

Appendix A

School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of St. Columba's Comprehensive, 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.

Definition of bullying

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

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

Responsibilities

Board of management

The Board of Management recognizes the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils. It is fully committed to a school wide approach and best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behavior as per Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary schools with measures such as:

1. 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 behavior in a non-

threatening environment.

- Promotes respectful relationships across the school community
 - Shares an understanding of what bullying is and its impact.
 - Implements regular whole school awareness measures including whole year assemblies, posters, competitions, lessons and annual pastoral calendar focus.
 - Ensures the Anti-Bullying Policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardians (s) through the Parents Association, Wellbeing class and the school's website.
2. Consistent recording, investigating and follow-up of bullying behaviours
 3. Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.
 4. A commitment to refer bullying to Tusla and/or the Gardai as appropriate in accordance with the Children's First and Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools.

Staff:

- To have read and understood St. Columba's Comprehensive's Anti-Bullying Policy.
- To acknowledge that bullying is shared responsibility within the school.
- To be vigilant against bullying behavior inside and outside the classroom.
- To take all reports of bullying seriously and to report them to the appropriate person if warranted.
- To assist in prevention and intervention strategies.
- To empower students to deal with conflict in constructive ways.

Students:

- To never bully others.
- To show consideration, respect and support towards others.
- To be sensitive to the wellbeing of everybody.
- To be vigilant and watch out for others.
- To be able to identify bullying behavior.
- To report if they are bullied or if they see someone else being bullied.

Parents

- To support the school in the implementation of the policy and other related school policies such as Code of Behaviour and IT Acceptable Use Policy.
- To watch out for signs that their child may be bullied.
- To speak to Year Head if their child is being bullied or if they suspect that this happening.
- To instruct their child to tell if they are being bullied or if they have seen others pupils are being bullied.
- To notify the school if they think that their child is displaying bullying behavior and to work with the school in addressing this problem.
- To ensure that if their child is online that they are using social media in a safe and responsible manner.

St. Columba's Comprehensive Commitment to the Students:

- Sensitivity and respect will be shown to both the person making the complaint, and to the subject of the complaint.

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

All members of our school community were provided with the opportunity to input into the development/review of this policy.

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	27/02/25- established Anti-Bullying Committee following email from Principal 12 th May 2026	27/02/25 Anti Bullying Committee meet for presentation of Bi Cineálta procedures and Appendix. 14/03/25-Full Staff presentation Half School Closure Annual review process shared with all staff via email – staff invited to share any feedback or suggested amendments.
Students	04/02/25 Student Council met with Mr. Hugh Doyle 12 th May 2026	Reviewed current Anti-bullying Policy with recommendations moving forward. Approved policy shared with all students via Microsoft TEAMS seeking student feedback. School Chaplain met student council to seek their voice on the current policy.
Parents	03/04/2025 12 th May 2026	PowerPoint presentation and Draft Appendix A and C for parental consultation. Annual review process shared with all parents / guardians via email – they were invited to share any feedback or suggested amendments.
Board of Management	07/04/2025 2 nd June 2026	PowerPoint presentation and Draft Appendix A and C for consultation. Current policy sent to all Board Nominees to review policy prior to annual approval.
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	5/06/2025	Draft policy was sent to all school bus companies for consultation.
Date policy was approved: 9 th June 2026		
Date policy was last reviewed: 10 th June 2025		

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):

The aforementioned strategies are systematically aligned with the Wellbeing framework of Effective Practice, encompassing the four key areas of Wellbeing. This list is not exhaustive but aims to foster a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for all students. The strategies address various forms of bullying and promote positive behavior, thereby contributing to the holistic development of the student body.

Culture and Environment

- **Student Support Team:** Provides ongoing support and guidance to students.
- **Year Heads and Class/Wellbeing Tutors:** Monitor student behavior and provide mentorship.
- **CCTV:** Enhances security and deters bullying.
- **Breakfast Club:** Promotes a positive start to the day.
- **Awareness Weeks:** Focus on celebrating diversity and inclusion.
- **Mobile Phone Policy:** Regulates phone usage to prevent cyberbullying.
- **Signage/Visuals:** Promote anti-bullying messages throughout the school.
- **Parent-Teacher Meetings:** Foster communication between parents and teachers.
- **JCT information Night:** The issue of bullying is raised and they are encouraged to report any concerns regarding bullying to the school. Particular emphasis will be put on telling as soon as possible for quicker resolution.
- **Entrance Hall:** Welcoming space that sets a positive tone.
- **Creation of Safe Physical Spaces:** Games rooms, library, special classrooms.
- **Supervision:** Ensures student safety during lunchtimes, before and after school.
- **Positive and Inclusive School Culture:** Encourages respect and acceptance.
- **Positive Relationships:** Builds trust and support among students and staff.
- **Effective Leadership:** Guides the implementation of anti-bullying strategies.
- **Mentors:** Provide guidance and support to younger students.
- **Organized Activities at Break Time:** Engage students in positive interactions.
- **Variety of Extra-Curricular Activities:** Offers diverse opportunities for student involvement.
- **Oreo the Dog:** Promotes emotional well-being.
- **SCP:** School Completion Programme supports at-risk students.
- **Seating Plans in Classrooms:** Prevents isolation and promotes interaction.
- **Behavioral Expectations in Classroom:** Sets clear standards for conduct.
- **Mentoring Programme:** Peer mentors for 1st by 6th year, they look out for any incidents of bullying of or among first year students, The mentors encourage students to tell them about incidents they have witnessed or experienced and this information is in turn relayed to the appropriate staff member.
- **Student Council:** Enhances student voice and participation.
- **Senior Prefect Programme:** Leadership roles for senior students.
- **School Library:** Safe space for learning and relaxation.
- **Parental Involvement:** Parent's Association supports school initiatives.
- **Wide Variety of Extra-Curricular Activities:** Encourages student engagement.
- **School Tours and Educational Trips:** Promote learning and bonding.
- **Transition Programme from Primary to Secondary:** Smooth transition for new students.
- **Summer Programme:** Engages students during the break, promotes and encourages friendships.

- **Open Evening and Taster Days for Incoming First Years:** Introduces new students to the school.
- **Restorative Practice:** Focuses on repairing relationships.
- **Wellbeing/Tutor Time:** 40 minutes per week contact time for support for first and second years, it focuses on student mental health, promotes friendships and raises awareness on anti-bullying.
- **Approved Guest Speakers:** Support student well-being.
- **NEPs, HSCL, SCP:** Various support programs for students and parents.
- **School Farm, Chess Club, Breakfast Club, School Choir:** Diverse activities for student engagement.
- **Wellbeing Team:** Promotes friendships, raises awareness on Anti-bullying and help organise various events to promote inclusion and diversity.
- **Canteen:** Provides a social space for students during breaks
- **Awareness Weeks:** Celebrating and embracing difference and inclusion.
- **School Ethos and Mission Statement:** Mól na óige promotes positive values.
- **Comment Box** in Reception-Allows students to leave discreet information regarding bullying incident.
- **Inclusion Committee:** Students and teachers work together to raise awareness and promote inclusion and diversity among the student body.

Curriculum

- **Group Work and Differentiated Activities:** Encourage collaboration and inclusivity.
- **Level 1/2/3 for Junior Cycle, TY, LCA & LCE for Senior Cycle, LCVP:** Diverse educational pathways.
- **Wellbeing Classes and Career Classes:** Support student development.
- **Transfer Programme/Summer Programme:** Smooth transitions and engagement.
- **Helping Hands Programme, Global Programme, Farmers Programme:** Various initiatives for student involvement- recognising diversity and promotes inclusion.
- **Career Classes:** Guidance for future planning.
- **AEN Support:** Assistance for students with additional educational needs.
- **Lockers and Organization Support:** Helps students stay organized.
- **Student Support Plans:** Tailored academic and behavioural support.
- **Music Therapy:** Promotes emotional well-being.
- **Field Trips/Educational Trips:** Enhance learning experiences.
- **Guest Speakers:** Talks and workshops provided ON Anti-bullying topics. Parents and Guardians will be informed when this takes place.
- **Belonging Plus Programme for First Years:** Helps new students feel welcome.
- **Bonding Trips for LCA and TY:** Promote team building.
- **CPD Supports for Staff:** Continuous professional development.
- **Cross-Curriculum Links Between Subjects:** Encourage interdisciplinary learning.
- **AILO:** Academic initiatives.
- **Teaching and Learning in SPHE, RSE Curriculum:** Focus on personal development.
- **Student Participation:** Encourages active involvement.
- **SPHE Methodologies:** Promote inclusion and diversity, Issue of bullying is discussed in SPHE class each year.
- **Extra-Curricular Programmes:** Offer diverse opportunities for engagement.
- **Student's Diary:** The agreed procedures for dealing with Bullying incidents are outlined in the school diary each year.
- **Group Work/Collaboration:** Foster teamwork and cooperation.

Policy and Planning

- **ACCS Ethos and Mission Statement:** Guide school values and goals.
- **DEIS Planning & End of Year Review:** Monitor and improve school performance.
- **Health & Safety Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Dignity in the Workplace Policy:** Ensure a safe and respectful environment.
- **Staff Meetings:** Facilitate communication and planning in relation to Anti-bullying
- **No Phone Policy:** Prevents distractions and cyberbullying. Creates a safe learning environment for students.
- **Code of Behaviour Policy:** Sets clear expectations for conduct.
- **Admission Policy:** Ensures fair and transparent admissions.
- **Location of Lockers by Year Groups:** Organizes student spaces.
- **AEN Policy, Guidance Policy, HSCL Policy:** Support diverse student needs.
- **Attendance-Statement of Effective Practice Policy:** Promotes regular attendance.
- **Wellbeing Policy, Digital Plan and Policy:** Focus on student health and digital safety.
- **Safer Internet Day and Anti-Bullying Week-** Events on an annual basis. Student involvement in the decision-making process with regards to anti-bullying is sought through whole-school consultations.

Relationships & Partnerships

- **Student & Staff Relationship:** Strong interpersonal connections.
- **Bullying Awareness Initiatives:** Promote understanding and prevention.
- **Student and Parent Participation:** Encourage involvement and collaboration.
- **TPL (Teacher Professional Learning):** Support teacher development.
- **Critical Thinking Skills:** Encourage analytical thinking.
- **Promoting Peer Support:** Foster a supportive environment.
- **Supporting Activities That Build Empathy, Respect, and Resilience:** Encourage positive behavior.
- **Extra-Curricular Activities:** Offer diverse opportunities for engagement.
- **School Musical, School Tours:** Promote creativity and bonding.
- **Parent Teacher Meetings, Transfer Meetings for Incoming First Years:** Facilitate communication.
- **School Visits by Management and HSCL:** Ensure support and oversight.
- **Parents Association:** Support school initiatives.
- **Carol Service:** Promote community spirit.
- **Positive Modeling of Behavior:** Encourage respectful conduct.
- **Respectful Communication:** Foster a positive environment.
- **Visiting Guest Speakers:** Provide insights and inspiration.
- **Links with Sporting Clubs in the Community:** Promote physical activity.
- **Links with External Agencies Within the Community:** Provide additional support.
- **EWO, NEPs, Downstrands FRC, SVP, CAHMs, Jigsaw, Pieta House, Donegal Youth Service:** Various external support organizations used by the school.
- **Parents Coffee Mornings:** Encourage parental involvement.
- **SNA Support:** Provide additional assistance to students while looking out for any incidents of bullying which may be occurring discretely in the class.
- **Caretaker, Canteen staff and cleaning staff:** Also look out for any incidents of bullying in the canteen or on the corridors.
- **Guidance Meetings:** Counselling and career guidance, 1:1 meeting to help students develop their pathway progressions.
- **Check n Connect programme:** The Check & Connect program is an evidence-based intervention designed to prevent disengagement among students. It pairs students with trained mentors who provide personalised support and timely interventions to keep them engaged in their education.

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):

The school has implemented comprehensive supervision and monitoring policies to prevent and address bullying behaviour, as outlined in Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures. These policies include:

- **DEIS Plan:** Supports educational inclusion and equality.
- **School's Acceptable Use Policy:** Regulates the use of technology to prevent misuse.
- **No Phone Policy:** Minimizes distractions and prevents cyberbullying.
- **GDPR Policy:** Ensures the protection of personal data.
- **AEN Policy:** Provides support for students with additional educational needs.
- **Code of Behaviour:** Establishes clear expectations for student conduct (to be reviewed in respect of Bí Cineálta).
- **Whole School Guidance Policy:** Offers career and personal guidance (currently being reviewed).
- **Wellbeing Policy:** Focuses on student mental health and well-being (currently being completed).
- **Attendance Statement of Strategy:** Monitors student attendance with appropriate supports.
- **Admission Policy:** Ensures fair and transparent admissions.

Monitoring of students regarding the implementation of supports is reflected in the work completed at bi-weekly meetings of the Student Support Team (SST). The following computer packages are used to aid this work: **VSWARE** and **CPOMS**.

Attendance is monitored and reviewed by the **Home School Community Liaison (HSCL)** and the **School Completion Programme (SCP)**, who support the role of the Year Heads in working with parents and students.

Supervision and Substitute: Ensures a safe environment for students before school starts, during breaks, and at the end of the day.

These policies and practices aim to create a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for all students, addressing various forms of bullying and promoting positive behaviour.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

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):

Please see forms attached (Appendix C to be implemented here)

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 will employ the following approaches to support students who experience, witness, or display bullying behavior, as outlined in Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures:

- **Listening and Reassurance:** Ensuring that students who experience bullying feel heard and supported.
- **Privacy and Sensitivity:** Conducting conversations with sensitivity and maintaining the privacy of those involved.
- **Timely Action:** Addressing bullying behaviour promptly to prevent escalation.
- **Parental Involvement:** Informing parents of the students involved to foster a collaborative approach.
- **Individual and Group Engagement:** Initially engaging with students individually, followed by group meetings to ensure clarity and mutual understanding.
- **Restorative Practices:** Focusing on repairing relationships and restoring a positive environment.
- **Mentorship Programs:** Providing peer and staff mentorship to support affected students.
- **Counseling and Guidance:** Offering access to school counsellors and guidance services.
- **Awareness and Education:** Conducting awareness programs and educational sessions to promote understanding and prevention of bullying.
- **Monitoring and Follow-Up:** Regularly monitoring the situation and following up to ensure the effectiveness of the interventions.
- **Supportive Environment:** Creating a safe and inclusive school culture that discourages bullying behaviour.

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: M. James Sweeney Date: 9th June 2026
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: B. O'Neil Date: 9th June 2026
(Principal)