:

• Physical: pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping students. Physical assault. Destruction of personal property.

• Verbal: continual name calling which insults, humiliates the student – this may refer to physical appearance, clothes, gender, accent, academic ability, race or ethnic origin.

• Written: Writing insulting remarks in public places, passing notes or drawings about the student.

• Extortion: where something is obtained through force or threats

Bullying can be: Indirect:

• Exclusion: where a student is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded or ignored by a student or group of students.

• Relational: Where a student's attempts to form friendships with peers are repeatedly

rejected or undermined, threats, non-verbal gesturing, malicious gossip, spreading rumours, silent treatment and manipulation of friend groups etc can all form relational bullying for a student.

Online bullying behaviour:

Cyber bullying is carried out via text, direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, email, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chat rooms and other online technologies.

This can include:

- Sending or sharing of insulting and offensive or intimidating messages or images via online means as mentioned above.

- Posting information which is personal, private or sensitive without consent.

- Making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other students (Catfishing).

- Exclude/disrupt access to a student on purpose on online chat groups/access to accounts/from an online game.

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	28th March	Staff Meeting – staff provided with the opportunity to discuss the new Bi Cineálta action plan and stemming from this discussion, staff were informed of the important points in dealing with an incidence or report of bullying – notice board in the office with the relevant information displayed as well as resources and recording form. Staff given time to discuss and relay feedback. Sharing of draft policy with staff to discuss / consult and make any amendments
Students	31st March April and May	Pupils from 2nd-6th class completed an anonymous questionnaire on bullying in school. Students in the Senior Room were given the opportunity to give their input in developing an Anti-Bullying Policy in Child Friendly Format during SHPE lessons on bullying. Their wording, examples and suggestions were all taken into account when drafting this policy. Pupils in the Senior Room designed and made child friendly Bí Cineálta visuals to be hung up around the school
Parents	31st March	Questionnaire issued to Parent to gain their opinions on how bullying is handled in the school. Feedback from these questionnaires informed the drafting of the policy.
Board of Management	June	Review new policy draft – leading to consultation and final ratification after amendments made where necessary.
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):

A Telling Environment

It is important that the school community supports a 'telling' environment. According to research conducted in Ireland, there is a persistent tendency not to report bullying incidents. Our aim is to ensure that students feel comfortable to talk about concerns regarding bullying behaviour.

The reasons why students may not report include the following:

- fear of retaliation from the student displaying the bullying behaviour or their friendship group
- concerns about being seen as a "telltale" for reporting bullying behaviour
- fear that the adult may make the situation worse
- fear that the adult doesn't have the knowledge and skills to deal appropriately with the bullying behaviour
- fear that the adult may deny access to their smart phone
- not knowing what will happen when they report bullying behaviour
- fear that they will not be believed
- concerns about "getting into trouble" for reporting bullying behaviour
- not having evidence to back up the allegation of bullying behaviour, this can be seen particularly with relational bullying behaviour

It is for all the above reasons that we aim to make our school a safe environment where reporting of bullying behaviour is encouraged.

A Trusted Adult

The concept of "a trusted adult" can be an effective strategy to encourage students to report if they or another student is experiencing bullying behaviour. Staff members support this strategy by letting students know that they can talk to them. Students who witness bullying behaviour are supported and encouraged to report the behaviour to a trusted adult in the school so that the behaviour can be addressed. Students who witness bullying behaviour on social media have an important role in helping to address the behaviour by reporting the witnessed behaviour to a trusted adult. The trusted adult should reassure the student that they have done the right thing by reporting the behaviour. The trusted adult should, without delay, inform the member of staff who has responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour. At primary level this may be the class teacher. If unsure who to inform, the trusted adult should inform the principal or deputy principal. The trusted adult should continue to support the student, as appropriate, while the behaviour is being addressed by the relevant member of staff.

Creating safe physical spaces in schools

The creation of safe physical spaces supports psychological safety and is an important measure to prevent bullying behaviour. Spaces that have a clear line of sight make it easier for school staff to supervise students. Hidden spaces in hallways, around staircases and in the schoolyard can be areas where there is a greater risk for bullying

behaviour to occur. It is for this reason that there are always 3 adults outside supervising the yard during breaktimes in Caheragh NS. We have also taken the following measures to create safe physical spaces:

- ensured good lighting is present to avoid dark corners or spaces

- removed visual barriers from windows such as posters

- improved the visibility of school staff who are supervising at break times including during yard duty

- artwork and signage have been put up around the school to promote the school's values such as equality, diversity, inclusion and respect

Students can feel a greater sense of belonging to a school community when they are given ownership of their own space through art and creativity. This helps students to identify and to feel a sense of responsibility for their school environment.

