


**Ratified 13th May 2025.**

**Reviewed June 2026**

# Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Clogher Road Community College has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

This policy fully complies with the requirements of *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* 2024.

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

We are committed to ensuring that all students who attend our school are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our students is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our students, and we are fully committed to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

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

## 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.

## 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 | | ½ Day closure - using Guidance document and resources<br>Ppts<br>Familiarisation with Bí Cineálta Procedures publication<br>Group activities around scenarios etc.<br>Q&A<br>Collation of all activities in the school that promote belonging and inclusion<br>At staff meetings regularly review effectiveness of new policy especially with regard to preventing and addressing bullying strategies<br>Establishment of a Bi Cinealta working group |
| Students | January 2025<br><br>May 2025 | As part of SPHE presently.<br>Student Council attended symposium on Ag Fail Readh as City of Dublin wider network preparation. Survey students |
| Parents | January 2025 May 2025 | Consult with Parents' Focus Group Survey Parents |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Board of Management | Sept – May 2025 May 2025 | Discussed at BOM meetings,<br>Draft policy sent to all members in advance of the meeting to invite feedback and suggestions. Discuss and agree final draft at BOM meeting on 13/05/2025<br>Ratify and monitor implementation and effectiveness of the policy through feedback from the principal at each meeting and its annual |
| | | review |
| Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers | May | Professional conversation to be had with bus drivers, caretaker, secretary, coaches and other visitors as appropriate and relevant.<br>Reminder to do this at the start of school year Staff Meeting |
| Date policy was approved: **13/05/2025** | | |
| Date policy was last reviewed: March 2024 (Anti-Bullying Policy based on 2013 guidelines) | | |

## 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 Board of Management of Clogher Road CC recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

**Culture and Environment**

- A positive and inclusive school culture and environment which ○ is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity. ○ Is a caring environment which encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment
  - promotes and models respectful relationships across the school community (**Appendix C)**
- Effective leadership that sets high standards and expectations
- A school-wide approach where each member of staff takes a consistent approach to effective observation and addressing of bullying behaviour
- Students promoting kindness and inclusion in peer groups
- Parents as active partners in their child's education, fostering an environment where bullying is not tolerated through promoting empathy and respect
- A 'trusted adult' who reassures and supports students they have done the right thing by reporting bullying behaviour
- Creating safe, visible physical spaces in school

**Curriculum- Teaching and Learning**

- A shared understanding of what bullying is, its impact and bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour.
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that- ○ build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils ○ promote inclusion and diversity
  - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including homophobic, transphobic, racist, sexist bullying and sexual harassment as appropriate.

○ provide teaching and learning in SPHE that equips students with skills to build positive relationships, resolve conflicts and recognise and deal with bullying behaviour ● SPHE Curricular Programmes

- Teaching methodologies to include -e.g.
- Group work/ Collaboration
- Classroom routines
- Extra - curricular activities to develop positive self - worth
- Nurture Programme
- Restorative Practice
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**Policy and Planning**

- Bí Cineálta Policy developed, communicated, implemented and reviewed in consultation with all partners
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies)
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the Bí Cinealta Policy
- Student Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment
- Acceptable Use Policy
- SPHE & RSE Policy
- SEN Policy
- DEIS Policies
- Wellbeing interwoven into DEIS policies and others
- Health and Safety Policy Statement
- Effective supervision and monitoring of students
- Teacher Professional Learning and other such relevant supports for staff

**Relationships and Partnerships**

- Strong interpersonal connections supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as Student Council, restorative practice, HSCL, outdoor education, JCSP library
- DEIS Partnership with Parents and Others Plan
- Student and parent/guardian active participation
- Workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying
- Promoting acts of kindness and activities that build empathy, respect and resilience e.g. Stand Up Week, Wellbeing week, Form tutor activities
- Teaching problem solving skills
- Critical Thinking Skills
- Promoting self-awareness and awareness of others

**Preventing cyber bullying behaviour:**

Technology and social media have provided many positive opportunities for entertainment, social engagement and education. However, the increase in the use of technology has led to students becoming increasingly vulnerable to cyberbullying or unacceptable online behaviour.

Clogher Road CC strives to proactively address these challenges by promoting digital literacy, digital citizenship, and fostering safe online environments.

Strategies to prevent cyberbullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- implementing the SPHE curriculum

- implementing the Digital Media Literacy curriculum which teaches students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship
- having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- developing and communicating an acceptable use policy for technology
- referring to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour
- promoting or hosting online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online*
- holding an Internet safety day to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour

(**Note:** The digital age of consent is the minimum age a user must be before a social media or internet company can collect, process and store their date. In Ireland the digital age of consent is 16. Children between 13 and 16 must have parental permission to sign up to social media services. Most social media platforms have a minimum age requirement and for the majority of these, it is 13 years old.
Therefore, children under the age of 13 should not have a social media account).

**Preventing homophobic/ transphobic bullying behaviour:**

All students including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students, have a right to feel safe and supported at school.

Strategies to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- maintaining an inclusive physical environment such as by displaying relevant posters
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- challenging gender stereotypes
- conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour
- encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour

**Preventing racist bullying behaviour**

As our school becomes more culturally diverse, we strive to prevent potential racist bullying behaviour.

Strategies to prevent racist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students "see themselves" in their school environment
- having the cultural diversity of the school visible and on display
- conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of racism
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour
- providing supports to school staff to respond to the needs of students for whom English is an additional language and for communicating with their parents
- providing supports to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma students, and to encourage communication with their parents
- inviting speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds
- ensuring that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds

**Preventing sexist bullying behaviour:**

Clogher Road CC will focus on gender equality as part of the school's measures to create a supportive and respectful environment.

Strategies to prevent sexist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list: ●
ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex

- ensuring all student have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex
- celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contribution of all students
- encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home

**Preventing sexual harassment:**
Clogher Road CC promotes a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment. It strives to support this through a focus on education, awareness and clear enforceable policies. Sexual harassment should never be dismissed as teasing or banter.
Strategies to prevent sexual harassment include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

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

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

*The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.*

The relevant supervision and monitoring policies and procedures are as follows:

- Supervision and Substitution Rota
- Children are accompanied by at least one teacher/SNAs, as relevant and necessary, on all trips, outings, swimming etc.
- If patterns of inappropriate behaviour are detected these are investigated and documented, as relevant on VSware
- Form Tutors and Year Heads have regular Year team meetings.
- If there are reported incidents or issues between children that warrant closer monitoring this is notified to relevant staff and through SST meetings.
- A report on supervision and incidents of bullying behaviour is given at each BOM meeting

## Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

**Who? The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour are as follows:** Form tutors & **Year Heads**

**Approach**

**The primary aim in addressing reports of bullying behaviour should be to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the students involved, rather than to apportion blame.**

When addressing bullying behaviour teachers should:

- 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
- act 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):

**Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred**:

**Core Definition of Bullying:** Bullying is defined 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 to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*)

**Bullying Behaviour that occurs when students <u>are not</u> under the care or responsibility of the school**

- A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school.
- However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved.
- Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, schools should deal with it in accordance with their Bí Cineálta policy.
- Where the student displaying the bullying behaviour is not a student in the school, but the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour is a student in the school, the school should support the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as appropriate and engage with them and their parents to determine what steps can be taken.

**General Principles:**

- It is important for school staff to be fair and consistent in their approach to address bullying behaviour.
- Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour need support.
- It is important that the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour is engaged with without delay so that they feel listened to, supported and reassured.
- School staff should identify the supports needed for the student who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties and ensure that their needs are met.

**Requests to take no action:**

A student who reports bullying behaviour may ask a member of staff not to do anything and just "look out" for them due to not wanting to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They might feel that telling someone might make things more difficult for them.

Where this occurs:

- it is important that the member of staff shows empathy to the student, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the student to work out together what steps can be taken to address the behaviour.
- It must be made clear to the pupil that other parties may need to be informed for their welfare.
- Parents may also make the school aware of bullying behaviour and specifically request that no action is to be taken by the school. Parents should put this in writing to the school.
- The school will consider each such request on a case-by-case basis while reserving the right, if determined that based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour through the Bí Cineálta procedures and/or the Code of Behaviour where appropriate.

**To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour the following questions will be**

**considered:**

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.

**What is not bullying behaviour?**

- A once off instance of negative behaviour
- Disagreement between students
- Instances where students don't want to remain friends
- Non-deliberate behaviours of students with special educational needs (Bí Cineálta Section 2.2)

**Cyberbullying**

- Bullying behaviour including cyberbullying behaviour, which has occurred outside of school can often continue in school.
- Where a student engages in cyberbullying behaviour when in school, the school must address the bullying behaviour
- Where a student experiences cyberbullying behaviour in school, the school must address the bullying behaviour.
- In the case of cyberbullying, although the hurtful message may have been sent outside of school hours, the student may view the message while in school. Where this happens, the school must address the bullying behaviour

**When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred teachers should consider what, where, when and**

**why?**

- if a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first
- thereafter, all students involved should be met as a group
- at the group meeting, each student should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views
- each student should be supported as appropriate, following the group meeting
- it may be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident(s)

**Where bullying behaviour has occurred**

- 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
- 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 Bi Cineálta procedures), where and when it took place and the date of the initial

engagement with the students involved and their parents (Appendix B)

- the record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour

**Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred**

- the teacher must engage with the students involved and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement
- 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 teacher should document the review with students (Appendix B) and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and their parents in relation to this
- 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
- if the bullying behaviour has not ceased the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents. A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased
- if it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school consideration should be given to using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.
- If disciplinary sanctions are considered, it must be made clear to all (pupils and parents/guardians) that this is a private matter (under GDPR) between the student being disciplined, his/her parents/guardians and the school

**Recording Bullying Behaviour**: See template **Appendix B** which includes all the required details/fields.

- 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.
- where a Student Support File exists for a student a copy of the record should be placed on the student's support file with a brief reference to it on a Behavioural Log of Actions(priority document)
- where a Student Support Plan exists, the plan should be updated to incorporate response strategies and associated supports.
- where no Student Support File exists open a Behavioural Log of Actions on Aladdin and mark it as a 'Priority document'. Add date and reference to the completed record (Appendix B). (This form can be found by selecting - Child's profile >documents > new document >Bullying Incident Recording Form)
- 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 2.4)

**Complaint Process**

- if a parent(s) is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with the *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, they should be referred to the school's complaints procedures

- if a student and/or parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions have had a

negative effect on the student

**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):**

**Supports:**

The school's programme of support for working with pupils who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour, in addition to supports referenced in the steps above, may include but is not limited to the following:

- Listening
- Showing empathy
- Reassuring the student
- Asking them to let you know if the bullying behaviour occurs in school
- Devising appropriate 'check in' mechanisms – check and connect
- Discussing how the pupils can inform their parents of the situation if they haven't already done so
- Discreet lessons may be taught as appropriate
- Pupils who have been bullied, witness or engage in bullying behaviour will be supported by the school, within the limits of resources available in the school, through the provision of opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and thereby build resilience and a sense of self-worth whenever this is needed.
- Where relevant and available, a referral for appropriate supports as offered through e.g. Art Therapy, Rainbows, Friends for Life etc

**Supports available to help prevent and address bullying include the following:**

- City of Dublin ETB Winsted- providing advice on best practice to prevent and address bullying when issues arise in schools and/or training in preventative initiatives pg.46
- Oide – providing TPL pg.47
- Webwise – online safety awareness raising and education initiative for pupils and parents pg.47
- National Parents Council – online and in person courses to support parents to prevent and address bullying pg. 48
- DCU Anti bullying centre- FUSE programme that can be used to promote a positive school culture and assist in preventing and addressing bullying behaviours. Pg.48
- Tusla – for cases where it is considered that bullying behaviour becomes a child protection concern. Pg.48
- Cyberbullying and Internet Safety expert Ger Brick- Parent and pupil seminars.

## 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 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: ***Allison Masterson*** Date: 13/05/2025

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: *Lesley Byrne* Date: 13/05/2025

(Principal)