



## Callystown National School

### Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Callystown National School 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. Ireland ratified the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>1</sup> in September 1992. In doing this we committed to promote, protect and fulfil the rights of children. Bullying is a children's rights issue. Bullying interferes with the following rights of the child:

- The right to freedom of expression (Article 13)
- The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 14)
- The right to freedom of association and freedom of peaceful assembly (Article 15)
- The right to privacy (Article 16)
- The right to be protected from all forms of abuse and neglect (Article 19)
- The right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health (Article 24)
- The right to education (Article 28)
- The right to enjoy their own culture, religion or language (Article 30)

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 targeted behaviour, online or offline, that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature and can have lasting effects on the child experiencing the behaviour. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society. It is behaviour which is deliberate in nature and is unwanted. It is not accidental or reckless behaviour.***

The harm can be:

- Physical (e.g.: personal injury, damage to or loss of property)
  - Social: eg: withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion)
  - Emotional: (eg: low self-esteem, depression, anxiety)
- A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards a 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.

### Behaviour that is not 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 be addressed under the school 's code of 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 cannot control.
- Disagreement between students is not considered bullying **unless** it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

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### **Types of Bullying:**

There are many different types of bullying behaviour. These can include directing bullying at someone focused on the following:

- disability,
  - exceptional ability,
  - gender identity,
  - LGBTQ+ ,
  - physical appearance,
  - racism,
  - poverty status,
  - religious identity,
  - sexism and sexual harassment.
- This is not an exhaustive list.

### **Bullying can be Direct:**

- **Physical:** pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping students. Physical assault. Destruction of personal property.
- **Verbal:** continual name calling which insults, humiliates the student – this may refer to physical appearance, size, clothes, gender, accent, academic ability, race or ethnic origin.
- **Written:** Writing insulting remarks in public places, passing notes or drawings about the student.

- **Extortion:** where something is obtained through force or threats

**Bullying can be : Indirect:**

- **Exclusion:** where a student is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded or ignored by a student or group of students.
- **Relational:** Where a student's attempts to form friendships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined, threats, non-verbal gesturing, malicious gossip, spreading rumours, silent treatment and manipulation of friend groups etc. can all form relational bullying for a student.

**Online bullying behaviour:**

Cyber bullying is carried out via text, direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, e mail, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chatrooms and other online technologies.

This can include:

- Sending or sharing of insulting and offensive or intimidating messages or images via online means as mentioned above.
- Posting information which is personal, private or sensitive without consent.
- Making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other students.
- Exclude/disrupt access to a student on purpose on online chat groups/access to accounts/from an online game.

**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	01/04/25	Discussion
Students	6-9 May	Discussion
Parents	22/05/25	Parents' Council
Board of Management	05/06/25	Meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	05/06/25	Meeting
Date policy was approved: 05/06/25		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

## Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by the school. These include strategies specifically aimed at preventing online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate.

### **Culture and Environment:**

The school has a very strong Vision Statement that is underpinned by 9 Mission statements and a school Motto. These statements ensure that we strive to ensure that the school experience for all is positive and inclusive.

**“Together We Thrive”**

### **Vision Statement**

***Callystown National School is a Catholic School in the community of Clogherhead which aspires to develop a Respectful, Supportive, Open and Inclusive culture where Fairness, Wellbeing and Progressive Education are encouraged to flourish.***

### **Mission Statements**

#### **“Warm, friendly atmosphere in the school, staffroom and classroom”**

- We recognise the importance of a positive, friendly and supportive staff in creating a warm and welcoming school.
- We endeavour to create classrooms that make all our pupils feel safe, valued and welcomed.

#### **“Open and inclusive communication among staff, students and parents”**

- We value the freedom afforded to all staff, pupils and parents within our school community to voice one’s opinions and ideas and to have them valued and respected.

#### **Co-operative rather than competitive approach with colleagues and students**

- We are determined to create a culture in our classrooms and school that is supportive rather than competitive, where difference is recognised and celebrated and where pupils feel valued and experience a sense of achievement.

#### **Collaborative/ supportive management of staff and students**

- We value the culture of collegiality and co-operation that exists in our school and we recognise that the success of our school is built on these characteristics.

#### **“Discussion and resolution of conflict in our school”**

- We recognise that conflict is an inevitable fact of life.
- We, the staff, parents, and pupils, are determined to find resolutions to our conflicts in an open, honest and respectful manner.

#### **“Fair and equal valuing of all in our school community”**

- We recognise that open and honest communication is at the heart of a healthy school and it is important that everyone takes responsibility for the fair and equal treatment of others.

#### **“Innovation and initiative welcomed by all staff and students”**

- We recognise the need to improve as a school by trying out new ideas and implementing best practice.

#### **“Recognition & Feedback on performance/achievements of staff and students”**

- We value, encourage and support the great work, efforts and achievements of the people in our

### **"Enjoyment, laughter & fun in the staffroom in our school"**

- We wish to create a school that is a happy place of learning and where pupils and staff enjoy coming to school.