The inclusion of spaces within schools for collaborative learning can also play a part in fostering a sense of belonging. It is important that the school grounds are well maintained to promote a sense of ownership and respect in the school community

Appropriate Supervision

Supervision is an important measure to help prevent and address bullying behaviour. Schools are required to take all reasonable measures to ensure the safety of their students and to supervise students when students are attending school or attending school activities.

Culture and Environment: We strive to:
- Create a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and maintain a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.
- Involve parents as active partners in fostering an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated.
- Support the idea that our school is a telling environment.
- Promote the concept of a trusted adult – Stay Safe linkage – who to tell.
- Create safe spaces in our school building and yards – visibility
- Incorporate artwork and signs to promote our school values and promote the rights of all to have – equality, inclusion and respect.
- Encourage a sense of belonging with ownership over their own space through art and creativity.
- Create a positive school culture and climate which-
  - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
  - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
  - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;

Ways in which we work to achieve these goals are as follows:
- Staff are briefed on the uniform approach we must take to handle all reports of bullying – this is distributed to staff and a copy is displayed in the office notice for ease of access also.
- Anti Bullying week activities such as Random acts of Kindness homework, Poster making, slogan making, etc
- Playground helpers – students in higher classes volunteer to support younger classes on yard to help with games and positive interactions.
- Child Friendly Anti- Bullying Policy was formed with pupil and parent input and is

distributed to parents, children and staff to discuss. This policy outlines various ways to tell.
- Parents receive information at times regarding useful information on Anti Bullying.
- Stay safe and SPHE lessons focusing on positive behaviour form part of curricular content in all classes.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils.
- Class and School Charter development as well as notice board to promote kindness and build responsibility amongst pupils – ties in with the Amber Flag.

Curriculum (teaching and learning)
We strive to :
- Provide teaching and promote learning which is collaborative and respectful, fostering inclusion and respect for diversity.
- Display a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact.

Ways in which we work to achieve this:
- Teach SPHE and RSE content which fosters student's well-being and self confidence as well as promoting personal responsibility for their own behaviours and actions.
- Model respectful behaviour towards colleagues, pupils and visitors in our school environment.
- Curricular and extra-curricular activities can help to develop a sense of self worth, working together, inclusion and respect.
- Students are given regular opportunities to work in small groups with peers, which can help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy.
- Acknowledgment of our diverse school population – celebrating diversity and culture in our school through art, displays, photographs, international events.
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-
    - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
    - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.

- Supports for staff; training days in the local Education Centre and online

- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and

- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

Policy and planning
The aim of Caheragh National School's Bi Cineálta policy is
- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils, parents/guardians.
- To promote a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To ensure appropriate supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
- To develop procedures for noting, investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To implement a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour

and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- To work with appropriate agencies in countering all forms of bullying and promoting anti bullying behaviour.

➢ The Acceptable Use Policy, Supervision policy, Special Education Policy and Code of Behaviour as well as the Working Together Policy all support the implementation of the Bi Cineálta policy.
➢ Effective leadership is a key component with Principal, Deputy Principal, DLP, DDLP, and all middle management focused on supporting the implementation of this policy.

Relationships and Partnerships
- Interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as our parents' association and our various and multiple student committees and groups.
- Age and stage appropriate awareness initiatives that engage the student body in looking at their own behaviour – promoting acts of kindness and friendship, being an active help to others and looking at the causes of and impact of bullying during SPHE lessons.
- Conducting workshops and seminars for students, staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying.
- Encouraging peer mentoring and peer support
- Supporting active participation of students in school life and active participation of parents in school life also.
- Engaging parents and students in actively contributing to the formation of a Child Friendly Anti Bullying Policy to make them active participants in promotion of and discussion of useful ways to identify and reduce bullying behaviour and highlight procedure and how to deal with it if it does occur.

Preventing specific types of bullying behaviour

It should be noted that there is a variety of prevention strategies that can be implemented. A school's Student Support Team can support the development, implementation and review of the school's strategies to prevent bullying behaviour. When implementing a prevention strategy our school will consider engaging with members of the wider school community who are in regular contact with students, such as the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- school bus drivers
- education welfare officers
- home school community liaison officers
- school completion project workers
- Traveller and Roma community education workers
- local businesses that are close to the school

These members of the wider school community can be encouraged to report any bullying behaviour to the school as appropriate.

Preventing cyber bullying behaviour

Technology and social media have provided many positive opportunities for entertainment, social engagement and education. Technology is a part of life that can

impact even the youngest members of society. However, the increase in the use of technology has led to students becoming increasingly vulnerable to cyber bullying or unacceptable online behaviour. We as a school proactively address these challenges by promoting digital literacy, digital citizenship, and fostering safe online environments. Strategies to prevent cyber bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- implementing the SPHE curriculum
- implementing the Digital Media Literacy curriculum which teaches students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship
- having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- updating and communicating our Acceptable Use Policy for technology
- referring to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour
- promoting or hosting online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online via the Parent Association
- holding an Internet safety day to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour

The digital age of consent is the minimum age a user must be before a social media or internet company can collect, process and store their data. In Ireland the digital age of consent is 16.

