

Bí Cineálta Anti-Bullying Policy

Scoil Mhuire na mBráithre

CBS Primary Tralee 18247K

The Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire na mBráithre 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.

We confirm that we will take all steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent all bullying or harassment of our students in whatever form and however motivated.

Catholic schools have a distinctive understanding of the human person, recognising that every person is created in God's image and likeness and has inherent dignity as a child of God. This is the basis for ensuring that everybody in our school is treated with respect and care, in accordance with the Catholic Schedule.

As a Catholic school, we are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual. No human person is to be devalued and everybody has a part to play in the school community, regardless of difference.

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

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

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	March 24 th -28 th , 2025 Half day closure	Online questionnaire Half day closure- small group feedback
Students	March 24 th – 28 th , 2025	Online questionnaire Student Council – group feedback
Parents	March 24 th – 28 th , 2025	Online questionnaire
Board of management	11 th December 2024	Discussed at Board meeting
Date policy was approved	4 th June 2025	Board Ratification

What is bullying

Bullying is defined 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 core elements of the definition are further described below:

- **Targeted 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. The harm can be physical, social and/or emotional.

- **Repeated behaviour**

Bullying takes the form of a **systematic pattern** of behaviour which is repeated over time. **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.**

- **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.

Further details can be viewed at <https://tinyurl.com/yef5y7p2>

Types of bullying behaviour.

These can include the following: disablist, exceptionally able, gender identity, homophobic/transphobic (LGBTQ), physical appearance, racist, poverty, religious, sexist or sexual.

Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour

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

Criminal behaviour

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 nonconsensual sharing of intimate images and also criminalises threatening to share these images.

If 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 Traveller community, it may be considered a hate crime under the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989¹¹, 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.

Forms of bullying behaviour

Bullying behaviour can take many forms, which can occur separately or together. These can be **direct** such as physical eg pushing, shoving, punching, continual name calling or making fun of someone's accent, targeting someone's personal property or writing insulting remarks on notes or public spaces or can involve extortion.

Some forms of bullying behaviour are **indirect** eg exclusion or ganging up on a student, spreading rumours, giving someone the silent treatment or and the deliberate manipulation of

friendship groups to make someone unpopular.

Online bullying behaviour (cyberbullying) is carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text or direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, email, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chatrooms and other online technologies.

Impact of experiencing bullying behaviour

When students experience bullying behaviour, it can have a severe and profound impact on them in both the short and long term. Students may develop feelings of stress, insecurity, humiliation and anxiety and therefore become more vulnerable. Experiencing bullying behaviour can have a detrimental effect on their experience of education and education outcomes.

Impact of witnessing bullying behaviour

Students who witness bullying behaviour can also be impacted in a similar way to those who experience bullying behaviour.

Impact of engaging in bullying behaviour

There can also be a negative impact on those who engage in bullying behaviour. Those who engage in bullying behaviour can display aggression, antisocial behaviour and lower academic achievement.

Further details can be viewed at <https://tinyurl.com/yef5y7p2>

Section B - Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by this school to address all forms of bullying behaviour, in whatever form and however motivated, including online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment.

In developing the preventative strategies which this school will use to prevent all forms of bullying behaviour, we come from the context of our Catholic ethos, where inclusivity permeates our school in a real way.

This school takes positive steps to ensure that the culture of the school is one which welcomes a respectful dialogue and encounter with diversity and difference by ensuring that prevention and inclusivity strategies are given priority and discussed regularly at our board of management and staff meetings.

The dignity and the wellbeing of the individual person is of paramount concern in our Christian response. This school will listen closely to and dialogue with parents, thereby building a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, trust and confidence.

In continuing to develop prevention strategies, this school will listen to young people and parents, to help establish their particular context and needs. Frequent periods of reflection and further engagement by the school, young people and parents, will be used to discern appropriate supports for young people in this school and to help inform future prevention strategies.

1. Culture and environment

We recognise that a positive and inclusive school culture and environment is essential to prevent and address bullying behaviour. We endeavour to make our school a place where students and school staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported.

Relationships between all members of the school community should be based on respect, care, integrity and trust. Open communication between the patron, boards of management, school staff, students and their parents help to foster a collaborative approach and shared responsibilities in relation to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

We recognise that the **school leadership** team influences the school culture and set the standards and expectations for the school community when preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. Each member of school staff has a responsibility to develop and maintain a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and to take a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.

Students can shape the school culture by promoting kindness and inclusion within their peer group and maintain a positive and supportive school environment for all.

Parents, as active partners in their child's education, can help foster an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated through promoting empathy and respect.

We actively celebrate diversity in our school throughout the year, but especially during Multicultural Week. Displays of the countries our children's families come from, their flags, and greetings in various languages are prominent in the school. Religious celebration days are highlighted.

We are involved in the School of Sanctuary Project which reflects our culture and ethos.

We have adopted the **Anti-Bullying Campaign** as an approach to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour in our school.

A Telling Environment

We as a school community support a 'telling' environment. We encourage students to talk about concerns regarding bullying behaviour. **Recognise, Reject and Report** posters will be displayed around the school.

We encourage children to tell a **trusted adult** if they or anyone else is being bullied. Staff can help by reminding the children that they can always talk to them if there is a problem. If a child does tell, the trusted adult will reassure them that they have done the right thing by telling. The trusted adult will then inform the class teacher but continue to support the student, as appropriate, while it is being dealt with by the teacher.

An emphasis is placed on being an upstander, not a bystander.

Children are encouraged to report any online bullying also.

Supervision

Appropriate supervision is an important measure to help prevent and address bullying behaviour.

We ensure that children are adequately supervised in the classroom, in the corridors and in the hall. We recognise the importance of supervision especially during breaktimes in the yard or Astro.

2. Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

Teaching and learning that is collaborative and respectful is promoted. Students have regular opportunities to work in small groups with their peers, which can help build sense of connection, belonging and empathy among students.

The Social Personal and Health Education Curriculum aims to foster students' wellbeing, self-confidence and sense of belonging and to develop students' sense of personal responsibility for their own behaviour and actions. Students' social and emotional learning skills can also be improved.

Teachers will develop the children's awareness of bullying as unacceptable behaviour, in an age-appropriate way. This will be explored through the Stay Safe Programme, the SPHE Curriculum, Grow in Love Programme, Weaving Wellbeing and specifically the Anti-Bullying Campaign Programme which teaches children to **recognise, reject and report** bullying.

School Posters have been created in collaboration with the children and are used to explore conflict resolution strategies. These posters are reproduced in the school diary. During Friendship Week at the end of September, we focus on conflict resolution, but these strategies are encouraged throughout the year.

Bullying is discussed regularly with the children, especially during Friendship Week, and before class surveys. Resources from the Anti-bullying Campaign are used to support this.

The Code of Behaviour is revised each September

3. Policy and Planning:

The following policies support Bí Cineálta:

- Student friendly Bí Cineálta policy
- Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- SPHE Policy
- Yard Duty Rota
- Digital Learning Plan

4. Relationships and partnerships

Strong interpersonal connections are a vital part of effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. These interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as the Student Council, after school activities and the Parents' Association.

We use the following to strengthen relationships and partnerships between members of the school community:

- supporting the active participation of students in school life
- supporting the active participation of parents in school life, including those who may find it difficult or daunting to engage with the school due to being unfamiliar with the education system or due to language or cultural barriers.
- The Home School Liaison Officer plays an important role in fostering strong connections between home and school
- Share details on workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying via Teams and Facebook
- supporting activities that build empathy, respect and resilience as part of SPHE programme
- promoting acts of kindness among staff and students
- acts of kindness awards in each class
- class buddies
- Restorative Practice (when training is completed)
- Parents may be kept informed of any initiatives via Teams, Newsletters and Facebook

We recognise the importance of positive relationships across the whole education community to promote empathy, understanding and respect. We include the Board of Management, staff, students and their parents in the development, implementation and review of our school's Bí Cineálta policy and student friendly version as we recognize this as essential to effectively prevent and address bullying behaviour,

5. Preventing cyberbullying behaviour

Technology and social media have provided many positive opportunities for entertainment, social engagement and education. Technology is a part of life that can impact even the youngest members of society. However, the increase in the use of technology has led to students becoming increasingly vulnerable to cyberbullying or unacceptable online behaviour.

We proactively address these challenges by promoting digital literacy, digital citizenship, and fostering safe online environments.

We use the following strategies to prevent cyberbullying behaviour by:

- implementing the SPHE curriculum
- having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- developing and communicating an acceptable use policy for technology
- referring to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour.
- promoting or hosting online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online
- holding an Internet Safety Day to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour
- engaging with "Webwise", utilising its free resources designed for schools, families and young people to promote online safety and digital citizenship (1st class to 6th class)
- inviting the Community Garda to visit senior classes to talk about online bullying
- communicating regularly with parents about the digital age of consent, the importance of having parental controls on their child's phone/tablet and the supports that are available on 'Webwise' via Teams, Newsletters and Facebook.

(The digital age of consent is the minimum age a user must be before a social media or internet company can collect, process and store their data. In Ireland the digital age of consent is 16. For the purposes of data collection, students between the age of 13 and 16 years old must have parental permission to sign up to social media services where companies use the legal basis of consent to collect process and store users' data. Most social media platforms and services have a minimum age requirement and for the majority of these services it is 13 years' old. Therefore technically, children under the age of 13 should not have a social media account. It is important for their child's safety, that parents are aware of their children's use of technology including smartphones and

gaming consoles).

Prevention of Homophobic Bullying

All students including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students, have a right to feel safe and supported at school. Strategies to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour include the following,

- challenging gender stereotypes
- usualising' different kinds of families through books and displays
- sharing details and possibly conducting in-school workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour
- encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour
- maintaining an inclusive physical environment

Preventing racist bullying behaviour

Schools have become much more culturally diverse over the last number of decades. Students attending schools come from many different cultures and backgrounds. Students from diverse backgrounds may face discrimination and prejudice and may be subject to racist bullying behaviour. We use the following strategies to prevent racist bullying behaviour in our school:

- actively celebrate diversity in our school throughout the year, but especially during Multicultural Week. Displays of the countries our children's families come from, their flags, and greetings in various languages are prominent in the school. Religious celebration days are highlighted.
- we are involved in the School of Sanctuary Project which reflects our culture and ethos.
- ensuring the cultural diversity of the school is visible and on display
- encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour
- providing supports to school staff to respond to the needs of students for whom English is an additional language and for communicating with their parents

- providing supports to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma students, and to encourage communication with their parents via Teams, Newsletters and Facebook
- sharing details and possibly conducting in-school workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of racism
- inviting speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds during Multi-cultural Week
- 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

We focus on gender equality as part of our school's measures to create a supportive and respectful environment. We do this by:

- ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex
- ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex
- celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contributions of all students
- organising awareness campaigns, workshops and presentations on gender equality and respect
- encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home through the sharing of initiatives via Facebook, Teams and Newsletters.
- 'Not all Men' is used in 5th and 6th class.

Preventing sexual harassment

We have a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment. Sexual harassment should never be dismissed as teasing or banter. We deal with it by:

- promoting positive role models within the school community
- challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

Outside school

The school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, we endeavour to support the students involved and engage with them and their parents to determine what steps can be taken.

If we become aware that bullying is happening outside of school between children in our school, we reassure the child experiencing the bullying behaviour that we are monitoring the situation and encourage them and their parents to tell us immediately if something happens in school. We inform teachers and SNAs supervising the playtimes so they can 'keep an eye'. The teacher will use the opportunity to do a lesson on bullying with the class/classes involved.

If the school becomes aware of an online bullying incident, a 'stern lesson' on online bullying will be given outlining the serious implications for the person involved in the bullying behaviour.

Inside school

Parents and children are actively encouraged to report incidents of bullying. Once a child has reported an incident of bullying it is important that it will be dealt with without delay. When deciding on the actions to be taken the following principles will be adhered to

- Ensure that the pupil experiencing bullying feels listened to and reassured
- Seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- Conduct conversations with sensitivity
- Consider the age and ability of those involved
- Listen to the views of the pupil who is experiencing bullying behaviour as to how best to

address the situation.

Procedures to investigate if bullying has occurred

- The class teacher will be responsible for investigating and dealing with/resolving the bullying incidents although the SET may carry out the interviews, keeping the class teacher informed of the details,
- On being informed of an alleged incident of bullying, whether it is inside or outside the school but with an impact within it, the teacher will first interview the victim(s) with a view to establishing the facts and bringing any such behaviour to an end. The teacher will discuss the feelings which the victim(s) experienced because of bullying. Support, listening and encouragement guide this work.
- The teacher will interview the student who is alleged to have used bullying behaviour. The child will be encouraged to admit to their bullying behaviour without fear of punishment. The '**Alleged Bullying Interview Sheet**' and the '**Bullying behaviour Checklist**' will be used as part of the investigation process.
- If a group of students are involved, members will be met individually and possibly as a group. The interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and due regard for the rights of all pupils involved. A written account may be required from each person. This will be a standard procedure and does not necessarily imply that any pupil is guilty of misbehaviour.

Class surveys

- Since bullying can often be hidden from teachers and not reported, pupils "see everything," surveys are done every half-term to uncover possible bullying situations, allowing pupils to suggest to their teacher who s/he should talk to in relation to these.
- The teacher does not apportion blame but rather treats bullying behaviour as something that can and must be remedied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter. Pupils who report bullying therefore are not getting others 'in trouble' but rather enabling them to get out of trouble

into which they may ultimately get if the bullying behaviour continues.

- **Where This school Stands on Bullying** is read to the class and then the **Class Survey** is used.
- Teachers could also have a 'Worry box' in the classroom where a child can discreetly share any concerns about bullying behaviour.

Where bullying behaviour has occurred

- If the behaviour is deemed to be bullying behaviour (cf definition of bullying) the child involved in bullying behaviour must make a solemn promise (in writing) that they will not repeat this behaviour. The **Pupil Behaviour Promise** will be used or the **Joining-In Promise**. This reflects a **Reform not Blame approach**.
- "The primary aim for the relevant teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is possible, the relationships of the parties involved. If/When staff are trained in Restorative Practice it will be used at this stage.
- Under the BÍ Cinealta guidelines, the parents of all children involved must be informed.
- The child who experienced bullying behaviour must be included in the process. If he/she expresses concern about his/her parents being informed he/she will be supported as to how best it can be done. Technology may be used if there is a language barrier.
- If the bullying behaviour continues, a second promise will be made. If this is broken, the principal will be informed and the child will be sanctioned according to our Code of Behaviour.
- Incidents of a more serious nature may be referred to the principal without following the procedures laid out above.
- Supports will be put in place by staff for children who display bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties and ensure that their needs are met.
- Children who witness bullying behaviour will also be supported by giving them an opportunity to express their feelings and possible fears, by reassuring them that they are safe, the incident is being dealt with, and by letting them know that they can talk to the teacher again if they need to.
- If a parent has concerns about possible bullying behaviour, the class teacher should be contacted directly to make an appointment. The teacher will listen to the parent's concerns and will take time to investigate the situation (or ask the SET, as appropriate) and will treat it as a matter of urgency. Parents will be kept up to date about the situation and should be notified by the end of the day if possible, and otherwise within 2 working days.
- If the behaviour is deemed not to be a bullying, the promise may be used to stop the

behaviour, or the behaviour will be dealt with under Code of Behaviour.

Requests to take no action

A child reporting bullying behaviour may request that nothing is done about the behaviour other than 'look out' for them. The child will be listened to, with empathy, and the teacher will work out with the child how their parents will be told.

A parent may also request that no action be taken but **this must be put in writing**. However, the school may decide that based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

Recording

All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the form and 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 and the views of the students involved and their parents on the **CBS_recording template**.

A copy of the record will be placed on the student's file on Aladdin, titled 'Bullying' and if there is a support plan, this will be updated to incorporate response strategies and associated supports.

A copy of this will be sent to the principal.

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.

Determining if bullying has ceased

The teacher will engage with the students and parents after 2 weeks (no more than 20 school days) to see if the bullying behaviour has ceased. The situation may need to be monitored for some time. If it has not ceased, a third promise may be signed, or it may be dealt with under the Code of Behaviour.

Supports

Supports are available to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

These include the following

- National Educational Psychology Service (NEPS)
- Oide
- Webwise
- National Parents Council
- Dublin City University-FUSE
- Tusla

Section D: Oversight

Bullying Behaviour update to board of management

At each meeting of the Board of Management the principal will present an update on the number of incidents of bullying behaviour and the measures taken to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

The update will include

- The number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting
- The number of incidents of bullying behaviour that are currently ongoing
- The number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the beginning of the school year

Where incidents of bullying behaviour have been reported since the last meeting, the update will include a verbal report which will 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
- 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 does not include personal or identifying information.

Review of Bí Cineálta policy

This policy is available to our school community on the school's website and in hard copy on request. A student 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.

Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A standardised notification will be used for this purpose. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Consultation with school community

All members of our school community were provided with the opportunity to input into the development/review of this policy. School staff, students and parents were consulted by questionnaire and later the staff met to discuss and offer suggestions. These suggestions were incorporated into the draft policy which was reviewed and approved by the B.O.M. and parents.

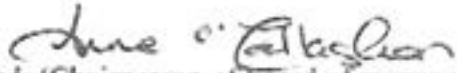
Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

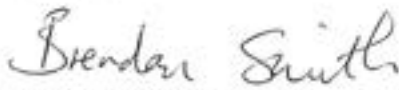
Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds

specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.



Signed: (Chairperson of board of management)



Signed: (Principal) Date: 04/06/2025

