



Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

2025/2026

Colehill NS 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. This was ratified by Ireland in 1992. 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.

We confirm that we will take all steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent all bullying or harassment of our students in whatever form and however motivated.

Catholic schools have a distinctive understanding of the human person, recognising that every person is created in God's image and likeness and has inherent dignity as a child of God. This is the basis for ensuring that everybody in our school is treated with respect and care, in accordance with the Catholic Schedule.

As a Catholic school, we are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual. No human person is to be devalued and everybody has a part to play in the school community, regardless of difference.

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.

Behaviours that are not bullying:

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. 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 be addressed under the school's code of behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

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		Two staff members attended a Bí Cineálta training day
Students	April 3 rd , 2025	Pupil survey
Parents	April 8 th , 2025	Parents' Questionnaire
	May 6 th , 2025	Email to PA seeking feedback on policy
	May 27 th , 2025	Email to all parents
Board of Management	May 26 th , 2025	BoM Meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	May 27 th , 2025	Publish on website
	Date Policy was approved:	

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour:

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by the school. These include strategies specifically aimed at preventing online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

Culture and Environment:

- Positive and inclusive school culture: celebrating achievements, celebrating religious occasions, praise of all achievements academically
- Positive relationships: including the children in the promotion of Grandparents Day, religious celebrations, graduation, sports matches, student committees, buddy System
- Positive Environment: Incorporate artwork and science to promote a positive school values, noticeboards, displays, Green-schools
- Effective leadership: good communication, staff wellbeing and respectful relationships
- Positive culture: promoting a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable, communication with parents of achievements through social media etc.,
- A telling environment: worry box, worry monster, promotion through curriculum e.g.
- A trusted adult: develop an understanding for the children to know who to go to within the school with a bullying behaviour issue.
- Safe physical access: promoting respect amongst students for each other and each other's bodies e.g. gentle hands, knowledge of physical boundaries
- Supervision: children are supervised at all times and bully behaviour is observed, reported and recorded.
- Opportunities to participate in class and whole school activities to raise self – esteem: Amber Flag, Wellbeing Week, Catholic Schools Week, Green Flag

Curriculum:

- Teaching and learning in SPHE: Stay Safe, Weaving Wellbeing, Walk Tall, Fuse?? Grow in Love, Music Generation, Green Schools
- RSE Curriculum: Stay Safe
- Student participation: Art work, drama, circle time,
- Promoting inclusion and diversity: Through differentiation, Wellbeing Week, Buddy System, SEN policy and communication with SEN staff

Policy and Planning:

- Bí Cineálta policy
- Student friendly Bí Cineálta policy
- Code of behaviour
- Wellbeing Policy

- Child safeguarding statement
- Acceptable use policy
- Supervision
- RSE Policy
- SEN policy
- SSE Wellbeing in education
- Appropriate TPL (Teacher Professional Learning)

Relationships and partnerships:

Strong connections with external agencies: Local parish, Tidy Towns, GAA, County Council Longford Library, Longford Sports Partnership etc.,

- Strong interpersonal connections: Good staff relations and modelling respectful behaviour, good communication amongst staff and parents.
- Bullying awareness initiatives: Friends First Programme with targeted groups, Amber Flag.
- Student and parent participation: Christmas Fair, Sports Day, religious occasions, open day for junior infants.
- TPL (Teacher Professional Learning) CPD participation on courses related to
- Critical Thinking Skills: Promoting research through different mediums so as not to rely on IT, reflections, debates, philosophy in education.
- Promoting peer support: Buddy System, paired reading, Green School committee, Amber Flag committee, team sports, Spelling Bee etc.
- Supporting activities that build empathy, respect and resilience: Team sports, Quiz Team, Scor etc.

Preventing cyber bullying behaviour: (Note - the digital age of consent is 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. Children between 13 and 16 must have parental permission to sign up to social media services. Most social media platforms have a minimum age requirement and for the majority of these, it is 13 years old. Therefore, children under the age of 13 should not have a social media account)

Promoting digital citizenship

- implementing SPHE curriculum
- open 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 children's activities online.
- holding internet safety day

In developing the preventative strategies which this school will use to prevent all forms of bullying behaviour, we come from the context of our Catholic ethos, where inclusivity permeates our school in a real way.”

Preventing homophobic/ transphobic bullying behaviour

- maintaining an inclusive physical environment such as displaying relevant posters
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- challenging gender-stereotypes

Preventing racist bullying behaviour

- fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students “see themselves” in their school environment
- 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 support students from ethnic minorities, including traveller and Roma students, and to encourage communication with their parents
- ensuring that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Preventing sexist bullying behaviour:

- ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex.
- ensuring all student have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex.
- celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contribution of all students.
- encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home.

Preventing sexual harassment:

- promoting positive role models within the school community
- challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment

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

bullying behaviour (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

- Two Teachers and two SNAs to supervise at break and lunch time
- Children are accompanied by a minimum one staff member on school trips. Staff to pupil ratios will be decided based on numbers in attendance.

- Children have designated play areas on yard
- Teachers bear in mind children who may have recently clashed when organising groups For collaborative work/ teams etc. with a view to giving space to the children involved to heal.

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

This school takes positive steps to ensure that the culture of the school is one which welcomes a respectful dialogue and encounter with diversity and difference by ensuring that prevention and inclusivity strategies are given priority and discussed regularly at our board of management and staff meetings.

The dignity and the wellbeing of the individual person is of paramount concern in our Christian response. This school will listen closely to and dialogue with parents, thereby building a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, trust and confidence”

In continuing to develop prevention strategies, this school will listen to young people and parents, to help establish their particular context and needs. Frequent periods of reflection and further engagement by the school, young people and parents, will be used to discern appropriate supports for young people in this school and to help inform future prevention strategies.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour is (are) as follows:

Class teachers, SET teacher, Principal.

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

- ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour is heard and reassured.
- seek to ensure the privacy of those involved.
- conduct all conversations with sensitivity.
- consider the age and ability of those involved.
- listen to the views of the 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.

The steps that will be taken by the school to determine if bullying behaviour has occurred, the approaches taken to address the bullying behaviour and to review progress are as follows (see Chapter 6 of the BÍ Cineálta procedures):

Identify if bullying behaviour has occurred:

- Two staff members will be present when engaging with children individually initially without parents' notification and presence.
- Two staff members will be present when engaging with a group of children to investigate what happened. Teacher's discretion can be used with this approach about when best to use it.
- A group meeting will provide the opportunity for the children to give their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views. Each student should be supported, as appropriate, following the group meeting. It may also be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident.

The following three questions should be considered to determine if bullying has occurred.

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

If the answer to each of the questions above is Yes, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour and the behaviour should be addressed using the BÍ Cineálta procedures.

Requests no action taken:

A student who reports bullying behaviour may ask a member of staff not to do anything and just “look out” for them due to not wanting to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They might 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 behaviour. It must be made clear to the pupil that other parties may need to be informed for their welfare.

Parents should automatically be told if the teacher/principal acknowledges the child is experiencing bullying behaviour.

Parents may also make the school aware of bullying behaviour and specifically request that no action is to be taken by the school. Parents should put this in writing to the school.

However, schools may decide that based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour through the Bí Cineálta procedures and/or the Code of Behaviour where appropriate.

Determining if the bullying behaviour has ceased:

The teacher must engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 school days’ after the initial discussion to review progress. Factors to consider in the review include:

- the nature of the bullying
- the effectiveness of strategies used to address the bullying behaviour
- the relationship between the students involved

Ongoing supervision of both the child experiencing bullying behaviour and the child displaying bullying behaviour may be required as well as continued support.

It can take time for relationships to settle and for supports to take effect. In some cases, relationships may never be restored to how they were before the bullying behaviour occurred.

If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students and parents and agree to meet again over an agreed timeframe until the bullying behaviour has ceased.

Where it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school should consider 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 and school.

Recording bullying behaviour:

All incidents of bullying behaviour should be recorded. The following details should be included on the record: (Appendix A)

- form (see section 2.5 of Bí Cineálta procedures)
- type (see section 2.7 of Bí Cineálta procedures)
- where and when (if known)
- the date of initial engagement with the students and their parents
- the views of the students and their parents* regarding the action to be taken to address the bullying behaviour (*only in relation to their own child) but procedures are decided on by the school
- when review takes place, it should be noted if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of the students and parents in relation to this.
- note the date of reviews and engagements
- note the date that the bullying behaviour has ceased
- any engagement with external services/ supports should also be noted
- if a SSF exists for a pupil involved, schools are encouraged to place a copy of the record on the student's support file.

Complaint process:

If a parent is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with these procedures, they should be referred to the school complaints procedure. In the event that a student and/or parent is dissatisfied following the complaints procedure, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for children.

- the date of initial engagement with the students and their parents
- the views of the students and their parents* regarding the action to be taken to address the bullying behaviour (*only in relation to their own child) and in line with school policy and procedures
- when review takes place, it should be noted if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of the students and parents in relation to this.
- note the date of reviews and engagements
- note the date that the bullying behaviour has ceased
- any engagement with external services/ supports should also be noted
- if a SSF exists for a pupil involved, schools are encouraged to place a copy of the record on the student's support file

Complaint process:

If a parent is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with these procedures, they should be referred to the school complaints procedure. In the event that a student and/or parent is dissatisfied following the complaints procedure, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for children.

Supports:

- NEPS
- Oide

- Webwsie
- National Parents Council
- DCU Anti bullying centre
Tusla

Where bullying behaviour has occurred:

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, then school can deal with it in accordance with Bí Cineálta policy

It is important for staff to be fair and consistent in their approach to address bullying behaviour.

Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour needs support. Engage with the student who is experiencing bullying without delay. School staff should identify the support needed for the student who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties.

It is important that a student's agency is not decreased further by adults deciding what will happen next without listening to the student and involving them in deciding on the actions that will be taken.

The following principles must be adhered to when addressing bullying behaviour:

- ensure the child 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 view 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

Parents of both parties involved must be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to consult with them on the actions to be taken to address the behaviour as outlined in the school's Bí Cineálta policy. In circumstances where a student expresses concern about their parents being informed, the school should develop an appropriate plan to support the student and for how their parents will be informed.

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.

This policy was discussed and ratified at our Board of Management meeting on 8th September, 2025.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Fr. Liam Murray (Chairperson BoM)

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Brenda Lavelle (Principal)

Appendix A



Template for recording incidents of bullying behaviour

Section	Details / Notes
Name of pupil being bullied and class group	Name: Class:
Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern	
Form of Bullying (per section 2.5)	E.g., verbal, physical, cyber, exclusion, etc.
Type of Bullying (per section 2.7)	E.g., homophobic, racist, based on disability/SEN, gender-based, etc.
Location and Timing (if known)	Specify where and when the bullying occurred.
Date of Initial Engagement	

External Services/Supports Engaged	
SSF (Student Support File)	Yes/No – If yes, a copy of this record should be placed in the SSF.

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher)

Date _____

Date submitted to Principal _____