For the purposes of data collection, students between the age of 13 and 16 years old must have parental permission to sign up to social media services where companies use the legal basis of consent to collect process and store users' data. Most social media platforms and services have a minimum age requirement and for the majority of these services it is 13 years old. Therefore technically, children under the age of 13 should not have a social media account. It is important for their child's safety, that parents are aware of their children's use of technology including smart phones and gaming consoles.

Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour

All students including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students, have a right to feel safe and supported at school. Strategies to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- maintaining an inclusive physical environment such as by displaying relevant posters
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- challenging gender stereotypes
- conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behavior
- encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic behavior

Preventing racist bullying behaviour

Schools have become much more culturally diverse over the last number of decades. Students attending schools come from many different cultures and backgrounds. Students from diverse backgrounds may face discrimination and prejudice and may be subject to racist bullying behaviour. Strategies to prevent racist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students "see themselves" in their school environment
- having the cultural diversity of the school visible and on display
- conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of racism
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour
- providing supports to school staff to respond to the needs of students for whom English is an additional language and for communicating with their parents
- providing supports to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma students, and to encourage communication with their parents
- inviting speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds
- ensuring that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds

Preventing sexist bullying behaviour

Schools should focus on gender equality as part of the school's measures to create a supportive and respectful environment. Strategies to prevent sexist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex
- ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex
- celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contributions of all students
- organising awareness campaigns, workshops and presentations on gender equality and respect
- encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home

Preventing sexual harassment

Preventing sexual harassment requires an approach that focuses on education, awareness and clear enforceable policies. Schools must make it clear that there is a zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment. Sexual harassment should never be dismissed as teasing or banter. Strategies to prevent sexual harassment include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- using the SPHE curriculum to teach students about healthy relationships and how to treat each other with respect and kindness
- promoting positive role models within the school community
- challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment

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):

School Procedures

- It is the policy of the school to supervise the school yard at all times during regular lunch breaks i.e. 11.00am to 11.10am, 12.30pm to 1.00pm and 2.00pm to 2.05pm. Teachers assume a duty of care at 9.10am. The Board of Management informs parents that the school does not accept responsibility for pupils dropped off earlier than 9.10am
- A Rota for supervision is drawn up by the principal in consultation with staff and this Rota is displayed in the office.
- Rules of the school yard are reviewed and revised continually and communicated to children regularly
- Supervision duties are compulsory due to the Public Service Stability Agreement 2013 – 2016 (Haddington Road Agreement) so teachers do not have the option of opting out if they so desire.
- If parents indicate a worry about a particular child on the yard all teachers scheduled 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
- All Special Needs Assistants are on duty during lunch breaks. While these Assistants provide individual supervision for designated children with additional needs, they can act in an observing and reporting capacity, bringing instances of misbehaviour to the attention of the teacher on yard duty. The schools anti-bullying/discipline policy covers incidents of misbehaviour
- Children with injuries/complaints are dealt with directly by the teacher on yard duty. Children are not permitted to report directly to the staff room if there is an incident on the yard unless expressly told to by the teacher on yard duty.
- All full-time teachers will complete 1 hour of yard duty each week.
- First Aid boxes and Accident Report books are kept as a matter of procedure (See Accident and Injury Policy). All accidents where there is injury involved should be noted in the Accident Report Book by the teachers on supervision or by the relevant class teacher. Where teachers suspect that a child is unwell, parents are alerted, usually by phone.
- If children remain uncollected after 3.00pm, the school always ensures that a duty of care is provided until a parent/guardian calls or can be contacted
- At all other times each teacher is responsible for the supervision of all children under their care.
- *The Principal supervises the playground for the ten minutes preceding the start of the school day. This is done without prejudice, as the school does not officially take responsibility for children before admission time of 9:20am.*
- At dismissal time in the evening the class teachers supervise the outside of the school 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 Additional Education or Language Support should be collected at the classroom door by the relevant teacher.

Special Provisions

a) For out of school activities such as games, swimming, tours, back up provisions are put in place to ensure adequate levels of supervision are present. 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, Language, take over a class, the school encourages teachers to maintain a presence.
e) The school Safety Statement lists all hazards on the school yard and supervisors are accordingly briefed
f) Parents may request that their children be allowed leave during the school day due to health commitments etc. These requests must be made in writing to the school and a will be kept, by the school for the duration of 1 year.

