

Newtown National School

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School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Newtown NS 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.

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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.

For the purpose of this policy, forms and types of bullying behaviour include but are not limited to:

See Bí Cineálta Guidelines page 21-24

Forms of Bullying	Types
Direct Bullying Behaviour <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Physical bullying behaviour● Verbal bullying behaviour● Written bullying behaviour● Extortion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Disablist bullying behaviour● Exceptionally able bullying● Gender Identity bullying● Homophobic/ transphobic bullying● Physical appearance bullying● Racist bullying● Poverty bullying● Religious identity bullying● Sexist bullying● Sexual Harassment
Indirect Bullying Behaviour <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Exclusion● Relational	
Online Bullying Behaviour	

Section A: Development/review of our Bi 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.

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	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	25/03/25	Online Survey
	27/03/25	Staff Meeting
Students		
Parents	19/03/25	Online Survey
Board of management	08/05/2025	
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers		Consultation as deemed necessary.
Date policy was approved: 08/05/2025		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

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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):

Culture and Environment

A positive and inclusive school culture and environment is essential to prevent and address bullying behaviour. The school environment will be a space where students and school staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported (Bí Cineálta procedures).

In developing 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 the 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 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

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parents, to help establish their particular context and needs. Frequent periods of reflection and 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.

In addition to this we stress the importance of:

- **A Telling Environment**

Newtown NS. endeavours to be a safe environment where reporting of bullying behaviour is encouraged. Children should tell the issue immediately to a staff member in the school environment. Staff members will then investigate at an appropriate time and as outlined in this policy.

- **A Trusted Adult**

Newtown NS. will endeavour to create an environment where children develop relationships with 'trusted adults'. This strategy will encourage the children to report if they or another student is experiencing bullying behaviour. Staff can support this by letting students know that they can talk to them.

- **A Safe Physical Space at School**

Environments which are familiar and safe spaces for children will be available to anyone. Spaces such as calm corners and a sensory garden will have a clear line of sight making it easier for staff to supervise students. This is an important measure to prevent bullying

- **Supervision**

Appropriate supervision is an important measure to help prevent and address bullying behaviour. The school will take all reasonable measures to ensure the safety and supervision of their students at school and while attending school activities.

Curriculum (Teaching & Learning)

Newtown NS. strives to ensure teachers and learning is collaborative and respectful. The following steps will be promoted and encouraged to support this goal:

- Small Group Work with Peers
- Promoting opportunities to foster inclusion and respect for diversity, developing a sense of self-worth through both curricular and extra-curricular programmes.
- Foster students well-being, self confidence and sense of belonging and to develop students' sense of personal responsibility for their own behaviour and actions. This will be done through the teaching and learning of Social, Personal and Health

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Education and Relationship and Sexual Education

Policy and Planning

The well-being of the community is at the heart of Newtown NS. school policies and plans. Along with this Bí Cineálta policy, the following are examples of policies and planning that support the well-being of our school community.

- Acceptance Use Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- SPHE / RSE Policy
- Code of Behaviour Policy
- Student Council Initiative
- Amber Flag Initiative
- Extra Curricular Activities (dancing, swimming, sensory activities, GAA etc.)
- Shout out notes / golden time

Relationships and Partnerships

Newtown NS. aims to develop strong interpersonal connections as a vital part to effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. These interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as student councils, school clubs, parent's associations and student support teams.

The following, which is not an exhaustive list, is considered at Newtown NS. to strengthen relationships and partnerships between staff members of the school community;

- Age Appropriate awareness initiatives that looks at causes and impacts of bullying behaviour including those dealing with navigating friendships, identity-based bullying, racist bullying, homophobic/transphobic bullying, sexism and sexual harassment.
- Supporting the active participation of students in school life through initiatives not limited to but including classroom/school jobs, student council, committees, student surveys etc.
- Supporting the active participation of parents in school life, including those who may find it challenging or daunting to engage with the school due to being unfamiliar with the education system or due to language or cultural barriers. Initiatives include but are not limited to PA coffee mornings, Invitations to external speakers at the school, opportunities to develop relationships with staff by having

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adults accessible at the school gate etc., access for everyone including those with EAL to school documents e.g. newsletters, aladdin notices.

- Conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying.
- Supporting activities to build empathy, respect and resilience.
- Encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring eg. junior senior pairs, buddies, whole school team activities
- Promoting acts of kindness
- Teaching problem solving
- Hosting Debates
- Student Council
- Staff wellbeing
- Dignity at work charter

Newtown NS. recognises the importance of the school community in supporting their aims in preventing bullying behaviour.

Members of the school community include but are not limited to:

- School bus drivers
- Caretaker/ cleaner
- Community Groups
- Local Businesses that are close to the school
- School Visitors
- School Completion Project Workers
- Education Welfare Officers

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

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):

Preventing cyberbullying behaviour

Technology and social media have provided many positive opportunities for

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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.

Newtown NS. proactively address these challenges by promoting digital literacy, digital citizenship, and fostering safe online environments. Strategies to prevent cyberbullying behaviour may include but are not limited to the following:

- implementing the SPHE curriculum
- implementing the Digital Media Literacy curriculum which teaches students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship
- having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- 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

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

Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour

All students, including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students, have a right to feel safe and supported at school.

Strategies to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour may include, but are not limited to the following:

- maintaining an inclusive physical environment such as by displaying relevant posters
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities challenging gender stereotypes
- conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to

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raise

- awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour
- encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour

Preventing racist bullying behaviour

Schools have become much more culturally diverse over the last number of decades. Students attending Newtown NS. come from many different cultures and backgrounds. Students from diverse backgrounds may face discrimination and prejudice and may be subject to racist bullying behaviour.

Strategies to prevent racist bullying behaviour may include but are not limited to:

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

Preventing sexist bullying behaviour

Schools should focus on gender equality as part of the school’s measures to create a supportive and respectful environment.

Strategies to prevent sexist bullying behaviour include the following, which may include but are not limited to:

- 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

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equality and respect

- encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home

Preventing sexual harassment

Preventing sexual harassment requires an approach that focuses on education, awareness and clear enforceable policies. Schools must make it clear that there is a zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment. Sexual harassment should never be dismissed as teasing or banter.

Strategies to prevent sexual harassment may include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

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

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Class Teacher

With the support of the Principal; Mrs. Siobhan Dougan and / or Deputy Principal; Ms. Cathy McCarthy

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

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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):

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

- When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the teacher should consider the following questions: **what, where, when, why**
- If there is a group of students involved, **individuals** will be met at first, thereafter all students should be met as a **group** if deemed appropriate.
- **Group Meeting:** Each student will be given a chance to share their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views. Each student should be supported, as appropriate, following the group meeting. It may also be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident.
- Incidents can occur where behaviour is unacceptable and hurtful but the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies that deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within Newtown NS. Code of Behaviour.

Where bullying behaviour has occurred

- Newtown NS School staff should know what to do (see below) when bullying behaviour is reported to them or when they witness bullying behaviour.
- A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school.
- Where a student displaying the bullying behaviour is not a student of Newtown National School, but the child who is experiencing the bullying behaviour is a student in Newtown NS, the school will support the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour as appropriate and engage with their parents to determine what steps can be taken.
- School staff will be fair and consistent in their approach to address bullying behaviour. Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour need support. The student who is

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experiencing bullying behaviour will be engaged without delay so that they feel listened to, supported and reassured. School staff should identify the support needed for the student who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties and ensure that their needs are met.

Principles adhered to when addressing bullying behaviour

- ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured
- seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- consider the age and ability of those involved
- listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- take action in a timely manner
- inform parents of those involved

Newtown NS. procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies that may be used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behavior are as follows:

- Class teacher(s) investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour with a view to establishing the facts and managing the behaviour. A second teacher may be present.
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the class teacher(s) will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved. Class teacher(s) should consider the following: **what, where and when?**
- Class teacher(s) will be fair and consistent in their approach when addressing bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
- Interviews will be conducted outside the classroom in a fair and consistent way. If a group has been involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first and, thereafter, as a group when each child will be asked for his/her account of what happened. It may be helpful to ask the students involved to

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write down their account of the incident.

- Non-teaching staff such as special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to a class teacher.
- School staff should know what to do when bullying behaviour is reported to them.
- A 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, schools are required to support the students involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, schools should deal in accordance with this Bí Cineálta policy.
- Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour need support.
- Parents are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with schools, in addressing bullying behaviour.
- The primary aim of the class teacher(s) investigating bullying is to resolve issues and to restore relationships. Ongoing supervision and support may be required for both the student who has experienced the bullying behaviour as well as the student who has displayed the bullying behaviour. In some cases, relationships may never be restored to how they were before.
- The parents/guardians of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school will give parents/guardians an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the support provided to the pupils. It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents/guardians) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter (under GDPR) between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents/guardians and the school.

Recording Bullying Behaviour:

- When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the teacher(s) will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other

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relevant information.

- Behaviour reflection sheets filled out by pupils to be attached to their pupil profile on Aladdin.
- Staff will fill out an incident report on Aladdin.
- The incident will be recorded on Aladdin under the heading: Log of Actions. Where a Student Support Plan exists, the plan should be updated to incorporate response strategies and associated supports. See Appendix A

Determining if bullying behaviour has ceased:

- The class teacher(s) must engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 days after the initial discussion to review progress following the initial intervention.
- If the bullying behaviour has not ceased the class teacher(s) should review the strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents. A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- If it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school consideration should be given to using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school.

Complaints Process

- If a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with the B'í Cine'alta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary School, they should be referred to the school's complaints procedures.
- If a parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions have had a negative effect on the student.

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Requests to take no action:

A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than “look out” for them. The student may not want to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They may feel that telling someone might make things more difficult for them. Where this occurs, it is important that the member of staff shows empathy to the student, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the student to work out together what steps can be taken to address the matter and how their parents will be informed of the situation. It is important that the student who has experienced bullying behaviour feels safe. Parents may also make schools aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action. Parents should put this request in writing to the school or be facilitated to do so where there are literacy, digital literacy or language barriers. However, while acknowledging the parent’s request, schools may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

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):

- Supporting the pupils who have experienced bullying behaviour, displayed bullying behaviour and witnessed bullying behaviour.
- Promote a positive school culture where pupils feel safe, respected and valued.
- Raising awareness of the appropriate programmes and teacher training e.g. Friends for Life, restorative practice, weaving well-being,
- 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.

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- In dealing with challenging behaviour, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on positive reinforcement
- Circle time
- Amber Flag/ Well- Being Initiatives
- External Supports available include NEPS, Oide, Webwise, National Parents Council, DCU Anti-Bullying Centre, Tusla

Our Ethos as a Catholic School

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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 such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the bullying or harassment of our students in whatever form and however motivated.

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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 each person 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 all have an indispensable part to play in the school community, regardless of difference.

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

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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: *Anna O'Cuill*

Date: 8/5/26

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: ***Siobhán Dougan***

Date: 8/5/26

(Principal)

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Appendix A : Aladdin Template for recording Bullying behaviour where no Log of Actions Exists.

Template for recording bullying behaviour

Section One

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick ✓ relevant box(es))

Pupil concerned

Other Pupil

Parent

Teacher

Other (identify below)

4. Location of incidents (tick ✓ relevant box(es))*

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Playground

Classroom

Hallway

Bus

Other (identify below)

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick ✓ relevant box(es))

**Physical
Aggression**

Isolation/Exclusion

Cyber-bullying

Malicious Gossip

**Damage to
Property**

Name Calling

Intimidation

**Other (specify
below)**

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate ✓ the relevant

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category:

**Homophob
ic AEN related Racist Sexis
t Other
(specify)**

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken / Date of Initial Engagement with Students & Parents:

Section Two : Student & Parent Views

Student's Views on Action to Address the Behaviour:

Parent's Views on Action to Address the Behaviour (Only in relation to their own child):

Section Three : Review & Follow-Up

Review Date(s): _____

Has the Bullying Behaviour Ceased? (Yes/No) _____

Student's Views on Outcome:

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Parent's Views on Outcome:

Date Bullying Behaviour Ceased (if applicable): _____

Section 4: Additional Actions & Support

Engagement with External Services/Supports (if applicable):

If a SSF (Student Support File) exists for a pupil involved, has a copy of this record been placed in their support file? (Yes/No) _____

If a SSP (Student Support Plan) exists has it been updated to incorporate response strategies and associated supports? (Yes/No)

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher / Staff member)

Date _____

Date submitted to Principal / Deputy Principal _____

Signed