

CARRIGTWOHILL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

BÍ CINEÁLTA POLICY

RATIFIED: Dec '16; Nov '17; Dec '18; Nov '20; Nov '21;
Nov '22; Nov '23; Nov '24; May 25



Introduction

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Code of Behaviour Guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Carrigtwohill Community College has adopted the following *Bí Cineálta* [Anti-bullying] Policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour, within the framework of the College's overall Code of Behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the Department of Education's *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2024*. These procedures aim to support school communities to prevent and address bullying behaviour. They have been developed with the four key principles of *Cineáltas* in mind: prevention; support; oversight and community.

Rationale

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 attending our school are kept safe from harm and that their wellbeing remains at the forefront of all that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our students and 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 specified grounds: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, and membership of the Traveller community.

School staff can prevent and address bullying behaviour by promoting empathy, intervening promptly and implementing policies that create a positive and inclusive environment that fosters kindness among students. The primary aim in addressing bullying behaviour is to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

Students have an important role to play by supporting their peers, reporting incidents of bullying behaviour and working in partnership with their school community.

Parents also have an important role to play. Collaboration between parents and school staff is essential to effectively prevent and address bullying behaviour. We aim to promote active partnership with parents to help reinforce values that discourage bullying behaviour.

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains effective in preventing and addressing bullying behaviour in our school community.

Definition

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. 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:** 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. Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour.
- **Causes Harm:** This can be physical (example: personal injury, damage to or loss of property), social (example: withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion) and/or emotional (example: low self-esteem, depression, anxiety) and can have a serious and long-term negative impact on the student experiencing the bullying behaviour.
 - If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying but, importantly, must still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour.
- **Repeated:** Bullying takes the form of a systematic pattern of behaviour which is repeated over time.
 - Single offline incidents of intentional negative behaviour involving an imbalance of power are not considered bullying but must still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour.
 - Posting a single harmful message/image/video online, and which is highly likely to be reposted or shared with others thus becoming a repeated behaviour, can be considered bullying behaviour.
- **Imbalance of Power:** In incidents of bullying, the student experiencing bullying behaviour finds it hard to defend themselves as a result of the abuse of a real or perceived imbalance of power. This imbalance of power may manifest itself through differences in size, strength, age, ability, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, race, ethnic origin including membership of the Traveller and/or Roma communities, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, experience of the care system, disability or the receipt of special education. In incidents of online (or cyber) bullying, the imbalance of power may relate to online anonymity, technical proficiency and possession of information/images/video, and the inability of the targeted student to remove offensive online material or escape the bullying.

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.

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. An Garda Síochána is the appropriate authority to investigate alleged criminal behaviour.

- Some online behaviour may be illegal. In cases of intimate imagery, the Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020, also known as Coco's Law, criminalises the non-consensual 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 1989, 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.

The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (Revised 2023) provide that all school staff should report reasonable concerns to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) who may take advice and/or report the concerns to Tusla.

- If the staff member is a registered teacher and the concern is at or above the threshold of harm at which a mandated report must be made the concern shall be submitted as a mandated report to Tusla jointly by the DLP and the registered teacher.
- The Children First Act 2015 defines harm as assault [physical], ill-treatment [emotional], neglect or sexual abuse and covers single and multiple instances.
- The threshold of harm is reached where the mandated person believes that a child's health, development or welfare have been, or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected
- Bullying behaviour may become a child protection concern when it results in significant physical or emotional harm, or where it becomes a persistent and severe problem and measures taken to address it are not effective.
- The Children First National Guidance document 2017 provides that in cases of serious instances of bullying where the behaviour is regarded as possibly abusive, a referral may need to be made to Tusla or An Garda Síochána as appropriate.
- In determining when bullying behaviour should be reported to Tusla the following factors should be considered:
 - the impact on the child
 - protective/appropriate action taken by the parents
 - protective/appropriate action taken by the school
 - engagement of child/family with support services such as NEPS

How Bullying Behaviour Occurs:

Bullying behaviour can take many forms, which can occur separately or together. These can include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

Direct Bullying Behaviour:

- Physical:
 - Includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping students. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While students can often engage in “mess fights” they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.
 - Personal Property can be a focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, schoolbooks and other learning material or interference with a student’s locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.
- Verbal:
 - Continual name-calling directed at a student which hurts, insults or humiliates the student should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance; for example, size or clothes worn or gender identity. It can also refer to a student’s accent, distinctive voice characteristics, academic ability, religion, race or ethnic origin, perceived or actual disability or additional need, perceived or actual gender identity, perceived or actual membership of the LGBTQ+ community, a lack of resources. Any form of unwanted verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on sex which affects the dignity of the student.
- Written:
 - Includes writing insulting remarks about a student in public places, passing around notes about or drawings of a student.
- Extortion:
 - Extortion is where something is obtained through force or threats.