In addition to above mentioned strategies, the school has the following in place to prevent and address bullying:

- Staff at all times endeavour to encourage pupils to show respect for each other.
- Implementation of the SPHE curriculum.
- Positive self-esteem is fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences, by acknowledging good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success.
- Acceptable Use Policy includes learning about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed regularly with the pupils.
- Staff are particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of bullying/ being bullied.
- All disclosed incidents of bullying are investigated thoroughly and consistently by following the correct procedure as outlined to staff and recorded and kept in a secure location.
- School wide awareness raising on all aspects of bullying, supervision and monitoring of classrooms, hallways, school grounds, school tours and extracurricular activities. This is also covered in our Supervision Policy.
- Involvement of pupils in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Kindness/Friendship/anti-bullying week, and other activities that can help to pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Refer to appropriate online behaviour when using devices and in SPHE lessons.
- Promote online safety events or material for parents
- The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school e.g. www.tacklebullying.ie, www.antibullyingcentre.ie>fuse, www.webwise.ie
- Shared resources for teaching of bullying including lessons from above websites – shared Google drive for all teachers to access or physical copies available in the office.
- Challenge gender- stereotypes – equal participation of all. Equal recognition.
- Raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour and encourage

students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour.

- Foster a culture where diversity is celebrated and students "see themselves" in the school environment.
- Ensuring the library has material with reflects our diverse school population from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
- Modelling of respectful behaviour by staff of all irrespective of sex.
- Ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of sex.
- Making clear that our school has a zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment of any kind with enforceable policy - See Code of Behaviour.

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 (see attached)

- The DDLP 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

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):

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the teacher should consider the following:
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 also be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident. The following definition of bullying sets out clear criteria to help schools to identify bullying behaviour.

'Bullying is 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.'

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.

It is important to note that incidents can occur where behaviour is unacceptable and hurtful but the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. If the answer to any of the above questions is No, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies that deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

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.

The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

a. While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the 'Relevant Teacher(s)', the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' will use his/her/their professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.

b. If it is established by the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' that bullying has occurred, the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

c. The 'Relevant Teacher(s)' must record the bullying incident by adding an Alleged Bullying Behaviour Report to the relevant pupil's file which will be visible on files

on all other pupils named. The 'Relevant Teacher' must inform the Principal.

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). With this in mind the school's procedures are as follows:

- In investigating and dealing with bullying the teacher(s) will exercise his/her/their judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type if it has and how best the situation might be resolved.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the 'Relevant Teacher(s)'. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report instances of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, SNAs, caretakers and cleaners are encouraged to report any incidences of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them to the Class Teacher.
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
- On being informed of an alleged incident of bullying, the teacher dealing with the report will first interview the victim(s) and discuss the feelings which the victim(s) experienced because of the bullying behaviour.
- Initial investigations of bullying will be done in class where possible but some incidents might be best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' should seek answers to questions of what, where, who, when and why. This should be done in a clam manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non- aggressive manner.
- If a group is involved each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about the other's statements.
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.
- Where the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' has/have determined that a pupil has engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- The ''Relevant Teacher'' does not apportion blame but should make an effort to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter.
- When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the ''Relevant Teacher'' will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information. This may be recorded and stored in a secure location in the office using an "Alleged Bullying Behaviour Report".
- If a pupil chooses to continue the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer be considered a once off occurrence. In this event parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted. The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in

which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for the pupil.
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may be arranged separately with a view to bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.

It is important to note the following:
- 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 will be kept of the engagement with all involved
- this record should 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 behaviour

Follow up
Where bullying behaviour has occured
- 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 document the views of students and their parents in relation to the Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and PostPrimary Schools
- 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 Board of Management of 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

Caheragh NS 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.

Where the student displaying the bullying behaviour is not a student in the school, but the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour is a student in the school, the school should support the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as appropriate and engage with them and their parents to determine what steps can be taken. It is important for school staff to be fair and consistent in their approach to address bullying behaviour. Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour need support. It is important that the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour is engaged with without delay so that they feel listened to, supported and reassured. School staff should identify the supports needed for the student who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties and ensure that their needs are met.

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 counselling 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.

A student's agency or sense of power can be decreased when they experience or witness bullying behaviour. When a student tells an adult that they feel that they are experiencing bullying behaviour they may feel that they are taking back some control over what is happening to them. It is very important that a student's agency is not decreased further by adults deciding what will happen next without listening to the student and involving them in deciding on the actions that will be taken.

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*

*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 parties 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 as outlined in the school's Bí Cineálta policy. In circumstances where a student expresses concern about their parents being informed, the school should develop an appropriate plan to support the student and for how their parents will be informed. The school must consider communication barriers that may exist when communicating with parents, for example, literacy, digital literacy or language barriers. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour it is generally acknowledged that that no one approach works in all situations. International and national research also continues to evolve in this area and the effectiveness of particular approaches continues to be reviewed that is why every school must therefore decide on an approach that is best suited to its own circumstances.

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)