Coláiste Bríde Bí Cineálta Policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour

The Board of Management of Coláiste Bríde 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. Linked here]

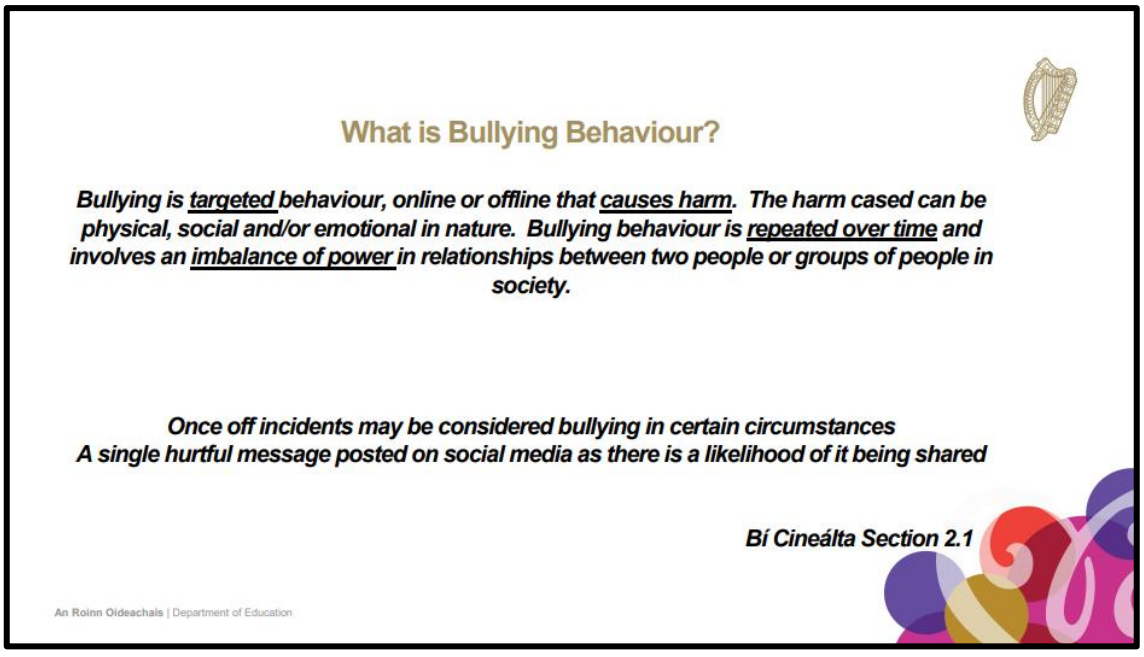
The board of management acknowledges that bullying behaviour interferes with the rights of the child as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We all, as a school community, have a responsibility to work together to prevent and address bullying behaviour and to deal with 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.

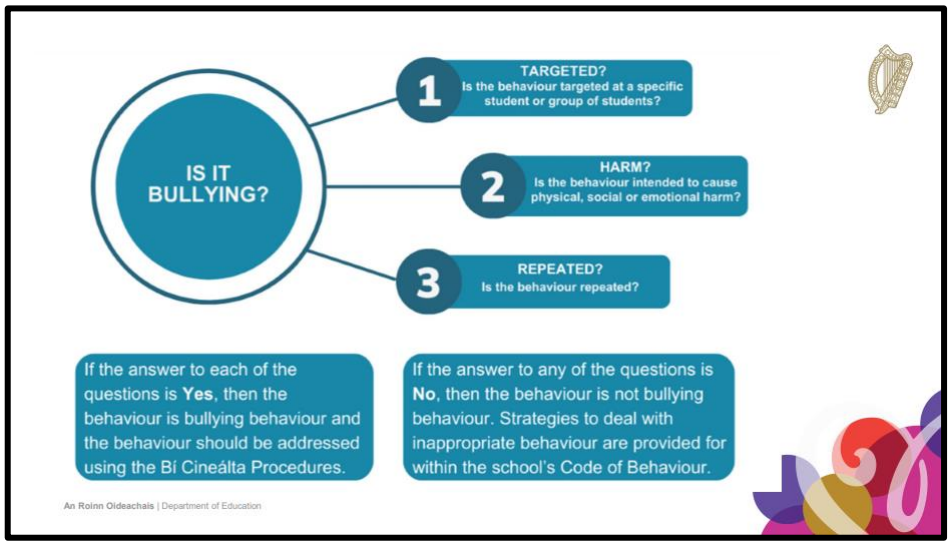
We confirm that we will, in accordance with our obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the harassment of students or staff on any of the nine grounds specified: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability,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

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.



The following image will be employe when bullying behaviour is being investigated.



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 Behaviour.

School Context & Characteristic Spirit

Coláiste Bríde is a Catholic all girls voluntary secondary school with a Catholic ethos under the trusteeship of CEIST (Catholic Education An Irish Schools Trust). In accordance with S.15. (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998, the Board of Management of Coláiste Bríde shall uphold, and be accountable to the patron for so upholding, the characteristic spirit of the school as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school.

The school's motto "To Teach, To Guide, To Form" forms the basis of the school's community daily interaction as the student progresses through her educational experience in Coláiste Bríde. In all of this the school community is guided by the values espoused by the patron (CEIST) and the school's mission statement.

Coláiste Bríde aims, in the spirit of Nano Nagle's vision;
1. To nurture the personal, academic and spiritual wellbeing of each student in a caring inclusive learning environment with the support of parents/guardians and staff and
2. To cherish equally all students in our care, to prepare them with confidence, strength and a sense of purpose, ready to take their place as respectful citizens and leaders in the 21st century global society.

"Catholic Ethos" in the context of a Catholic voluntary secondary school means the ethos and characteristic spirit of the Roman Catholic Church, which aims at promoting:
a) the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects; and
b) a living relationship with God and with other people; and
c) a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and
d) the formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith

in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, and/or such ethos and/or characteristic spirit as may be determined or interpreted from time to time by the Irish Episcopal Conference.

Catholic education is therefore a lifelong process of human growth and development which has been at the heart of the Church's mission since Jesus Christ urged his disciples to "go teach all nations". The person of Christ is the core of Catholic education.

Coláiste Bríde draws on the richness of the religious and cultural heritage of the past, interpreted and lived out for students living in today's world. The charisma of founder Nano Nagle of the Presentation Sisters who began this school is of very significant importance in the life of the school.

As a CEIST school, Coláiste Bríde values teaching as one of the most important of all human activities. Our school seeks to build a quality learning community that welcomes, and bears witness to the Gospel values of Jesus Christ, expressed through the lens of the CEIST Charter. These are encapsulated in the core values which are intended to support and nourish the lives of the people who are at the heart of our schools;

- Promoting Spiritual and Human Development
- Achieving Quality in Teaching and Learning
- Showing Respect for Every Person
- Creating Community
- Being Just and Responsible

Coláiste Bríde is inspired by the words of Jesus Christ to his disciples, 'Love one another as I have loved you (John 13:34-35) The dignity and uniqueness of every human being as a child of God is acknowledged and affirmed here. The Catholic school is an inclusive community, ideally built on love and formed by the interaction and collaboration of its various components: students, parents, teachers, non-teaching staff and members of the Board of Management. Catholic schools are also outward looking. They are connected to their local parish and Diocese and other local organisations which enrich the life of the school. Our school draws on the rich resources of the local community and, in turn, contributes to the life of the local community

Section A: Development/review of our Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour

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	02/04/2025	Half-Day Closure Bí Cineálta Workshop
Student Representatives from Student Council, Cairde Cineálta, ASF, Care Club	30/04/2025	Half-Day Bí Cineálta Workshop
Parent Representatives Parents Council	30/04/2025 12/02/25	Bí Cineálta Workshop Information Session
Board of Management	5/02/25 07/05/2025	Information Session
Wider school community Parent Partnership	30/04/2025	Bí Cineálta Workshop
Date policy was approved:		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by 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):

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The Board of Management acknowledges the importance of respect as a key value in the creation of a positive and inclusive school culture and environment. This is essential to prevent and address bullying behaviour. The school environment should be a space where students and school staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported. Class teachers, Tutors, Year Heads, Middle Leadership and Management Team, Senior Leadership Team (SLT), Guidance Team, Ancillary Staff all promote a positive culture in the school and work collaboratively

The following strategies are employed to ensure this

- Coláiste Bríde values and supports the concept of the Trusted Adult. This is explained at assemblies, tutor times and in individual classes. We are committed to having an open culture where students feel comfortable reporting incidents of bullying behaviour
- We encourage a culture of telling with a particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders in that way pupils will gain confidence in telling.

- It should be made clear to all pupils that they are not telling tales but they are behaving responsibly
- Encourage parents to contact the school if they suspect their child is being bullied. All incidences of reported bullying behaviour will be investigated and all involved will be treated fairly and equally.

- The School Journal – Our student-friendly Bí Cineálta policy can be found in the School Journal alongside further messaging on anti-bullying, infographics, code of behaviour and respect. The School Journal includes information on the Prefect and Mentor system. It also contains information on Child Protection and Safety. The school's policy on discrimination, harassment and bullying is also outlined here. Expected behaviour inside and outside the class is clearly explained & outlined in the journal aswell as ways to embrace difference and celebrate individuality.

- Regular assemblies promoting positive behaviour
- The use of Year Group Teams to spread positive behaviour messages.
- Reminders of what kind and unkind behaviour looks like as a focus at assemblies with Year Heads
- School uniform to be always worn as it reduces pressure on students regarding their appearance.
- Expected behaviour inside and outside the class is clearly explained & outlined in the journal and through repeated reminders through extended tutor time.
- Embracing difference & celebrating individuality is promoted in the journal and extended tutor time and during awareness week.
  Use of Awareness days to build inclusion for example LGBTQIA+ Allies group.
- Positive Behaviour affirmation via Tyro & Reward sheets encourage citizenship and positive behaviour as well as, academic progress and commitment.
- A new Cineáltas Award to show the value and importance placed on this initiative in our community.

- Poster campaigns, Social media updates and reminders to inform parents.
- Reinforcement of Key Bí Cineálta Messages throughout our Building – posters, displays, screens etc
- Anti-Bullying Awareness Campaign, Creation of a Student-Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy as per Bí Cineálta guidelines (See Appendix B)
- Intercom announcements and reminders.
- Wellbeing Week deals with aspects of bullying for different year groups.
- Workshops - Sticks and Stones Workshop, Don't be mean behind your screen
- Annual Cyber Safety and Awareness sessions for Parents
- Safer Internet Day resources
- School awareness in all aspects of bullying to include pupils, parents, guardians and the wider school community.
- Community Garda education initiatives and in-school visits.
- Cairde Cineálta (a group of students who design resources to support Bí Cineálta
- Community building Cineáltas initiatives, eg Whole School Heart, Bonding Symbols, Bí Cineálta focus during bonding days.

- CPD on bullying training for selected students, Year Heads and other staff to develop anti-bullying strategies in Coláiste Bríde.
- Student Body – Mentors, Ambassadors & Student Council all contribute to a safe school environment.
- Learning leaders via-The Learning Hub where Powerpoints are presented with an anti-bullying focus
- Social club at lunch time – safe place for students at risk
- Code of Behaviour - all parents have access to the Code of Behaviour via our website and/or their daughters' journal.
- Use of Team Microsoft Form surveys to identify/provide feedback on problem areas/ student groups for example first year feedback from Garda talks
- Liaising with primary schools on previous bullying instances, which are taken into account when forming first year classes.
- Use of whole-school/year group student/teacher surveys (via Teams) to identify problem areas around bullying

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):

- We have undertaken a survey of our school building and have identified areas in which supervision will be required. Our Supervision & Substitution system is designed to ensure that all areas are adequately patrolled before, during and after school
- Our Student-Friendly Bí Cineálta policy (available in our school journal outlines the pathways available to students should they experience bullying behaviour.
- The Acceptable Use Policy in the school includes the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.
- Explicitly teaching students how to behave responsibly online
- Proactive approach adopted and led by the Senior Leadership Team and Year Heads involving weekly meetings
- Student Support Team hold regular meetings to monitor and support vulnerable students
- Reflective Practice by Year Heads sharing information, seeking advice and guidance from peers and members of SLT
- We use Looking at Our Schools to continue to embed best practice.
- A report of all bullying behaviour incidents will be provided to the Board of Management by the principal at each meeting.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Class Teachers, Tutors, Year Heads, Senior Leadership Team

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):

Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, This is a core message that we explicitly teach during extended tutor-time

- Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
- Speak to their Tutor, Year Head, a Guidance Counsellor or any member of staff that they feel comfortable with. A member of the Student Council, a Mentor.
- Place note discreetly under Year Head's or Guidance Counsellor's Door.
- Send message on Teams,
- Make a phone call to the school or to a tutor or trusted teacher in the school.
- Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

Once an incident of bullying behaviour has been reported and deemed to satisfy the criteria (is it harmful? Is it targeted? Is it repeated/ online?) the Year Head will investigate further using the Year Head Bí Cineálta Record Form. (See appendix A)

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 as follows:

The primary aim for the relevant teacher/Year-Head in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame).

The school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach. Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

Reporting bullying behaviour

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant Year head/teacher
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and will consult the student and their parents as how they wish to proceed. The relevant teacher may consult the Year Head, Deputy Principal and/or Principal at any stage in relation to a case.

- Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist us in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible. This involvement should be positive and understanding in the context of the case being investigated.
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- Incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- All interviews will be conducted sensitively and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way. Students will be encouraged to write out their reports outlining the nature of the incident.
- The rights of all parties are to be safe-guarded during and after the investigation process
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner;
- If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved may be met as a group, if it is deemed appropriate. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's reports.
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face them from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). We will give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for our pupils;
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to the student how they are in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get them to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, their parents and the school;

Follow up and recording:

The responsible teacher will follow-up with the student and parents involved within 20 school days of the incident being reported.

In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:

- Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
- Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
- Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and
- Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;

- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved will be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.

- Where a parent is not satisfied that we have dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents will be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures;

The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

In-school supports which are provided for pupils affected by bullying and designed to raise their self-esteem to develop friendships, social skills and build resilience and include the following:

- Cairdeas Mentoring system
- Tutor/Year head System (including guidance counsellors, chaplain, SPHE coordinator)
- Student support team
- Friends for life in First year via Transition and Transfer classes
- Module in SPHE
- Lunchtime Club
- Friendship/Wellbeing week activities
- Extended Tutor time devoted to relevant current Pastoral Care
- Individual Year Group Bonding days
- The Student Support Team identifies students who may require targeted intervention through the use of play therapy, sand tray therapy
- Mindfulness/Sacred Space
- NCSE National Council for Special Education Relate Resources
- Neart Resources from Jigsaw
- NEPS Training in PsychologicaL First Aid
- Rewards and Awards Scheme
- Promotion of anti-Bullying initiatives ongoing through the year, as identified during Anti-Bullying Week
- Check and Connect – teacher support for vulnerable students
- Involvement in wide range of extra-curricular activities such as sport, music, photography
- Reinforcement of messages around cyber safety and digital citizenship to parents and students via online talks, expert speakers for example Wayne Jenner etc.
- Creative Built Environment which reinforces key messages of Respect, Positive behaviour and Self-Esteem through visual displays, digital message board,
- School journal for usage by students and parents include key positive, affirmations and motivational quotes which aim to build a positive self-image. School journal also contains points of contact for outside agencies for parents and students
- Opportunities for Counselling both in school and through the school linking with external agencies are provided as appropriate. Equally students may be referred to other school support programs such as Rainbows and/or the ALERT scheme.
- The school encourages students affected by bullying or observe incidents of bullying behaviour are encouraged to report and discuss with teachers/parents or responsible adults.
- If appropriate our guidance department may refer students on to external support agencies such as e.g. BeLonGTo www.belongto.org, ISPCC, AWARE, TENI, Pieta House, Jigsaw, Youthreach, Cross Care, Tús Nua, Beacon of Light, Cari, Teen counselling

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: _____ Date: 7/5/2025
(Chairperson of board of management

Signed: _____ Date: 7/5/2025
(Principal)

Bí Cineálta Year Head Record

Date	Date of follow-up	Year Head

Year Head	Tick
What happened?	What has happened? ☐ Targeted? ☐ Harmful? ☐ Repeated? 3 ticks = bullying behaviour
Where?	
When?	
Why?	
Type of bullying?	

The following has been addressed	Tick
Ensure the student experiencing bullying behaviour has been heard and reassured	
Conduct all conversations sensitively whilst considering the age and ability of those involved	
Listen to the views of the student experiencing bullying behaviour regarding how best to address the situation. Note of student's views	
Log of actions taken • • • • • •	
Inform parents of those involved (For those who express a concern about parents being told, an appropriate plan will be made) Details of above	
If a parent requests no action be taken, ensure the parent puts this in writing and a record is placed on the student's file	
I have engaged with the students and parents involved no more than 20 school days since the initial reaction	
Log of dates of engagement • • • • •	
Engagement with External Services and/or supports	
Copy of record given to Principal and placed in student's file	

Bí Cineálta
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.
TO TEACH TO GUIDE TO FORM
What is bullying?
Bullying behaviour is when someone keeps being mean or hurtful to others on purpose over and over again
What is not bullying?
Friendships changing, evolving and/or ending, disagreements, misunderstandings
Problem
You or someone else is being bullied
What to do?
• Tell a trusted adult (eg.teacher/ tutor/ other member of staff)
• Make a plan together
• Follow up
Aim
That all members of the Coláiste Bríde school community continue to learn, develop and progress in a respectful, safe, caring environment.