

# St. Columba's College Stranorlar



## Bí Cineálta Policy

**Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for  
Primary and Post-Primary Schools**

**May 2025**

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## **1. Introduction to our Bí Cineálta Policy**

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

The Board of Management of St Columba's College 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 students and is therefore fully committed to ensuring that policy and practice in the school is guided by the four key principles of the Bí Cineálta Procedures

1. Prevention
2. Support
3. Oversight
4. And Community

## **2. Key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour**

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 therefore 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.
- Effective leadership

- A whole education approach
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact.
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils and explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils during school activities (including break/lunch times), going to and from school, school tours/trips, extra-curricular activities, etc.;
- Supports for staff; including whole-education training and CPD.
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the Bí Cineálta Policy

All members of the school community are subject to this policy. Bullying behaviour such as cyber bullying which breaks the law may be referred to the Gardaí. The school reserves the right to apply its Bí Cineálta policy in respect of bullying that occurs at any location, activity, function or programme, if, in the opinion of the school management the alleged bully has created a hostile environment at school for the victim and if it impacts upon the school or relationships within the school. If the rights of the victim of the bully have materially or substantially disrupted the education process or the orderly operation of the school, the school also reserves the right to apply its Bí Cineálta policy and contact the relevant bodies to assist.

### **3. Scope**

The Policy applies to the following:

- When students are on the school grounds.
- When students are travelling to and from School.
- When students are on school tours and trips.
- When students are in school uniform.
- When students are engaged in extracurricular activities organised by the School.
- To any bullying behaviour outside School which seriously impacts on a student's participation in school.
- To any behaviour that adversely affects the school reputation or the education of any student in the school

#### 4. Definition of Bullying Behaviour, as outlined in *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying*

In accordance with the *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying*:

*'Bullying Behaviour 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'*

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- There are many different methods of bullying behaviour, including physical, verbal and relational forms, and it can take place online and offline.
- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.
- The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature and can have lasting effects on the child experiencing the behaviour.
- Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society.
- It is behaviour which is deliberate in nature and is unwanted.

Bullying behaviour in schools is often strongly influenced by attitudes, behaviours, norms and power dynamics that are deeply engrained in our society. The core elements of the definition are further described below:

> **Targeted behaviour:** 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. The harm can be physical (for example, personal injury, damage to or loss of property), social (for example, withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion) and/or emotional (for 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 behaviour:** 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 can therefore be seen as bullying behaviour.

> **Imbalance of power:** In incidents of bullying, the student experiencing the 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, Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools 18 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

- Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour do not fall within the definition of bullying within the perimeters of the Cineáltas Action plan and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.
- However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social media site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.
- Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour, Remote Learning Policy, Acceptable Use Policy and Communications Policy

#### **4.1 Where bullying behaviour can occur**

Bullying behaviour can happen anywhere, online or offline and at any time, but there are certain places and times where bullying behaviour can be more likely to occur. These can include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

**Inside School:** School physical environments can have a significant influence on social relationships among students and can impact on the ability of school staff to effectively prevent and address bullying. Well-designed school environments play a vital role in preventing bullying behaviour and promoting inclusion, positive relationships, and a safe and supportive learning environment.

**School yard:** Bullying behaviour can take place in the school yard. School grounds with hidden or obscure parts may provide an environment where bullying behaviour is more likely to occur. Many common school yard games/activities present opportunities for bullying behaviour because of their physical nature. Continuing provocation may lead to a physical fight and in some cases the student experiencing bullying behaviour may appear to be the aggressor as they give vent to their frustration.

**In the classroom:** Bullying behaviour can take place in class. It may occur subtly through glances, looks, sniggers or may take the more overt form of physical intimidation or deliberate isolation. Bullying behaviour may also occur between class periods when the students or the teacher moves.

**Other areas:** Bullying behaviour can take place in other areas such as toilets, corridors, social areas, locker areas, changing rooms, showers, gym, canteen and sports hall.

**Outside School:** 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 our Bí Cineálta policy.

**Coming to and from school:** Bullying behaviour can occur in the area immediately outside the school, Drumboe Avenue, the local shops and the wider local area. Bullying behaviour can take place at the bus stop or on the journey to and from school whether the students are walking, cycling or on school buses.

