



Circular Number 55/2024

**To: The Managerial Authorities of Recognised Primary, Secondary, Community,
and Comprehensive Schools and
the Chief Executives of Education and Training Boards**

**Publication of *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address
Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools***

1. Purpose of this Circular

The purpose of this circular is to advise school management authorities that following consultations between the Department of Education and the education partners, the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2013* have been replaced by the *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

2. General and Date Effective

- 2.1 These *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* have resulted from a review of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2013* and the implementation of *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying* which was published in December 2022.
- 2.2 These procedures apply to all recognised primary and post-primary schools and to centres for education, as defined in the Education Act 1998, which are attended by students under the age of 18 years.
- 2.3 School authorities and school personnel are required to adhere to these procedures.
- 2.4 It should be noted that the requirements of the procedures **come into effect from the start of the 2025/2026 school year.**
- 2.5 These procedures should be brought to the attention of all school staff and board of management members.
- 2.6 The board of management must develop its *Bí Cineálta* policy during the 2024/2025 school year. The *Bí Cineálta* policy and these procedures should

be formally adopted prior to the commencement of the 2025/2026 school year.

- 2.7 These procedures are published on the Department's website and can be accessed here: [gov - Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)

3. Purpose of these Procedures

- 3.1 These procedures provide direction and guidance to schools on measures to prevent and address bullying behaviour in schools. They replace the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2013*.
- 3.2 An overview of the key areas of change from the *Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2013* is outlined in Appendix G of the *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*. These changes include the following:
- a) Updated definition of bullying behaviour based on *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying (2022)*
 - b) Increased focus on a partnership approach to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour:
 - schools must collaborate with their whole school community which includes their board of management, staff, students and their parents to develop their *Bí Cineálta* policy
 - every school must develop a student-friendly version of its *Bí Cineálta* policy and display it where students and the school community can see it
 - the school's *Bí Cineálta* policy must be reviewed in collaboration with their whole school community once each calendar year or sooner if required
 - schools must consult with the students involved in bullying behaviour and their parents to decide the actions that will be taken and when determining if bullying behaviour has ceased
 - c) Increased oversight:
 - all incidents of bullying behaviour must be recorded
 - the school principal is required to provide a bullying behaviour update at each ordinary board of management meeting
 - the purpose of the principal's update is to inform discussion at board level regarding the overall effectiveness of the school's *Bí Cineálta* policy
 - d) New template documents:
 - the procedures include templates that schools must use for developing their *Bí Cineálta* policy and the annual review of their policy
 - the procedures also include a template that can be used as a basis for the student-friendly *Bí Cineálta* policy, as well as

guides that can be used to address bullying behaviour, and to assist principals in providing the bullying behaviour update to the board of management.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1 Implementation of these procedures will be supported by a suite of professional learning resources and information seminars, board of management members and parents, with further information on how to avail of these to be made available in early September 2024.
- 4.2 All boards of management are required, in advance of the commencement of the 2025/2026 school year, to develop and formally adopt a *Bí Cineálta* policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour which fully complies with the requirements of these procedures. A template document, which must be used as the basis for the school's policy, is provided in Appendix A of the procedures.
- 4.3 Schools should engage with their school community to develop and review their policy. The content of the policy should be communicated to the school community and the patron and should be published on the school's website.
- 4.4 A student-friendly version of the school's *Bí Cineálta* policy must be developed. A template which can be used as the basis for the school's student-friendly policy is provided in Appendix B of the procedures.
- 4.5 All of the requirements of these procedures come into effect from the start of the 2025/2026 school year.

5. Support for Schools

- 5.1 The procedures, appendices and resources document are published on gov.ie [gov - Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie).
- 5.2 Physical copies of the procedures will be made available to schools during September 2024.
- 5.3 A suite of professional learning supports will be provided to support the engagement, collaboration and professional learning of school leaders and school staff as they become familiar with and implement the *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.
- 5.4 Online information seminars for school leaders will be provided by the Department early in the 2024/2025 school year. School leaders are encouraged to attend these seminars which will provide information on Cineáltas and the *Bí Cineálta* procedures to prevent and address bullying behaviour. The seminar will also provide information on the model of inspection currently being developed to evaluate the promotion of wellbeing

in schools. School leaders will be advised of how to register for these online information seminars in early September 2024.

- 5.5 This will be followed by the provision of in-person professional learning to all schools by Oide during the 2024/2025 school year. Oide will invite schools to nominate two staff members to attend these professional learning events.
- 5.6 Information seminars will also be provided by the management bodies to boards of management and by the National Parents Council to parents.
- 5.7 Schools will be able to avail of a half-day school closure during the 2024/2025 school year to facilitate engagement of all school staff with these procedures. This will also provide schools with time to reflect and plan for engagement with their school community as they work towards developing their Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour. Resources, such as a webinar, to support this engagement will be made available by the Department early in the 2024/2025 school year.
- 5.8 Notice of the date for the half-day closure should be provided by schools to their school community at the earliest possible opportunity. It is important that consideration is given by schools to minimising disruption for the school community when scheduling the half-day closure.

6. Queries

- 6.1 Queries from parents, guardians and students in relation to the implementation of these procedures should be dealt with at school level.
- 6.2 General queries can be e-mailed to the Department at:
antibullyingprocedures@education.gov.ie

7. Dissemination of Circular

- 7.1 A copy of this circular should be provided to members of the board of management, to school staff and to the parents association, where one is in place.
- 7.2 This circular and the associated procedures may be accessed on the Department's website at gov.ie. An Irish version of this circular is also available on the Department's website.

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Date Issued: August 2024