Indirect Bullying Behaviour:

- Exclusion:
 - Occurs where a student is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded or ignored by a student or group of students.
- Relational:
 - Occurs when a student’s attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. Common forms include control: “Do this or I won’t be your friend anymore”; a group of students ganging up against one student; nonverbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a student; giving a student the “silent treatment”; and the deliberate manipulation of friendship groups to make someone unpopular.

Online Bullying Behaviour:

- 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.
- This form of bullying behaviour can include:
 - sending or sharing nasty, insulting, offensive, and/or intimidating messages or images via text messages, emails, direct messages or other websites or apps
 - posting information considered to be personal, private and sensitive without consent
 - making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other students
 - excluding or disrupting access to a student on purpose from online chat groups, access to accounts or from an online game

Section A: Development/Review 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	10.04.2025 [Bí Cineálta Team]	Face to Face Meeting
Students		
Parents		
Board of Management		
Wider school community as appropriate, e.g. bus drivers		
Date policy was approved:		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

1. Culture & Environment

A positive and inclusive school culture and environment is essential to prevent and address bullying behaviour. The school environment should be a space 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.

- 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.
- **Telling Environment:** Carrigtwohill Community College promotes and supports a 'telling' environment. We are aware of the reasons why students may not report, for example:
 - Fear of retaliation from the student displaying the bullying behaviour or their friendship group.
 - Concerns about being seen as a "telltale" for reporting bullying behaviour.
 - Fear that the adult may make the situation worse.
 - Fear that the adult doesn't have the knowledge and skills to deal appropriately with the bullying behaviour.
 - Fear that the adult may deny access to their smart phone.
 - Not knowing what will happen when they report bullying behaviour.
 - Fear that they will not be believed.
 - Concerns about "getting into trouble" for reporting bullying behaviour.
 - Not having evidence to back up the allegation of bullying behaviour, this can be seen particularly with relational bullying behaviour.

We endeavor to ensure that students feel comfortable to talk about concerns regarding bullying behaviour and have considered the reasons above when developing our strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

- **One Good Adult:** Staff support this strategy by letting students know that they can talk to them. Each student has an assigned class tutor who can act as their 'one good adult'. However, this is not limited to the student's class tutor, their 'one good adult' may be any member of staff.
 - Students who witness bullying behaviour [offline or online] are supported and encouraged to report the behaviour to a trusted adult within the school.
 - The trusted adult will reassure the student that they have done the right thing by reporting the behaviour.
 - The trusted adult will, without delay, inform the member of staff who has responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour. This may be the year head for that year group and/or a member of the Student Support Team which comprises of the Principal; Deputy Principal; Guidance Counsellor; Chaplain and SENCO.
 - The trusted adult will continue to check-in with / support the student, as appropriate, while the behaviour is being addressed.
- The creation of safe physical spaces supports psychological safety and is an important measure to prevent bullying behaviour.
- Supervision and monitoring of students' behaviour, in all areas of the school and the school grounds, and during all school activities.
- Spaces designated to students for break and lunchtimes have a clear line of sight make which makes it easier for school staff to supervise.
- Good lighting is present to avoid dark corners or spaces.
- Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Absence of visual barriers on windows, e.g. posters.
- Posters and signage to help promote our values - equality, diversity, inclusion, kindness, respect. These may be created by students giving them a sense of ownership of and sense of belonging to our school.
- School grounds are well maintained to promote a sense of ownership and respect in the school

community.

- A sociogram may be used as a strategy to explore class dynamics and identify those involved in bullying behaviour. This tool assists in uncovering the social structures within a group, empowering bystanders, and identifying both risks and strengths within peer interactions.
- A variety of clubs / activities and a 'quiet' zone are offered at lunchtimes each day, each of which is supervised, to accommodate a range of preferences and interests amongst our students.
- Ongoing Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the schools Bí Cineálta Policy
- Strategies to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:
 - Maintaining an inclusive physical environment such as by displaying relevant posters
 - Encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour
- Strategies to prevent racist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:
 - 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
 - Ensuring that library reading material [if relevant] and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds
- Strategies to prevent sexist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:
 - 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
 - Encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home

2. Curriculum [Learning & Teaching]

Teaching and learning that is collaborative and respectful is be promoted.

- Students have regular opportunities to work in small groups or in pairs, which can help build sense of connection, belonging and empathy among students.
- The curricular subjects offered to students provide opportunities to foster inclusion and respect for diversity.
- Many extra-curricular activities & curriculum-based activities provide opportunities for students to develop a sense of self-worth.
- The Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) curricula aim 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 (SEL) skills can be improved through the SPHE curriculum.
- Updated SPHE specifications aim to help students to feel empowered to create, nurture and maintain respectful and healthy relationships with themselves and others.
 - The RSE strand of the specification also provides space for students to examine and consider relationships and human sexuality which can foster an understanding of diversity which may help to reduce gender and identity based bullying as well as sexism and sexual harassment.
 - Teach students about healthy relationships and how to treat each other with respect and kindness
- Students can also consider diversity and inclusion through the Religious Education specifications / syllabus.
- In Civic Social and Political Education [CSPE], there is a focus on the interdependence of people in communities, at local as well as national and international levels.
- History and, at Senior Cycle, Politics and Society can be used to raise awareness of racism and colonialism. By examining historical and contemporary examples of racial discrimination and colonial legacies, students can develop an understanding of the root causes of bias and prejudice.
- Class teachers can remind students regularly of effects of bullying.

- Inclusion in the curriculum – create awareness in a wide range of subjects.
- Positive behaviour activities are planned that raise awareness and prioritise anti-bullying interventions.
- School-wide awareness and training on all aspects of bullying to include pupils, parents/guardians, whole staff and wider school community.
- A series of events organised, relating to raising awareness of bullying and promoting positive behaviour.
- Carrigtwohill Community College is committed to surveying the student body regularly to identify the extent of bullying and, in so far as is possible, the students who are affected by it.
- Digital literacy, digital citizenship, and fostering safe online environments are promoted by teachers.
- Strategies to prevent cyberbullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:
 - 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.
 - Referring to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour.
 - Promoting 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.
- Ensuring students are aware of and understand the term *Digital Consent*. This is defined as *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.
- Strategies to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:
 - 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 raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour
 - Encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour
- Strategies to prevent racist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:
 - 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

- Ensuring that library reading material [if relevant] and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds
- Strategies to prevent sexist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:
 - 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
 - Challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment

3. Policy and Planning

The wellbeing of the school community is at the heart of our school policies and plans.

- Supporting the participation of students in the development and implementation of school policies and plans can help increase awareness and ensure effective implementation.
- School staff are encouraged to share their experiences and examples of best practice.
- There is a range of training available for school staff which relates to promoting inclusion and diversity in schools both face to face and online through a range of education support centres. Engaging in appropriate teacher professional learning courses can support school staff to prevent and address bullying behaviour.
- There are a number of policies which support the implementation of this Bí Cineálta policy, for example:
 - Code of Behaviour
 - Acceptable Usage Policy [AUP]
 - Admissions Policy
 - Child Safeguarding & Risk Assessment
 - Guidance Policy
 - SEN Policy
 - Wellbeing Policy
 - RSE Policy
 - Student Council Policy

4. Relationships and Partnerships

Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying recognises the importance of positive relationships across the whole education community to promote empathy, understanding and respect. 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 councils
- The broad range of extra-curricular activities
- The broad range of co-curricular clubs
- Student participation in a range of educational competitions and events
- The Parents' Association
- The Student Support Teams
- The Referral System
- The role of the Class Tutor
- The role of the Year Head

The following, which is not an exhaustive list, could be considered to strengthen relationships and partnerships between members of the school community:

- Age appropriate awareness initiatives that look at the 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
- 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
- Conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying
- Supporting activities that build empathy, respect and resilience
- Encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring
- Promoting acts of kindness
- Teaching problem solving
- Hosting debates
- Strategies to prevent sexist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:
 - Ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

Those responsible for addressing bullying behaviour are:

- ☒ The Student Support Team [Principal; Deputy Principals; Chaplain; Guidance Counsellor; SENCO]
- ☒ The relevant Year Head
- ☒ Possibly the relevant Class Tutor or 'One Good Adult'

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

When addressing bullying behaviour teachers should:

- Ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour is heard and reassured
- Listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- Seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- Conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- Consider the age and ability of those involved
- Act in a timely manner
- Inform parents of those involved

When investigating alleged bullying behaviour teachers should consider what, where, when and why?

- If a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first. It may be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident(s)
- Thereafter, all students involved may be met as a group
- If a group meeting occurs:
 - Each student may be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views
 - Each student will be supported as appropriate

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour the following questions are considered:

1. Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?
2. Is the behaviour repeated?
3. Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?

If the answer to any of the questions above is No, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. 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 the school's Code of Behaviour.

If the answer to *each* of the questions above is Yes, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour and the behaviour should be addressed using the Bí Cineálta Procedures outlined within this policy. Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour need support. School staff should identify the supports needed for the student who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties and ensure that their needs are met.

Where Bullying Behaviour has occurred:

The College is committed to responding to all incidents of bullying behaviour in a timely, sensitive, and structured manner, with the wellbeing of all students at the core of our approach. The impact of bullying on students is acknowledged, and all efforts will be made to ensure that students feel safe, heard, and supported throughout the process.

The school will:

- Conduct all discussions with sensitivity, respect privacy, and consider the age and developmental stage of those involved.
- Engage with the student who has experienced the bullying to consider their views on how best to resolve the situation.
- Inform the parents/guardians of all parties involved in the bullying incident and consult with them on the actions to be taken to address the behaviour.
- Involve External Agencies [if required]:

In accordance with Section 2.3; 2.4 & 6.7 of the *DES Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2024*, the College reserves the right to seek the involvement of relevant external agencies such as NEPS, TUSLA, and An Garda Síochána where appropriate. In cases where bullying behaviour is deemed potentially abusive (section 2.4 of the DES Procedures), the school will consult with TUSLA and may make a formal Child Protection Report in line with national procedures.

- Record all reported incidents of bullying using the official Bullying Incident Report Form. This form must be completed by the staff member who either witnessed the incident or to whom it was reported. This should document:
 - The form and type of bullying behaviour, if known
 - Where and when it took place
 - Details of the engagements with students and parents.
 - Actions taken and supports provided
 - The date of the initial engagement with the students involved and their parents.
- Make forms available via the staffroom, main office, and on SharePoint.
- Ensure that completed forms are submitted to and filed by a member of the Student Support Team [SST].

- Ensure that a teacher or student who suspects that bullying may be occurring, will bring their concern to the attention of an SST member at the earliest possible opportunity.
- Report immediately, in accordance with the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, if the bullying behaviour constitutes a child protection concern.
- Fully investigate allegations of bullying prior to any intervention.
- Ensure that the investigation process, using restorative practice, will aim to resolve interpersonal issues and restore relationships wherever practicable, rather than focusing solely on blame.
- Ensure all parties involved are given a fair hearing, and their rights and dignity are respected throughout the process.
- Take prompt action where bullying is identified, and it may be treated as a breach of the school's Code of Behaviour, resulting in appropriate disciplinary or pastoral responses.

In circumstances where a student expresses concern about their parents being informed, the school may develop an appropriate plan to support the student and for how their parents will be informed. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour it is generally acknowledged that that no one approach works in all situations.

Possible approaches in dealing with Bullying behaviour:

1. Engagement in Restorative Practice
2. National Educational Psychological Service [NEPS] Support

In relation to bullying, NEPS psychologists may advise schools on best practice to prevent and address bullying when issues arise in schools and/or provide training in preventative initiatives, such as developing social and emotion skills, social skills, executive function skills, promoting resilience and skills in relationship repair between peers as appropriate.

3. Oide Training

Oide fosters a culture of continuing professional learning among school leaders and teachers encouraging lifelong learning, reflective and enquiry based practices. Oide provides high quality professional learning experiences, supports and resources relating to curricular developments, broader educational goals and national priorities, such as wellbeing which includes preventing and addressing bullying.

4. Webwise – Online Safety

Webwise promotes safer, better internet use through awareness raising and education initiatives targeting teachers, students and parents. Webwise develops and disseminates resources that help teachers integrate digital citizenship and online safety into teaching and learning in their schools. Webwise also provides information, advice, and tools to parents to support their engagement in their children's online lives.

5. National Parents Council [NPC] – Parental Support

The NPC delivers online and in-person courses to support parents of post-primary students to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

6. Dublin City University (DCU) Anti-Bullying Centre – FUSE programme

The Anti-Bullying Centre offers a range of modules as part of its FUSE programme for the entire school community that can be used to help to promote a positive school culture and assist in preventing and addressing bullying behaviours.

7. Tusla Support

Schools should contact Tusla directly for advice in cases where it is considered that bullying behaviour is a child protection concern.

Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred:

- The teacher must engage with the students involved and their parents 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 students involved.
 - The teacher should document the review with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and their parents in relation to this.
- The date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased may also be recorded.
- Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted.
- Ongoing supervision and support may be needed for the students involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased.
- If the bullying behaviour has not ceased the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents/guardian. 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/guardians and the school.
- 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.
- 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 student.

A student can report a bullying incident by using one, or any, of the following approaches:

- Directly approaching a staff member at any time.
- Handing up a note with homework or classwork, or during assembly.
- Contacting the Student Support Team. A student may address a specific member of the SS team if they feel more comfortable. A list of the care team members will be made available to students.
- Getting a parent to contact the school by ringing to make an appointment with a member of the SS team.
- Participating in one or more positive behaviour strategies at any point during the academic year.

Support for Students Affected by Bullying

The College provides a programme of supports for students affected by bullying. This involve the following elements:

- Students who have been bullied may be offered appropriate counselling and provided with opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem and build their resilience.
- Students who have been involved in bullying behaviour may be provided with counselling to help them to learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others. They may also be provided with appropriate opportunities to build their self-esteem and feelings of self-worth.
- Students who observe incidents of bullying behaviour may be encouraged to discuss it with their teachers and their parents/guardians and to avail of counselling where they feel it may assist them to cope effectively with what they have experienced.
- Students may be made aware of the various avenues of their support network in the school and may be encouraged to email their subject teachers, Class Tutors or Year Head if they are the victim of or a witness to an incident of bullying.

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.

Staff members will be made aware of the Bí Cineálta Policy to include procedures documented within. The Policy will be available for all teachers in the Policy Folder on Sharepoint; in the staffroom and in the main office.

Students affected by bullying will be flagged, without details, when necessary. Data gathered through the Anti-Bullying Form will be collated and analysed annually with a view to monitoring levels of bullying behaviour and identifying issues requiring attention.

The Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management at each meeting setting out the following:

- The overall number of bullying cases reported
- Confirmation that all cases referred have been or are being, dealt with in accordance with the school's Bí Cineálta policy in conjunction with *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2024*. The Minutes of Board of Management meetings will not include any identifying details of the students involved.

The school reserves the right to apply its Bí Cineálta Policy in respect of bullying that occurs at a location, activity, function or programme that is not school related if, in the opinion of the Principal and/or Board of Management, the alleged bullying has created a hostile environment at school for the victim, has infringed on the rights of the victim at the school and/or has materially or substantially disrupted the education process or the orderly operation of the school.

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.

Policy Review: Oversight

The Board of Management is committed to the effective implementation and regular oversight of the College's Bí Cineálta Policy. The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting and the measures taken to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

The purpose of the update is to inform discussion at board level on the effectiveness of the measures that the school is taking to prevent and address bullying behaviour and the effectiveness of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy. The update will include the following:

- ☒ 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 must include a verbal report which should 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 contain personal or identifying information.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed annually, in line with Section 7.2 of the *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2024* & using appendix E of the procedures. This review will take into account input from the school community and will also occur as soon as practicable following any significant changes relevant to the policy. Following each review, the Board will ensure that an action plan is developed to address any areas identified for improvement. Details of the review, including key findings and actions taken, will be recorded in the minutes of the Board meeting at which the review is discussed.

A written notification confirming completion of the review will be:

- Made available to school personnel
- Published on the school website
- Provided to the Student Council (Comhairle na nDaltaí) and the Parents' Association.

A copy of the review and its outcomes will be made available, upon request, to the Patron and the Department of Education (DES). The Board acknowledges that the Inspectorate will focus on the school's efforts to promote a positive school culture and address bullying effectively.

Communication of Policy

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 school and is also available on our website and in hard copy on request.

Signed: Paula Sweeney
Chairperson of the Board

[Signature]
Acting Principal

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management on 15/05/25.

Date of next review: