



An Roinn Oideachais  
Department of Education

# **Bí Cineálta**

## Guidance for Half-Day School Closure

Circular 55/2024 provides that schools may avail of a half day school closure during the 2024/2025 school year. The half-day school closure is to allow all school staff to come together to determine how you will design and implement your Bí Cineálta policy which will come into effect at the beginning of the 25/26 school year.

How you structure your engagement in this half day is totally up to you.

This guidance is provided to support you in engaging with your school staff around the implementation of the Bí Cineálta procedures. You can choose to use some, all or none of the material provided here. Every school is different, and you know your school community best.

### Resources to Support the Half-Day School Closure

Guidance to assist you in exploring the following topics as part of the half-day :

Topic	What is Covered	Resources
A: <i>Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying</i>	Introduction to Cineáltas and the importance of <i>Kindness</i>	Presentation slides, including video, notes.
B: What is Bullying Behaviour?	Responsibilities of schools to address bullying behaviour and scenarios – is it bullying behaviour?	Presentation slides, notes and scenarios.
C: Preventing and Addressing Bullying Behaviour	Chapters 5 & 6 of the procedures.	Presentation slides, notes
D: Consultation with your School Community	School community input into the Bí Cineálta Policy	Guidance note, sample questionnaires for parents, children and young people and staff.

## **Part A: Cineáltas Action Plan on Bullying**

### Introduction to Cineáltas and the Implementation Plan

#### Notes for Slides

##### **Slide 1**

##### Cover Slide

##### **Slide 2**

Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying was published in December 2022, with a five-year implementation plan running from 2023 to 2027.

Cineáltas is our whole education approach to prevent and address bullying behaviour in schools.

Cineáltas is centred on a child rights-based approach and provides a collective vision and clear road map for how the whole education community can work together to prevent and address bullying behaviour in our schools.

Cineáltas incorporates each of the nine components of UNESCO's Whole Education Approach to prevent and address bullying. It is rooted in four key principles: prevention, support, oversight and community.

For a child or a young person, the experience of bullying can be traumatic and stands in direct opposition to the sense of security, opportunity and wellbeing that we hope all of our students feel when they come to school.

The new Bí Cineálta procedures were developed as one of the 61 individual actions included as part of Cineáltas Action Plan on Bullying.

##### **Slide 3**

Why is Cineáltas important? Here's a video that was originally published when the Action Plan was published in December 2022.

## **Part B: What is bullying behaviour, and schools' responsibilities to address bullying behaviour.**

Notes for Slides

### **Slide 1**

Cover Slide

### **Slide 2**

Bí Cineálta's partnership approach

### **Slide 3**

Updated definition of bullying behaviour from *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying (2022)*

### **Slide 4**

The school community should be able to recognise behaviour that is not bullying behaviour.

### **Slide 5**

Bullying Behaviour Outside of School

Schools are not expected to investigate and address incidents of bullying behaviour that occurs outside of school, for example at sports or social clubs, birthday parties, or on the way to school.

Where bullying behaviour occurs outside of school and the bullying behaviour has not occurred in school, the school should support the student.

Bullying behaviour including cyberbullying, while it can start outside of school, often continues into the school. Where this happens, schools must address the bullying behaviour using the Bí Cineálta procedures.

Regarding cyberbullying, where hurtful messages are sent outside of school hours, but are viewed by students while at school, schools are required to address the bullying behaviour.

### **Slide 6**

**Discussion**

The group can discuss how they can support students. Possible ways of doing this may be include but is not limited to the following:

- Listening
- Showing empathy
- Reassuring the student
- Asking them to let them know if the bullying behaviour occurs in school.
- Devising appropriate “check in” mechanisms
- Discussing how the student can inform their parents of the situation if they haven’t already done so

**Slide 7**

Is it bullying behaviour? Answering the three questions can help you decide if bullying behaviour has occurred.

**Slide 8**

**Activity:**

Review scenarios provided (Primary/Post-Primary), or you may develop your own.

Has bullying behaviour occurred here?

