



Glenstal Abbey
SCHOOL

Bí Cineálta Policy

Version 1

June 2025

Document Version Control

Version	Date	Description
1.0	June 2025	New Policy

Glenstal Abbey School, a Benedictine boys' boarding school located in Murroe, County Limerick, is committed to providing a high-quality educational experience for its students. As a Catholic Benedictine school, the school aims to foster the intellectual, physical, social, cultural, moral, and spiritual development of its students.

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Glenstal Abbey 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.

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 reasonable steps to prevent the harassment of students or staff on any of the nine grounds specified: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, and membership of the Traveller community.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined in *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying* and **Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools** as targeted behaviour, online or offline, that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social, and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society. The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the **Bí Cineálta** procedures.

Each school is required to develop and implement a **Bí Cineálta** policy that sets out how the school community prevents and addresses bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying are provided within the school's Code of Behaviour.

Section A: Development/Review of Our Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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

Cohort	Date Consulted	Method of Consultation
School Staff	14 Feb 2025	Training session
Students	14 May 2025	Focus Groups and student friendly poster creation
Parents	13 Jun 2025	Survey
Board of Management		

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, homophobic and transphobic bullying, racist bullying, sexist bullying, and sexual harassment as appropriate (see Chapter 5 of the **Bí Cineálta** procedures):

- Preventing Cyberbullying:** Implementing the SPHE curriculum, holding regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online, hosting Internet safety workshops to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour, and developing and communicating an acceptable use policy for technology.
- Preventing Homophobic/Transphobic Bullying:** Challenging gender stereotypes, encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy-building activities, encouraging students to speak up if they witness homophobic behaviour, and maintaining an inclusive physical environment.
- Preventing Racist Bullying:** 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, 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, encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour, encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy-building activities, fostering a school culture where diversity is

celebrated and where students “see themselves” in their school environment, and having the cultural diversity of the school visible and on display

- **Preventing Sexist Bullying:** Ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour; monitoring school culture; gender equality education.
- **Preventing Sexual Harassment:** Using the updated SPHE specifications at post-primary level to teach students about healthy relationships and how to treat each other with respect and kindness, promoting positive role models within the school community, and challenging gender stereotypes that 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):

- Active supervision of students during break and lunchtime in key areas, with clear supervision rotas in place
- Classroom supervision to ensure that students are monitored during transition times and lessons
- Use of CCTV in strategic locations to support staff supervision and enhance student safety, in line with data protection guidelines
- Clear protocols for teachers on how to respond to observed incidents of concern, including bullying or inappropriate behaviour

Section B.1: Preventing Bullying in the Boarding Context

As a boarding school, Glenstal Abbey School recognises that bullying behaviour may occur outside the traditional school day and in settings unique to residential life, including dormitories, study areas, recreational spaces and shared facilities. We are committed to ensuring that our anti-bullying policy applies consistently across all aspects of school life, including evenings and weekends.

Boarding-Specific Prevention Strategies

We aim to build a strong, respectful and inclusive culture within the boarding houses by implementing the following strategies:

- **House Culture:** Promoting a culture of kindness, inclusion and mutual respect through daily routines, shared meals and prayer.
- **Role Modelling:** Housemasters, prefects and monitors are expected to model respectful and inclusive behaviour.

- **Peer Relationships:** Activities such as extracurricular/ co curricular activities, weekend activities, sports and inter house events help to strengthen relationships across year groups and reduce power imbalances.
- **Evening Wellbeing Check-ins:** Regular, informal check-ins by housemasters with boarders to monitor wellbeing and give students opportunities to voice concerns.
- **Visible Displays:** Posters and reminders of the Bí Cineálta principles are displayed in dormitories, study areas and common rooms to reinforce expectations.

Boarding Supervision and Monitoring

- **Dormitory Supervision:** Housemasters are present and actively supervise dormitories.
- **Study Time:** Evening study sessions are monitored by study monitors and housemasters.
- **After-Hours Reporting:** Students can report bullying concerns after hours to the housemasters.
- **Record Keeping:** Incidents of bullying within the boarding context are recorded using the same Bí Cineálta tracking sheet

Supporting Boarders Involved in Bullying Situations

- Students who experience bullying in the boarding context may feel particularly vulnerable due to the close living arrangements. Our response includes:
 - Creating **space and distance** if needed (e.g. changing sleeping arrangements short-term).
 - Ensuring the student has access to a trusted adult (e.g. Housemaster).
 - Engaging parents/guardians early and involving them in the plan to resolve the issue.
- Support will also be offered to students who display bullying behaviour by housemasters and appropriate follow-up actions implemented to rebuild trust in the boarding community.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

- Principal
- Deputy principal
- Deputy headmaster
- Junior Dean
- Senior Dean
- Housemaster

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 bullying behaviour, and to review progress are as follows (see Chapter 6 of the *Bí Cineálta* procedures):

- **Identifying if Bullying Behaviour Has Occurred:** Bullying is defined in *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying* and *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour* as targeted behaviour, online or offline, that causes harm. This harm may be physical, social, or emotional. Bullying behaviour is typically repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between individuals or groups. To determine whether a reported incident is bullying behaviour, consider the following
 - Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group?
 - Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social, or emotional harm?
 - Is the behaviour repeated?
- If the answer to all three is yes, the behaviour is considered bullying and should be addressed using the **Bí Cineálta** procedures. If the answer to any of these is no, the behaviour does not meet the criteria for bullying and should be dealt with under the school's Code of Behaviour.

Note: One-off incidents may still be considered bullying in some situations. For example, a single hurtful message posted online may be shared multiple times, which makes it repeated in effect.

- **Investigating a Concern:**
 - Ask: What happened? Where, when, and why did it happen?
 - If a group is involved:
 - Speak with each student individually first
 - Then hold a group meeting
 - Ask each student for their account to ensure everyone understands each other's version of events
 - Offer support to each student afterwards
 - Written accounts may also be useful in some cases

When Bullying Behaviour Has Occurred:

- Parents and guardians are key partners in dealing with bullying and should be contacted early
- Discuss with them the actions that will be taken
- Take into account the views of the student who has experienced the behaviour, especially around how they feel the issue should be handled
- Keep a written record of all engagements

Records Should Include:

- The type of bullying (This list is not exhaustive: Disabilist, Exceptionally able, Gender identity, Homophobic/Transphobic, Physical appearance, Racist, Poverty, Religious identity, Sexist, Sexual harassment. See 2.7 in procedures).
- The form of bullying (This list is not exhaustive: Physical, Verbal, Written, Extortion, Exclusion, Relational, Online. See 2.5 in procedures).
- Where and when the incident happened.
- The date of first contact with students and parents.
- The perspectives of students and parents on the best way forward.

Requests to Take No Action

A student who reports bullying behaviour may ask that no formal action be taken, other than for staff to “look out” for them. The student may:

- Not want to be identified as the person who reported the bullying
- Feel that telling someone could make the situation more difficult

In such cases, it is crucial that the staff member:

1. Shows empathy towards the student
2. Deals with the matter in a sensitive and respectful manner

3. Engages in a discussion with the student to:
 - Identify potential steps to address the situation
 - Agree on how and when their parents will be informed.

The priority is to ensure that the student feels safe and supported

Requests from Parents

Parents may also report bullying behaviour and request that no action be taken. In these situations:

1. Parents should submit this request in writing to the school
2. The school will support parents in making this request if there are:
 - Literacy difficulties
 - Digital literacy challenges
 - Language barriers

While the school will acknowledge the parents' request, it may decide, based on the circumstances, that it is necessary to address the bullying behaviour.

Following Up

A follow-up meeting with the students involved and their parents must take place within 20 school days of the initial contact. This meeting should:

- Revisit the nature of the bullying behaviour
- Review how effective the actions taken have been
- Reflect on the relationships between those involved
- Decide if the bullying behaviour has ceased
- Record the date the behaviour is considered to have stopped
- Note any support from outside agencies or services

Ongoing support and monitoring may still be required, even if the behaviour has stopped. If bullying has not stopped:

- Reassess and adapt the approach with input from students and parents
- Set a timeline for the next review
- If the student continues the behaviour, the school may need to implement measures from the Code of Behaviour, including possible disciplinary action where appropriate

What to Do if a Parent Is Not Satisfied

- If a parent feels the school has not handled a bullying issue appropriately, they should be referred to the school's Complaints Procedures.
- If they remain unhappy with the outcome, they may raise the matter with the Ombudsman for Children if they believe the school's handling of the issue negatively impacted the student - ococomplaint@oco.ie

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):

- Student support team
- Guidance counsellors
- Housemasters
- Chaplain
- Deans
- Teachers

The following external supports are also available:

- **National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)**
- **Oide**
- **Webwise**
- **National Parents Council (NPC)**
- **Dublin City University (DCU) Anti-Bullying Centre**
- **Tusla**

Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

All bullying behaviour will be recorded using our school's **Bí Cineálta** tracking sheet. 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

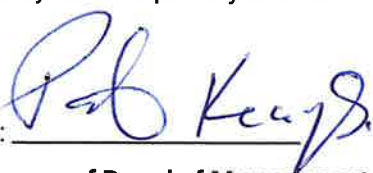
The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting. This update will include the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting, the number of ongoing incidents, and the total number of incidents since the beginning 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.

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.

This Policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 3 June 2025.

Signed: 
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: 
Headmaster/Principal

Date: 3rd June 2025

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