



## **Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour**

The Board of Management of Coláiste Muire recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the profound negative impact it can have on the well-being, self-esteem, and overall development of those affected. As a Catholic school, we are deeply committed to fostering an environment where every student feels safe, valued, and respected.

Our school community is built on the core values of respect, kindness, compassion, inclusion, tolerance, and understanding. Bullying in any form goes against these fundamental principles, and we stand firm in our resolve to prevent, address, and eliminate such behavior.

We are fully committed to upholding our Bí Cineálta Anti-Bullying Policy and will be guided by the principles outlined in the Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying:

- **Prevention** – Creating a culture of kindness and proactive education on respectful relationships.
- **Support** – Ensuring that victims and those involved in bullying receive appropriate care and guidance.
- **Oversight** – Implementing clear policies and procedures to identify and address bullying effectively.
- **Community** – Involving students, staff, parents, and the wider school community in a collective effort to promote a bully-free environment.

In Coláiste Muire, we believe that every student has the right to learn and grow in a positive and supportive atmosphere. Together, we will work to uphold this policy and create a school where kindness and respect are at the heart of everything we do.

The Board of Management of Coláiste Muire has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2024*. The Board of Management acknowledges that bullying behaviour interferes with the rights of the child as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We all, as a school community, have a responsibility to work together to prevent and address bullying behaviour and to deal with the negative impact of bullying behaviour.

We are committed to ensuring that all students who attend our school are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our students is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our students, and we are fully committed to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

We confirm that we will, in accordance with our obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the harassment of students or staff on any of the nine grounds specified: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

A positive school culture and climate which

- is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
- encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment;
- and
- promotes respectful relationships across the school community

## Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined in *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying and Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* as **targeted behaviour**, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is **repeated** over time and involves an **imbalance of power** in relationships between two people or groups of people in society. The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

Each school is required to develop and implement a Bí Cineálta policy that sets out how the school community prevents and addresses bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Positive Behaviour.

## Definition of Targeted Behaviour in Terms of Bullying

In line with the Bí Cineálta Anti-Bullying Procedures, Targeted Behaviour refers to repeated, deliberate, and harmful actions directed at a specific individual or group, with the intent to cause distress, fear, or exclusion. This behavior can take many forms, including:

- **Verbal** – Name-calling, insults, teasing, or threats.
- **Physical** – Hitting, pushing, damaging belongings, or intimidation.
- **Social/Relational** – Exclusion, spreading rumors, or manipulating friendships.
- **Cyberbullying** – Harassment, threats, or harmful content shared online.

Targeted behaviour creates an imbalance of power where the person experiencing the bullying feels vulnerable or unable to defend themselves. It goes against the school's core values of kindness, respect, inclusion, and compassion and will be addressed in accordance with the principles of Prevention, Support, Oversight, and Community as outlined in the *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying*.

## Repeated Behaviour

Bullying is characterised by a repeated pattern of harmful behaviour over time. A single, intentional negative act offline, even if involving a power imbalance, is not considered bullying but should still be addressed under the school's behaviour policy. In contrast, a single harmful message, image, or video posted online can qualify as bullying if it is likely to be reshared or widely circulated.

## **Imbalance of Power**

In bullying incidents, the targeted student often struggles to defend themselves due to a real or perceived imbalance of power. This power imbalance can manifest in various ways, including:

- Differences in physical factors such as size, strength, or age
- Social or economic factors like peer influence, status, or financial situation
- Personal attributes such as race, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability
- Experience in care systems or receipt of special education
- In cases of online (cyber) bullying, power imbalances may arise from factors like online anonymity, technological expertise, or control over harmful content. The targeted student may feel powerless to remove offensive material or escape the harassment.

## **Behaviour that is not bullying**

It is important to note that every negative behaviour does not constitute bullying and some behaviours may be dealt with under the Code of Behaviour rather than the procedures as outlined in this policy.

A single instance of negative behaviour, while harmful, does not constitute bullying. However, a hurtful message posted on social media may still be considered bullying if it is likely to be shared and cause ongoing harm. Bullying behaviour may be visible to a wide audience and is likely to be shared multiple times, thereby becoming repeated behaviour.

Disagreements between students, or situations where students do not want to be or remain friends, are not considered bullying unless they involve deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude, or manipulate others, including efforts to isolate deliberately or influence friendship groups negatively.

Some students with special educational needs may have social communication difficulties, which can lead to behaviours that inadvertently cause harm to themselves or others. It is important to recognise that these behaviours are not deliberate or planned; in some situations, they are automatic responses beyond the student's control. Bullying is not characterised by accidental or reckless behaviour.

If a student experiences repeated harm but the behaviour causing it is unintentional, this does not qualify as bullying. Nevertheless, such behaviours, while not defined as

bullying, can still be distressing. The school may address these situations through strategies outlined in their Code of Behaviour.

## **Culture and Environment**

Coláiste Muire is committed to fostering a school culture rooted in the core values of Respect, Justice, Compassion, and Inclusion. Guided by the CEIST Charter, we strive to create an educational environment where every student feels safe, valued, and supported.

As part of our Bí Cineálta Anti-Bullying Procedures, we actively promote a positive school climate that nurtures kindness, respect, and dignity in all actions and interactions. Recognising that prevention is key, we embed our values in daily school life through:

**Faith-inspired ethos** – Encouraging students to live out Gospel values of love, inclusion, and service to others.

**Positive relationships** – Promoting a culture of empathy, understanding, and support among students, staff, and the wider school community.

**Restorative practices** – Encouraging conflict resolution through dialogue and reflection.

**Student voice & leadership** – Empowering students through mentoring programmes, peer support initiatives, and active participation in school life.

**Curriculum integration** – Embedding themes of inclusion, diversity, and digital responsibility within SPHE, CSPE, and Religious Education.

**Staff training & awareness** – Providing ongoing professional development to ensure early intervention and effective support.

**Engagement with parents & guardians** – Strengthening the school-home partnership to reinforce positive behaviour expectations.

By fostering a culture of care and respect, we are fully committed to the Cineáltas principles of Prevention, Support, Oversight, and Community to ensure a safe, inclusive, and affirming school environment for all.

## **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.

	<b>Date consulted</b>	<b>Method of consultation</b>
School Staff	14 <sup>th</sup> March 2025	Whole staff meeting; presentation on Bí Cineálta Anti-bullying procedures; group tasks and feedback
Students		Student survey; consultation with Student Council
Parents	21 <sup>st</sup> March 2025	Survey sent to all families using Microsoft Forms
Board of Management	8 <sup>th</sup> April 2025	Presentation made to Board by Principal; copy of draft policy circulated
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers		Local area social media accounts; Parish newsletter; Meeting with bus inspector
Date policy was approved:		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

## **Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour**

Coláiste Muire is fully committed to preventing bullying and bullying behaviour by adhering to the highest standards of best practice, in collaboration with all members of our school community. We believe that a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment is essential for every student to thrive and to achieve their potential.

Guided by our Catholic ethos and the CEIST values of Respect, Inclusion, and Justice, we strive to create a school culture that:

Welcomes difference – embracing diversity and ensuring that all students feel valued and accepted.

Promotes an open and supportive environment – encouraging students to express concerns without fear and fostering a community where support is readily available.

Builds respectful relationships – teaching and modelling kindness, empathy, and positive interactions among students and staff.

Values all members of the school community – recognising the unique dignity of every student, teacher, and parent/guardian as essential contributors to our school's well-being.

Encourages collaboration – working together with students, staff, and families to proactively prevent bullying through awareness, education, and engagement.

Through proactive policies, pastoral care, and the principles of Cineáltas – Prevention, Support, Oversight, and Community, we reaffirm our dedication to ensuring that every member of our school community feels safe, respected, and empowered.

## **Supervision**

The school ensures active supervision in all areas, particularly in high-risk locations such as corridors and outdoor spaces. Teachers and staff are strategically placed to monitor student interactions, and designated break-time duties help prevent bullying behaviour from occurring unnoticed. CCTV is used in accordance with data protection guidelines to support monitoring efforts where necessary.

## **Student Support Team**

The Student Support Team meets regularly to discuss concerns regarding student welfare and address potential bullying behaviour proactively. This team includes SEN coordinator, Guidance Counsellor, home school liaison and senior management, working together to provide targeted support and interventions for students affected by bullying.

## **Culture and Environment**

The culture and environment of Coláiste Muire reflects its commitment to holistic education, inclusivity, and personal development. The school fosters a well-rounded learning experience by balancing academic, technical, and artistic achievements, ensuring that students can explore and develop their talents in various fields.

A strong sense of respect and dignity is upheld, valuing each individual's uniqueness. The Catholic ethos is affirmed, promoting moral and spiritual growth while also instilling pride in cultural heritage and environmental awareness.

The school nurtures a supportive and cooperative community, emphasising the importance of collaboration between parents, teachers, and students. This partnership ensures a caring and inclusive atmosphere where all individuals, regardless of class, creed, or culture, feel welcomed and valued.

## **How We Create This Culture and Environment**

**Open Communication:** Students are encouraged to report concerns through designated trusted adults, peer support groups, and an anonymous reporting system.

**Setting Standards and Expectations:** School policies clearly outline expected behaviour, with an emphasis on respect and responsibility. Expectations are communicated through assemblies, student handbooks, and classroom discussions.

**Approach to Bullying Behaviours:** A restorative approach is used to educate students on the impact of bullying. Consequences are aligned with the school's Code of Behaviour and ensure accountability.

**Student Leadership:** The Student Council and senior students act as role models and promote positive interactions among peers.

**Parental Support:** Parents are informed about bullying prevention strategies and encouraged to communicate concerns with the school. Information sessions and newsletters provide guidance on recognising and addressing bullying.

**Creating a 'Safe to Talk/Tell' Environment:** Students are reassured that reporting bullying is a responsible action. Peer mentoring and confidential reporting mechanisms support this approach.

## **The Strategies We Adopt Include:**

**Supporting students who witness bullying:** Bystander intervention training and awareness programmes encourage students to support their peers and report incidents.

**Safe physical spaces:** The school evaluates and improves physical spaces to reduce areas where bullying can occur, ensuring that all areas are adequately supervised and welcoming.

**Promoting positive messages:** Anti-bullying campaigns, themed awareness weeks, and classroom activities reinforce respect and inclusivity.

## Curriculum and Learning

Subject areas: Topics related to bullying prevention are covered in SPHE, RSE, CSPE, and Wellbeing modules.

Working with peers: Group projects and peer mentoring initiatives foster positive relationships and inclusivity.

Wellbeing: The Wellbeing curriculum incorporates discussions on empathy, resilience, and conflict resolution. Wellbeing policies are included in all department plans.

Publishing policies on website: The school's anti-bullying policy is available online for accessibility. Student friendly anti-bullying policies are displayed in all classrooms and in the student journal.

Reviewing policy and practices: Regular evaluations and student surveys ensure the policy remains effective and responsive to emerging needs.

## Preventing Cyber-bullying Behaviour

**Benefits of digital technologies:** Digital tools enhance learning, communication, and creativity.

**Issues:** Vulnerable students may be at higher risk, and unrestricted access to digital technologies can facilitate harmful interactions.

### **Strategies:**

- Cyberbullying awareness campaigns, education on digital citizenship, parental guidance on internet use, and monitoring of school-related online platforms.
- Use of mobile phones is not permitted in the school, unless for educational purposes in the presence of a staff member.
- Implementing the SPHE and Digital Media Literacy curricula to teach students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship.

## Preventing Homophobic/Transphobic Bullying Behaviour

Right to Feel Safe and Supported: All students have the right to express their identities without fear of discrimination.

Inclusion and Judgement: A zero-tolerance approach is taken against homophobic and transphobic language and behaviour.

Strategies: Inclusive language, teacher training, and representation in curriculum materials.

## **Preventing Racist Bullying Behaviour**

Cultural Diversity: The school values and celebrates its diverse student body. Every student has the right to feel safe and supported. Students of all backgrounds are entitled to an inclusive and secure environment and Coláiste Muire strives to create that secure environment by implementing the following strategies:

- We foster a school culture that celebrates diversity, where students see their own identities reflected in the environment.
- We strive to showcase the school's cultural diversity through photos and social media content.
- We empower bystanders to report incidents of racist behaviour.
- We provide staff with resources to support students learning English as an additional language and to communicate effectively with parents from diverse backgrounds.
- We offer support for students from ethnic minority communities and maintain regular communication with their parents.
- We provide lessons on racism and bias, as part of the curriculum, clear reporting channels, and diversity-positive displays.

## **Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour**

As a coeducational school, our focus on gender equality is a priority. The school promotes equal opportunities for all students so that the environment is supportive and respectful for all.

- We ensure that staff model respectful behaviour and treat all students equally, regardless of their sex.
- We provide equal opportunities for all students to participate in school activities, regardless of gender.
- We celebrate diversity by acknowledging and valuing the contributions of all students.

- We organise awareness campaigns, workshops, and presentations on gender equality and respect during Friendship/Anti-Bullying Week and at other times throughout the year.
- We strive for a supportive and respectful environment where gender-based stereotypes and discrimination are actively challenged.
- We create gender-inclusive policies, education on equality, and student leadership roles to promote gender respect.

## **Preventing Sexual Harassment**

Zero Tolerance Approach: The school has a firm stance against sexual harassment, ensuring all incidents are dealt with seriously.

Strategies: Clear reporting procedures, age-appropriate consent education delivered through qualified SPHE/RSE teachers, staff training, and peer-led discussions on respectful relationships.

## **Supervision and Monitoring Policies**

The school has established structured supervision and monitoring procedures to prevent and address bullying behaviour effectively. These include:

- Teacher presence in high-risk areas
- Anonymous reporting systems
- Regular staff training on bullying prevention
- Periodic student feedback on school climate
- Collaboration with external agencies for specialist support

By implementing these comprehensive strategies, the school remains committed to fostering a safe and respectful learning environment for all students.

## **Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour**

We are committed to fostering a school environment that reflects our Catholic values of respect, inclusion, and compassion. As a CEIST school, we uphold the dignity of each person, ensuring that all members of our community are treated with kindness and fairness.

Bullying in any form undermines these values and has no place in our school. Every student has the fundamental right to feel safe, secure, and valued. Through our BÍ Cineálta Anti-Bullying Policy, we take a proactive approach to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour, ensuring that our school remains a place where everyone is respected, supported, and included.

We are dedicated to identifying, addressing, and resolving bullying concerns through a framework of

- Prevention
- Support
- Oversight
- Community

as outlined in the Cineáltas Action Plan on Bullying. By working together—students, staff, and parents—we strive to create a culture where kindness prevails, differences are embraced, and all students can flourish.

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

- Class tutors
- Year Heads
- Deputy Principal
- Principal

Each year group will have an assigned Year Head who will have responsibility for the year group as part of their role.

All Junior classes will be assigned a Class Tutor.

TY classes will be assigned a Class Tutor

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. All staff have a responsibility to report any suspected incidents of bullying. Such reports should be brought to the attention of the Year Head who will formally begin the process by completing a Bullying Incident Report Form.

Students and/or parents should report bullying behaviour to any member of staff with whom they feel comfortable. Generally, the main point of contact will be the Year Head of the student in question. Contact may be made as follows:

- Arranging a meeting with the Year Head
- Emailing the relevant Year Head
- Contacting the school to speak to the Year Head

Students may also

- Hand up a signed note in their homework copy
- Have a parent/guardian make the report on their behalf
- Speak with a teacher (other than Year Head) if more comfortable doing so

Any incident of bullying behaviour brought to the attention of any staff member will be dealt with as follows:

The staff member the report is being made to shall:

- Listen, note, reassure
- Ensure the safety of the student
- Explain the procedures
- Report to Year Head

Staff, other than teachers, are also required to report any incidents of bullying behaviour brought to their attention or witnessed by them to a teacher, Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal.

Non-teaching staff include secretaries, caretakers, SNAs, cleaners, school bus drivers, coaches.

The school will then take the following steps:

1. Identify if bullying behaviour has occurred
2. When established that bullying behaviour has occurred, the school will
  - Ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured
  - Seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
  - Conduct all conversations with sensitivity
  - Consider the age and ability of those involved
  - Listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
  - Take action in a timely manner
  - Inform parents of those involved at an early stage

- The process will be reviewed within 20 days of the initial engagement with all parties

## **Where bullying behaviour has occurred**

Where it has been established that bullying behaviour has occurred, contact will be made with the parents of the students involved to inform them of the matter and to consult with them on the actions to be taken to address the behaviour.

A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, the school will deal with it in accordance with the BÍ Cineálta policy. Where the student displaying the bullying behaviour is not a student in the school, but the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour is a student in the school, the school should support the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as appropriate and engage with them and their parents to determine what steps can be taken.

### **Investigation and intervention**

- All reported incidents will be investigated promptly and sensitively, ensuring the well-being of all involved.
- The process (Appendix A) will be clearly communicated to students, staff, and parents/guardians, ensuring transparency and understanding.
- A restorative approach will be prioritised where appropriate, fostering learning and positive behavioural change.

### **Parental involvement and communication**

- Parents/guardians will be informed at an early stage and encouraged to work collaboratively with the school in addressing concerns.
- Support and guidance will be provided to both the targeted student and the student engaging in bullying behaviour.

### **Record-keeping and oversight**

- Accurate records of reported incidents, actions taken, and follow-up measures will be maintained in accordance with school policy and BÍ Cineálta procedures.
- Regular monitoring and review will be conducted to ensure a sustained resolution.

- All reports of bullying will be brought to the attention of the Board of Management, in line with the guidelines.

### **Support and preventative measures**

- Counselling, peer support, and additional interventions will be made available where needed.
- Continued awareness and education will be promoted through school initiatives, ensuring a culture where bullying is not tolerated.

### **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 should 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. 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 Positive Behaviour. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school.

If a parent(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 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.

### **Requests to take no action**

A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than “look out” for them. The student may not want to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They may feel that telling someone might make things more difficult for them. Where this occurs, it is important that the member of staff shows empathy to the student, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the student to work out together what steps can be taken to address the matter and how their parents will be informed of the situation. It is important that the student who has experienced bullying behaviour feels safe.

Parents may also make schools aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action. Parents should put this request in writing to the school or be facilitated to do so where there are literacy, digital literacy or language barriers. However, while acknowledging the parent's request, schools may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

### **Determining if bullying behaviour has ceased**

To ensure a safe and respectful environment, the **Bí Cineálta** framework outlines a structured approach to assessing whether bullying behaviour has ceased. This process involves ongoing monitoring, clear communication, and defined next steps based on the observed outcomes.

### **Monitoring and Assessment**

1. **Follow-up meetings:** Designated staff will conduct scheduled check-ins with all parties involved, ensuring the targeted individual feels safe and supported.
2. **Behavioural observations:** Teachers and staff will discreetly observe interactions to assess changes in behaviour.
3. **Feedback collection:** Input from the affected individual, the alleged perpetrator, and relevant peers will be gathered to determine any ongoing concerns.

## Determination Process

### If bullying has ceased:

- A final review meeting is held to confirm that respectful behaviour is maintained.
- Support structures remain in place to prevent recurrence.
- The situation is documented as resolved, with continued low-level monitoring.

### If bullying has not ceased:

- Further intervention strategies are implemented, such as additional education, mediation, or behavioural contracts.
- Disciplinary actions, aligned with the **Bí Cineálta** policy, may be applied.
- Ongoing support for the targeted individual is reinforced.
- External agencies may be engaged if necessary.

## Record-Keeping

Effective record-keeping is essential for ensuring a consistent and fair response to bullying incidents. Staff members investigating incidents of bullying behaviour have a responsibility to document all relevant details accurately and in a timely manner. This supports transparency, facilitates follow-up actions, and ensures compliance with the **Bí Cineálta** policy.

The relevant teacher must use the recording template at Appendix 3 to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

1. In cases where s/he considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after s/he has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred; and
2. Where it is necessary to report serious bullying behaviour immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal
3. The non-consensual sharing of sexting content always warrants a report regardless of whether the issue is resolved within 20 days and whether the teacher thinks the incident warrants a report. The sharing of explicit images is an unacceptable and

absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved. All incidents involving creating, storing or sharing of explicit images of children under the age of 17 will be reported to the Gardaí and Tusla.

At any point in the investigation/resolution of the bullying matter, the relevant teacher may seek the advice and support of the Principal or Deputy Principal while still retaining responsibility for the matter. Also, at any point in the investigation of the matter the relevant teacher may hand over the matter to the Principal/Deputy Principal. In doing so, however, s/he must complete a report, retain a copy in his/her files and provide a copy for the Principal/Deputy Principal.

## Responsibilities in Record-Keeping

- All incidents must be recorded using Appendix 3 on the Unique Schools App / agreed file to ensure a structured and secure documentation process.
- Investigators must provide factual, objective accounts of incidents, including dates, times, locations, individuals involved, and actions taken.
- Records should be updated throughout the intervention process, ensuring all follow-ups and resolutions are documented.

## Step-by-Step Process

1. **Initial recording** – Once a concern is raised, details must be logged promptly in Appendix 3 of the Unique Schools App / agreed file.
2. **Investigation notes** – All findings from discussions, meetings, and observations must be recorded objectively.
3. **Action taken** – Any interventions, supports provided, or disciplinary measures must be documented.
4. **Follow-up** – Ongoing monitoring and further actions, if required, should be updated to track progress.
5. **Final review** – When the case is resolved, a summary should be recorded, noting whether the behaviour has ceased.

All records are confidential and should be accessed only by relevant school personnel. Proper documentation ensures accountability and reinforces the school's commitment to maintaining a safe and respectful environment.

All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with students and parents. The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented. If the bullying behaviour is a child protection concern the matter will be addressed without

delay in accordance with Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

## **Section D: Oversight**

The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each Board of Management meeting. This update will include the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting, the number of ongoing incidents and the total number of incidents since the beginning of the school year. Where incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred, the principal will also provide a verbal update which will include where relevant, information relating to trends and patterns identified, strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant. This update does not contain personal or identifying information. See Chapter 7 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

This policy is available to our school community on the school's website and in hard copy on request. A student friendly version of this policy is displayed in the 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: John Perry

Date: 27<sup>th</sup> May 2025

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: Damien MacGraith

Date: 27<sup>th</sup> May 2025

(Principal)

# Appendix A

## Step 1: Reporting & Initial Awareness

### Encouraging Reporting:

- All students, parents, and staff are encouraged to report bullying behaviour, either verbally or in writing, to any trusted staff member (teacher, tutor, year head, or designated anti-bullying coordinator).
- Anonymous reports will be taken seriously and followed up appropriately.

### Listening & Reassurance:

- The student making the report (or their parent(s)/guardian(s)) will be listened to in a supportive and non-judgmental manner.
- Immediate steps will be taken to ensure their safety and well-being.

## Step 2: Initial Investigation & Information Gathering

### Fact-Finding:

- The relevant staff member (e.g., Year Head, Deputy Principal) will conduct an informal but structured inquiry to gather details.
- Witnesses or bystanders may be interviewed if appropriate.

### Confidentiality & Sensitivity:

- Investigations will be handled with discretion, ensuring that students feel safe in coming forward.

## Step 3: Formal Investigation & Intervention

### Meetings with the Students Involved:

- The student accused of bullying will be met privately to discuss the concerns.
- The targeted student will be kept informed about actions taken.
- Parents/guardians may be contacted at this stage if deemed necessary.

### Restorative Approach Where Possible:

- A restorative meeting may be facilitated to help repair relationships if appropriate and agreed upon by all parties.
- A plan for positive behaviour change will be implemented.

#### **Record-Keeping:**

- A written record of incidents, interventions, and outcomes will be kept in line with the BÍ Cineálta Procedures.
- The situation will be monitored for an appropriate period to ensure no recurrence.

### **Step 4: Parental Involvement & Communication**

#### **Notifying Parents/Guardians:**

- If the behaviour is confirmed as bullying, the parents/guardians of both the targeted student and the student engaging in bullying will be informed.
- A meeting may be arranged to discuss the findings and outline support measures.

#### **Collaborative Approach:**

- Parents/guardians will be encouraged to work with the school to support positive behavioural change.
- Where necessary, external supports (e.g., counselling, youth services) may be recommended.

### **Step 5: Implementation of Actions & Follow-Up**

#### **Interventions & Supports:**

- Support will be provided for the targeted student to help them rebuild confidence.
- The student who engaged in bullying will be given clear guidelines for behaviour improvement and may be required to participate in a restorative justice or social skills programme.

#### **Ongoing Monitoring & Check-Ins:**

- School staff will monitor interactions to ensure that bullying behaviour does not continue.
- Follow-up meetings may be scheduled to assess progress.

## **Step 6: Further Disciplinary Measures (if necessary)**

### **If the Behaviour Persists:**

- If bullying behaviour continues despite interventions, escalated disciplinary measures may be taken in line with the school's Code of Behaviour.
- This could include loss of privileges, detention, behaviour contracts, or in serious cases, suspension or referral to the Board of Management.

### **Referral to External Agencies:**

- In cases of serious, repeated bullying, the school may liaise with external agencies (e.g., TUSLA, NEPS, Gardaí) where appropriate.

## **Step 7: Policy Review & Reflection**

### **Annual Review & Improvement:**

- The effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy will be reviewed regularly by school management.
- Feedback from students, parents, and staff will be used to enhance prevention and intervention strategies.

### **Promoting a Culture of Kindness & Respect:**

- Continued awareness campaigns, workshops, and peer-led initiatives will be implemented to promote a positive school climate.

## **Appendix B**

# Bullying Incident Report Form

Name of student being bullied: \_\_\_\_\_

Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) and class(es) of students allegedly engaged in bullying behaviour:

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Source of bullying concern/report (tick as relevant):

Student concerned	
Other student(s)	
Teacher	
Parent	
Other	

Location of incident(s) (tick as relevant):

School yard		Changing Rooms	
Classroom		Corridor	
Bus		Canteen	
Toilets		Other	
Out-of-school			

Name of person(s) who reported the alleged bullying concern:

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Type of bullying behaviour (tick as relevant):

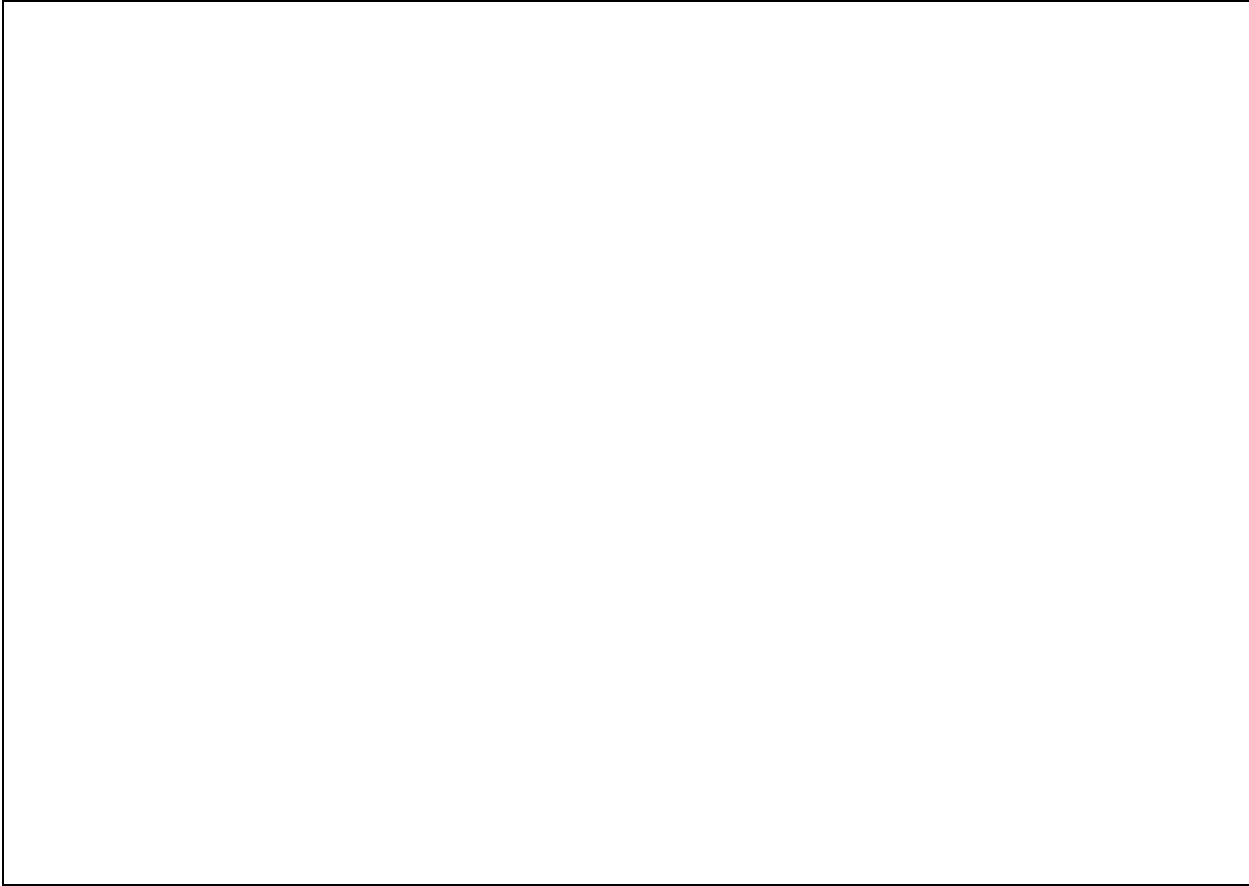
Physical		Exclusion	
Gender-identity		Relational	

Verbal		Cyber	
Extortion		Intimidation	
Damage to personal property		Other	
Written			

**Brief description**

**Impact of bullying behaviour:**

**Details of action taken:**



Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal:

\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ (Year Head)

**Appendix C**

# Bullying Determination Checklist

## Bullying Determination Checklist

Bullying is 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.

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour you should consider the following questions:

Is the behaviour <b>targeted</b> at a specific student or group of students?	YES	NO
Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional <b>harm</b> ?	YES	NO
Is the behaviour <b>repeated</b> ?	YES	NO

**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.**

Note the following:

One-off incidents may be considered bullying in certain circumstances. A single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and thus becomes a repeated behaviour.

**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.

Schools are not expected to address bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, if this bullying behaviour, including cyber bullying behaviour, continues into the school environment, schools are required to address the bullying behaviour. Bullying behaviour, including cyber bullying behaviour, which has occurred outside of school can often continue in school.

Where a school is made aware of cyberbullying behaviour that has occurred while a student was not under the care or responsibility of the school, the school is required to

support the student. The school could support the student as follows, listening, showing empathy, reassuring the student, and asking the student to let the school know if the bullying behaviour occurs in school.

Where a student engages in cyberbullying behaviour when in school, the school must address the bullying behaviour. Where a student experiences cyber bullying behaviour in school, the school must address the bullying behaviour.

In the case of cyber-bullying, although the hurtful message may have been sent outside of school hours, the student may view the message while in school. Where this happens, the school must address the bullying behaviour.

If bullying behaviour occurs when students are on a school trip and are therefore under the care and responsibility of the school, the school must address the bullying behaviour.

### **Types of Bullying behaviour checklist**

<b>Types of bullying behaviour</b>	<b>Yes / No</b>
Disablist bullying behaviour	
Physical appearance bullying	
Racist bullying	
Gender identity bullying	
Poverty bullying	
Homophobic/transphobic bullying	
Religious identity bullying	
Exceptionally able bullying	
Sexist bullying	
Cyberbullying	
Sexual harassment	
Other	

### **How the bully behaviour occurred**

<b>How the bullying behaviour occurred</b>	<b>Yes / No</b>
Physical bullying behaviour	
Verbal bullying behaviour	
Written bullying behaviour	
Extortion	
Exclusion	

Relational	
Cyber / online	
Other	

**Appendix D**

## Guide to Providing Bullying Behaviour Update

Guide to providing Bullying Behaviour Update for Board of Management meeting of DD/MM/YYYY

Having reviewed the details of the incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the previous board of management meeting, the principal must provide the following information at each ordinary meeting of the board of management:

Total number of new incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the last board of management meeting.	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour currently ongoing.	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the beginning of this 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 etc.
- 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 should not include any personal information or information that could identify the students involved.

## Appendix E

## Review of the Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual (calendar) review of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and its implementation in consultation with the school community. As part of the review, this document must be completed.

### Bí Cineálta Policy Review

1. When did the Board formally adopt its Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools? Insert date when the Bí Cineálta policy was last adopted by the school. \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ /20\_\_\_\_\_

2. Where in the school is the student--friendly Bí Cineálta policy displayed?

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3. What date did the Board publish the Bí Cineálta policy and the student-friendly policy on the school website? \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ /20\_\_\_\_\_

4. How has the student-friendly policy been communicated to students?

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5. How has the Bí Cineálta policy and student-friendly policy been communicated to parents?

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6. Have all school staff been made aware of the, school's Bí Cineálta policy and the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

7. Does the Bí Cineálta policy document the strategies that the school uses to prevent bullying behaviour?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

8. Has the Board received and minuted the Bullying Behaviour Update

presented by the principal at every ordinary board meeting over the last calendar year?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

9. Has the Board discussed how the school is addressing all reports of bullying behaviour.

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

10. Is the Board satisfied that all incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed in accordance with the school's BÍ Cineálta Policy? Yes

\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

11. Have the prevention strategies in the BÍ Cineálta policy been implemented?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

12. Has the Board discussed the effectiveness of the strategies used to prevent bullying behaviour?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

13. How have (a) parents, (b) students and (c) school staff been consulted with as part of the review of the BÍ Cineálta Policy?

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14. Outline any aspects of the school's BÍ Cineálta policy and/or its implementation that have been identified as requiring further improvement as part of this review:

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15. Where areas for improvement have been identified, outline how these will be addressed and whether an action plan with timeframes has been developed?

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16. Does the student-friendly policy need to be updated as a result of this review and if so why?

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\_\_\_\_\_

17. Does the school refer parents to the complaints procedures if they have a complaint about how the school has addressed bullying behaviour?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

18. Has a parent informed the school that a student has left the school due to reported bullying behaviour?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

19. Has the Office of the Ombudsman for Children initiated or completed an investigation into how the school has addressed an incident of bullying behaviour?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

(Chairperson of board of management)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

(Principal)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of next review: \_\_\_\_\_