#### **4.2 Examples of Bullying include:**

Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc.

- Physical aggression
- Peer Pressure whereby a student feels they are within a toxic friendship group or a particular person is threatening/isolating them if they refuse to do something.
- Any type of manipulation
- Any type of behaviour which attacks another person's self confidence
- Blackmail and intimidation
- Damage to property
- Name calling
- Slagging
- The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person
- Offensive graffiti
- Extortion
- Insulting or offensive gestures
- The 'look'
- Invasion of personal space
- A combination of any of the types listed.

**Cyber Bullying has been defined as:**

An aggressive, intentional act carried out by:

- A group or individual
- Using social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat etc... on a once off basis, repeatedly and/or over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself.
- Cyber bullying does not involve face to face or physical confrontation.
- It does not require any close proximity to the cyber victim.
- Cyber bullying can also be carried out anonymously.
- Disinhibition exists where young people say and do things online that they would never do face to face. It is conducted in an environment perceived as free from adult supervision. As the fear of discovery is absent, there is no perceived control on the cyber bully's behaviour that exists in 'real world' encounters.

### **Computers/Smartphones**

- **Denigration:** Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation
- **Harassment:** Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual
- **Impersonation:** Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name
- **Flaming:** Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight
- **Trickery:** Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online
- **Outing:** Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images
- **Exclusion:** Purposefully excluding some from an online group
- **Fraping:** Hacking into a person's social networking account to send false/untrue messages or to change details while pretending to be that person
- **Cyber stalking:** Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety
- Silent telephone/mobile phone call
- Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls
- Abusive text messages
- Abusive email
- Abusive posts or comments on any form of social media
- Any kind of abuse in a remote learning environment

### **Homophobic and Transgender**

- Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation
- Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation

- Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian.... used in a derogatory manner
- Physical intimidation or attacks
- Threats

### **Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community**

- Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background
- Exclusion on the basis of any of the above

### **Relational**

- Isolation/exclusion from groups/ignoring
- Ignoring
- Excluding from the group
- Taking someone's friends away
- 'Bitching'
- Spreading rumours
- Breaking confidence
- Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear
- The 'look'
- Use or terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way

### **Sexual**

- Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching
- Harassment
- 'Slut shaming' where girls are targeted on social media or elsewhere and bullied through degradation/humiliation for their perceived sexual conduct

### **Special Educational Needs, Disability**

- Name calling
- Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs
- Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying
- Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues
- Mimicking a person's disability
- Setting others up for ridicule

### **4.3 Behaviour that is not 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, will be addressed under the School's Code of Behaviour.
- Some students with additional educational needs, may have social communication difficulties which may make them communicate their needs through behaviours that can hurt themselves or others. It is important to note that these behaviours are not deliberate or planned, but in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they cannot control.
- Disagreement between students is not considered bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create division and dislike by others.

***Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the Bí Cineálta Procedures to prevent and address bullying behaviour***

#### **5. Development/review of our Bi 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	December 2024	Whole School Training day, staff feedback and questionnaire
Students	November 2024	Questionnaires, student focus group
Parents	November 2024	Questionnaires
Board of management		
Wider school community as appropriate	December 2024	Whole School Training day, staff feedback and questionnaire
Date policy was approved:		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

## **6. Prevention Strategies:**

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by St Columba's College. These include strategies specifically targeted at preventing online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment.

The four areas that we considered when developing our prevention strategies for bullying behaviour originate from our school's Wellbeing Plan. These areas include

1. Culture and Environment
2. Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)
3. Policy and Planning
4. Relationships and Partnerships

### **6.1 Culture and Environment:**

A positive and inclusive school culture and environment is essential to prevent and address bullying behaviour. The values of CEIST underpin all aspects of our school culture and environment

- *Being Just and Responsible,*
- *Creating Community,*
- *Promoting Spiritual and Human Development,*
- *Showing Respect for Every Person and*
- *Achieving Quality in Teaching and Learning*
- We continue to nurture and strengthen our school environment so it is a space where students and school staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported.
- Weekly assemblies and daily meetings with class tutors are used to promote positive reinforcement and emphasise the school's ethos of care and compassion.
- We continue to nurture and instil the core values of CEIST in our school community. It is always our intention to support and nourish the lives of the people who are at the heart of our schools – students, staff and parents.
- We continue to be a welcoming school that promotes a culture of good relationships where people thrive and grow through showing respect for every person and having compassion and empathy for others.
- Our school promotes quality and excellence in teaching and learning where diligence, good practice and achievement are affirmed and celebrated.
- Our CEIST school seeks to act justly, promoting the wellbeing of our entire school community and our school stands in solidarity with those who are powerless and marginalized
- 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.

- The school leadership team influences the school culture and set the standards and expectations for the school community when 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.
- Various programs and activities promote inclusivity in our school including, but not limited to:
  - Open day and night events
  - Transfer programme with 1<sup>st</sup> years
  - Tutor system and assemblies
  - Mentoring for vulnerable students
  - Additional supports for students with additional needs
  - SPHE and Wellbeing programs
  - Guidance support
  - School of Sanctuary initiative
  - International student engagement eg School of Sanctuary, Red Ribbon Day
  - Extra-curricular activities across various disciplines
  - Celebration of student successes eg Prize-giving day
  - Use of social media for recognition
- Students have an integral role in the shaping of our school culture by promoting kindness and inclusion within their peer group and in the maintenance of a positive and supportive school environment for all. This work can be seen through our student-led groups including the Cineáltas Group, Student Council, Sports Council, Senior Prefects and our Student Mentoring Group.
- 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. The school will inform and involve parents/guardians on an ongoing basis, ensuring parents are aware of the situation as it unfolds.
- Students are encouraged always to seek out the help of a ‘trusted adult’ within the school community should they want to report an incident of bullying. In St Columba’s College we have an open-door policy where students feel comfortable approaching staff members they trust.
- It is important that our school community continues to support a ‘telling’ environment. Students should feel comfortable to talk about concerns regarding bullying behaviour. The reasons why students may not report include the following:

- fear of retaliation from the student displaying the bullying behaviour or their friendship group
- concerns about being seen as a “tell-tale” 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

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

**Supervision**

- 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.
- Supervision of breaks are organised on a rota basis. Each teacher has a responsibility to actively supervise their designated area during their allocated time slot.
- Appropriate, visible and pro-active supervision is an important measure to help prevent and address bullying behaviour.
- Supervision takes place before school from 8.45am, during break time and lunchtime, and after school at the school gate
- Our school takes reasonable measures to ensure the safety of our students and to supervise students when they are attending school or are attending school activities.
- Our school offers a mixture of organised activities during break/lunchtimes which are also supervised by staff
- Particular attention is given to busy hallways, corridors, social areas, hidden spots, entry-ways, toilet areas and locker areas where students are present
- Non-teaching staff can also be instrumental in alerting management to possible problems
- During class time, staff members can be seen on the corridors, including caretakers.
- Each 1st Year class is allocated a team of Senior Prefects to visit their Tutor class or Assembly regularly.
- A mentoring programme has been developed in the college through which 1st Years are linked up with 5th Year students.

### **Creating safe physical spaces in schools**

The creation of safe physical spaces supports psychological safety and is an important measure to prevent bullying behaviour.

#### **Measures in place to create safe physical spaces:**

- Ensure good lighting is present to avoid dark corners or spaces
- Remove visual barriers from windows such as posters
- CCTV in operation
- Improve the visibility of school staff who are supervising at break times
- Murals, artwork and signage can help schools to promote the school's values such as equality, diversity, inclusion and respect
- Various policies working together to support students
- Tutor system providing daily contact for junior students
- Weekly assemblies for year groups
- Canteen is a common area for all year groups

## **6.2 Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)**

- Teaching and learning that is collaborative and respectful is promoted in accordance with our school ethos.
- All students have equal opportunities to partake in curricular, Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities with their peers, which can help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy among students.
- The curricular subjects offered to students provide opportunities to foster inclusion and respect for diversity.
- **SPHE/RSE/Wellbeing:** 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.
- A culture of reporting bullying is fostered in the school through assemblies, visits by management to classes, SPHE lessons and the Wellbeing Programme. Particular emphasis is placed on standing up for others, encouraging self-confidence, recognising both good and toxic relationships and being forthcoming with information to help the school authorities in identifying and solving issues of bullying.
- **Religious Education:** Our students learn about the importance of creating community, treating others with respect, respecting one another, as well as diversity and inclusion through the Religious Education specifications/syllabus. Religion classes are inclusive of all religions
- **CSPE:** 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. Resources and materials are also available to support incorporating Traveller culture and history across all areas of the curriculum.

- Particular attention is paid to the key period of transition to secondary school during the Transfer Programme in August for incoming 1<sup>st</sup> Year students. The changes brought by the move from Junior to Senior Cycle are also recognised for 5<sup>th</sup> Year students coming from TY and 3<sup>rd</sup> Year.
- All students must sign the Code of Behaviour and agree to the Acceptable Use Policy in the school, which both prohibit bullying in any form.
- Accessing the support of Community Gardaí and Donegal Youth Services to cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying.
- **Extra-Curricular Activities**
  - Wide range of activities offered (e.g., chess, darts, baking, sports, book clubs, debating, creative writing, musical activities)
  - Christmas Charity Appeal
  - Wellbeing Week
  - Videos for social media
  - Fashion show
  - Enterprise activities (trade fair, mini-companies)
- **School-Wide Initiatives**
  - Student Council activities (e.g., tea and talk with international groups)
  - Mentoring system/Jigsaw Peer mentoring/Student Council/Cineáltas group
  - Prefect system to support other students
  - Promotion of school rules and ethos during activities
- **Opportunities for Group Work and Collaboration**
  - Group work and discussion opportunities in class
  - Student Council and prefects promote student voice
  - Students take ownership of activities and event planning
  - CBAs (Classroom-Based Assessments) allow for collaborative work
  - Portfolio work/student self-reflection/student choice
  - Meeting room available at breaks for additional support students
  - Classroom rules
  - Sports activities
  - SPHE & Wellbeing programs
  - Student Council initiatives
  - Assemblies and Tutor time
- **Diverse Program Offerings**
  - Various programs available: JCSP, LCA, LCVP, and TY
  - A wide, diverse range of activities cater to a wide range of interests from sports, culture, drama and music etc

## 6.3 Policy and Planning

### 1. Various school policies support the Bí Cineálta policy:

- Wellbeing Plan
- Code of Behaviour
- SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education) and RSE (Relationships and Sexuality Education) policies
- School trip policies
- Substance abuse policy
- Acceptable use policy
- Admissions policy
- Mobile phone policy
- AEN (Additional Educational Needs) policy
- Child protection policy/Child Safeguarding Statement
- CSPE (Civic, Social and Political Education) plan
- Guidance Plan
- Homework Policy
- Extra-Curricular Trips Policy
- Vetting Policy
- Critical Incident Policy

### 7. Professional Training and Initiatives

- Training and time for discussion among staff
- Collaboration with other schools (e.g., Finn Valley)
- Training for parents
- Adequate CPD for SPHE and other programs
- Training in restorative practices and communication
- Courses on dealing with both bullies and victims
- Collaboration with expert guidance from facilitators
- CPD available online and through Donegal Education Centre
- Mobile phone policy to reduce screen time and decrease cyberbullying during school hours
- Internet Safety Awareness Day
- Education on cyberbullying in digital media literacy
- Whole school education on bullying through wellbeing classes and SPHE
- Making students aware of anti-bullying legislation (e.g., Coco's Law)
- Guest speakers and talks from Garda about cyberbullying
- Referral to guidance/support teams in the school community

## 6.4 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. The meaningful involvement of the board of management, staff, students and parents in

the development, implementation and review of our school's Bí Cineálta policy and student-friendly version is essential to effectively prevent and address bullying behaviour.

- Staff members, students and parents were consulted in the compiling of this policy and their opinions and input were considered at all stages and in turn form the basis of this policy.

The following, which is not an exhaustive list, aims to strengthen relationships and partnerships, increase student participation, encourage respect and empathy between members of our school community as well as recognising our student achievements

### **Actions/initiatives in our school community to nurture relationships and partnerships**

- Strong relationships between students and staff are very important
- Many activities help build empathy, respect, and resilience
- SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education) and Wellbeing classes
- Mentoring programme with older students helping younger ones
- Tutor time for small group support
- Extra-curricular activities
- Student Council to give students a voice
- Evening study and extra classes
- Positive classroom environments where students feel safe
- Student support team for extra help
- Celebrating different cultures
- Charity work in the community
- Special projects like the Friday club history project
- Work experience to see different perspectives
- No phones policy to encourage face-to-face interaction
- Group activities that include everyone
- Promoting CEIST values
- Catholic Schools Week
- Anti-bullying week and lessons
- Activities on the Wellbeing Calendar
- Wellbeing Week
- Fun-days for year groups at the end of the school year
- School masses
- Teachers being good role models
- Posting achievements on school social media
- Prize-giving day to celebrate talents
- Giving students extra responsibilities to feel valued
- School badges, Senior Prefect, Student Council, Cineáltas, Sports Council

### **6.5 Specific Strategies to prevent bullying behaviour:**

<p><b>Preventing cyberbullying behaviour</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No phones allowed during school hours</li> <li>• Phones collected at start of class</li> <li>• Internet safety lessons in SPHE, ICT, and other classes</li> <li>• Guest speakers like Gardaí and Donegal Youth Services</li> <li>• FUSE program for junior students</li> <li>• Internet Safety Week activities</li> <li>• 'Lockers' programme on sharing of sharing of intimate images</li> <li>• #wedontwantthis 'peer violence video sharing' – a Donegal based awareness campaign for sharing peer recorded violence and sharing online</li> <li>• Student Safety Ambassadors</li> <li>• Acceptable Use Policy and Code of Behaviour (reminders at assemblies, tutor time)</li> <li>• Blocking social media sites on school network</li> <li>• Parent's information evenings</li> <li>• Foster a "<i>telling environment</i>" where students feel safe reporting issues</li> </ul>
<p><b>Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having Anti-Bullying week to raise awareness/different theme each year</li> <li>• Catholic Schools Week</li> <li>• Raising awareness/facilitating discussion in classes like SPHE, RSE, Home Economics, and CSPE</li> <li>• Student led activities led by Cineáltas group, Student Council and Senior Prefects.</li> <li>• Using the FUSE program in SPHE classes</li> <li>• Student support team keeps an eye out</li> <li>• Putting up posters to make students aware</li> <li>• Teaching about it in Guidance classes</li> <li>• Student-led activities in subject classes</li> <li>• Positive school displays</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal care facilities</li> <li>• Keep building students' self-esteem and confidence</li> <li>• Make students and parents more aware</li> <li>• Foster a "<i>telling environment</i>" where students feel safe reporting issues</li> <li>• Encourage students to speak up when they see homophobic behaviour</li> <li>• Encourage students to use outside supports like Youth Services</li> <li>• Have guest speakers come talk to students</li> <li>• Keep challenging stereotypes</li> </ul>
<p><b>Preventing racist bullying behaviour</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having a zero-tolerance policy for racist bullying</li> <li>• Celebrating different cultures in school</li> <li>• Our School of Sanctuary</li> <li>• Supporting international students</li> <li>• Teaching about diversity in classes like SPHE and Wellbeing</li> <li>• Having special days like Red Ribbon Day and International Student Day</li> <li>• Putting up posters about respecting others</li> <li>• Including different cultures in lessons across subjects</li> <li>• encouraging international representation on the Parent's Council</li> <li>• FUSE program in SPHE classes</li> <li>• Display flags from all students' countries in central area</li> <li>• Keep challenging stereotypes</li> </ul>
<p><b>Preventing sexist bullying behaviour</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treating all students equally and with respect</li> <li>• Giving equal chances to all genders in subjects and activities</li> <li>• Having both boys and girls in sports teams</li> <li>• Challenging gender stereotypes</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fair treatment for all students</li> <li>• Teaching about respect in SPHE and other classes</li> <li>• Being a mixed school (boys and girls together)</li> <li>• Teachers being good role models</li> <li>• Ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex</li> </ul>
<p><b>Preventing sexual harassment behaviour</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching about respect in SPHE classes</li> <li>• Talking about consent with students</li> <li>• Dealing with problems quickly when they happen</li> <li>• Bringing in guest speakers to talk to students</li> <li>• Being good role models as teachers</li> <li>• Challenging stereotypes about boys and girls</li> <li>• Talking about these issues openly</li> <li>• Having clear rules about how to behave</li> </ul>

## **7.Addressing Bullying Behaviour**

- All staff members are responsible for reporting bullying behaviour.
- Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher when and if circumstances warrant it.
- A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school.
- Individual teachers must take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school’s Bí Cineálta Policy
- All staff members, students and parents have a responsibility to report any instances of bullying.
- The members of teaching staff who have responsibility for investigating and dealing with bullying are the year heads, guidance counsellors, deputy principals and the principal.

### **7.1 When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will follow procedure:**

- 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

In accordance with Bí Cineálta Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools: the School's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the School for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are underpinned by a restorative approach, and are as follows (see Section 6.8 of the Bí Cineálta Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

- A. An incident comes to the attention of any staff member
- B. The incident is then referred to the relevant personnel – teacher, tutor, year head, counsellors, deputy principals and principals.
- C. In dealing with an allegation of bullying the teacher/staff member will exercise their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best to resolve the situation.
- D. Investigation to be carried out, including the interviewing, and taking of statements from those involved and from witnesses and bystanders.
- E. All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all students concerned
- F. Parents and guardians to be contacted and if necessary, requested to meet in school with the relevant personnel
- G. Parents and guardians, and students are required to cooperate and assist with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring as far as is possible the relationships of the parties involved.
- H. In cases where it has been determined that bullying has occurred it should be made clear to the student who engaged in bullying behaviour how they are in breach of the School's Bí Cineálta Policy and efforts will be made to get them to see the situation from the perspective of the student being bullied
- I. Following investigation: meeting to discuss findings and to agree proposed actions (including disciplinary and support actions required for parties involved)
- J. Proposed actions are decided upon by deputy principals/principal
- K. Parents and guardians and students informed of actions
- L. Where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between any student being disciplined, their parents and guardians and the school
- M. Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour to be stored on student's file
- N. The School will, always, endeavour to comply with current legislation.

## **7.2 Recording bullying behaviour**

- All incidents of bullying behaviour should be recorded. The Template for Reporting Bullying Behaviour should be used.
- The record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known, where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students and their parents.
- The record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour. It 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. It is important to document the date of each of these engagements and the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- The relevant teacher must keep a record of their investigation. The relevant teacher must use the Template for Reporting Bullying Behaviour to record bullying behaviour in all circumstances.
- The recording template can be completed in written or e-format.

## **7.3 Determining if bullying behaviour has occurred:**

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

- When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the teacher should consider the following: what, where, when and why?
- If a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first. Thereafter, all students involved can be met as a group, if appropriate.
- At the group meeting, each student should be asked for 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 definition of bullying sets out clear criteria to help schools to identify 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.

## **7.4 Where bullying behaviour has occurred**

- School staff adhere to the school's Bí Cineálta Policy when bullying behaviour is reported to them or when they witness bullying behaviour.
- The school's Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour and the student- friendly policy clearly explain what actions will be taken when bullying behaviour is reported.

- 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 their 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 will endeavour to 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.
- It is important for school 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 need support. It is important that the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour is engaged with without delay so that they feel listened to, supported and reassured. School staff will identify the supports needed for the student who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties and ensure that their needs are met.
- A student's agency or sense of power can be decreased when they experience/witness bullying behaviour. When a student tells an adult that they feel that they are experiencing bullying behaviour they may feel that they are taking back some control over what is happening to them. It is very 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.

### **7.5 Supports available:**

The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour.

#### **1. Communication and Support**

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.
  - Pastoral care system
  - Tutor/Year head system
  - Guidance/Care team/Student Support Team
  - Group work
  - SPHE/RSE and within subject classes through a variety of activities and lessons
  - Guest speakers
  - Outside agencies such as Donegal Youth Services and Donegal Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Centre
  - Referral to Tusla or/and An Garda Síochána
- Listen to the student without judgment
- Show empathy and reassurance

- Conduct sensitive conversations
- Check in regularly with the affected student
- Make the student aware of available supports
- Allow the student to approach trusted staff members
- Active Listening: Provide a non-judgmental ear to students, showing empathy and reassurance. Let students know there are supports in place and as mandated personnel we are obliged to report instances of bullying/ child safeguarding issues
- Refer to student support team for further guidance and support
- Referral to outside agencies

## 2. Parental Involvement

- Inform and involve parents/guardians
- Ensure parents are aware of the situation

## 3. Documentation and Evidence

- For cyberbullying, advise taking screenshots and gathering evidence
- Advise on not engaging with cyberbullies and blocking them
- Report all instances of bullying using our school template

## 4. School Procedures

- Follow the school's Bí Cineálta Policy
- Refer to guidance teams, Year Heads, or Management
- Take action in line with child protection procedures, if required.
- Inform the Designated Liaison Person (DLP), if required.

## 5. Confidentiality and Reporting

- Inform students that information may not be kept confidential
- Make students aware of guidelines and procedures
- Policy Adherence: Follow school protocols and child protection procedures when addressing bullying issues.
- Explain that outside parties may need to be informed depending on severity eg Law Enforcement

## 7.6 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.

### **7.7 Determining if 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 following the initial intervention. Important factors to consider as part of the review 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.
- Even though the bullying behaviour may have ceased, ongoing supervision and support may be required for both the student who has experienced the bullying behaviour as well as the student who has displayed the behaviour. 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 will 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 the school.

\*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.

### **8. 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.

### **9. Adoption of Policy**


This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2025.

### **10. Notification to Staff and Parents**


This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

### **11. Policy Review**

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department of Education.

Signed:   
(Chairperson of board of management)

Date: 7/5/25

Signed:   
(Principal)

Date: 7/5/2025

# Bí Cineálta!

We want everyone at our school to feel safe and happy.

If you think that you are being bullied or someone else is being bullied, you need to tell a teacher or another adult that you trust. They will know what to do to help.



If a student tells a staff member that they think they are being bullied, we will:

- > talk with the student
- > ask the student what they want to happen
- > work out a plan together
- > talk to their parents
- > talk to the other student(s) involved
- > talk with the other student's parents

Bullying behaviour is when someone keeps being mean or hurtful to others on purpose over and over again.



Please  
tell someone if you  
think that you are  
being bullied or  
someone else is  
being bullied.

Our school  
has a Bí Cineálta policy to try  
to stop bullying behaviour.

We look at this policy every year to  
see what is working well or what could  
work better.

We will ask you what  
you think.



When it happens a lot.  
Not just once.

## Appendix 2

### Template for Reporting Bullying Behaviour

#### 1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour


#### 3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))\*

Pupil concerned	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### 4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))\*

School yard	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corridor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toilets	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Bus	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### 5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

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**6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) \***

Physical Aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Other (specify)	

**7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:**

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)
Socio-economic status	Gender			

**8. Description of the Bullying Behaviour and its impact**

(Brief description of the behaviour and how it has affected the student.)

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**9. Details of actions taken**

(Steps taken to address the situation, engagement with parents, support for the student and any disciplinary measures.)

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Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Relevant staff member)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted to Deputy Principal/Principal \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 3

### 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 <b>new</b> 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 4

### Review of the Bí Cineálta Policy

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

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:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

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: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

(Principal)

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

## Appendix 5

# Notification regarding the board of management's annual review of the school's *Bí Cineálta* Policy

The Board of Management of \_\_\_\_\_ confirms that the board of management's annual review of the school's *Bí Cineálta* Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour and its implementation was completed at the board of management meeting of \_\_\_\_\_ [date].

This review was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Education's *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

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

(Chairperson of Board of management)

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

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

(Principal)

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