

Geashill National School

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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The Board of Management of Geashill 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.

We are committed to ensuring that all students who attend our school are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our students is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our students and we are fully committed to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

We confirm that we will, in accordance with our obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the harassment of students or staff on any of the nine grounds specified: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

Definition of bullying

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

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

Section A: Development/review of our Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour

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

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	February 2025 May 16th	Surveys, and staff meeting
Students	February 2025 May/June 2025	Surveys, Student Council Meetings and class discussion.
Parents	February 2025 May 2025	Surveys and email looking for feedback on draft policy
Board of Management	February 2025 and June 2025	Discussion at meetings
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers, bus escorts		
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):
<p>Prevention Strategies</p> <p>Culture and Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a positive school climate where all students feel safe, respected, and valued.• Promote diversity and inclusion in all aspects of school life.• Using circle practice in the classroom to build a positive culture and environment.• Encourage open communication between students, staff, and parents.• Encourage pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behavior.• Establish clear expectations for behaviour and enforce them consistently.• Promote respectful relationships across the school community.• Open communication.• Anti-bullying signs and messages will be displayed around the school. Positive messages that promote friendship and a caring attitude will also be displayed.• Books and other school resources to reflect diverse additional needs.

Curriculum (Teaching & Learning)

- Integrate anti-bullying messages into the school curriculum.
- Teach students about bullying and its effects.
- SPHE methodologies including the RSE programme.
- Drama methodologies including role play and hot seating.
- Grow in Love - stories, scenarios etc.
- Provide opportunities for students to develop social and emotional skills.
- Incorporate lessons on respect, empathy, and diversity into the curriculum.
- An annual anti-bullying/friendship day/week.
- An annual wellbeing week and other activities related to the Amber Flag.
- Stay Safe will be fully implemented at appropriate times and levels in the school.
- Behaviour charts in the classrooms where appropriate.
- Code of conduct for the classroom and playground drawn up with the children in September
- Behaviour reflection sheets
- Buddy Bench in the playground
- Sensory walk for emotional regulation
- Resources such as Mood Monsters, Weaving Wellbeing Programme. Social Stories e.g Behaviour Matters by Sue Graves
- Explicit teaching and appropriate communication and emotional literacy
- Group work/Collaboration

Policy & Planning

- Develop a clear and consistent anti-bullying policy that is enforced by all staff members.
- Review and update the anti-bullying policy regularly.
- Provide training for staff on how to recognize and respond to bullying.
- Establish clear procedures for reporting and responding to bullying incidents.
- The Acceptable Use Policy was developed in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that access to technology within the school is strictly monitored.
- School Policies: The following policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying include; Code of Behaviour, Child Safeguarding Statement. Risk Assessment, Supervision of Pupils. Acceptable Use Policy, Attendance, Communication Policy, SPHE, RSE, PE, SEN/Inclusion Policy, Critical Incident Policy.
- Pupil voice
- The school's approach to tackling and preventing bullying will take particular account of the needs of pupils with disabilities or with additional needs, will join up with other relevant school policies and supports and will endeavor to ensure that all the services that provide for such pupils work together.
- Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for pupils with additional needs include improving inclusion, focusing on developing social skills, paying attention to key moments such as transitioning from pre-school to primary and from primary to post-primary and cultivating a good school culture which has

respect for all and helping one another as central.

Relationships & Partnerships

- Encourage open communication between students, staff, and parents.
- Build positive relationships with students and families.
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies including awareness raising measures that - Build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils.
- Collaborate with community organisations to provide additional support and resources.
- Guest speakers may be invited to address staff and parent groups at regular intervals in relation to various types of bullying.
- Work with parents and students to educate them about the dangers of cyberbullying by facilitating outside speakers e.g. Digiwise. Webwise will be taught on a regular basis in the school. This programme teaches safe and responsible internet use.
- Clear protocols are in place to encourage parents/guardians to approach the school they suspect that their child is being bullied.

Preventing Cyberbullying Behaviour

- Explicitly teach the issues of cyberbullying and the importance of using technology safely e.g. fuse
- Monitor student use of technology in the classroom and on school grounds.
- Develop a social media policy for students.
- Work with parents and students to educate them about the dangers of cyberbullying by facilitating outside speakers e.g. Digiwise, Zeeko.

Preventing Homophobic/Transphobic Bullying Behaviour

- Create a safe and inclusive environment for all students, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Educate students about the importance of respecting all people, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Encourage peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities e.g. 'All Together Now' (5th & 6th).

Preventing Racist Bullying Behaviour

- Teach students about the history and impact of racism e.g. Show Racism the Red Card.
- Promote diversity and inclusion in the classroom.
- Provide support to students who have been targeted by racist bullying.
- Ensure that library reading material represents appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour

- Teach students about the importance of gender equality e.g. Gender Equality Matters
- Celebrate diversity at school and acknowledge the contributions of all student

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

Supervision

- All staff members should be alert to recognise and respond to bullying behaviour. They should be present, visible and active in common areas and playgrounds during break times. Currently, there are three teachers and nine SNAs on supervision at each break time.
- Class teachers should supervise students during class time and break times. They should be aware of what is happening in their classrooms and on the playground.
- Visitors to the school should be supervised at all times. They should not be left unsupervised with students.

Monitoring

- Incident reporting: The class teacher investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour with a view to establishing the facts and records on an incident report form.
- Incident investigation: All reports of bullying should be investigated promptly and thoroughly. The investigation should include interviews with the student who reported the incident, the student who was allegedly bullied, and any witnesses.
- Follow-up: The school should take appropriate action to address the bullying behaviour.
- Notes taken and records of the above should be stored in the relevant section of Aladdin. See appendix for form templates.

By implementing these policies, our school can create a safer and more positive school environment for all students

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Principal, Deputy Principal, ISMT, and all teachers.

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):

The whole school community has a responsibility to prevent and address bullying behaviour. The following approach and steps are based on the information contained in Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Approach

The primary aim in addressing reports of bullying behaviour should be to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the students involved, rather than to apportion blame.

When addressing bullying behaviour, the teachers with responsibility will:

- 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 the students 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.

Stage 1 - 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 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.

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour we will consider the following questions.

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

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

Note: One-off incidents may be considered bullying behaviour 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.

If the answer to any of these questions is **No**, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour.

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

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred (Stage 1), teachers should consider what, where, when and why? as follows: (Note that these steps are required – as outlined in the Procedures):

Where one student is reported to be involved, the student should be engaged with individually at first.

Thereafter, this student and the student who is reported to be experiencing the bullying behaviour should be met together.

If a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first.

Thereafter, all students involved and the student who is reported to be experiencing the bullying behaviour should be met as a group.

At the group meeting, each student should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views.

Each student should be supported as appropriate, following the group meeting. It may be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident(s).

Parents will be supported by the school, if needed, with recommendations for useful resources/guides to help them support their children.

Stage 2: Where bullying behaviour has occurred

Parents are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with schools, in addressing bullying behaviour. Where bullying behaviour has occurred the parents of the students involved must be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to consult with them on the actions to be taken to address the behaviour.

It is important to listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation.

All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the form and type of behaviour if known (see pages 20-24, Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the Bí Céineálta procedures for descriptions/examples of the forms and types of bullying 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.

The record should be shared with the Principal.

Stage 3: Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred

The teacher must engage with the students involved and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement.

Important factors to consider as part of this engagement are the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the students involved.

The teacher should document the review with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and their parents in relation to this

the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased should also be recorded.

Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted.

Ongoing supervision and support may be needed for the students involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased.

If the bullying behaviour has not ceased the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents. A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased.

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

If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school.

If a parent(s) is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools they should be referred to the school's complaints procedures (available on our website).

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 pupil.

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 behavior is as follows:

- Managing the bullying behaviour.
- Supporting pupils who *have* experienced bullying behaviour, displayed bullying behaviour and witnessed bullying behavior.
- Promote a positive school culture where pupils feel safe, respected and valued.
- Raising awareness of the appropriate programmes and teacher training.
- Helping 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, team activities during or after school, small social groups with SET.
- Making it clear that adopting the strategies is a positive step towards creating a more respectful and inclusive school

environment.

- In dealing with challenging behaviour, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on positive reinforcement

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)

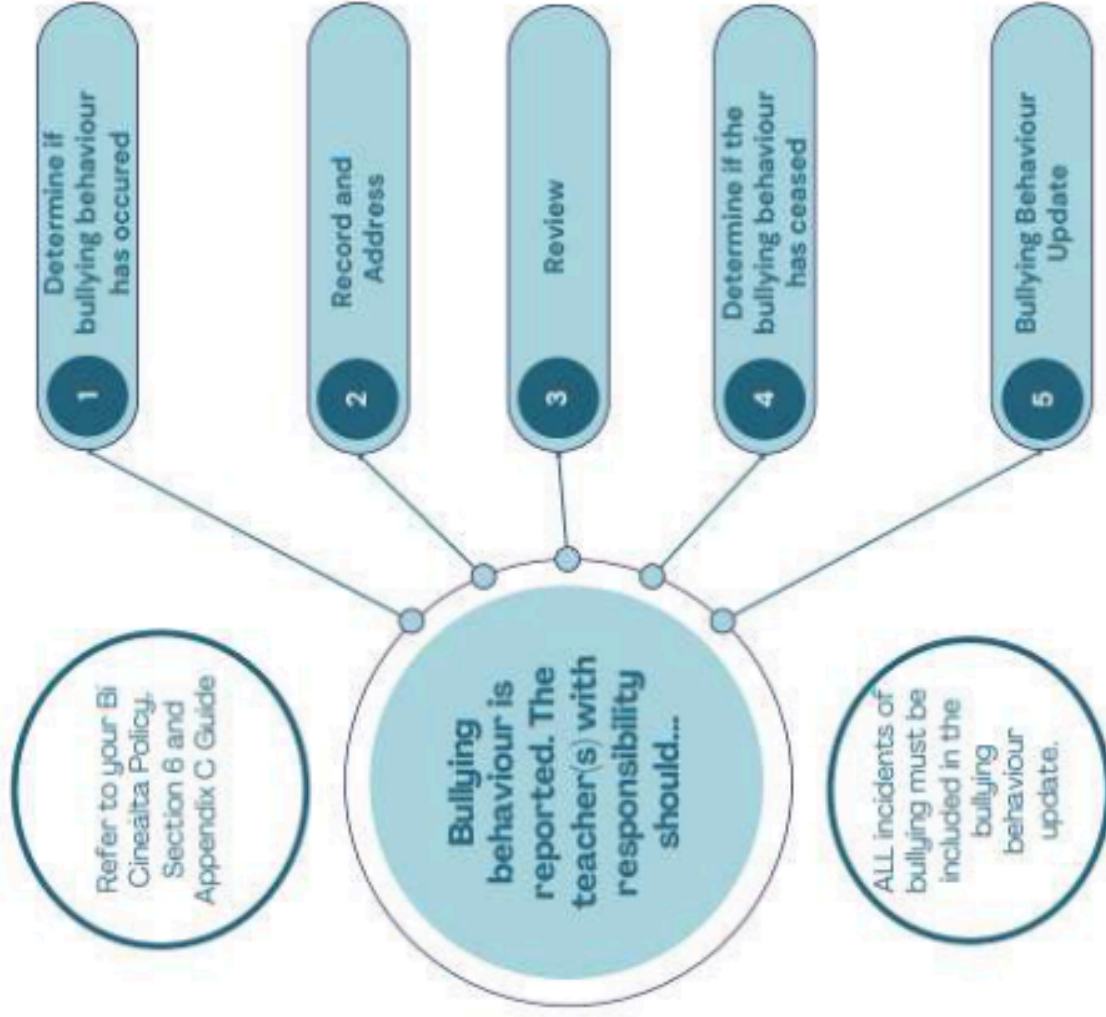
Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Principal)

Appendix 1

[Bí Cineálta - Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools](#)

Bullying behaviour	
Not bullying behaviour	

Bí Cineálta: Addressing Bullying Behaviour



Teacher(s) investigate as per school policy. Record as per Section 6.5.

If the behaviour **IS NOT** bullying, deal with in line with your Code of Behaviour.

If the behaviour **IS BULLYING**, proceed to Step 2.

Record as per Bí Cineálta policy and Section 6.5, Bí Cineálta.

Inform parent(s) of parties involved at an early stage.

Complete agreed actions, as per your Bí Cineálta policy, monitor and evaluate.

No more than **20 school days** after **initial engagement**, review with student(s) and parent(s).

If bullying has ceased, continue to monitor.

If bullying has **not ceased**, review strategies, seek external support, if appropriate, and review within the agreed timeframe.

Principal must include all bullying behaviour in their update to the board.

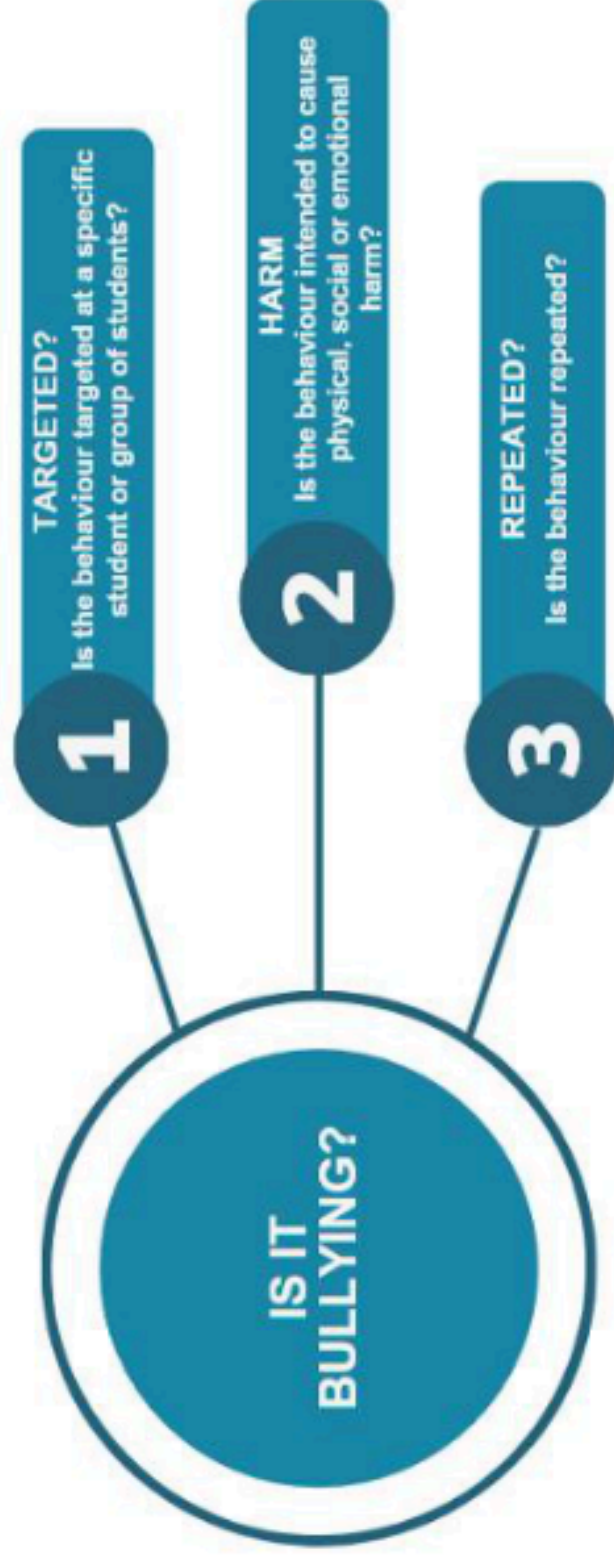
Principal provides verbal update to the board.

Review policy, if needed.



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For more information, Reporting to Professional
Schools about Gender Learning of School leaders
and Teachers



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.



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For more information
Contact: info@oide.ie
or visit www.oide.ie

Supporting the Professional
Learning of School Leaders
and Teachers

Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour

This template is only to be used when bullying behaviour has been identified, in line with the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

1. Date of initial engagement with pupil(s) and parent(s)

2. Pupil who has experienced bullying behaviour and class group

Pupil(s) _____ Class _____

3. Pupil(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

Pupil(s) _____ Class(es) _____

4. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es)*)		5. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es)*)	
Pupil concerned		Yard	
Other Pupil		Classroom	
Parent		Corridor	
Teacher		Toilets	
Other		Other (specify)	

6. Person(s) who reported the bullying concern and/or relationship to the pupil(s)

7. Dates of when the bullying behaviour occurred

8. Form of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box/boxes)

Physical Bullying Behaviour		Exclusion Bullying Behaviour	
Verbal Bullying Behaviour		Relational Bullying Behaviour	
Written Bullying Behaviour		Online Bullying Behaviour	
Extortion		Other (specify)	

9. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box/boxes)

Disablist Bullying Behaviour		Homophobic/Transphobic (LGBTQ+) Bullying Behaviour	
Exceptionally Able Bullying Behaviour		Physical Appearance Sexual Harassment	
Gender Identity Bullying Behaviour		Racist Bullying Behaviour	
Sexist Bullying Behaviour Sexual Harassment		Religious Identity Bullying Behaviour	
Poverty Bullying Behaviour		Other (specify)	

10. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

11. Views of pupil(s) and parent(s) regarding the actions to be taken

12. Date of review with pupil(s) and parent(s) (within 20 days)	
13. Has bullying behaviour ceased?	
14. Views of pupil(s) and parents in relation to this	
15. If bullying behaviour has not ceased, set an agreed timeframe to meet again and review strategies	
16. Engagement with external services or supports (if any)	

Signed: _____

(Relevant Teacher)

Date: _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal
