



Coláiste Chill na n-Iníon **ceithre
hingheana
míclár** Firhouse Community College

FIRHOUSE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour



This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 15/09/2026

Signed: Gerry O'Meara

Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: Senan Nolan

Principal/ Secretary to the Board of
Management

Date: 15/09/2026

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This policy will be reviewed: June 2027

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Table of Contents

Title	Page
1.Introduction	1
2.Ethos	2
3.Definition of Bullying	3
3.1 Targeted Behaviour	3
3.2 Repeated Behaviour	3
3.3 Imbalance of Power	3
3.4 Behaviour That Is Not Bullying	3
3.5 Criminal Behaviour	4
4.Types of Bullying Behaviour	4
4.1 General Behaviours	4
4.2 Cyberbullying	5
4.3 Identity-Based Bullying	5
4.4 Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying	5
4.5 Race, Nationality, Ethnic Background and Traveller Community	6
4.6 Relational Bullying	6
4.7 Sexual Bullying	6
4.8 SEN and Disability-Related Bullying	6
4.9 Where This Policy Applies	6
5.Development/Review of the Policy	7
6.Preventing Bullying Behaviour	8
6.1 Culture & Environment	8
6.2 Curriculum (Teaching & Learning)	10
6.3 Policy & Planning	11
6.4 Relationships & Partnerships	11
7.Supervision & Monitoring	12
7.1 Targeted Supervision in High-Risk Areas	12
7.2 Break and Lunchtime Supervision	12
7.3 Extracurricular Activities	13
7.4 Classroom, Corridors and Patio Monitoring	13
7.5 Vigilance of Non-Teaching Staff	13
7.6 Monitoring of ICT and Mobile Phone Use	13
7.7 Mobile Phone Policy	13
8.Addressing Bullying Behaviour	13
8.1 Identifying if Bullying Behaviour Has Occurred	14
8.2 Where Bullying Behaviour Has Occurred	14
8.3 Follow-Up Where Bullying Behaviour Has Occurred	15
8.3.1 Review of Intervention Strategies	15
8.3.2 Escalation and Use of School Behaviour Procedures	15
8.3.3 If a Parent/Guardian is Dissatisfied	15

8.4 Confidentiality	16
8.5 Retaliation	16
8.6 False Claims	16
9.Procedures for Recording and Responding to Bullying Behaviour	16
10,Request to Take No Action	17
11.Support	17
11.1 Students Who Experience or Witness Bullying	17
11.2 Students Who Display Bullying Behaviour	17
11.3 Outside Agency Support	18
12.Prevention of Harassment	18
13.Oversight	18
13.1 Board of Management Records	19

Appendices

Appendix A – Identifying if Bullying Has Occurred

Appendix B – Alleged Bullying Incident: Student Statement Form

Appendix C – FCC Student Behaviour Promise

Appendix D – Guide to Providing Bullying Behaviour Update to BOM

Appendix E – Review of Bí Cineálta Policy

Appendix F – Notification Regarding the Board of Management’s Annual Review of the School’s Bí Cineálta Policy

Appendix G – Record Keeping Checklist in Line with Bí Cineálta Procedures

Appendix H – Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour

1.Introduction

Firhouse Community College is committed to creating and maintaining a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for all students. We aim to foster an atmosphere of respect, kindness, and mutual understanding, where bullying is not tolerated. This policy is developed in line with the Bí Cineálta guidelines issued by the Department of Education in June 2024 and aims to prevent and address bullying in our school.

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (welfare) Act 2000 and Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools, the Board of Management of Firhouse Community College has adopted the following Policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour in conjunction with and within the framework of the school's overall Code of 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.

This policy is underpinned by the Children's First Act 2015, and the Harassment, Harmful Communications and related offences Act 2020, also known as Coco's Law. Any breach of these acts interferes with the rights of the child and is taken very seriously by our school community. 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. 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: Gerry O'Meara

Date: 15/09/2026

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: Signed: Senan Nolan

Date: 15/09/2026

(Principal)

Firhouse Community College

2.Ethos

Firhouse Community College was established in 1982 to meet the second-level educational needs of the local community.

As teachers, we commit ourselves to work to fulfil this purpose with dedication and professional expertise.

As set out in the Admissions Policy in our school, Firhouse Community College is a state, co-educational, multi-denominational school underpinned by the core values of:

- Excellence in Education
- Care
- Equality
- Community
- Respect

We believe in the principle of education for all. We value the uniqueness of each member of our school community. We are committed to equality in all aspects of school life.

As educators, we are mindful of, and sensitive to, the changing needs of students as they grow towards adulthood. We commit ourselves to care for our students and to provide for their wellbeing. We also commit ourselves to care for our colleagues.

We endeavour to carry out our work to the highest standards. We strive to create a positive, respectful atmosphere that is conducive to teaching and learning and the personal development of every member of the school community. For this reason, we expect our students to share and uphold the values of our school.

In working as a team, we aim to assist you, the student, to:

- Discover and realise your own potential
- Achieve the highest of your abilities
- Lead a rewarding and fulfilling life
- Strive for excellence
- Develop personal discipline in your life
- Respect and care for your own well-being and the well-being of others
- Understand and appreciate the values and traditions of our society
- Become good citizens
- Understand, respect and actively contribute to the community in which you live.

3. 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 core definition above sets out clear criteria to help school communities to prevent, correctly identify and address bullying among students. Alleged incidents of bullying are however often complex and must be considered on a case-by-case basis. The core elements of the definition are further described below:

3.1 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.

3.2 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.

3.3 Imbalance of power

In incidents of bullying, the student experiencing the bullying behaviour finds it hard to defend themselves because of the abuse of a real or perceived imbalance of power. This imbalance of power may manifest itself through differences in size, strength, age, ability, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, race, ethnic origin including membership of the Traveller and/or Roma communities, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, experience of the care system, disability or the receipt of special education. In incidents of online (or cyber) bullying, the imbalance of power may relate to online anonymity, technical proficiency and possession of information/images/video, and the inability of the targeted student to remove offensive online material or escape the bullying.

3.4 Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour

A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards another student is not bullying behaviour. However, a single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be visible

to a wide audience and has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and so becomes a repeated behaviour.

Some students with special educational needs may have social communication difficulties which may make them communicate their needs through behaviours that can hurt themselves or others. It is important to note that these behaviours are not deliberate or planned but, in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they can't control.

Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying.

These behaviours, while not defined as bullying, can be distressing.

Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

3.5 Criminal Behaviour

Bullying behaviour can be considered criminal behaviour under certain circumstances and legal consequences can apply. The age of criminal responsibility in Ireland is 12 years.

Some online behaviour may be illegal, and students need to be aware of the far-reaching consequences of posting inappropriate or harmful content online. In cases of intimate imagery, the Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020, also known as Coco's Law, **criminalises the non-consensual sharing of intimate images and also criminalises threatening to share these images.**

If bullying behaviour **involves physical violence or threats of violence**, it may be considered **assault**.

If bullying behaviour involves **discrimination or hate speech** targeting a student based on their race, religion, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation or membership of the Traveller community, it may be **considered a hate crime** under the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989, and those engaging in such behaviour may face criminal charges.

If bullying behaviour **involves sexual harassment or sexual assault**, this may also be **considered criminal behaviour**.

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

4.Types of Bullying Behaviour Deemed Inappropriate

This list is not exhaustive.

4.1 General Behaviours (Applies to All Types of Bullying)

- Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g., sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc.
- Physical aggression
- 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
- Intimidation
- Insulting or offensive gestures
- Invasion of personal space
- Exclusion

4.2 Cyber Bullying

- 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
- Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images
- Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group
- 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 communication on social networks e.g., Facebook/Instagram/Tik Tok/Be Real/Twitter/You Tube etc. or on games consoles
- Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures
- Abusive posts on any form of communication technology

4.3 Identity-Based Bullying

- Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).

4.4 Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying

- 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

4.5 Race, Nationality, Ethnic Background, and 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

4.6 Relational Bullying (Social Manipulation)

This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying.

Behaviours include:

- Malicious gossip
- Isolation & exclusion
- 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 of terminology such as "nerd" in a derogatory way

4.7 Sexual Bullying

- Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching
- Harassment: Any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on sex which affects the dignity of the student

4.8 Bullying Related to Special Educational Needs, Disabilities, or Learning Differences

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

4.9 Where This Policy Applies

This policy applies to bullying behaviour:

- In class, between classes, and on school premises
- While in school uniform

- On the journey to and from school
- During any school-based activity, including tours or trips
- In any activity done in the school's name

5. 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	January, February & March. 9th April 2025 15th May 2025	The principal, deputy principal and the wellbeing coordinator undertook Bí Cineálta training. Bí Cineálta staff day Policy agreed by all staff
Students	November 2024 December 2024 May 2025	Anti Bullying Week Student survey Development of the student friendly version of policy
Parents	December 2024 May 2025 May 2025	Parents survey Parents presentation on Bí Cineálta Policy shared with parents
Board of Management		
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers		
Date policy was approved:		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

6. 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.

In line with the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 2024, the school adopts a school - wide approach to the prevention of bullying for each type of bullying.

FCC takes account of the specific needs of students with additional needs (AEN).