#### **• Anti Bullying Campaign**

- In 2014, the school introduced The Anti Bullying Campaign programme to deal with bullying behavior. The programme has two strands: Raising Awareness and Resolving Situations.
- The programme can be viewed on the following link:  
<https://www.antibullyingcampaign.ie/primary-level-tools/>

#### **In addition**

We strive to:

- Create a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.
- Involve parents as active partners in fostering an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated.
- Support the idea that our school is a **telling environment**.
- Promote the concept of a trusted adult – stay safe linkage – who to tell.
- Create safe spaces in our school building and yards – visibility
- Incorporate artwork and signs to promote our school values – creation of a school charter promoting rights – equality, inclusion and respect.
- Encourage a sense of belonging with ownership over their own space through art and creativity.
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#### **Ways in which we work to achieve these goals are as follows:**

- Publication of the Anti Bullying Campaign in the pupils' journal and through the termly newsletter
- Anti Bullying week activities such as Random acts of Kindness homework, Poster making, slogan making, etc.
- Playground helpers – students in higher classes volunteer to support younger classes on yard to help with games and positive interactions. Minders at lunchtime also.
- Child Friendly Anti- Bullying Policy was formed with pupil and parent input and is distributed to parents, children and staff to discuss. This policy outlines various ways to tell.
- Parents receive information at times regarding useful information on Anti Bullying.
- Stay safe and SPHE lessons focusing on positive behaviour form part of curricular content in all classes.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils.

#### **Curriculum (teaching and learning)**

- The Anti Bullying Campaign is taught in all classes from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>. The programme provides a consistent and effective approach to raising awareness to bullying behaviour and a process of resolving bullying behaviour when it arises.
- Provide teaching and promote learning which is collaborative and respectful, fostering inclusion and respect for diversity.
- Display a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact.

#### **Ways in which we work to achieve this:**

- Wellbeing programmes of Circle Time, S.A.L.T. (conflict resolution), Lust for Life
- Teach SPHE and RSE content which fosters student's well-being and self-confidence as well

- as promoting personal responsibility for their own behaviours and actions.
- Model respectful behaviour towards colleagues, pupils and visitors in our school environment.
- Curricular and Extra-curricular activities can help to develop a sense of self-worth, working together, inclusion and respect.
- Students are given regular opportunities to work in small groups with peers, which can help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy.
- Acknowledgment of our diverse school population – celebrating diversity and culture in our school through art, displays, photographs, international events. • Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that
  - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
  - explicitly addresses the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- Supports for staff;
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

## **Policy and planning**

The aim of Callystown National School's Bi Cineálta policy is

- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils, parents/guardians.
- To promote a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
  - To ensure appropriate supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
- To develop procedures for noting, investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To implement a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- To work with appropriate agencies in countering all forms of bullying and promoting anti bullying behaviour.
  - The Acceptable Use Policy, Supervision policy, Special Education Policy and Code of Behaviour all support the implementation of the Bi Cineálta policy.
- Effective leadership is a key component with Principal, Deputy Principal, DLP, DDLP, and all middle management focused on supporting the implementation of this policy.
- The appointment of an Anti Bullying Co-ordinator as a post of responsibility in our In School Management team.
- A team of three teachers who will conduct termly surveys and follow up to resolve any incidents of bullying behaviour.

## **Relationships and Partnerships**

- Interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as our parents' association etc
- Age and stage appropriate awareness initiatives that engage the student body in looking at their own behaviour – promoting acts of kindness and friendship, being an active help to others and looking at the causes of and impact of bullying during SPHE lessons.
- Conducting workshops and seminars for students, staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying.
- Encouraging peer mentoring and peer support
- Supporting active participation of students in school life and active participation of parents in school life also.
  
- Engaging parents and students in actively contributing to the formation of a Child Friendly Anti Bullying Policy to make them active participants in promotion of and discussion of useful ways to identify and reduce bullying behaviour and highlight procedure and how to deal with it if it does occur.

## ***Preventing Cyber Bullying, Homophobic/Transphobic bullying, Racist bullying, Preventing sexual harassment.***

### ***In addition to above mentioned strategies, the school has the following in place to prevent and address bullying:***

- Staff at all times endeavour to encourage pupils to show respect for each other.
- Implementation of the SPHE curriculum.
- Positive self-esteem is fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences, by acknowledging good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success.
  - Digital Media Policy includes learning about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship.
- AUP also developed for technology in our school.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed regularly with the pupils.
- Staff are particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of bullying being bullied.
- All disclosed incidents of bullying are investigated thoroughly and consistently by following the correct procedure as outlined in the Anti Bullying Campaign programme.
- The school will also record the frequency and nature of bullying behaviour under the Bí Cineálta format.
- School wide awareness raising on all aspects of bullying, supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extracurricular activities.
- Involvement of pupils in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Kindness/ anti-bullying week, and other activities that can help to pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Refer to appropriate online behaviour when using devices and in SPHE lessons.
- Promote online safety events or material for parents
- Shared folder of resources for teaching of bullying.





- Challenge gender- stereotypes – equal participation of all. Equal recognition.
- Raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour and encourage students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour.
- Foster a culture where diversity is celebrated and students “see themselves” in the school environment.
  - Ensuring the library has material with reflects our diverse school population from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
- Modelling of respectful behaviour by staff of all irrespective of sex.
- Ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of sex.
  - Making clear that our school has a zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment of any kind with enforceable policy - See Code of Behaviour.

### **Supervision:**

- **Staff Supervision:** All staff members are trained to recognise and respond to Bullying behaviour. They should be present and visible in common areas and playgrounds during break times and for the 10 mins pre school supervision period.
- **Student Supervision:** Class teachers should supervise during class times and should be aware of what is happening in their classes and on the playground.
- **Supervision Roster for playtimes:** A roster organised by Ms O Kane will be posted on the staff notice board and it will be the responsibility of teachers and SNAs to be on supervision duty in a timely and professional manner.
- **Wet Day Supervision:** At the beginning of each school year, teachers will be informed of the classes that are to be cover and the permissible activities for pupils.

### **Monitoring:**

- **Incident Reporting:**
  - Anti Bullying teachers will conduct a class survey once a term
  - When an incident is reported by a teacher, pupil or parent, the anti-bullying teacher assigned to that class will carry out a further survey and investigation
- **Incident Investigating:**
  - When an incident of bullying has been identified, the anti bullying teacher will conduct a thorough investigation as outlined by the anti bullying procedures.
  - Detailed records of the incident will be taken and filed.

## **Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour**

Callystown National School uses The Anti Bullying Campaign to address all bullying incidents.

The procedures are set out in the following document

<https://www.antibullyingcampaign.ie/primary-level-tools/strand-2>

The school has an Anti Bullying Co-ordinator

The school has a team of 3 Anti Bullying Teachers who are assigned to classes from 2<sup>nd</sup> class to 6<sup>th</sup> class and deal with any bullying behaviour that arises in these classes.

All teachers and staff are responsible to ensure that bullying behaviour is reported and not tolerated in the school.

### **In Addition**

- Principal will inform Board of Management of incidents of Bullying.

### **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 as outlined by the Anti Bullying Campaign programme

### **Investigating Bullying Behaviour**

- Termly Surveys: Anti Bullying teachers will conduct a survey in each class from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> once a term and follow up on any issues that occur.
- Reports of Bullying behaviour outside scheduled surveys: When a report of a potential incident of bullying is reported the anti bullying teacher assigned to the particular class will conduct a survey in a timely manner.
- The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame). With this in mind the school's procedures are as follows:
- In investigating and dealing with bullying the teacher(s) will exercise his/her/their judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type if it has and how best the situation might be resolved.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the 'Relevant Teacher(s)'. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report instances of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, SNAs, caretakers and cleaners are encouraged to report any incidences of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them to the Class Teacher.
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
- When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the Anti Bullying teacher will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information. The report will be stored in the Anti Bullying files. In addition, the report will

be presented to the principal so he may be able to inform the Board at a future meeting.

- If a pupil chooses to continue the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer be considered a once off occurrence
  
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may be arranged separately with a view to bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
- Repeated incidents of bullying behaviour will result in the imposition of sanctions. Such sanctions will be proportionate to the seriousness of the bullying behaviour. It must be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required that this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.
- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent must be referred to the school's complaints procedure.
- In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their rights to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.
- The School will maintain care for the victim over time. This will be done by speaking to the child a number of weeks after the incident to check on their continuing welfare. The child's parents will also be consulted.
- If a child makes a report of bullying, but asks that nothing is to be done about it, the relevant teacher will support the child appropriately to explore how it will be handled sensitively and how parents may be notified. If a parent does so, they must submit in writing that they require no further action to be taken, but even so, the school may still deem it necessary to be investigated and handled appropriately. The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves a whole school approach. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, no one intervention/support programme works in all situations.

• Supporting Bullied pupils:

- Ending the bullying behaviour,
- Fostering respect for bullied pupils and all pupils,
- Fostering greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils, - Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through annual awareness-raising programmes,
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations,
- Making adequate counselling facilities available to pupils who need it in a timely manner (subject to available funding)
- Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).

Supporting Bullying pupils:

- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a 'clean sheet,'

- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honourable thing and giving them praise for this,
- Making adequate counselling facilities available to help those who need it learn other ways of meeting their needs besides violating the rights of others,
- Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school),
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth,
- In dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child,
- In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a 'clean sheet' and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.

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:   
(Chairperson of board of management)

Date: 5/6/2025

Signed:   
(Principal)

Date: 5/6/2025

