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Ballinteer Educate Together National School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Ballinteer Educate Together 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 pupils who attend our school are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our pupils is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our pupils 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 pupils 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 targeted behaviour, online or offline, that causes harm.
- ➤ The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature and can have lasting effects on the child experiencing the behaviour.
- > Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in the relationships between two people or groups of people in society.

The harm can be:

- > Physical (e.g.: personal injury, damage to or loss of property)
- > Social: (e.g.: withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion)
- ➤ Emotional: (e.g.: low self-esteem, depression, anxiety)

Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour:

- A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards a pupil is not bullying behaviour.
 However, a single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be visible to a wide audience and has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and so becomes a repeated behaviour.
- If the repeated harm is real for the pupil experiencing the behaviour, but unintended by the other pupil, this is not bullying, but, importantly, must be addressed under the school's code of behaviour.
- Some pupils with additional 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 cannot control.
- Disagreement between pupils is not considered bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Types of Bullying:

There are many different types of bullying behaviour. These can include bullying based on: disability, exceptional ability, gender identity, LGBTQ+, physical appearance, racism, poverty status, religious identity, sexism and sexual harassment. This is not an exhaustive list.

Bullying can be: Direct:

- Physical: pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping. Physical assault. Destruction of personal property.
- Verbal: continual name calling which insults, humiliates the pupil this may refer to physical appearance, size, clothes, gender, accent, academic ability, race or ethnic origin.
- Written: Writing insulting remarks in public places, passing notes or drawings about the pupil.
- > Extortion: where something is obtained through force or threats.

Bullying can be: Indirect:

- Exclusion: where a pupil is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded or ignored by another pupil or group of pupils.
- Relational: Where a pupil's attempts to form friendships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined, threats, non-verbal gesturing, malicious gossip, spreading rumours, silent treatment and manipulation of friend groups etc. can all form relational bullying for a pupil.

Online bullying behaviour:

Cyber bullying is carried out via text, direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, email, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chatrooms and other online technologies.

This can include:

- > Sending or sharing of insulting and offensive or intimidating messages or images via online means as mentioned above.
- > Posting information which is personal, private or sensitive without consent.
- ➤ Making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other pupils.
- ➤ Exclude/disrupt access to a pupil on purpose on online chat groups, access to accounts or from an online game.

Bullying behaviour that occurs outside of school

As per the Bí Cineálta Procedures, a school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when pupils are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the pupils involved.

Examples of bullying behaviours that can occur outside of school (non-exhaustive list): Bullying behaviour that occurs in the area immediately outside the school, the local shops and the wider local area.

Bullying behaviour that occurs on the journey to and from school.

Bullying behaviour that occurs in organised clubs and groups outside of school such as sports clubs.

Online bullying (cyberbullying) behaviour, along with other types of bullying behaviour can cause significant harm and have a lasting impact on pupils who experience this behaviour. Access to technology means that online bullying behaviour can happen any time and that the pupil's home is no longer a safe place. The nature of these technologies means that digital content can be shared and seen by a very wide audience almost instantly and the content is almost impossible to delete permanently.

Section A: Development 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	7/04/2025	Stage 1: ➤ Staff Meeting – staff provided with the opportunity to discuss the new Bí Cineálta action plan and stemming from this discussion, staff were informed of the important points in dealing with an incidence or report of bullying ➤ Notice board in staff room with the relevant information displayed as well as resources and record form. ➤ Staff given time to discuss and relay feedback. ➤ Sharing of draft policy with staff to discuss / consult and make any amendments		
Pupils	16/06/2025	Pupils were given a questionnaire to seek their input in developing an Anti- Bullying policy in a child- friendly format – their wording, examples and suggestions were all taken into account when drafting this policy.		
Parents / Guardians	10/04/2025	Parents / guardians were given a questionnaire to seek their input in developing our Anti-Bullying Policy. Their wording, examples and suggestions were all taken into account when drafting this Policy.		
Board of Management		Meeting and ratification of policy.		
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 our 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.

Culture and Environment: We will

- ➤ Create a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and have a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.
- > Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.

- ➤ Involve parents/guardians as active partners in fostering an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated.
- > Support the idea that our school is a telling environment.
- > Promote the concept of a trusted adult link to Stay Safe programme who to tell.
- Create safe spaces in our school building and yards visibility.
- ➤ Encourage a sense of belonging with ownership over pupils' own space through art and creativity.
- Create a positive school culture and climate which is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity.
 - Encourage pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
 - Promote respectful relationships across the school community;

Curriculum (teaching and learning): We will

- > Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Implement the Social Physical and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum, according to our school plan, including the Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE), Weaving Well-being and Stay Safe Programmes.
- ➤ Deliver school-wide lessons on bullying from evidence-based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme, programmes to teach about cyberbullying (e.g. Webwise teachers' resources and lessons from (www.cybersafekids.ie).
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Organise seminars/workshops given by relevant professionals to pupils and to parents/guardians, focusing on educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while online and also on developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying. The school-wide approach and the role of parents / guardians is of great importance in this regard.
- ➤ In younger classes, use picture/story books to teach important concepts (e.g. 'Amazing Grace' considers gender & race through story etc.)
- Specifically consider pupils with additional needs with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.

Policy and planning

The aim of Ballinteer Educate Together National School's Bi Cineálta policy is:

- ➤ To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils, parents/guardians.
- > To promote a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- > To ensure appropriate supervision and monitoring measures are in place through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
- > To develop procedures for noting, investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- > To implement a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- > To work with appropriate agencies in countering all forms of bullying and promoting anti bullying behaviour.
- ➤ The Acceptable Use Policy, Special Education Policy, Code of Behaviour and Dignity at Work Policy all support the implementation of the Bi Cineálta policy.
- ➤ Effective leadership is a key component with Principal DLP), Deputy Principal (DDLP), and all members of the leadership team focused on supporting the implementation of this policy.

Relationships and Partnerships - We will:

- > Catch the children being good notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- ➤ Ensure school rules are reinforced at assemblies on a regular basis. Raise awareness of the definition of bullying behaviour and how the school deals with such behaviour.
- ➤ Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- > Support the active participation of parents/guardians in school life, e.g. becoming an active member of the PTA, volunteering in the school library and school garden.
- > Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- > Support the active participation of pupils in school life through formal and informal structures, e.g. circle-time activities, assemblies, sports' teams, pupil council, green school committee and amber flag committee.
- Conduct workshops and seminars for pupils, staff and parents/guardians to raise awareness of the impact of bullying.
- Engage parents/guardians and pupils in actively contributing to the formation of a Child Friendly Anti Bullying Policy to make them active participants in the promotion of and discussion of useful ways to identify and reduce bullying behaviour and highlight procedure and how to deal with it if it does occur.

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour

Internet Acceptable Use Policy
Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices Policy
Code of Behaviour
Dignity at Work Policy
Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment.

In addition to above mentioned strategies, the school has the following in place to prevent and address bullying:

- Our 3 school rules support the Bí Cineálta Policy. We are kind We are responsible We are respectful
- Our 10 Monthly Values support the Bí Cineálta Policy Cooperation, Respect, Fairness and Justice, Responsibility, Empathy and Understanding, Love and Nurture, Peace, Inclusion (Equality), Honesty and Community.
- > The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed regularly with the pupils.

- > Staff are particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of bullying/ being bullied.
- All disclosed incidents of bullying are investigated thoroughly and consistently by following the correct procedure as outlined to staff and recorded on Aladdin using the template provided.
- School wide awareness raising on all aspects of bullying, supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extracurricular activities.
- ➤ Involvement of pupils in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Kindness/ Wellbeing Week / Green Flag Committee / Amber Flag Committee/ the Pupil Council and class investigations, displays and assembly performances of our 10 monthly values can help pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell.
- ➤ Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Positive self-esteem is fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences, by acknowledging good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success.

Preventing Cyber Bullying

- > Implementation of the SPHE curriculum: learning about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship.
- Our Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices Policy and our Internet Acceptable Use Policy both support this Bí Cineálta Policy.
- Promote online safety events or material for parents / guardians who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online.
- The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school e.g. www.tacklebullying.ie, www.antibullyingcentre.ie, www.webwise.ie
- Shared folder of resources for teaching of bullying including lessons from above websites – shared Google drive for all teachers to access.

Preventing Homophobic/Transphobic bullying

- > Challenge gender stereotypes ensure equal participation and recognition of all.
- Raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour and encourage pupils to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour.

Preventing Racist bullying

- Ensuring the library has material that reflects our diverse school population from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
- > Encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities.
- > Providing support to school staff to support pupils for whom English is an additional language and for communicating with their parents / guardians.
- > Fostering a culture where diversity is celebrated and pupils "see themselves" in the school environment.

Preventing Sexist bullying:

- > Modelling of respectful behaviour by staff of all irrespective of sex.
- Ensuring all pupils have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of sex.
- > Celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contributions of all pupils.

Preventing Sexual Harassment:

- Making clear that our school has a zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment of any kind with clear and enforceable policies - See Code of Behaviour and Dignity at Work Policy.
- > Promote positive role models within the school community.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teachers with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour are as follows:

- ➤ The class teacher / support teacher will oversee recording of bullying reports for pupils in their class this includes using the procedure guidelines to investigate reports of bullying and recording bullying behaviour on the correct form on Aladdin
- > The DDLP will follow up after twenty days to investigate if bullying has ceased.
- > All staff will be vigilant to bullying behaviour.
- > The principal will inform the Board of Management of incidents of Bullying.
- Deputy Principal

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 (in keeping with Ch 6 of Bí Cineálta)

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

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

ensure that the pupil 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 pupil who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- > take action in a timely manner
- > inform parents / guardians of those involved

Stage 1: Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

Where bullying behaviour is suspected, it is reported to the class teacher.

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying, we consider the following questions:

- 1. Is the behaviour targeted at a specific pupil or group of pupils?
- 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 considered to be bullying behaviour, and the behaviour is addressed using the Bí Cineálta Procedures. 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 investigating bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher will carry out an investigation, in the presence of another member of staff and in accordance with the school policy. Teachers should consider:

What?

Where?

When?

Why?

One pupil involved

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

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

Group of pupils involved

If a group of pupils is involved, each pupil should be engaged with individually at first. Thereafter, all pupils involved, and the pupil who is reported to be experiencing the bullying behaviour, should be met as a group.

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

It may be helpful to ask the pupils involved to write down their account of the incident(s).

Parents / guardians 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

 The relevant teacher completes a 'Recording Bullying Behaviour' form.
 All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the form and type of behaviour if known, where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with pupils and parents/guardians. The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented. (See template on Aladdin.)

- 2. The relevant teacher may also seek a written account of the incidents from those involved where applicable.
- 3. The relevant teacher informs the principal that bullying had been established and gives the completed Recording Bullying Behaviour form to the principal.
- 4. The relevant teacher organises meetings and invites the parents/guardians of the pupils concerned to attend. (Where bullying behaviour has occurred the parents/guardians of the pupils 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.)
- 5. Meeting with the pupil engaging in bullying behaviour:

The principal will chair the meeting.

The principal outlines:

- 1. The allegations made
- 2. The investigation carried out
- 3. The measures taken to date.

The principal will then:

- 1) Invites the pupil and parents/guardians to respond.
- 2) Make it clear that the pupil is in breach of the school's Anti Bullying Policy.
- 3) Give a verbal warning that offending behaviour must stop.
- 4) Request that the pupil(s) engage in a restorative conversation with the other pupil(s).

Restorative Questions:

- 1. What happened?
- 2. What were you thinking or feeling at the time?
- 3. What are you feeling / thinking now?
- 4. Who was affected/harmed by what happened and in what way?
- 5. What could have been done differently?
- 6. What do you think needs to happen next to move forward?
 - 5) Seek assurances that the behaviour will stop.

If bullying reoccurs, the pupil will be required to sign a Contract of Agreement to stop bullying behaviour. This situation is monitored by the Principal and relevant teacher.

Following this if the bullying behaviour reoccurs again, a formal meeting is arranged between the pupil, parents/guardians and the Chairperson of the Board Of Management. Formal suspension may result.

6. Meeting with the pupil affected by bullying behaviour:

The principal will chair the meeting.

The principal outlines:

- 1. The allegations made
- 2. The investigation carried out
- 3. The measures taken to date.

The principal will then give assurances that the school's Anti Bullying Policy will be fully implemented.

The pupil (s) affected by the bullying behaviour and their parents/guardians are given the opportunity to discuss the bullying incident, the school response and the support necessary at home and in school.

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 pupils involved and their parents / guardians 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 pupils involved.
- 2. The teacher should document the review with pupils and their parents / guardians to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of pupils and their parents / guardians in relation to this, the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased should also be recorded.
- 3. Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted.
- 4. Ongoing supervision and support may be needed for the pupils involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased.
- 5. If the bullying behaviour *has not ceased* the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the pupils involved and their parents/guardians. A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- 6. If it becomes clear that the pupil 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.
- 7. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant pupil, their parents / guardians and the school.
- 8. If a parent(s) / guardian (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.
- 9. If a parent / guardian 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.

Request to take no action

A pupil reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than "look out" for them. The pupil 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 pupil, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the pupil to work out together what steps can be taken to address the matter and how their parents / guardians will be informed of the situation.

It is important that the pupil who has experienced bullying behaviour feels safe. Parents / guardians may also make schools aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action. Parents / guardians 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 / guardian's request, schools have a right to act and 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

We take all instances of bullying behaviour on a case-by-case basis, but we may use the following approaches generally:

All pupils involved will be checked-in with regularly and behaviour will be monitored carefully. The teacher will check-in with parents / guardians too and will look for their

ongoing support to monitor their child at home and to communicate with the school if needed.

We will use resources, as appropriate – including those developed by:

NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service),

Oide (support service for schools)

Programmes/sites such as Webwise and FUSE

National Parents Council

DCU Anti Bullying Centre

TUSLA.

Teachers will be encouraged to attend training in Restorative Practices.

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 pupils and parents / guardians. 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 pupil 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: 28/08/2025

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed:

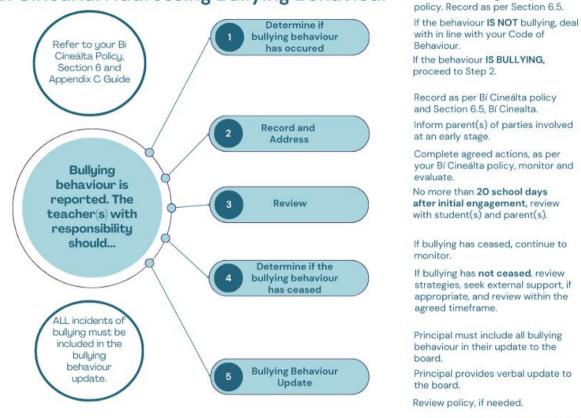
(Principal)

__ Date: 28/08/2025

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Bí Cineálta: Addressing Bullying Behaviour





Recording Bullying Behaviour

Names of Children Involved				
pupil(s) Experiencing Bullying	pupil(s) Engaging in Bullying Behaviour:	Other Witnesses (if any)		
 Form of Bullying Physical (e.g., hitting, kicking, pushing) Verbal (e.g., name-calling, teasing, insults) Psychological (e.g., intimidation, manipulation) Cyberbullying (e.g., harmful messages, social media misuse) Relational (e.g., exclusion, spreading) 	Type of Bullying (2.7) Disablist Bullying Exceptionally Able Bullying Gender Identity Bullying Homophobic/transgender (LGBTQ+) bullying Physical appearance Bullying Racist Bullying Poverty Bullying Religious Identity Bullying Sexist Bullying Sexist Bullying Sexist Bullying	Type of Bullying Peer-to-Peer Teacher-to-pupil pupil-to-Teacher Group Bullying		

Teacher(s) investigate as per school

rumors) • Other:					
Location:	Date:	Time:			
Date of Initial Engagement:	With pupils	With Parents			
Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact					
Views of pupil(s)/Parent(s) (Regarding the actions to be taken to address bullying behaviour)					
Date of Review (To determine if bullying behaviour has ceased) (reminder - 20 days) Review Date: Has bullying behaviour ceased? If not - set agreed timeframe to meet again and review strategies. Outcome: Views of pupil(s): -Views of Parent(s):					
Engagement with External Services/Supports (If any) Services Contacted: Details of Engagement:					
Recording Teacher Name: Date Recorded:					