The purpose of the activity is to look at different forms of bullying behaviour and recognise that some forms of behaviour might not be categorised as bullying

**Primary Schools**

Scenario A	Not bullying behaviour	Disagreement among pupils
Scenario B	Bullying behaviour	Homophobic /Physical/Verbal
Scenario C	Bullying behaviour	Disablist/Verbal/Relational

**Post-Primary Schools**

Scenario A	Bullying behaviour	Racist/Physical/Verbal
Scenario B	Not bullying behaviour	Disagreement among students
Scenario C	Bullying behaviour	Sexist/Cyber

## **Part C: Preventing and Addressing Bullying Behaviour**

Notes for Slides

### **Slide 1**

Cover Slide

### **Slide 2 & 3**

Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures speaks to the strategies that can be employed by schools to prevent bullying behaviour. The four areas of wellbeing promotion should be considered when developing measures to prevent bullying behaviour.

Slides 2 and 3 outline what you might consider when developing your own strategies.

### **Slide 4**

You are required to include specific strategies where appropriate in relation to the four areas listed on this slide in Section B of your Bí Cineálta policy.

Everyone should read through pages 39 to 41 of the procedures with the following questions in mind:

- What are we doing now to prevent these types of bullying behaviour?
- Are there new strategies we could implement?

### **Slide 5**

#### **Discussion**

Following their review of chapter 5, the group should discuss their answers to the three questions on slide 5. Depending on the number of staff attending you could break into smaller groups to address individual questions.

### **Slide 6**

Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures deals with how schools should address bullying behaviour if and when it occurs.

Bí Cineálta focuses on a partnership approach which includes the students involved, and their parents. Where bullying behaviour has occurred, it is important that parents are informed as early as possible, even if students would prefer that you don't tell them.

Appendix C can be used as a guide for teachers when a report of bullying behaviour is made.

### **Slide 7**

Schools are required to document in Section C of their Bí Cineálta policy the teachers who are responsible for addressing bullying behaviour, the approaches they will take to identify, and address bullying behaviour when it occurs and what they will do to support the children and young people involved.

### **Discussion**

Who will you list as the responsible teacher in your school?

Primary: Class teacher?

Post-Primary – Student Support Team member/Year Head/Deputy Principal?

### **Slide 8**

Everyone should read pages 43 to 46 of the procedures with the following questions in mind:

- How do we currently address incidents of bullying behaviour in our school?
- Do we need to change how we address incidents of bullying behaviour

Following their review of chapter 6, the group should discuss their answers to the three questions on slide 8. Depending on the number of staff attending you could break into smaller groups to address individual questions.

### **Slide 9**

All incidents of bullying behaviour must be recorded, and the information listed on Slide 9 should be documented.

It's important that the actions agreed are recorded so that the responsible teacher can review progress with all involved.

It will also assist the principal in collating their bullying behaviour update to the board of management each month.

### **Discussion**

How is the school currently recording incidents of bullying behaviour?

Do teachers use a common form to record incidents of bullying behaviour?

Does it need to be amended to take account of the requirements of Bí Cineálta?

What is the school's record keeping policy?



## **D: Consultation with your School Community**

Notes for Slides

### **Slide 1**

Cover Slide

### **Slide 2**

Bí Cineálta has a strong focus on partnership.

Section 1.4 of the procedures make clear that all members of the school community must work together in partnership to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

### **Slide 3**

Schools must seek input from their school community when developing their Bí Cineálta policy.

### **Slide 4**

#### **Discussion**

Staff should consider and discuss the following question.

What is the best way to include the voice of all **school staff in** our Bí Cineálta policy?

The suggestions listed on this slide are ideas that you could consider. Staff may suggest other ideas which you may decide are mor appropriate to your school.

### **Slide 5**

#### **Discussion**

Staff should consider and discuss the following question.

What is the best way to include the voice of **children and young people** in our Bí Cineálta policy?

The suggestions listed on this slide are ideas that you could consider. Staff may suggest other ideas which you may decide are mor appropriate to your school.

## Slide 6

### Discussion

Staff should consider and discuss the following question.

What is the best way to include the voice of **parents** in our Bí Cineálta Policy?

The suggestions listed on this slide are ideas that you could consider.

### Questionnaires

Sample questionnaires for parents, primary pupils, post-primary students and school staff are included. You may use these or develop your own questionnaire or survey.

Your patron body and board of management may also be in a position to assist you in consulting with your school community in regard to the Bí Cineálta policy.