6.1 Culture & Environment

- A positive and inclusive culture is actively encouraged, promoted and regularly planned for as part of our school ethos. This is to ensure that all members of the school community are welcomed, accepted, loved and respected for being their true self.
- Students are encouraged to join the increasingly expanding Student Wellbeing Committee which discusses the issue of bullying and potential preventative strategies, as well as works to promote and raise awareness of bullying and bullying prevention through kindness and wellbeing initiatives, particularly during our themed weeks.
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all students through both curricular and extracurricular activities and school organised events. Students are provided with opportunities to belong, participate and develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- Active supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff are encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers.
- Firhouse Community College has established structured mentoring systems to support peer connection, leadership development, and student wellbeing. As part of this initiative, 6th Year Prefects are assigned to work with incoming 1st Year students, helping them to settle into school life, offering guidance, and acting as positive role models. Similarly, 5th Year mentors support 2nd Year students, providing peer-to-peer encouragement and advice during a key stage of their school journey. These mentoring relationships foster a strong sense of community, promote empathy and responsibility among senior students, and help younger students feel supported and included.
- Students are actively encouraged to understand the vital role of bystanders in preventing and addressing bullying. Through SPHE lessons, assemblies, and school-wide initiatives, the importance of speaking up and reporting incidents—whether witnessed directly or shared with them by peers—is consistently reinforced. Students are taught that telling a trusted adult is not ‘telling tales’ but a responsible and courageous action that helps protect others and fosters a safe, respectful school environment for all.
- Throughout the school year, Firhouse Community College organises a series of themed weeks to raise awareness and promote positive values among the student body. These include Anti-Bullying Week, Internet Awareness Week, Stand Up Awareness Week, and Diversity Week. Each themed week features a range of activities such as workshops, assemblies, student-led initiatives, and visual displays aimed at educating students, encouraging empathy, and

celebrating inclusivity. These events reinforce the school's commitment to creating a safe, respectful, and welcoming environment for all members of the school community.

- Firhouse Community College has an active and inclusive Student Council that plays a central role in representing the student voice and contributing to school decision-making. The Council provides students with a structured platform to express their views, propose initiatives, and collaborate with school management on matters that affect student life. Through regular meetings and organised activities, the Student Council promotes leadership, responsibility, and active citizenship, while fostering a sense of belonging and engagement within the school community.
- Firhouse Community College has implemented an effective Student Care Team and strong pastoral care systems to ensure the holistic wellbeing and academic success of every student. The Student Care Team, comprising senior management, the guidance counsellor, SEN coordinator, and chaplain, meets regularly to identify and support students in need of additional care or intervention. This multidisciplinary approach ensures early identification of issues and a coordinated response. The school's robust pastoral care system—anchored by the presence of tutors and year heads—fosters meaningful relationships, provides ongoing support, and promotes a nurturing and inclusive school environment where all students feel seen, supported, and valued.
- The Principal and Deputy Principals complete Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLDP) training in line with the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools. This ensures they are fully equipped to respond appropriately to child protection concerns and to fulfil their legal and ethical responsibilities in safeguarding the welfare of all students.
- Appropriate supervision is a key measure in preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. FCC takes all reasonable steps to ensure student safety during the school day and at school-related activities. A robust supervision schedule is in place to ensure students are consistently monitored and supported in a safe and structured environment.
- Firhouse Community College aims to provide a physically welcoming space for students that encourages safety and wellbeing for all members of the school community.
- To support a positive transition to post-primary school, Firhouse Community College provides a designated space for 1st Year students during morning break, where possible. This separate area allows them to build friendships in a more comfortable and age-appropriate setting, easing the transition from primary school and helping them feel safe, supported, and included during the early stages of their second level school experience.
- The college promotes a culture of empathy and positivity through its 'Random Acts of Kindness' initiative, which takes place throughout the school year. These events encourage students and staff to engage in small, thoughtful gestures that foster connection, boost morale, and create a supportive school atmosphere. By celebrating kindness in everyday interactions, the school reinforces values of respect, compassion, and community spirit.
- As schools have become increasingly diverse, Firhouse Community College recognises the importance of creating an inclusive environment where all students feel valued and respected. Students from different cultural backgrounds may be more vulnerable to discrimination or racist bullying. To help prevent this, FCC implements strategies such as fostering a school culture that celebrates diversity, ensuring students can "see themselves" reflected in their environment, and making cultural diversity visible through displays, events, and school practices.

6.2 Curriculum (Teaching & Learning)

- **Student Transition programme from primary to FCC:** This programme helps to reduce anxiety and uncertainty about the transition. It helps students form early connections with peers and staff. It familiarises students with school routines, values, and expectations and it supports wellbeing and a smooth academic transition by providing structured guidance, emotional support, and opportunities to build confidence in their new learning environment.
- A comprehensive wellbeing programme, as part of the Junior Cycle, is designed to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to support their emotional, social, physical, and mental wellbeing, while fostering resilience, promoting positive relationships, and creating a supportive school environment that enables students to thrive both personally and academically.
- The wellbeing co-ordinator and other relevant staff such as year heads invite external speakers and programmes when necessary to encourage kindness and empathy through various workshops throughout the year, such as the Shona Project
- The Zeeko Online Safety Programme is implemented as part of the school's commitment to promoting digital wellbeing and online safety. This programme provides students with age-appropriate guidance on navigating the online world responsibly, covering topics such as digital citizenship, cyberbullying, screen time management, and the safe use of social media. Through interactive workshops and resources, Zeeko empowers students to make informed, respectful, and safe choices online, while also involving parents and teachers in creating a consistent message around responsible digital behaviour.
- As part of our whole-school approach to digital wellbeing and online safety, a Zeeko presentation is delivered to parents to support their understanding of the challenges young people face in the digital world. The session provides practical strategies for managing screen time, promoting healthy online habits, and engaging in open conversations with children about internet safety, social media, and cyberbullying. This initiative helps strengthen the school-home partnership and ensures consistent messaging around safe and responsible technology use.
- A variety of structured programmes are delivered through SPHE and tutor classes to support students' personal development, emotional wellbeing, and social skills. For example, the *FUSE Anti-Bullying and Online Safety Programme*, developed by DCU Anti-Bullying Centre, is implemented to empower students to understand and address bullying and online safety issues. These programmes provide practical, age-appropriate content and promote critical thinking, empathy, and positive peer relationships. Additional initiatives may include modules on mental health awareness, body image, digital citizenship, healthy relationships, and resilience-building activities, all aligned with the Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines.
- The school is committed to the full implementation of the SPHE and CSPE curricula, as well as the RSE (Relationships and Sexuality Education) programme, ensuring consistent, age-appropriate delivery across all year groups. In addition, a school-wide approach is taken to delivering lessons on bullying, incorporating prevention, awareness, and response strategies into both the formal curriculum and the broader school culture. These lessons aim to foster respect, empathy, and responsible behaviour, while equipping students with the tools to identify, prevent, and address bullying in all its forms, including cyberbullying.
- Religious Education programmes are delivered in line with the Junior Cycle curriculum and are designed to promote understanding, respect, and appreciation for a wide range of religious beliefs and worldviews. These programmes place a strong emphasis on diversity, inclusion, and

multi-denominational awareness, encouraging students to explore questions of meaning, identity, and ethics in a respectful and open-minded environment. By fostering interfaith understanding and cultural sensitivity, the programme supports the development of well-rounded, compassionate individuals who are prepared to engage in an increasingly diverse society.

- FCC recognises vulnerable groups of students (minority groups and students with AEN) and specifically considers the additional needs of these students with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all students to respond appropriately.

6.3 Policy & Planning

- Bí Cineálta Policy has been developed and implemented and is reviewed with input from all aspects of the school community to ensure a cohesive approach to bullying and bullying prevention at Firhouse Community College
- The *Bí Cineálta*, Student-Friendly Policy is prominently displayed throughout Firhouse Community College as a visible reminder of the school's commitment to fostering a respectful and inclusive environment. Written in accessible, student-friendly language, the policy outlines key expectations around kindness, respect, and responsible behaviour. Its presence in classrooms, corridors, and communal spaces reinforces the school's ethos and encourages students to actively contribute to a positive and supportive school culture.
- Firhouse Community College has developed and regularly reviews a range of other policies to support the Bi Cineálta policy eg Code of Positive Behaviour; Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy; Acceptable Use Policy; Inclusion Policy; Mobile Phone Policy, Wellbeing Policy; Data Protection Policy; Attendance & Punctuality Policy; School Trip Policy; RSE Policy; Dignity in the Workplace Policy; Critical Incident Policy. This list is not exhaustive.
- All staff are regularly reminded that they are mandated persons under the Children First Act 2015, with a legal obligation to report child protection concerns. Child protection procedures are reviewed and addressed annually, ensuring compliance with national guidelines. As part of this commitment, all staff are required to complete the *Children First* E-Learning Programme, which provides essential training on recognising, responding to, and reporting child welfare and protection concerns appropriately.
- In Firhouse Community College, there is a culture of encouraging and supporting whole staff professional development to ensure that all staff develop an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on students' lives and the need to respond to it including prevention and intervention. Examples of such programmes include: Fuse antibullying and Friends for Life.

The policy is available on the school's website and an electronic copy is circulated to all parents / guardians annually upon review of the Anti-Bullying Policy.

6.4 Relationships & Partnerships

- At Firhouse Community College, each class group is supported by a dedicated Tutor and Year Head who remain with the students throughout their six years in the school (where possible). This continuity fosters strong, trusting relationships between students and staff, creating a stable and supportive environment. It allows staff to develop a deep understanding of each student's individual needs, strengths, and challenges, while also promoting consistency in

pastoral care, behavioural expectations, and academic support. This long-term connection contributes significantly to students' sense of belonging and wellbeing.

- Firhouse Community College engages with Community Gardai to provide workshops and information talks for students.
- An annual Parent-Tutor meeting is held to foster strong relationships between parents and the class tutor. This dedicated time provides an opportunity for open communication, early identification of any concerns, and collaborative support for the student's academic progress and wellbeing. It also reinforces the partnership between home and school, ensuring a consistent and supportive approach to each student's development.
- Firhouse Community College provides additional pastoral care supports through the availability of a School Counsellor and School Chaplain. The School Counsellor offers confidential emotional and psychological support to students, helping them navigate personal challenges, anxiety, or academic pressures. The School Chaplain provides a listening ear and guidance, supporting students in their personal development and wellbeing, regardless of their faith background. Together, they play a vital role in promoting a caring, inclusive environment where all students feel supported and valued.
- Firhouse Community College provides support to school staff to help them respond effectively to the needs of students for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL). This includes strategies for inclusive teaching and differentiated instruction. The school also supports staff in communicating clearly and respectfully with parents of EAL students, ensuring that all families are included in the school community and fully informed about their child's education and wellbeing.
- The college is committed to ensuring that all members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat every student with fairness and dignity, regardless of their gender. Staff are expected to actively promote gender equality in their daily interactions, classroom practices, and communication, fostering an inclusive environment where all students feel respected, valued, and supported.

7. Supervision & Monitoring

Firhouse Community College is committed to creating a safe and supportive school environment. Supervision plays a vital role in the prevention and early detection of bullying behaviour. The school has developed a comprehensive and proactive supervision system that supports student wellbeing and promotes positive behaviour throughout the school day and during all school-related activities.

A well-organised schedule ensures consistent supervision before, during, and after school hours, including at break and lunchtime.

This approach is a key element in the prevention and management of bullying behaviour and includes the following measures:

7.1 Targeted Supervision in High-Risk Areas

Additional supervision is provided in areas identified as higher risk for inappropriate or bullying behaviour (e.g. specific corridors, toilets, or secluded areas).

7.2 Break and Lunchtime Supervision

A detailed rota ensures adequate staff presence during unstructured times of the day, when bullying is more likely to occur.

7.3 Extra-Curricular Activities

A wide variety of teacher-led, voluntarily supervised extra-curricular activities are offered. These promote student engagement and help build positive, respectful relationships between staff and students.

7.4 Corridor, and Patio Monitoring

Supervision arrangements cover all parts of the school environment, including, corridors, toilets, school patio.

7.5 Vigilance of Non-Teaching Staff

SNAs, secretaries, caretakers, and cleaning staff are encouraged to remain alert and report any concerns or incidents to the appropriate teacher or year head.

7.6 Monitoring of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Mobile Phone Use

All staff are encouraged to monitor students' use of digital devices and ICT in line with the school's Acceptable Use Policy(AUP)

7.7 Mobile Phone Policy ('Not Seen or Heard')

The school's mobile phone policy is enforced to reduce opportunities for online bullying or misuse of technology during school hours.

8 Addressing Bullying Behaviour

Firhouse Community College has a consistent and clear approach to dealing with bullying when it occurs.

A student or parent/guardian may bring a bullying concern to any member of staff in the College. In the case where a student is being bullied, he or she can approach any of the following people:

- Class Tutor
- Year Head
- Guidance Counsellor
- Chaplain
- Any member of the staff with whom the student feels comfortable
- Principal or Deputy Principal

Generally, if a case is reported, the yearhead for each year group assisted by the principal and deputy principal will investigate the case.

(Each year group in Firhouse Community College is supported by a dedicated Year Head, who plays a key role in the pastoral and academic care of students. The Year Head works closely with both the Principal and Deputy Principal to ensure a consistent and coordinated approach to student support, behaviour management, and overall wellbeing. The Year Head plays a key role in dealing with and incidents of alleged bullying behaviour).

When bullying behaviour is reported, the school will, In line with the *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post-Primary Schools* take the following steps:

- 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

At Firhouse Community College, we are committed to providing a safe and respectful learning environment for all students.

8.1 Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

At **Firhouse Community College**, when investigating a potential incident of bullying, staff should consider the following guiding questions: **what happened, where did it happen, when did it happen, and why might it have happened?** These questions help to ensure a fair and thorough understanding of the incident.

Where a group of students is involved, each student should, firstly, be engaged with **individually**, in line with our commitment to hearing all sides without peer influence. Following these individual conversations, a **group meeting** should be arranged. During this meeting, each student should be given the opportunity to share their account to ensure that all involved are clear on each other's perspectives. Where appropriate, students may also be asked to provide a **written account** of the incident.

The **definition of bullying**, as outlined in **Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta Policy**, provides clear criteria for identifying bullying behaviour. Staff are also encouraged to refer to **Appendix C** for further support in assessing whether the behaviour meets the threshold for bullying.

It is important to note that while some incidents may involve **unacceptable or hurtful behaviour**, not all such incidents constitute bullying. In these cases, appropriate strategies, as outlined in **Firhouse Community College's Code of Behaviour**, should be followed to address the behaviour in a constructive and supportive manner.

8.2 Where bullying behaviour has occurred

- It is important to listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- A record should be kept of the engagement with all involved
- This record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known (see Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the *Bí Cineálta* procedures), where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students involved 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

Parents are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with schools, in addressing bullying behaviour. Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the students 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.

8.3 Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred

At Firhouse Community College, follow-up is a critical component of effectively addressing bullying behaviour and ensuring the wellbeing of all students involved. This process includes structured engagement with students and their parents/guardians and is guided by our *Bí Cineálta* Policy, the school's Code of Behaviour, and the **Bí Cineálta** procedures issued by the Department of Education

- Where bullying behaviour has been identified, the **Year Head, Deputy Principal, or Principal** will engage with the students involved and their parents/guardians.
- A follow-up engagement will occur **within 20 school days** of the initial report of the incident.
- Important factors to consider as part of this engagement are the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the students involved.
- The review should involve both students and their parents and aims to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased. The review should be documented.
- The date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased should also be recorded.
- Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted.
- Ongoing supervision and support may be needed for the students involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased.

8.3.1 Review of Intervention Strategies

If the bullying behaviour has not ceased:

- The Year Head, Deputy Principal, or Principal will **review the actions and supports** already put in place.
- **Consultation with students and parents** will take place to assess the need for additional or adjusted strategies.
- A clear **timeframe** will be agreed upon for further engagement and review.

8.3.2 Escalation and Use of School Behaviour Procedures

- If the bullying behaviour continues despite intervention, the school may activate additional responses in line with the **Firhouse Community College Code of Behaviour**.
- This may include **disciplinary measures**, determined in collaboration with the student, their parents/guardians, and school leadership.

8.3.3 If a Parent/Guardian is Dissatisfied

- Should a parent/guardian feel that the school's response has not been adequate, they are advised to refer to the school's **Complaints Procedure**, which is aligned with national guidance under the **Bí Cineálta** framework.
- If, after following the school's complaints process, the parent/guardian remains dissatisfied, they have the right to bring the matter to the **Office of the Ombudsman for Children**, particularly if they believe their child's rights or welfare have been negatively impacted.

These procedures reflect the College's commitment to fostering a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all members of the school community.

- All investigations and recordings of bullying incidents must be **objective and factual**.
- Data recording must comply with **relevant data protection legislation**.
- Documentation should be aligned with the **school's record-keeping policy**

8.4 Confidentiality:

- The College will respect confidentiality as much as is possible, consistent with the necessity to investigate allegations of bullying and take disciplinary action when the conduct has occurred. This approach is consistent with the advice given in the guidelines:

Such incidents are best investigated outside the classroom situation to avoid the public humiliation of the victim or the pupil engaged in bullying involved, in an attempt to get both sides of the story. All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity 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.

- Note 1 Students who bully or who are bullied may need support e.g., school counsellor, psychologist, or other referral agencies. Following discussion with parents/ guardians a referral may be made.
- Note 2 The Principal will deal with incidents of bullying behaviour between members of staff, staff and student or parent/guardians and staff.

8.5 Retaliation:

The College will take appropriate steps to address any retaliation against a person who reports alleged bullying, or a person who helps or provides further information in an investigation of a bullying complaint.

8.6 False Claims:

False claims are unacceptable, and any false claim will be dealt with as a serious incident.

9. Procedures for Recording Bullying Behaviour

At Firhouse Community College, all instances of bullying behaviour are taken seriously and handled in accordance with best practice and data protection legislation. Staff involved in investigating or resolving incidents of bullying are required to document all developments in an objective, factual, and timely manner.

The procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

- All incidents of bullying behaviour must be formally recorded using **Appendix B** of the school's BÍ Cineálta Policy.
- Staff must document the following:
 - The type and nature of the bullying behaviour, if known.
 - The location and time of the incident(s).
 - The date of the initial engagement with the student(s) involved and their parent(s)/guardian(s).
- The views of both students and parents/guardians must be captured, including their input on any actions taken to address the issue.
- The progress of the case should be actively tracked, including:
 - Follow-up meetings with students and parents to review the situation.
 - Confirmation and documentation of whether the bullying behaviour has ceased.
 - Recording of each engagement date and outcomes.
- Any involvement with **external support services** (e.g. PSS, Tusla, counselling) must be noted.
- All records must be maintained securely in line with the school's usual procedures and in full compliance with **data protection regulations (GDPR)**.
- A copy of the bullying incident report should be kept in the student file

10. 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. It is important that the teacher documents and takes note of this.

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.

11 Support

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):

11.1 Students who experience Bullying or Witness Bullying:

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

- Students may need counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed.
- In this regard the relevant care team will work closely with the student to ensure they are actively supported in the school and to engage in school-based activities they enjoy.
- The school's guidance department will also put in place a programme of support in conjunction with the year head

11.2 Students who display bullying Behaviour

- Students who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.
- The Year Head in conjunction with the relevant care team will work closely with the student in this regard.

11.3 Outside agency support:

The school in certain circumstances may also seek the support and advice of TUSLA, EWO, PSS, NCSE, HSE and any other agency deemed appropriate to support the school in dealing with incidents of bullying.

- Conducted by the year head, deputy principal, or principal.
- Must occur within 20 school days of initial report.

12. Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management confirms that the College will, in accordance with its obligations under Equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of students or staff or the harassment of students or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller Community.

13. Oversight

At Firhouse Community College, effective oversight is an essential part of our commitment to creating a safe and respectful school environment. To support this, the **principal provides a formal update on bullying behaviour at every Board of Management meeting.**

This update includes:

- The **number of new bullying incidents** reported since the last board meeting.
- The **number of ongoing incidents** under review.
- The **total number of incidents** recorded since the beginning of the academic year.

Where applicable, the principal also provides a **verbal report** outlining:

- Emerging **trends or patterns** in bullying behaviour within the school.
- The **strategies and interventions** implemented to manage and resolve issues.
- Any **school-wide preventative measures** or educational initiatives introduced.
- Any **serious incidents** that have had a significant adverse impact on a student's wellbeing.
- Any instance where a **student has left the school**, as reported by parents/guardians, due to bullying behaviour.
- Whether any **additional support** is needed from the Board of Management to respond effectively.
- Whether the school's **Bí Cineálta Policy** requires immediate review ahead of the scheduled annual policy review.

All information presented in these updates is **non-identifiable** and fully compliant with **data protection legislation**, in line with **Chapter 7 of the Bí Cineálta Procedures.**

13.1 Board of Management Records

The **minutes of each Board meeting** will include:

- A record of the **number of new, ongoing, and total incidents** reported.
- A note confirming that the **verbal update was reviewed** by the Board.
- Any decision made by the Board regarding the **need for an urgent policy review.**

Firhouse Community College's **Anti-Bullying Policy** is available on the school website and in hard copy upon request.

A **student-friendly version** of the policy is clearly displayed in the school and is also available online and in print if required.

The policy and its implementation will be **reviewed annually**, or sooner where necessary, with input from the school community.



Appendix A

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

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

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.

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

If the answer to any of these questions is **No**, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.



Appendix C

Firhouse Community College

Student Behaviour Promise

Student Name: _____ Class: _____

I recognise that my fellow students and I are all unique in many ways - such as our hair colour, skin colour, clothing, height, weight, size, accents, religions, nationalities, sexual orientations, past and current homes, hobbies, personalities, academic abilities, study habits, athletic skills, musical preferences, and much more.

I don't want to be treated unfairly or made to feel bad because of any of these differences, or simply because someone might not like me.

I understand that I have the right to be different, and no one has the right to treat me unfairly or be unkind because of that.

I know I am entitled to fair and respectful treatment both in Firhouse Community College, in line with the school's Bí Cineálta Policy & Code of Behaviour, and outside of school as well.

Likewise, I recognise that all students deserve to be treated with fairness, equality, and respect. It is wrong to treat anyone in any other way. Therefore, I promise to treat all my fellow students with fairness, equality, and respect, regardless of our differences or personal feeling.

In particular: (Handwrite below "I will always treat (Name) equally, fairly and respectfully")

Signed: Student: _____ Date: _____

Teacher: _____



Appendix D

Guide to Providing Bullying Behaviour Update

Guide to providing Bullying Behaviour Update for Board of Management meeting of Firhouse Community College

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

Total number of new incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the last board of management meeting.	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour currently ongoing.	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the beginning of this school year	

Where incidents of bullying behaviour have been reported since the last meeting, the update must include a verbal report which should include the following information where relevant:

- the trends and patterns identified such as the form of bullying behaviour, type of bullying behaviour if known, location of bullying behaviour, when it occurred etc
- the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour
- any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour
- if any serious incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred which have had a serious adverse impact on a student
- if a parent has informed the school that a student has left the school because of reported bullying behaviour
- if any additional support is needed from the board of management
- if the school's Bí Cineálta policy requires urgent review in advance of the annual review

This update should not include any personal information or information that could identify the students involved.



Appendix E

Review of the Bí Cineálta Policy

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

Bí Cineálta Policy Review

1. When did the Board formally adopt its Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools?

Insert date when the Bí Cineálta policy was last adopted by the school: __/__/20__

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

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?

--

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 ☐



Appendix F

Notification regarding the board of management's annual review of the school's

Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management of Firhouse Community College 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 on

_____.

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: _____ Date: _____

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Principal)

Date of next review: _____



Appendix G

Record Keeping checklist in line with Bí Cineálta procedures

Case Number _____

1	Name & class of student(s) experiencing bullying behaviour		
2	Name & class of student(s) engaged in bullying behaviour		
3	Did you identify the forms of bullying?		
4	Did you identify the types(s) of Bullying?		
5	Did you record where the bullying happened? (location)		
6	Did you record when the bullying happened? (date(s))		
7	Name of person reporting the concern/bullying behaviour		
8	Do you have a brief description of bullying behaviour and its impact?		
9	Date of initial engagement with pupil(s) harmed and pupil(s) engaging in harm		
10	Names of, and date of initial engagement with parent(s) of student(s) experiencing the bullying behaviour,		
11	Name of, and date of initial engagement with parent(s) of student(s) displaying bullying behaviours		
12	Do you have a record of what actions have been taken?		
13	Have you recorded the views of pupils and parents regarding actions to be taken		
14	Did you set a date for of Review to determine if bullying behaviour has ceased?		
15	Did you sign and date reports?		

Teacher responsible for investigating bullying behaviour

Signature _____

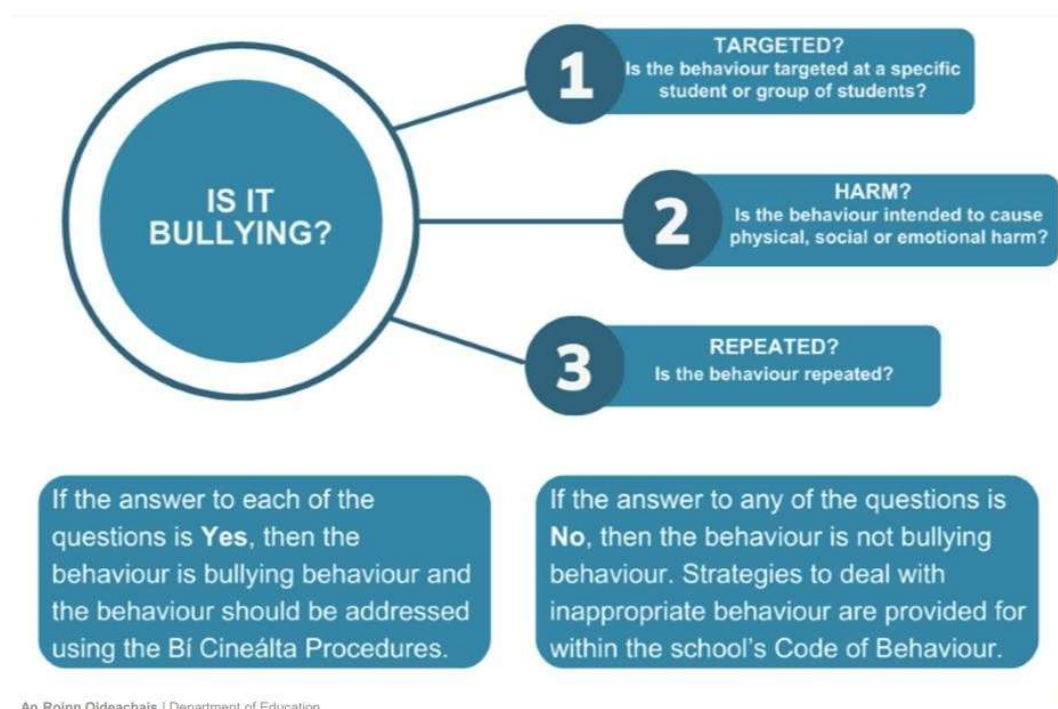


Appendix H

Template for recording bullying behaviour

Name of Pupil Experiencing Bullying Behaviour

Name: _____ Class: _____



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Name(s) & Class(es) of Pupil(s) Engaged in Bullying Behaviour

Form(s) of Bullying (2.5)

Please circle all that apply:

Physical Verbal Written Extortion Exclusion Relational Online

Other (please state): _____

Type of Bullying (2.7)*Please circle all that apply:*

Disablist Exceptionally Able Gender Identity Homophobic/Transphobic Physical
 Appearance
 Racist Poverty Religious Identity Sexist Bullying Sexual Harassment

Other (please state):

Location of Incident(s):**Date of Incident(s):** _____**Name of Person(s) Who Reported the Concern:** _____**Brief Description of Bullying Behaviour and Its Impact:**

Date of Initial Engagement with Pupil(s) Harmed and Pupil(s) Engaging in Harm:

Names of, and Date of Initial Engagement with, Parent(s) of Student(s) Experiencing Bullying Behaviour:

Name of, and Date of Initial Engagement with, Parent(s) of Student(s) Displaying Bullying Behaviours:

Details of Actions Taken:

Views of Pupils and Parents Regarding Actions to be Taken:

Date of Review to Determine if Bullying Behaviour Has Ceased:

Details of Engagement with External Supports (if any):

Signed: _____ (Teacher)

Date: