



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



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.

2025/2026 Policy

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	8 th January 2025 14 th March 2025 16 th May 2025	MS Forms Survey Bí Cineálta Half Day Closure Draft Policy shared for review
Students	8 th January 2025 19 th May 2025	MS Forms Survey Draft Policy shared with Student Council
Parents	8 th January 2025 May 2025	MS Forms Survey Draft Policy shared with Parents Association
Board of Management	16 th June 2025	
Date policy was approved: 16 th June 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: N/A		

2026/2027 Policy

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	26 th February 2026 20 th April 2026	Current Policy shared with SMT for suggested amendments Draft Policy 2026/2027 shared
Students	26 th February 2026 18 th March 2026 20 th April 2026	Current Policy shared with Student Council for suggested amendments Current Policy shared with SPHE/CSPE/Guidance/Wellbeing/Pastoral Care classes for suggested amendments Draft Policy 2026/2027 shared
Parents	26 th February 2026 20 th April 2026	Current Policy shared with Parents Association for suggested amendments Draft Policy 2026/2027 shared
Board of Management	15 th June 2026	
Date policy was approved: 15 th June 2026		
Date policy was last reviewed: February – March 2026		



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.

The Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice provides the following four key areas that are essential for a holistic, whole school approach to wellbeing promotion: Culture and Environment; Curriculum (Teaching and Learning); Policy and Planning; and Relationships and Partnerships. These are the four areas that we considered when we developed our measures to prevent bullying behaviour.

Culture and Environment

A positive and inclusive school culture and environment is essential to prevent and address bullying behaviour. The school environment should be a space where students and school personnel experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported. Relationships between all members of the school community should be based on respect, care, integrity and trust. We strive to create this culture and environment in the following ways:

- The entire school community works proactively to promote an environment where bullying/harassment does not take place and will foster respect for all members of the school community.
- Promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- On a whole school basis, we repeatedly stress the importance of reporting matters of concern and therefore create an environment of openness and tolerance and help dispel a culture of secrecy often associated with bullying.
- Involvement of the student voice in contributing to a safe school environment e.g., Student Council, Prefects, Mentor system, other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- 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.
- Lead by Example: Management, teachers and school staff model respectful and empathetic behaviour. Students learn a lot from observing adult interactions.

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

Athlone Community College's curriculum plays a vital role in promoting positive behaviour and preventing bullying by embedding key values and skills.

- Through SPHE, CSPE, and Guidance, and in alignment with national initiatives, our curriculum equips students with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to recognise, prevent, and respond to bullying, while fostering a culture of respect, inclusion, and wellbeing.
- The fostering and enhancing of students' self-esteem through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Students are provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- Students are given regular opportunities to work in small groups with their peers, which helps to build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy among students.
- Students are taught how to recognise bullying, who to tell, and how to report it safely and confidently, ensuring they feel supported and empowered to seek help.
- Effective anti-bullying education is supported using inclusive, student-centred teaching methodologies such as group discussions, role-play, and reflective activities, which encourage



empathy, active participation, and critical thinking.

Policy and Planning

The wellbeing of the school community is central in our policies and plans. This policy clearly details how we try to prevent and address bullying behaviour. We use many of the resources and practices as recommended in the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post- Primary Schools.

There are a range of other policies that support implementation of Athlone Community College's Bí Cineálta policy. These include:

- Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Acceptable Usage Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- AEN Policy

Relationships and Partnerships

Strong interpersonal connections are a vital part of effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. These interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures and activities.

The following, which is not an exhaustive list, could be considered to strengthen relationships and partnerships between members of Athlone Community College:

- Student Council
- Clubs
- Parents Association
- Student Support Team
- Peer Mentoring
- Community links
- Links to primary schools
- 'One Good Adult' model
- Workshops and seminars
- Transition Programme for incoming 1st years
- Open Door Policy and Positive relationships with staff
- Awareness Initiatives

Appropriate supervision is an important measure to help 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. We take all reasonable measures to ensure the safety of our students and to supervise students when students are attending school or attending school activities as per Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post- Primary Schools.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The primary aim in addressing reports of bullying behaviour should be to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved. Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including students, parents /guardians) understand this approach from the outset. Athlone Community College's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used in dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are underpinned by



Chapter 6 the Bí Cineálta Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

The whole school community is committed to best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour. To combat bullying, it is important that any or all incidents are reported. Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs) and other staff employed in the school must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them.

The staff with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour are as follows:

- Year Heads
- Deputy Principals
- Guidance Counsellors
- Principal

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 (with reference to Appendix C Guide to addressing bullying behaviour in the Bí Cineálta Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools) are as follows:

1. Incidents/allegations of bullying behaviour are referred to the relevant yearhead / Deputy Principal (s) / Guidance Counsellor / Principal.
2. Investigation to be carried out, including the interviewing, and taking of statements from those involved and from witnesses and bystanders. 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.
3. In dealing with an allegation of bullying the staff member will determine whether bullying has occurred by considering the following questions:
 - a. Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?
 - b. Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?
 - c. Is the behaviour repeated?



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. 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.

4. Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents/guardians 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.
5. A record will be kept of the engagement with all involved using the template (appendix 1).
6. Follow up, where bullying behaviour has occurred, must take place no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement.

A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than "look out" for them. The student may not want to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They may feel that telling someone might make things more difficult for them. Where this occurs, it is important that the member of staff shows empathy to the student, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the student to work out together what steps can be taken to address the matter and how their parents will be informed of the situation. It is important that the student who has experienced bullying behaviour feels safe.

Parents/Guardians may also make schools aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action. Parents/Guardians should put this request in writing to the school. However, while acknowledging the parent's request, we may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the 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.

Athlone Community College's programme of support for working with students affected by bullying is to ensure that both the victim of bullying behaviour and the person/persons responsible for the offending behaviour will be offered ongoing informal or formal support from within the school.

- The informal supports offered in the school may be check-ins with year head, guidance counsellor or other relevant member of staff.
- Formal supports offered in may be in the form of referral to an external counselling agency, a psychologist, psychotherapist, or other agencies, if deemed more appropriate and agreed to by parents and guardians.



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.

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 (see appendix 2) 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: Frankie Keena Date: 15/6/26
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: Memo Date: 15/6/26
(Principal)



Appendix 1: Template for Reporting Bullying Behaviour

1. Name of student being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

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

3. Source of bullying concern/report

4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))

Student concerned
Other student
Parent
Teacher
Other

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

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

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

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

Homophobic	Disability
Membership of Travelling Community	AEN
Racist/Ethnicity	Gender based
Religion	Socio-Economic Status
Other (specify)	



8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Relevant Teacher)

Date submitted to Principal / Deputy Principal _____



Appendix 2: Student Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy

BELONGING STARTS
belonging starts
WITH Kindness

SUPPORT EACH OTHER, STAND UP, SPEAK OUT

BÍ CINEÁLTA
anti Bullying

Tell someone!
Get help!

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

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

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

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

We will ask you what you think.

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

lwetb
Baird / Baird Bain agair Chinnair
an t-angloir agus na h-éire
Loughlin and Warrington
Education and Training Board