Bí Cineálta: Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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Introduction

Galway Educate Together Secondary Schools' Bí Cineálta: Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures is created within the frame of reference of the Code of Positive Behaviour. The school regards bullying as a serious infringement of individual rights and a serious threat to the self-esteem, self-confidence, and general wellbeing of students. We do not tolerate bullying of any kind. Every report of bullying will be treated seriously and investigated thoroughly, having due regard for the wellbeing of the students involved.

Staff at Galway Educate Together Secondary School (GETSS) accept a collective responsibility to work to prevent bullying, aggression and/or harassment by any member of the school community. The school recognises the role of the entire school community in identifying and reporting bullying behaviour and acknowledges its role in taking appropriate action when bullying behaviour becomes apparent.

Student participation in school life is encouraged through all existing school structures. An important aspect of this positive school culture is to be aware of how to recognise bullying and to report it immediately.

As bullying is known to cause physical and/or psychological harm and negatively affect the quality of the learning and teaching provided, all members of the school are united in recognising their role in supporting an anti-bullying ethos and a whole school anti-bullying environment. It is the responsibility of every member of the school community to respect the right of others to learn in an atmosphere free from threats towards themselves or their belongings and to assist in the prevention of bullying behaviour. To this end, every member of the school community must recognise that bullying or harassing behaviour will not be tolerated and must be reported.

As a School of Sanctuary, we strive to ensure that all students and their families feel a sense of safety and acceptance in the school, regardless of their backgrounds.

Our Commitment to a Bully-Free Environment

The Board of Management has adopted this 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 the 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 in any of the nine grounds specified: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

Scope

The Policy applies to the following:

- When students are on the school grounds
- Travelling to and from school (all methods of transport)
- When students are on school tours and trips
- When students are engaged in extracurricular activities organised by the school

GETSS reserves the right, to apply the policy in respect of bullying or harassment that occurs at any other time when, in the opinion of the principal and/or the board of management, there is a clear connection with GETSS, and the alleged behaviour is likely to have a significant impact on the work of the school. This could include (but is not limited to), for example, the bullying of a student using a social networking site such as Snapchat, Instagram, X, WhatsApp, Facebook, or other such sites.

The procedures outlined in this policy relate to measures to prevent and address bullying behaviour that occurs between students. In line with the Bí Cineálta guidelines, allegations of bullying behaviour

by students towards school staff will be addressed through the school's Code of Positive Behaviour. Allegations of bullying behaviour by school staff towards students may be addressed by the principal or chairperson of the Board of Management through the disciplinary procedures for staff.

The ***Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying*** is rooted in the following four key principles:

1. **Prevention:** Through the generation of empathy and the provision of training which provides a foundation for knowledge, respect, equality and inclusion
2. **Support:** Tangible and targeted supports based on the continuum of needs which provide a framework for school communities to work together
3. **Oversight:** Visible leadership creates positive environments for children and young people and all members of our school community
4. **Community:** Building inclusive school communities that are connected to society, and that support and nurture positive relationships and partnerships

Through the implementation of the *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying*, we can all work together towards a diverse, inclusive Irish society free from bullying in all its forms, where individual difference is valued, nurtured and celebrated and where all our children and young people can feel happy and safe in our schools.

This policy relates to, and should be read in conjunction with, other school policies including:

- Code of Positive Behaviour
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Child Safeguarding Policy
- Wellbeing Policy
- The Blueprint for an Educate Together Second-level Schools, and the "The Ethical Curriculum Framework.
- The principles of restorative practice.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined in *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. This includes cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying (such as homophobic bullying and racist bullying) and relational bullying."

The core definition above sets out clear criteria to help school communities to prevent, correctly identify and address bullying among students. Alleged incidents of bullying behaviour are however often complex and must be considered on a case-by case basis. A detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

The three core elements of the definition are further described below:

1. **Targeted, Harmful Behaviour**

Bullying is deliberate, unwanted behaviour that causes harm to others, and where the student displaying bullying behaviour knows that their behaviour is or will be perceived as harmful by the child or young person experiencing the behaviour. Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. The harm can be physical (for example, personal injury, damage to or loss of property), social (for example, withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion) and/or emotional (for example, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety) and can have a serious and long-term negative impact on the student experiencing the bullying behaviour. 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 still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour.

2. **Repeated Behaviour**

Bullying takes the form of a systematic pattern of behaviour which is repeated over time. Single offline incidents of intentional negative behaviour involving an imbalance of power are not considered bullying but must still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour. Posting a single harmful message/image/video online, and which is highly likely to be reposted or shared with others can therefore be seen as bullying behaviour.

3. **Imbalance of Power**

In incidents of bullying, the student experiencing the bullying behaviour finds it hard to defend themselves as a result of the abuse of a real or perceived imbalance of power. This imbalance of power may manifest itself through differences in size, strength, age, ability, peer group power,

economic status, social status, religion, race, ethnic origin including membership of the Traveller and/or Roma communities, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, experience of the care system, disability or the receipt of special education. In incidents of online (or cyber) bullying, the imbalance of power may relate to online anonymity, technical proficiency and possession of information/images/video, and the inability of the targeted student to remove offensive online material or escape the bullying.

Types of Bullying Behaviour

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in this non-exhaustive definition:
(*This is not an exhaustive list of behaviours, as all incidents will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.)*

- **Relational bullying:** Spreading rumours and lies about a student to hurt their reputation, rallying friends against one-person, deliberate exclusion.
- **Physical bullying:** Damage to property, pushing others, tripping up others and fighting.
- **Verbal bullying:** Slagging, jeering, talking about others behind their backs, name-calling, threats, demanding money, sarcasm.
- **Psychological bullying:** Giving the "Look," staring at others, isolating others, deliberately excluding others, intimidation, being unfriendly.
- **Sexual bullying/harassment:** Unwanted sexual contact or comments, sexually abusive comments/images, unwelcome touching of others, making nasty comments about someone's sexual orientation or gender, offensive sexist graffiti with sexual content, images with sexual content.
- **Identity-based bullying:** Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in the Equality Legislation (gender identity including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller Community.
- **Homophobic and transphobic bullying:** Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation and or gender identity. Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation and or gender identity. Name calling, threats or intimidation.
- **Racist bullying:** Commenting on others' accent, race, ethnicity, colour. Making offensive hurtful jokes. Inciting others to be racist.
- **SEN/AEN-based bullying:** Name calling, taunting others because of their learning need (including exceptionally able students), unwelcome comments on others' learning needs, taunting others because of their support in school.

- **Neurodiversity-based bullying:** Commenting on others' differences in thinking, learning, processing, communication, social interaction, sensory experience, or behaviour.
- **Cyberbullying:** Cyber bullying refers to any or all bullying carried out by one person or a group of persons using ICT, including social networking platforms, iPads and mobile phones. Includes the following:
    - sending threatening/abusive text messages or emails
    - placing any offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum.
    - The sharing or storing of information without consent.
    - Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual (harassment)
    - Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name (impersonation)
    - Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight (flaming)
    - Fooling someone into sharing confidential or compromising information or images (trickery)
    - Purposedly excluding someone from an online group Cyber Stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for their safety (exclusion)
    - Silent phone calls
    - Abusive calls/text messages or emails

Behaviour that is Not Bullying

Isolated or once-off incidents of negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private message, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's Code of Positive Behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or group chat where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

Harmful behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Code of Positive Behaviour.

Disagreement between students, or situations where students don't want to be friends or to remain friends, is not considered bullying behaviour unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others including deliberate manipulation of friendship groups.

Some students with additional educational needs may have social communication difficulties which may make them communicate their needs through behaviours that can hurt themselves and others. It is important to note that these behaviours are not deliberate or planned but, in certain situations, they are an automatic response they can't control. Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour.
If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying. These behaviours, while not defined as bullying, can be distressing.

Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Positive Behaviour.

This policy aims to resolve any issues and restore relationships in so far as possible. It also aims to support both parties so that there is learning and personal development. Parents/guardians and students are expected to cooperate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.

Criminal Behaviour

The school's anti-bullying procedures are guided by a strong legal framework designed to promote a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment. Several key pieces of legislation set out the responsibilities of schools in preventing and addressing bullying and harassment and are outlined in section 1.5 of the Bí Cineálta guidelines.

Bullying behaviour can be considered criminal behaviour under certain circumstances and legal consequences can apply. The age of criminal responsibility in Ireland is 12 years.

Some online behaviour may be illegal, and students need to be aware of the far-reaching consequences of posting inappropriate or harmful content online. In cases of intimate imagery, The Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020, also known as Coco's Law, criminalises the non-consensual sharing of intimate images and criminalises threatening to share these images.

If the bullying behaviour involves physical violence or threats of violence, it may be considered assault.

If bullying behaviour involves discrimination or hate speech targeting a student based on their race, religion, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation or membership of the travelling community, it may be considered a hate crime under the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989, and those engaging in such behaviour may face criminal charges.

If bullying behaviour involves sexual harassment or sexual assault, this may also be considered criminal behaviour.

An Garda Síochána is the appropriate authority to investigate alleged criminal behaviour.

Development/Review of our Bí Cineálta Policy

All members of the school community were provided with the opportunity to input into the development/review of this policy.

	Date Consulted	Method of Consultation
School Staff	Jan 15, 2025	Discussed at length during Bí Cineálta workshop. Feedback invited via email.
Students	May 22, 2025	Discussion at Student Council meeting
Parents/Guardians		Feedback invited via email.
Board of Management	June 3rd, 2025 & September 30th, 2025	Discussion at BOM meeting, June 3, 2025
Wider School Community		Feedback invited from ancillary staff (caretaker, secretary, bus escorts, cleaners)
Date Policy was approved:	September 30th, 2025	Ratification at BOM meeting
Date Policy was last reviewed	May, 2025	Reviewed by Anti-bullying Team

Preventing Bullying Behaviour at GETSS

Creating a Safe and Inclusive School Environment

GETSS takes a whole-school preventative and educational approach to bullying and promotes a restorative school climate that focuses on relationships and values including respect for the individual, along with a strong sense of community and cooperation between students, parents/guardians, staff, and Board of Management.

GETSS is fully committed to the following principles of best practice in preventing bullying behaviour. The school environment should be space where students and school staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported. Maintaining a positive school culture and climate that:

- Is inclusive, welcoming of difference, is open, supportive and encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour
- makes it clear to all members of the school community that bullying of any kind is unacceptable behaviour

- promotes respectful relationships across the school community. The school will focus on building empathy and respect in all members if the school community by modelling empathy and respect in all dealings with pupils and other members of the school community.

A 'Telling' School

Galway Educate Together Secondary School is a 'Telling' School. It is made clear to students in all years that when they report bullying behaviour they are not considered to be 'telling tales' but are behaving responsibly and that the wellbeing of other students is dependent on them reporting such behaviour to a teacher or a senior student.

Anti-bullying Pledge

This GETSS Anti-bullying pledge (Appendix 5) protects all members of Galway ETSS school community and hopes to raise awareness and knowledge among students about how to respond to bullying behaviour. All students are asked to sign this pledge at the beginning of each school year.

We, the members of Galway ETSS, recognise that every individual has the right to learn and work in an environment free from bullying, harassment, and discrimination. As such, we are committed to creating a culture of respect, empathy, and inclusion where all students and staff feel safe, valued, and supported.

Restorative Practice at GETSS

This policy promotes whole-school preferred practices and the explicit building of positive and healthy relationships, recognising the centrality of such relationships to wellbeing and learning for all.

RESPECT

Relationships / **E**mpathy / **S**afety / **P**ersonal accountability / **E**quity / **C**ommunity / **T**rust

These values guide our relational school community. They inform how we try to think, engage, speak, listen, and approach situations in our school. When things go wrong, we will use the restorative questions to guide conversations and circles so that we can work together to find a solution. Whilst the school proactively seeks to build positive and healthy relationships within the school community, it recognises that bullying behaviour may occur and must be responded to promptly to minimise and repair harm and meet the needs of everybody involved.

Education and Prevention Strategies

Our preventative measures are guided by the *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2019*, ensuring that wellbeing is promoted across all aspects of school life. The measures in this section are structured around the following four domains of wellbeing:

1. Culture and Environment
2. Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)
3. Policy and Planning
4. Relationships and Partnerships

By embedding preventative measures within these four domains, we aim to create a school environment where all students can thrive, free from the fear of bullying.

Culture and Environment

We strive to cultivate a positive school culture where diversity is valued and where all members of the school community feel respected and connected. Our environment promotes high expectations for respectful behaviour, supported through clear policies, consistent practice, and visible leadership. The physical and emotional safety of students is prioritised through both proactive supervision and inclusive school practices.

Agreed Class Rules	Teaching staff ensure that the rules of the classroom (decided upon with input from the class) are enforced and that the students always behave appropriately and in line with the school's Code of Positive Behaviour.
Group Work and Peer Teaching	Group activities and peer teaching encourages collaboration, leadership, and mutual respect among students. By learning from and supporting one another, students build positive relationships and a stronger sense of community—reducing the likelihood of bullying.
House System	The House system fosters a sense of belonging, creates links between older and younger students, and promotes relationship building and collaboration. Students are recognised and rewarded for living the Educate Together ethos.

Merit System	GETSS seeks to promote a positive school culture and environment by recognising and rewarding students for positive engagement, effort and improvement.
Open Door Policy	The school's open door policy encourages students to report bullying by fostering trust and open communication, enabling staff to address issues early. This helps create a positive, inclusive environment where bullying is less likely to thrive.
Regular Student Surveys on Bullying	The combating of bullying depends on the extent to which students note and report bullying. The student body is surveyed regularly (at least once every school year) to identify the extent of bullying behaviour and insofar as possible, students who may be experiencing bullying behaviour
Student Support Team (SST)	The SST meets weekly and comprises the Guidance Counsellor, SEN Coordinator, a Student Support Assistant, the Deputy Principal and the Principal.
Safe Physical Spaces	The school ensures safe physical spaces by maintaining well-supervised classrooms, corridors, and outside spaces where students feel secure and supported. Quiet areas and sensory spaces also provide refuge for students who may feel overwhelmed or need help.
Student Induction	Our student induction programme supports transitions by helping new students feel welcomed, informed, and connected from the start. By building early relationships and setting clear expectations, inductions reduce isolation and support a positive, inclusive school culture.
'Telling' Environment	Creating a 'telling' environment encourages students to speak up about bullying without fear of judgment or retaliation. When students feel safe and supported in reporting concerns, bullying incidents are more likely to be identified and addressed early.
Tutor Time	A tutor system is in place as a support mechanism for all students. This approach helps bind year groups together. The tutor groups are met by their tutor at the beginning of every day for 15 minutes. This allows for regular 'check-ins' and a

	supportive structure to deal with bullying issues if they arise. Clear procedures, ensuring students know Who to Tell and How to Tell are shared with students during Tutor Time. Exercises to help raise awareness of the nature of bullying will be completed once a month during tutor time.
Unique Schools App	The school uses a dedicated school app to enhance communication with parents and guardians. This platform allows for timely updates on student behaviour, attendance, and wellbeing, ensuring that parents are kept informed and engaged.
VSWare (MIS)	The school uses the VSware Management Information System to monitor student behaviour and support early intervention in cases of negative behaviour. Staff record behavioural incidents promptly and consistently, allowing for the identification of patterns of concern, which enables timely communication with parents/guardians and prompt staff responses.
Volunteerism and Fundraising	Our school promotes inclusion and empathy through regular fundraising and volunteer activities. These shared experiences help build teamwork, respect, and a sense of belonging—key elements in preventing bullying and creating a positive school culture.

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

Through the formal and informal curriculum, we provide opportunities for students to develop social and emotional skills, empathy, and resilience. Programmes such as SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education), CSPE (Civic, Social and Political Education), Ethical Education and Global Citizenship Education (GCE) address topics related to bullying prevention, respectful relationships, inclusion, and responsible online behaviour. Further details of education and prevention strategies are detailed below.

CSPE	Civic, Social and Political Education) helps prevent bullying by promoting respect, empathy, and understanding among students, while teaching the importance of human rights and responsible citizenship. It encourages active participation in creating a positive and inclusive school environment.

Curricular Activities	Students are provided with opportunities across the curriculum to develop a positive sense of their self-worth, foster an attitude of respect for all, to promote the value of diversity, to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
Ethical Education	The ethical education curriculum plays a vital role in creating a school culture that values empathy, respect and inclusion which are essential components in addressing and preventing bullying.
Extra-Curricular Activities	After School and Lunchtime clubs are available during the week, presenting a means for students, (particularly those who feel shy, alone or alienated), to become involved in school life and develop socially in school. These inclusive activities help support and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
FUSE Anti-bullying Programme	FUSE is an anti- bullying and online safety programme designed by the DCU Anti-bullying Centre aims to tackle bullying and online safety in schools. This programme is delivered in second year and covers the following topics: – Bullying and the importance of noticing – Cyberbullying and the importance of noticing. – Bystanders and Responsibility – Online Safety – Privacy and Sharing Online – Empathy and relationships – Reporting Concerns
Global Citizenship Education (GCE)	Global Citizenship Education fosters empathy, respect for diversity, and a sense of shared responsibility, helping students understand and value differences. This promotes inclusive behaviours and reduces the likelihood of bullying by encouraging a culture of respect and mutual understanding.
Programmes, events and supports which	Supports for LGBTQIA+ students include: – Annual Stand-Up Week – Notice boards and posters (as appropriate)

deal explicitly with identity-based bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying	– Prioritisation of respect for LGBTQIA+ members of the school community, through discussion with students and parents/guardians – Pride Club – Pride Flag – Links with BelongTo and TENI (Transgender Equality Network of Ireland)
Measures to Prevent Cyberbullying Behaviour	- Promoting digital literacy and digital citizenship - SPHE Curriculum - Regular conversations about respectful relationships online - Communicating our Acceptable Use Policy for technology - Promoting and hosting online safety events for students and parents - Holding an Internet Safety Day to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour
Preventing Racist Bullying	- Fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and students "see themselves" in their school environment - Whole School PBL on celebrating culture and diversity in our school - Map on display near GP area - GETSS cookbook launched by the PGC - Workshops and talks for students - Yearly visit to University of Galway to celebrate Traveller Ethnicity week. (2nd year students) - Inviting speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds to the school - 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	- Ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex

	- Ensuring that students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex - Celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contribution of all students - Organising awareness campaigns, workshops and presentations on gender equality and respect - Encouraging parents and guardians to reinforce these values of respect at home.
Preventing Sexual Harassment	- Teaching the updated SPHE specifications to teach students about healthy relationships and how to treat each other with respect and kindness - Promoting positive role models in the school community - Challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment
RSE	Relationships & Sexuality Education, delivered in each of the year groups, provides opportunities to explore and discuss areas such as human sexuality and relationships, which have relevance to identity-based bullying. Consent workshops are regularly delivered by COPE, Active Consent and other organisations.
School Performances	School musicals and performances provide inclusive, creative spaces where students collaborate, express themselves, and build confidence. These shared experiences strengthen peer connections and foster a sense of belonging, helping to prevent bullying.
SEN Supports	– SEN Policy – ASD special classes – SSA – Co-teaching/Team Teaching – Support Interventions: You are Here, Get Up Stand Up, Talk About Social Skills. – Continuum of Support – Behaviour Support Plans

SPHE – Social, Personal & Health Education	Students receive 100 hours of timetabled over the course of each the three years of Junior Cycle. Anti-bullying lessons feature in each of the years. Senior Cycle SPHE incorporates the delivery of lessons on Communication, and Mental Health. Staff are trained in the delivery of the SPHE programme.
Themed Weeks	Themed weeks and events take place across the yearly calendar to promote a positive, inclusive school culture and raise awareness about bullying and friendship. These include: – Stand-Up Week – Friendship Week – RP Week – Neurodiversity Week – Wellbeing Week – Safer Internet Day

Policy and Planning

Our Bí Cineálta Anti-bullying Policy is integrated with wider school planning to ensure a coherent, whole-school approach to wellbeing and student safety. The policy is regularly reviewed in consultation with staff, students, and parents/guardians to ensure its continued effectiveness. All incidents of bullying are responded to in line with clearly communicated procedures that prioritise prevention, early intervention, and support for those affected.

Acceptable Use Policy	The school's Acceptable Use Policy outlines expectations around the use of digital devices and the procedures for dealing with breaches of same.
Bí Cineálta Anti-Bullying Policy	The policy is published on the school website and is available to all staff on OneNote. The Anti-bullying Pledge is in the school journal and is signed by all students at the beginning of the school year. All new students are made aware of the Anti-Bullying policy. Staff training on Anti-bullying takes place each school year. The Policy is promoted at Parent and Guardian Information Evenings. Parents, guardians, students and staff are consulted in the development of the

	policy and procedures. The policy promotes a consistent approach to dealing with bullying behaviour.
Blocking of Sites on the School Network	Students use of technology in school is regularly monitored, in line with our Acceptable Use Policy.
Code of Positive Behaviour	The school's Code of Behaviour sets clear expectations for respectful conduct and outlines consistent responses to negative behaviour. By promoting fairness, accountability, and positive behaviour, using a restorative approach, it helps create a safe and supportive school environment for all students.
Child Protection and Safeguarding	The school's child safeguarding procedures, developed in line with the *Children First Act 2015* and the Department of Education's *Child Protection Procedures for Schools*, help ensure a safe environment for all students. By identifying and supporting vulnerable children early, these procedures play a key role in preventing bullying and protecting student wellbeing.
Student Friendly Anti-bullying Policy	Clear details including what constitutes bullying and who and how to tell, are located at multiple points in both school buildings. These posters also include a QR code to the school's 'Negative Behaviour Support Form' (Appendix 2).
Wellbeing Policy	Our Wellbeing Policy supports students' mental, emotional, and social development. By fostering resilience, empathy, and positive relationships, it outlines the steps we take to promote a caring school culture where bullying is less likely to occur.

Relationships and Partnerships

Building strong, supportive relationships among students, staff, and parents/guardians is central to our prevention efforts. We actively encourage open communication and foster partnerships with families and the wider community, including outside support agencies. Programmes such as restorative practice and student mentoring further contribute to a positive relational climate in the school.

Big Brother Big Sister	A mentoring programme in which TY (Transition Year) and 5th Year students mentor 1st Year students.
Check and Connect	This intervention offers additional support for some students.
External Agencies	Where appropriate, the assistance of outside agencies is sought to help combat bullying. These may include: • **Mental health services** such as Jigsaw and CAMHS - These partnerships provide access to expert guidance and early intervention for students in need, helping to build resilience, reduce vulnerability, and create a supportive environment where bullying is less likely to occur. • **Psychological services**, including NEPS - These services help identify challenges early, guide interventions, and promote a safe, inclusive environment where bullying is less likely to occur. • **The HSE** - Through access to health education, support services, and professional advice, this collaboration helps address underlying issues, strengthen resilience, and reduce the risk of bullying. • **The Gardaí -** Through educational visits, community engagement, and support in serious cases, this collaboration reinforces anti-bullying messages and helps maintain a secure school environment. • **TUSLA** - This partnership helps identify and respond to child protection concerns, strengthens supports for vulnerable students, and contributes to a safe, inclusive school environment where bullying is less likely to occur. • **Planet Youth** - By using data-driven insights and promoting protective factors in young people's lives, this partnership helps reduce risk behaviours and fosters a positive school culture where bullying is less likely to occur.
Guest Speakers	Guest speakers are regularly invited in to discuss anti-bullying topics to class groups and year groups. Guest speakers bring real-world perspectives on topics like respect, diversity, and resilience. Their

	insights help raise awareness, challenge harmful attitudes, and inspire positive behaviour.
Guidance Counsellor Support	Available, as required, for all students, in groups or individually.
Links with Primary Schools	Strong links with primary schools help us identify and plan for students' support needs, including those with special educational needs (SEN). Early coordination ensures smoother transitions, promotes inclusion, and reduces the risk of bullying by supporting vulnerable students from the outset.
Nurture Programme	The Nurture Programme is a short-term, targeted support which focuses on supporting students experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.
Parents' & Guardians' Community (PGC) & Committee	The PGC supports the school in enhancing the educational development and educational opportunities of their children. The school's PGC Committee acts as a conduit between parents/guardians and the school management and ensures that parents are represented in the consultative process of school development planning and decision-making.
Restorative Practice	Positive relationships are developed through restorative practice, which is based on principles of equality, respect, honesty, and community problem-solving. Emphasis is placed on ensuring understanding, empathy, and reflection is encouraged to improve behaviour and develop collaborative solutions to repair harm and restore relationships. All staff are trained in Restorative Practice.
Student Council	Promotes the voice of students to ensure that they have meaningful input into the development of the Anti-Bullying policy. Students are involved in student led anti- bullying and wellbeing initiatives.

Supervision and Monitoring of Students

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour:

- All staff are watchful and observe relationships between students in class, note absences patterns and remind students that high standards of behaviour are always expected
- Supervision is provided before school and during morning and lunch breaks:
    - A supervision rota is prepared for teachers and SSAs.
    - A pro-active approach is encouraged during periods of supervision.
    - Students are assigned designated areas in which to socialise and eat.
    - A games room, library, Nurture room, yard and sports hall are available at lunchtime.
    - Any causes for concern are dealt with by supervising staff, and reported to school management, where necessary.
- Adequate supervision is organised for school tours and extra-curricular activities.

Procedures for Reporting Bullying

Who to Tell

- Students can report bullying behaviour to any member of staff whom they feel comfortable with.
- Parents/guardians should report bullying behaviour to any member of staff with whom they feel comfortable, but their main point of contact will be the Tutor.

How to Tell

Students:

GETSS is a 'Telling' School.

- Tell a teacher or trusted staff member after class or at an appropriate time
- Hand up a note inside your school journal or with home learning
- Phone the school
- E-mail the school
- Ask a parent/guardian or friend to talk on your behalf
- Place a note in the anonymous 'Report Bullying Box'
- Use the QR code which can be found on posters around the school and on our website, to complete the Negative Behaviour Report Form (Appendix 2).

If you see someone engaging in harmful behaviour, **tell someone - you are doing the right thing!** It will be made clear to all students that when they report concerns of bullying, they are

not telling tales but behaving responsibly. All allegations, including anonymous allegations of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with.

Parents/Guardians:

- Parents/guardians should contact the school by emailing admin@galwayetss.ie. or use the QR code on the school website to access the *Negative Behaviour Report Form*. A hard copy of this form will be made available, if necessary.

Staff:

Teaching and non-teaching staff such as administrative staff, SSAs, bus escorts, caretakers, and cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the Relevant Teacher. They may be asked to complete a *Negative Behaviour Report Form.*

Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour includes any member of the Anti-Bullying Team. The Anti-Bullying Team may delegate the investigation to another teacher, if appropriate.

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

- Ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured
- Seek to ensure privacy of those involved
- Conduct all conversations with sensitivity – considering the age and ability of those involved
- Listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour to determine how best to address the situation
- Take action in a timely manner
- Inform parents/guardians of those involved

Identifying if Bullying Behaviour has Occurred

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:

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred teachers will consider the following: what happened, where, when, and why?

The staff will use the three questions outlined in the Bí Cineálta procedures to make a preliminary assessment of whether bullying behaviour has occurred.

1. Is it targeted?
2. Is it repeated?
3. Is it causing harm?

Sometimes behaviour can be hurtful or unacceptable without being bullying. If bullying has not occurred, the behaviour is addressed through the school's Code of Positive Behaviour.

If a group of students has been involved in alleged bullying behaviour or negative behaviour, each student will first be spoken to on their own. Students may also be asked to write down their own account of what took place.

Then, all students will be met as a group. At the group meeting, each student will be asked to give their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views. Support will be provided to students as needed after these meetings.

The Anti-Bullying Team will review the gathered information and determine whether bullying has occurred

Where Bullying Behaviour has Occurred

Where bullying behaviour has been identified, parent(s)/guardian(s) of both parties will be updated and the steps that will be taken by the school are as follows:

Meet with Student(s)

1. Complete 'Discussion Document' (Appendix 4) with the student(s) to identify bullying behaviour(s) and help support the student in understanding how their behaviour has been hurtful.
2. Tell the student to stop the identified hurtful/negative behaviour(s) immediately.
3. Revisit the GETSS Anti-Bullying Pledge with the student (available in the student journal).

Meet with Student and Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

4. Review details of incident/s with parent(s)/guardian(s) and sign a 'Student Promise'.

5. Advise the student that they are in breach of the Anti-Bullying Policy and Code of Positive Behaviour. Advise the student of the next steps of this procedure. Ask the student not to discuss the issue with other students.

Arrange Supports

6. Inform class teachers, where necessary ('need to know' basis)
7. Liaise with Guidance Counsellor to discuss supports. Offer and arrange support to all parties.

Monitor and Review

8. Monitor interactions between students and follow up to ensure behaviour has ceased.
9. Check in with the student and parents/guardians within 20 school days

Parents and Guardians are an integral part of the school community and play an important role in addressing bullying behaviour. Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to consult them on actions to be taken to address the behaviour as outlined in the school's Bí Cineálta policy.

In circumstances where student expresses concern about their parents being informed, the school will develop an appropriate plan to support the student and for how their parents will be informed.

The school will consider communication barriers that may exist when communicating with parents, for example, literacy, digital literacy or language barriers.

Requests to Take No Action

A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask a member of staff not to take action other than to "look out' for them. The students may not want to be identified as the person who reported the bullying behaviour. They might worry that telling someone could make their situation worse. In such cases, it is crucial for the staff member to show empathy, handle the situation with sensitivity, and collaborate with the student to determine what steps can be taken to address the issue. Together, they should agree on how the student's parents will be informed. It is essential that the student who has experienced bullying feels safe and supported.

Parents may also notify the school of bullying behaviour and request that no action be taken. In such instances, parents should put their request in writing or be facilitated to do so if there are literacy,

digital literacy or language barriers. While the school should acknowledge the parents request, it may still decide, based on the circumstances, that addressing the bullying behaviour is appropriate.

Determining if Bullying Behaviour has Ceased

The relevant teacher must engage with the students and parents and guardians involved within 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress following the initial intervention. During this check-in, key considerations should include the nature of the bullying incident, how effective the response strategies have been, and the current dynamics between the students involved.

Even though the bullying behaviour may have ceased, ongoing supervision and support may be required for both the student who experienced the bullying behaviour as well as the student who has displayed the behaviour

If bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately resolved within 20 school days, the Student Support Team will:

i) Review the strategies used to address the bullying.
ii) Consult with the students involved and their parents to determine next steps
iii) Agree on a timeframe to follow-up until the bullying behaviour ceases.

Where it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school should consider using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Positive Behaviour.

At this stage, the student accused of bullying is dealt with under the terms of the School's Code of Positive Behaviour. Serious or repeated cases of victimisation may result in equally serious sanctions, up and including suspension/expulsion, in line with the school's Code of Positive Behaviour.

Recording Bullying Behaviour

Details of all reports of bullying, including submitted Negative Behaviour Report Forms (Appendix 2) detailing behaviour which meets the definition of bullying as outlined on page 7, are securely stored by the Anti-Bullying Coordinator along with any supplementary documentation, including but not limited to:

- Notes from all conversations associated with the investigation
- Details of the decision-making process and the rationale for the decision

- Interventions applied and outcomes of interventions
- Investigation Support Documents (Appendix 3)
- Discussion Documents (Appendix 4)
- Student Behaviour Promises (Appendix 6)

Records will also document the review with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of the students and parents in relation to this.

These reports and associated documents are stored in a central file and are available to the School Principal and Deputy Principal. They may be put in the Student Support File also.

Complaints Process

Where a parent/guardian or a student who is 18 or older is not satisfied that Galway Educate Together Secondary School has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Guidelines, they should refer to the school's Complaints Procedure.

Should parents, guardians, or students over the age of 18 remain dissatisfied following the conclusion of the school's Complaints Procedure and believe that the actions of the school have adversely affected the student, they have the right to contact the Ombudsman for Children.

Supports

In accordance with Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures, the school will adopt the following measures to support those impacted by bullying, including those who experience, observe, or engage in such behaviour.

Supports for Students Affected by Bullying

Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, it is acknowledged that no one intervention works in all situations. Once appropriate sanctions have been applied, both sides may need healing and reconciliation.

The approach the school takes is a Restorative Practice approach to Bullying. Everyone affected by the bullying are invited to:

1. Talk about what happened

2. Explain how they have been affected
3. Describe how they are feeling about what happened
4. Say what they think must happen to reach a resolution

Bullying incidents will be a priority for the Student Support Team. Support will be offered from the Guidance department. The school will also use the Discussion Document to help students understand harmful behaviour.

Students may need opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience. The Student Support Team will work closely with the student to ensure that they are actively supported in the school and to engage in school base activities they enjoy. Students may be placed on a check and connect programme or the nurture programme.

Supports for Students who Display Bullying Behaviour

Students who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others. The Student Support Team will work closely with the student in this regard.

Outside Agency Support

The school may seek the support and advice from NEPS, Tusla, EWO, HSE, Oide, Webwise, DCU and any other agency deemed appropriate to support the school in delaing with invidents of bullying.

Oversight

At each Board of Management meeting, the principal will complete an Anti-Bullying Oversight Report, setting out:

1. The number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting
2. The number of incidents of bullying behaviour that are currently ongoing
3. Confirmation that all these cases have been or are being dealt with in accordance with the schools anti bullying policy and procedures
4. The number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the beginning of the school year.

The purpose of the update is to inform discussion at board level on the effectiveness of the measures that the school is taking to prevent and address bullying behaviour and the effectiveness of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy.

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

- Trends and patterns identified such as the form of bullying behaviour, the type of bullying behaviour if known, the 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.

This policy is available to our school community on our website and a hard copy is available on request. A student friendly version of this policy (Appendix 1) is displayed in school and is available on our website and a hard copy is available on request.

Review of the School's Bí Cineálta Policy

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.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Student Friendly Policy Poster

Bí Cineálta!

If you think you are being bullied, or someone else is being bullied, please tell someone!

WHAT IS BULLYING BEHAVIOUR ?

Bullying behaviour is when someone keeps being mean or hurtful to others on purpose over and over again. Not just once.

WHAT TO DO...

IF YOU THINK YOU ARE BEING BULLIED OR IF YOU SEE BULLYING TAKING PLACE

- **Tell a member of staff or an adult you trust.**

  or...
- **Report it using this QR code.**

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

- **We will talk with you**
- **We will ask you what you want to happen next**
- **We will work out a plan together**
- **We will talk with your parent(s)/ guardian(s)**
- **We will talk to other students involved**
- **We will talk with other students' parent(s)/guardian(s)**

Our school has a Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

We look at this policy every year to see what is working well and what could work better.

We will ask you what you think.

GALWAY

EDUCATE TOGETHER SECONDARY SCHOOL

Appendix 2: Negative Behaviour Report Form

GALWAY EDUCATE TOGETHER SECONDARY SCHOOL

Negative Behaviour Report Form

Source of Report Parent ☐ Student ☐ Staff member ☐ Survey ☐ Other ☐

Name of Reporting Person

Details of Alleged Incident(s)

Location

Date(s)

Time(s)

Possible Targeted Student(s)

Possible Targeted Perpetrator(s)

Others who may have witnessed alleged bullying behaviour

Type of alleged bullying behaviour

- ☐ Emotional
- ☐ Social exclusion/isolation
- ☐ Damage to property
- ☐ Physical agression
- ☐ Intimidation
- ☐ Name-calling
- ☐ Cyberbullying
- ☐ Malicious gossip/spreading rumours
- ☐ Sexual

Other:

GALWAY EDUCATE TOGETHER SECONDARY SCHOOL

Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based, indicate the relevant category

- ☐ Homophobic/biphobic/transphobic
- ☐ SEN/AEN/Disability-related
- ☐ Racist

Other:

Description of alleged bullying behaviour and its impact

Signed

Date ☐☐ / ☐☐ / ☐☐

Appendix 3: Investigation Support Document

INVESTIGATION STEP

INVESTIGATON SUPPORT DOCUMENT

These questions may be used by a staff member to support a student in reporting alleged hurtful or negative behaviours if they are having difficulty describing the situation. (Supplementary interview records may be attached.)

Student Name:
Staff Member:
Date:

Is it Bullying?

IS IT BULLYING?

1. TARGETED? Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?
2. HARM? Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?
3. REPEATED? Is the behaviour repeated?

If the answer to each of the questions is **Yes**, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour and the behaviour should be addressed using the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

If the answer to any of the 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.

What happened?

Where did it happen?

When did it happen?

Who else was there?

How did you feel?

What would you like to happen next?

Appendix 4: Discussion Document

BÍ CINEALTA

DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

GALWAY EDUCATE TOGETHER SECONDARY SCHOOL

This form is to be used to record details of reported bullying behaviour. This is a **learning moment** and aims to help you understand and identify the impact of your behaviour on another person or group of people.

* This conversation should take place in a a quiet and safe place.

Student Name:	***Staff Member:***

What happened?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What were you thinking at the time?	Who has been impacted?
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

NOW, USE PAGE 2 TO DISCUSS HOW THEY HAVE BEEN AFFECTED.

Explain why this behaviur is hurtful.	What needs to happen now?
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Do you, the student, understand that this behaviour is a serious breach of the school rules?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Do you, the student, understand why your behaviour is bullying behaviour?	Yes ☐	No ☐
Do you, the student, understand that a repeat of any of the behaviours listed above will be taken very seriously and will be dealt with using our Code of Behaviour and our Anti-bullying policy, where applicable.	Yes ☐	No ☐

BÍ CINEALTA

DISCUSSION DOCUMENT
IDENTIFYING BEHAVIOURS

GALWAY EDUCATE TOGETHER SECONDARY SCHOOL

Sometimes you may not realise your behaviour might be hurtful. It is important to name the behaviour so you gain a deeper understanding of the impact of your behaviour on another person. In order to repair a relationship, you must understand and recognise hurtful, intimidating behaviour, which may include some or all the behaviours listed below.

Please circle those which you feel describes your recent behaviour towards _____ [*name of student(s)*.

Verbal

- ☐ Name calling?
- ☐ Said things to make student feel bad/upset?
- ☐ Hurtful slagging?
- ☐ Hurtful teasing?
- ☐ Offensive remarks?
- ☐ Use of bad language?
- ☐ Insulted student?
- ☐ Hurtful remarks about appearance?
- ☐ Hurtful remarks about religion, nationality, home background, gender?
- ☐ Participating in unkind/malicious conversations about others?
- ☐ Trying to embarrass student in front of others or privately?
- ☐ Repeatedly speaking over someone?
- ☐ Repeating words/phrases to try and confuse someone?
- ☐ Use of sarcasm/insincere laughter/silence?

Physical

- ☐ Thrown objects at student?
- ☐ Pushing?
- ☐ Shoving?
- ☐ Punched?
- ☐ Kicked?
- ☐ Pulled Hair?
- ☐ Tripped?
- ☐ Making rude or aggressive hand gestures?
- ☐ Blocked students path?
- ☐ Giving "the look" or "dirty looks"?
- ☐ Holding someone's gaze for a period of time?
- ☐ Eyeballing?
- ☐ Stared at student as a group?
- ☐ Grabbing student inappropriately?

Social

- ☐ Laughed at/talked about a student, knowing that they could hear you?
- ☐ Deliberately ignored student ?
- ☐ Excluded or isolated student?
- ☐ Stopped people being friends with student?
- ☐ Tried to cause trouble between student and their friends?
- ☐ Made fun of student in front of others?
- ☐ Spread rumors about student?
- ☐ Blackmailed?

Written

- ☐ Hurtful notes?
- ☐ Hurtful text messages?
- ☐ Written something hurtful on a group chat?
- ☐ Sent embarrassing messages/pictures?
- ☐ Written threats on my own behalf or on behalf of others?

Property

- ☐ "Borrowed" property without consent?
- ☐ Hid Property?
- ☐ Stole Property?
- ☐ Damaged Property?
- ☐ "Threaten to borrow property"

Add any other behaviours not already listed:

_____

_____

_____

Appendix 5: GETSS Anti-Bullying Pledge

BÍ CINEALTA

GALWAY EDUCATE TOGETHER SECONDARY SCHOOL

GETSS ANTI-BULLYING PLEDGE

Galway Educate Together Secondary School believes that every member of the school community has a right to work and learn in a safe, comfortable, and positive environment. Every member of our school community (staff, students, parents/guardians) has a responsibility to maintain a positive atmosphere within the school and to play their part in dealing with bullying when it occurs.

Bullying will not be tolerated in Galway Educate Together Secondary School

GETSS Anti-Bullying Pledge

As a student/parent at Galway Educate Together Secondary School, it is my duty to play my part in making my school a place where everyone feels safe from bullying. I also want my school to be a safe and positive place to learn.

I _____ (student name) *promise:*

- ✓ *to treat all students with respect and kindness.*
- ✓ *to call fellow students by their preferred name only.*
- ✓ *to avoid aggressive or offensive behaviour such as name-calling, giving dirty looks, sneering, pushing, or making unwanted physical contact.... etc.*
- ✓ *to refrain from telling lies, starting rumours or repeating gossip about others.*
- ✓ *to refrain from cyberbullying (which includes abusive anonymous telephone calls, the internet, social networking, text messages, camera phones and certain apps such as Snapchat...etc.). to refrain from cyber bullying (which includes abusive anonymous telephone calls, the internet, social networking, text messages, camera phones and certain apps such as Snapchat...etc.).*
- ✓ *never retaliate but to report the incident*
- ✓ *to report any incident of bullying behaviour that I may witness.*
- ✓ *to make new students feel welcome and to be helpful to them.*

Student Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 6: Student Promise

STAGE 1.5

GALWAY EDUCATE TOGETHER SECONDARY SCHOOL

STUDENT BEHAVIOUR PROMISE

To be completed at meeting with student and parents/guardians in instances where bullying has been identified

Student Name: **Class:**

I know that all of my fellow students are different from each other and from me in many ways, (e.g. hair colour, skin colour, what we wear, height, weight, size, accent, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, where we live or have lived, what we like to do, whether we are loud or quiet, how good we are at learning, how well we study, how good we are at sports, whether we like music etc. etc). I would not like to be treated unfairly and made to feel bad by any of my fellow-students because of any of these differences or just because they did not like me. I know that I have a right to be different from other students and that this does not give anyone the right to treat me unfairly or to be mean to me. I know that I am entitled to fair, equal, respectful treatment in school because of the school's Code of Positive Behaviour and outside of school too.

I also know that all other students are entitled to be treated fairly, equally and respectfully. It is wrong to treat anyone any other way. I therefore promise that in future I will treat all my fellow-students fairly, equally and respectfully despite our differences and whether I like them or not.

In particular, I will always treat _____*(insert specific name here)* fairly and respectfully.

Signed *(Student)*: **Date :**

Signed *(Parent/Guardian)*: **Date :**

Anti-bullying coordinator: **Date :**

This document supports, and should be used in conjuction with, the School's Anti-Bullying Policy.

Appendix 7: Bullying Behaviour BOM Update

Bullying Behaviour Update for Board of Management meeting of

_____/ _____ / _____ (DD/MM/YYYY)

Total number of new incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the last board of management meeting.	0
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour currently ongoing.	0
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the beginning of this school year.	0

Where incidents of bullying behaviour have been reported since the last meeting, this update includes 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 has not included any personal information or information that could identify the students involved.

Appendix 8: Annual Review of Bí Cineálta Policy

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 Post-Primary schools?*	Date 30/9/2025
2. Where in the school is the student-friendly Bí Cineálta policy displayed?	Multiple locations; all learning spaces and bathrooms.
3. What date did the Board publish the Bí Cineálta policy and the student friendly policy on the school website?	Date 01/10/2025
4. How has the student friendly policy been communicated to students?	Drop Everything and Learn – Anti-bullying class on 8/925 (whole school)
5. Has the Bí Cineálta policy and student friendly policy been communicated to parents and guardians?	Yes
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
7. Does the Bí Cineálta policy document the strategies that the school uses to prevent bullying behaviour?	Yes
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?	Yes
9. Has the Board discussed how the School is addressing all reports of bullying behaviour?	Yes
10. Is the Board satisfied that all incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed in accordance with the school's Bí Cineálta Policy?	Yes
11. Have the prevention strategies in the Bí Cineálta policy been implemented?	Yes
12. Has the Board discussed the effectiveness of the strategies used to prevent bullying behaviour?	Yes
13. How have (a) parents, (b) students and (c) school staff been consulted as part of the review of the Bí Cineálta Policy?	Details of annual posted to school website
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?	• Simplified documents and processes. • Invedtigation docuements available to staff • Provided clarity around defined roles • Added QR code to student-friendly policy • Digitised Negative Behaviour Report Form
15. Where areas for improvement have been identified, outline how these will be addressed and whether an action plan with timeframes has been developed?	N/a

16. Does the student-friendly policy need to be updated as a result of this review and if so why?	No – this has been updated.
17. Does the school refer parents to the complaints procedures if they have a complaint about how the school has addressed bullying behaviour?	Yes
18. Has a parent informed the school that a student has left the school due to reported bullying behaviour?	No
19. Has the Office of Ombudsman for Children initiated or completed an investigation into how the school has addressed an incident of bullying behaviour?	No

Signed: Date: 30/9/25

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: Date: 30/9/25

Principal

Date of next review: June 2025

Appendix 9: Notification of Annual Review

Notification Regarding the Board of Management's Annual Review of the Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management of Galway Educate Together confirms that the Board'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*.

Ratified by the Board of Management of Galway Educate Together Secondary School at a Board Meeting held on September 30th, 2025.

Signed: Date: 30th September 2025

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: Date: 30th September 2025

Principal

Appendix 10: Practical Tips for Creating Positive School Climate

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- Always model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community.
- Explicitly teach students what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like, and feels like in class and around the school.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of students with a disability or SEN/AEN.
- Give constructive feedback to students when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach students about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage students to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use
- Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents or guardians and/or the Parents and Guardians Community in awareness-raising campaigns around social media
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in student-friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- Actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure there is adequate corridor and school yard supervision.
- Encourage students to help identify bullying "hot spots" and "hot times" (e.g. "hot spots" tend to be in the yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors, and other areas of unstructured supervision. "Hot times" tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when students are in the above areas, moving between classrooms or at the end of breaktimes.
- Support the work of Student Council and other student committees.

Appendix 11: Impact of Bullying

The following signs and systems may suggest that a student is being bullied:

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school – requesting parents or guardians to drive or collect them, changing the route of travel, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from the school
- Unwillingness to go to school, and refusal to attend, particularly among older students
- Truancy, missing classes or 'mitching'
- Deterioration in educational performance
- Loss of concentration
- Loss of enthusiasm and interest in school
- Pattern of physical illnesses (e.g. headaches, stomach aches)
- Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour (may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after longer school holidays)
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress – stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting
- Spontaneous out-of-character comments about either students or teachers
- Becoming disruptive or aggressive
- Possessions missing or damaged
- Increased requests for money or stealing money to meet extortion demands
- Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling them
- Becoming isolated in the class
- Unexplained absences
- May begin to bully other younger students

These signs do not necessarily mean that a student is being bullied. They can also be indicative of other problems. If repeated or occurring in combination, these signs warrant investigation to establish if bullying is the root cause.

Appendix 12: Resources

- The Bí Cineálta sets out the requirements of schools in relation to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour https://oide.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Bi-Cinealta.pdf
- The Anti-Bullying Centre at Dublin City University
- The National Parents Council Primary and National Parents Council Post-primary
- The Stand Up! Against Homophobic and Transphobic bullying campaign, organised by BeLonG To Youth Services
- "Being LGBT in School" A resource for post-primary schools to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying and support LGBTQIA+ students was developed by the Gay and Lesbian Equality Network (GLEN) as part of the implementation of the Action Plan on Bullying. It will support schools in the implementation of the department's Anti-Bullying Procedures
- Watch Your Space is a website devoted to empowering and supporting young people as they take action to address bullying, in particular cyberbullying, in their local communities
- Be Safe Online is the government's campaign to highlight ways to help you stay safe online
- the tackle bullying.ie website, which was developed by the National Anti-Bullying Research and Resource Centre (ABC) at Dublin City University, provides information, support and advice for students, teachers, and parents or guardians on how to recognise and deal with bullying behaviour and allows teenagers to share experiences with their peers online
- Webwise has launched a number of resources aimed at tackling cyberbullying
- www.tacklebullying.ie provides a single point of information and support for young people, parents or guardians and teachers affected by bullying.
- http://www.antibullyingcampaign.ie