



Coláiste na hInse

Bí Cineálta – Anti-Bullying Policy

Vision Statement

‘Our vision for Coláiste na hInse is an outstanding progressive centre of teaching and learning, where the three cornerstones of our school: bród (pride), uaimhian (ambition) and dearfach (positivity) are lived daily allowing personal growth and wellbeing, empowering us to aimigh ar realt eolais (reach for your star) through positive relationships, respect, inclusivity, and encouragement’.

Contents

1. RATIONALE (Page 2)
2. RELATION TO VISION (Page 2)
3. AIMS OF POLICY (Page 3)
4. OBJECTIVES OF POLICY (Page 3)
5. POLICY CONTENT
 - 5.1: Legal Basis of this policy (page 2)
 - 5.2: Definitions of Bullying Behaviour (Page 3)
 - 5.3: Types of Bullying Behaviour and How Bullying Behaviour Occurs (page 6)
 - 5.4 Where Bullying Behaviour can occur (page 8)
 - 5.5 Impact and signs of Bullying Behaviour (Page 9)
 - 5.6 Students who may be more at risk of experiencing Bullying Behaviour (page 10)
 - 5.7 Impact of witnessing Bullying Behaviour (page 10)
 - 5.8 Impact of engaging in Bullying Behaviour (page 10)
 - 5.9 Preventing Bullying Behaviour (Page 11)
 - 5.10 Policy and Planning (page 13)
 - 5.11 Procedures for Addressing Bullying Behaviour (page 15)
 - 5.12 School Oversight Procedures (Page 20)

6. REVIEW AND EVALUATION (Page 21)

7. APPENDICES (Page 22)

Section 1: RATIONALE

The rationale for Bí Cineálta, the school's anti-bullying policy is to provide a school environment where every young person feels valued and is actively supported and nurtured to reach their full potential. This policy provides guidelines for all members of the school community to work together towards an inclusive school environment where bullying is not tolerated and where individual difference is acknowledged, valued and celebrated.

Bullying is an experience that no child or young person should have to endure. It can affect engagement with school, self-confidence, and the child or young person's sense of self and belonging. Bullying behaviour can impact a child's agency and their ability to take effective action.

Bullying is a children's rights issue. Bullying interferes with the following rights of the child set out in the United Nations Convention on the 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)

Section 2: RELATION TO VISION

Our vision seeks to foster personal growth and wellbeing among all members of our school community, empowering students to aimigh ar realt eolais through positive relationships, respect, inclusivity, and encouragement. Such personal growth and wellbeing are only possible in a school environment where bullying is not tolerated and where individual difference is acknowledged, valued and celebrated.

Section 3: AIMS OF POLICY

The aim of this policy as part of the ‘Cineáltas Action Plan on Bullying’ is to provide a collective vision and clear roadmap for how the whole education community and society can work together to prevent and address bullying in our schools. The policy is rooted in the four key principles of prevention, support, oversight and community.

Section 4: OBJECTIVES OF POLICY

1. To define and outline the types of bullying behaviour as outlined in Cineáltas: Action Plan on bullying and to educate all members of our school community on what bullying behaviour is and is not.
2. To educate all members of our school community on the impact that bullying behaviour has.
3. To outline the ways in which the school community works towards preventing bullying behaviour.
4. To outline how the school addresses bullying behaviour if it occurs.
5. To outline how the school’s Board of Management provides oversight in relation to the issue of bullying.

Section 5

POLICY CONTENT

5.1: LEGAL BASIS

This policy and its procedures are underpinned by a range of legislation and Department of Education circulars and agreed procedures.

- Education (Welfare) Act 2000
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (2014)
- Equal Status Acts (2000-2018)
- The Children First Act (2015)
- The Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act (2020)
- ‘Bí Cineálta , Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools’ (2024).
- Developing a code of behaviour, Guidelines for Schools (2008)

5.2: Definition of Bullying Behaviour

Core Definition of Bullying Behaviour

Bullying is targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society.

The core elements of this definition is further described below:

- **Targeted behaviour:** Bullying is deliberate, unwanted behaviour that causes harm to others, and where the student displaying bullying behaviour knows that their behaviour is or will be perceived as harmful by the child or young person experiencing the behaviour. Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. The harm can be physical (for example, personal injury, damage to or loss of property), social (for example, withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion) and/or emotional (for example, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety) and can have a serious and long-term negative impact on the student experiencing the bullying behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying but, importantly, must still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour.
- **Repeated behaviour:** Bullying takes the form of a systematic pattern of behaviour which is repeated over time. Single offline incidents of intentional negative behaviour involving an imbalance of power are not considered bullying but must still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour. Posting a single harmful message/image/video online, and which is highly likely to be reposted or shared with others can therefore be seen as bullying behaviour.
- **Imbalance of power:** In incidents of bullying, the student experiencing the bullying behaviour finds it hard to defend themselves as a result of the abuse of a real or perceived imbalance of power. This imbalance of power may manifest itself through differences in size, strength, age, ability, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, race, ethnic origin including membership of the Traveller and/or Roma communities, sexual orientation, In incidents of online (or cyber) bullying, the imbalance of power may relate to online anonymity, technical proficiency and possession of information/images/video, and the inability of the targeted student to remove offensive online material or escape the bullying.

Behaviour that is not Bullying Behaviour

- A once-off instance of negative behaviour towards another student is not bullying behaviour. However, a single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be visible to a wide audience and has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and so becomes repeated behaviour.
- Disagreement between students, or instances where students don't want to be friends or to remain friends, is not considered bullying behaviour unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others including deliberate manipulation of friendship groups.

- Some students with special educational needs may have social communication difficulties which may make them communicate their needs through behaviours that can hurt themselves or others. It is important to note that these behaviours are not deliberate or planned but, in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they can't control.
- Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. If repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying.

These behaviours, while not defined as bullying, can be distressing. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

Criminal Behaviour

- Bullying behaviour can be considered criminal behaviour under certain circumstances and legal consequences can apply. The age of criminal responsibility in Ireland is 12 years.
- Some online behaviour may be illegal, and students need to be aware of the far-reaching consequences of posting inappropriate or harmful content online. In cases of intimate imagery, the Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020, also known as Coco's Law, criminalises the nonconsensual sharing of intimate images and also criminalises threatening to share these images.
- If bullying behaviour involves physical violence or threats of violence, it may be considered assault.
- If bullying involves discrimination or hate speech targeting a student based on their race, religion, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation or membership of the Traveller community, it may be considered a hate crime under the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act (1989), and those engaging in such behaviour may face criminal charges.
- If bullying behaviour involves sexual harassment or sexual assault, this may also be considered criminal behaviour.

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

When Bullying Behaviour Becomes a Child Protection Concern

Section 10 of the Children First Act (2015) places a statutory obligation on schools, as a 'provider of a relevant service' to ensure, as far as practicable, that each child attending the school is safe from harm while attending school or otherwise participating in school activities. The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (Revised 2023) provide that all school staff should report reasonable concerns to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) or DDLP, who may take advice and/or report the concerns to Tusla. All school staff may, if they believe that a report should be made to Tusla, but has not been made by the DLP or DDLP send a report to Tusla directly themselves.

Generally, bullying behaviour can be addressed without the involvement of Tusla. However, bullying behaviour may become a child protection concern when it results in significant physical or emotional harm, or where it becomes a persistent and severe problem and measures taken to address it are not effective. In determining when bullying behaviour should be reported to Tusla the following factors will be considered:

- the impact on the child
- protective/appropriate action taken by the parents
- protective/appropriate action taken by the school
- engagement of child/family with support services such as NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service)

If there is doubt about whether bullying behaviour is a child protection concern the school will contact Tusla's social work department for advice. This will enable the social worker to explore the situation with school staff and provide advice on the best course of action.

5.3 Types of Bullying Behaviour and How Bullying Behaviour Occurs

Bullying behaviour can take many forms, which can occur separately or together. These can include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

Direct Bullying Behaviour

Physical bullying behaviour:

- Physical bullying behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping students. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While students can often engage in 'mess fights' they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.
- Personal property can be a focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, schoolbooks and other learning material or interference with a student's locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

Verbal bullying behaviour:

- Continual name calling directed at a student which hurts, insults or humiliates the student should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name calling of this type refers to physical appearance; for example, size or clothes worn or gender identity. It can also refer to a student's accent, distinctive voice characteristics, academic ability, race or ethnic origin.

Written bullying behaviour:

- Written bullying behaviour includes writing insulting remarks about a student in public places, passing around notes about or drawings of a student.

Extortion:

- Bullying behaviour can involve extortion. Extortion is where something is obtained through force or threats.

Indirect Bullying Behaviour

Exclusion:

- Exclusion bullying behaviour occurs where a student is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded or ignored by a student or group of students.

Relational:

- Relational bullying behaviour occurs when a student's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. Common forms include control: 'Do this or I won't be your friend anymore'; a group of students ganging up against one student; nonverbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a student; giving a student the 'silent treatment'; and the deliberate manipulation of friendship groups to make someone unpopular.

Online bullying behaviour:

- Online bullying behaviour (cyberbullying) is carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text or direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, email, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chatrooms and other online technologies. This form of bullying behaviour can include:
 - sending or sharing nasty, insulting, offensive, and/or intimidating messages or images via text messages, emails, direct messages or other websites or apps
 - posting information considered to be personal, private and sensitive without consent
 - making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other students
 - excluding or disrupting access to a student on purpose from online chat groups, access to accounts or from an online game

Even though a message may be posted online just once by a student it can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be seen by a wide audience where it is intended to be shared or has a likelihood of being shared multiple times and is thus repeated.

Note: 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.

Other types of Bullying Behaviour:

- **Disablist bullying behaviour:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of a perceived or actual disability or additional need
- **Exceptionally able bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their high academic ability or outstanding talents
- **Gender identity bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual gender identity
- **Homophobic/transphobic (LGBTQ+) bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual membership of the LGBTQ+ community
- **Physical appearance bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their physical appearance. Students who 'look different' can be mocked or criticised about the shape, size or appearance of their body
- **Racist bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their race or ethnic origin which includes membership of the Traveller or Roma community.
- **Poverty bullying:** behaviour that intends to humiliate a student because of a lack of resources
- **Religious identity bullying:** behaviour that intends to harm a student because of their religion or religious identity
- **Sexist bullying:** behaviour that intends to harm a student based on their sex, perpetuating stereotypes that a student or a group of students are inferior because of their sex
- **Sexual harassment:** any form of unwanted verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on sex which affects the dignity of the student

5.4 Where bullying behaviour can occur

Bullying behaviour can happen anywhere, online or offline and at any time, but there are certain places and times where bullying behaviour can be more likely to occur. These can include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

Inside School

School physical environments can have a significant influence on social relationships among students and can impact on the ability of school staff to effectively prevent and address bullying. Well-designed school environments play a vital role in preventing bullying behaviour and promoting inclusion, positive relationships, and a safe and supportive learning environment.

School yard: Bullying behaviour can take place in the school yard. School grounds with hidden or obscure parts may provide an environment where bullying behaviour is more likely to occur. Supervision is in place at sos and lón each day in outdoor recreation areas.

In the classroom: Bullying behaviour can take place in class. It may occur subtly through glances, looks, sniggers or may take the more overt form of physical intimidation or deliberate isolation. Bullying behaviour may also occur between class periods when the students or the teacher moves. All teachers are made aware of their obligation to be alert to bullying behaviour in their classrooms and on corridors between classes.

Other areas: Bullying behaviour can take place in other areas such as toilets, corridors, cloakrooms, locker areas, changing rooms, showers, gym, canteen and assembly hall. Supervision is in place during assembly for PE classes and in the canteen and toilet block areas during sos and lón.

Outside of 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, Coláiste na hInse will ensure the required supports are made available to the students involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, the school will deal with it in accordance with the procedures outlined in this Bí Cineálta policy.

5.5 Impact and Signs of Bullying Behaviour

Impact of experiencing bullying behaviour

When students experience bullying behaviour, it can have a severe and profound impact on them in both the short and long term.

- Students may develop feelings of stress, insecurity, humiliation and anxiety and therefore become more vulnerable.
- Experiencing bullying behaviour can have a detrimental effect on students' experience of education and education outcomes.
- A student's self-confidence may be damaged with a resulting lowering of their self-esteem which can continue into adulthood.
- Extreme cases of bullying behaviour may contribute to mental health difficulties.

Signs of Bullying

Signs that may indicate that a student is experiencing bullying behaviour include but are not limited to the following:

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school; for example, requesting parents to drive or collect them, changing travel routes, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school.
- Not wanting to go to school, refusal to attend.
- A change in how the student performs in school, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school.
- Pattern of physical illnesses for example, headaches, stomach aches

- Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour which may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or after school holidays.
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress for example, stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting.
- Spontaneous out of character comments about either students or teachers
- Possessions missing or damaged.
- Increased requests for money or stealing money.
- Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing.
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling them.

The above signs do not necessarily mean that a student is experiencing bullying behaviour. However, if these signs occur over a period of time or if a number occur together, it may be an indication that the student is experiencing bullying behaviour.

5.6 Students who may be more at risk of experiencing bullying behaviour.

It is important to note that bullying behaviour can be experienced by anyone. Bullying behaviour can be directed at individuals for no obvious reason, or it can be more overt based on a student's identity or societal issues.

At risk groups can include:

- Students who have additional learning needs.
- Students with disabilities.
- Students from an ethnic minority background and migrant students.
- Students who are members of the Traveller and Roma communities.
- Students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+).
- Students who practise or display a religious faith.
- Students experiencing homelessness.
- Students experiencing health or mental health issues.

5.7 Impact of Witnessing Bullying Behaviour

- Students who witness bullying behaviour can also be impacted in a similar way to those who experience bullying behaviour.
- These students may be afraid to tell someone because of a fear of reprisals for telling or a fear of making the situation worse.
- Students who witness bullying behaviour may feel guilt or anxiety for not helping the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour.

5.8 Impact of engaging in bullying behaviour

- Those who engage in bullying behaviour can display aggression, antisocial behaviour and lower academic achievement.

- Students who display bullying behaviour often fail to recognise the impact of their actions and may lack empathy. They may avoid responsibility and deny or minimise their actions when confronted. Long term, these students may find it hard to form long term relationships and they may express feelings of isolation and depression.
- Some students who engage in bullying behaviour have learned attitudes and behaviours which can undermine their ability to integrate themselves into their peer group. They may suffer from low self-esteem or insecurity and may have been bullied themselves.
- Students may also display or engage in bullying behaviour out of ignorance or because they are uncomfortable with another student's perceived difference.

5.9 Preventing Bullying Behaviour

The Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (2019) provides the following four key areas that are essential for a holistic, whole school approach to wellbeing promotion and the prevention of Bullying Behaviour.

- Culture and Environment
- Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)
- Policy and Planning
- Relationships and Partnerships.

These four areas are considered by Coláiste na hInse while developing 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 staff 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.
- Open communication between the board of management, school staff, students and their parents help to foster a collaborative approach and shared responsibilities in relation to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.
- The school leadership team influences the school culture and set the standards and expectations for the school community when preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.
- Each member of school staff has a responsibility to develop and maintain a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and to take a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.
- Students can shape the school culture by promoting kindness and inclusion within their peer group and maintain a positive and supportive school environment for all.

- Parents, as active partners in their child’s education, can help foster an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated through promoting empathy and respect.
- **A Telling Environment:** It is important that the school community supports a ‘telling’ environment, where students should feel comfortable to talk about concerns regarding bullying behaviour.
- **Clear reporting procedures:** Students and staff must be very clear about how to report bullying and what happens when a report is made.
- **A Trusted Adult:** The concept of ‘a trusted adult’ is promoted in Coláiste na hInse though all our interactions with students. All staff in Coláiste na hInse support this strategy by letting students know that they can talk to them.
- The trusted adults in Coláiste na hInse will reassure the student that they have done the right thing by reporting the behaviour. The trusted adult should, without delay, inform the member of staff who has responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour – Réaltóir, leas-Príomhoide or Príomhoide.

Safe Physical Spaces

The creation of safe physical spaces supports psychological safety and is an important measure to prevent bullying behaviour. Coláiste na hInse creates safe physical spaces by:

- Ensuring good lighting is present to avoid dark corners or spaces
- Remove visual barriers from windows such as posters. All classrooms in the school have vision panels installed.
- All reasonable measures are taken to ensure adequate supervision during sos and lón. Additional personnel are assigned to the areas outside all toilet blocks.
- Artwork and signage are used to promote the school’s values such as equality, diversity, inclusion and respect.
- Lunchtime clubs and activities are encouraged to engage students in positive pursuits.

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning):

Teaching and learning that is collaborative and respectful should be promoted.

- Students should have regular opportunities to work in small groups with their peers, which can help build sense of connection, belonging and empathy among students.
- SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education) aims to help students to feel empowered to create, nurture and maintain respectful and healthy relationships with themselves and others.
- The RSE (Relationships and Sexuality Education) strand of the specification also provides space for students to examine and consider relationships and human sexuality which can foster an understanding of diversity which may help to reduce gender and identity-based bullying as well as sexism and sexual harassment.
- Coláiste na hInse’s religious education programme promotes diversity and inclusion.

- In Civic Social and Political Education (CSPE), there is a focus on the interdependence of people in communities, at local as well as national and international levels.
- History and, at Senior Cycle, Politics and Society can be used to raise awareness of racism and colonialism.
- Ongoing school initiatives support a positive environment and an anti-bullying ethos. These include:
 - Bí Cineálta Posters displayed around the school
 - 1st Year Induction programme
 - Bonding trips and activities
 - Dearfacht system including Lá Dearfacht
 - Realtá na Míosa
 - Cinnirí programme
 - Tionóil programme
- Check and Connect (NCSE – National Council for Special Education)
- Stand-up week
- Morning club
- Nurture Programme

5.10 Policy and planning

Relevant school policies already in place, being developed or under reviewed are written with reference to this Bí Cineálta Anti-Bullying Policy.

The following policies and programmes are particularly relevant.

Code of behaviour	Child safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment
Special Education Needs Policy	Health and Safety Statement
Wellbeing Policy	SPHE and RSE Policy
Whole school Guidance and Counselling Policy	Anti-harassment and dignity in the workplace policy
Wellbeing policy	ICT Acceptable Use Policy for ICT
CCTV Policy	Suspension and Expulsion Policy
Anti-racism and intercultural education policy	Mobile phone and technical devices policy

Relationships and Partnerships

Strong interpersonal connections are a vital part of effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. In Coláiste na hInse these interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures and initiatives, including:

- Junior and Senior Student Support Teams – weekly support meetings - Principal, Deputy Principal's, Réaltóirí, Career Guidance Counsellors and Additional Education Needs (AEN) co-ordinator.

- Anti-bullying workshops and seminars for both students and parents
- Supporting active student participation in school life e.g. student council
- Supporting active parent/guardian participation in school life e.g. clear communication channels between home and school
- Promoting activities that build empathy, respect and resilience
- Peer mentoring programme
- Prefect programme
- Promoting acts of kindness
- Management, staff, students and their parents in the development, implementation and review of their school's Bí Cineálta policy and student friendly version is essential to effectively prevent and address bullying behaviour

Preventing Specific Types of Bullying Behaviour

Preventing cyberbullying behaviour

- Complete ban on the use of mobile phones and SMART watches in Coláiste na hInse
- 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.
- Acceptable use policy for technology
- Coláiste na hInse regularly hosts online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online.
- Where ICT is used as part of teaching and learning, teachers closely supervise to ensure devices are being used for correct purposes.

Preventing Homophobic/Transphobic Bullying Behaviour

- Maintaining an inclusive physical environment e.g. by displaying relevant information.
- Encouraging peer support – peer mentoring programme.
- 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

- Fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated e.g. multi-cultural events.
- Cultural diversity of the school is visible and on display.
- Workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of racism.
- Peer support through our peer mentoring programme.
- 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 to encourage communication with their parents/guardians.
- Inviting speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds.
- Library reading material and textbooks represent students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Preventing sexist bullying behaviour

- Ensure members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex.
- Ensure all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex e.g. equal access to all curricular subjects.
- Celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contributions of all students
Organising awareness campaigns, workshops and presentations on gender equality and respect e.g. women in technology.
- Using the updated SPHE specifications to teach students about healthy relationships and how to treat each other with respect and kindness.
- Promoting positive role models within the school community.
- Challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment.

5.11 Procedures for 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.

The teachers with specific responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour are as follows:

- Eilis Flood (Principal and Designated Liaison Person)
- Sarah Ross (Deputy Principal and Deputy Designated Liaison Person)
- Martin McCabe (Deputy Principal)
- Gabrielle Harte (Deputy Principal)
- Reáitoirí

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 to be taken in Dealing with Bullying Incidents

Reporting procedures for Students:

Who to tell?

- Caomhnóir
- Reáltóir
- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Guidance Counsellor
- Any staff member with whom the student feels comfortable
- Parents
- Friends who will speak on your behalf

How to tell?

- Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, e.g. after class, hand note up with homework
- Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school
- Get a parent or friend to tell on your behalf
- Parents can inform the school either by phone or via email
- Bystanders can inform an appropriate person
- Use Anti-Bullying Reporting Tool on the school website
- Record bullying during anti-bullying audit (1 audit per term).

Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Reported Bullying Incidents by staff:

- If a student informs you of an incidence of bullying affecting either themselves, a friend or a parent or guardian, follow these steps:
 - Listen; encourage the student to tell their story as this is a very important first step.
 - Ask the student to complete the 'Bullying Record Form (1) (Appendix 1)
 - Reassure and tell the student help is available.
 - Confidentiality is respected and the student's privacy is protected, but a teacher must not give guarantees not to tell anyone.
 - Be sure that the student is not in immediate danger – if you think they are report it to the DLP or DDLP immediately (using the red child protection form available outside the Principal's office).
 - Inform the relevant Caomhnóir and give them the completed Bullying Record Form (1)

- Caomhnóir reads the form so they are aware of the situation and can support the student.
- Caomhnóir informs the Réaltóir and gives them the completed Bullying Report Form (1)
- All serious incidents of bullying (e.g. an assault or long-term exclusion) should be reported to the Réaltóir straight away.
- Once the issue has been resolved by the réaltóir, the réaltóir should inform the reporting teacher and the reporting teacher should check in with the student to ensure that the bullying is no longer occurring.
- In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher (Bullying Form (3) – Appendix 3) and given to the Principal / Deputy Principal.

In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:

- Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
- Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
- Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and
- Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents, Caomhnóir, Réaltóir or the school Principal or Deputy Principal.

Procedures for Réaltóir Investigating Reported Incidents of Bullying Behaviour:

How to investigate the alleged bullying:

In investigating and dealing with bullying the focus will be on resolving the interpersonal issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved - rather than appointing blame. In investigating and dealing with bullying, the Réaltóir, Deputy Principal or Principal will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved. Incidents of bullying will be investigated in a calm, unemotional problem-solving manner. Incidents of bullying will generally be investigated outside of the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved. All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard for the rights of students, irrespective of whether they are allegedly involved in bullying behaviour or in a position to provide information about the behaviour being investigated.

- Talk with alleged offender about their behaviour and their experiences of incidents mentioned.
- Have the alleged offender complete the Bullying Report Form (1) (Appendix 1) as early as possible.

- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first and each student should complete the Bullying Report Form. Thereafter, all those involved can be met as a group of deemed appropriate.
- Determine if bullying behaviour has occurred.
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant Reáltóir that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken.
- Parents should be given the opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their students.
- Where it has been determined that a student has been engaging in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and efforts should be made to try and get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the student being bullying. Ask student to complete Bullying Reflection Form (2) (Appendix 2).
- Discuss possible solutions with both parties separately/together if appropriate. The evidence will be evaluated, and fair appropriate action will be taken in accordance with the code of behaviour.
- All parties will be referred to the guidance counsellor if deemed necessary.
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of students and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the student being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.
- If deemed necessary restorative meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view of possibly bringing them together at a later date if the student who was being bullied is ready and agreeable.
- If a parent is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with these procedures, they should be referred to the school's complaints procedure (see school website).
- In the event that a student and/or parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, a student and/or parent 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 Office of the Ombudsman for Children can be contacted at ococomplaint@oco.ie.

Follow-up steps to be taken

- Counselling will be offered to all concerned where deemed necessary.
- The incident will be monitored on a regular basis by informal discussions and class surveys where possible.
- If necessary, the parents will be invited to a meeting with management.
- If bullying persists the Principal, Deputy Principal and/or Board of Management will be informed.

Requests to take no action

A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than 'look out' for them. The student may not want to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They may feel that telling someone might make things more difficult for them.

Where this occurs, it is important that the member of staff shows empathy to the student, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the student to work out together what steps can be taken to address the matter and how their parents will be informed of the situation. It is important that the student who has experienced bullying behaviour feels safe.

Parents may also make schools aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action. Parents should put **this request in writing** to the school or be facilitated to do so where there are literacy, digital literacy or language barriers. However, while acknowledging the parent's request, schools may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

Sanctions for Dealing with Cases of Bullying

Where necessary, sanctions may be imposed on the student(s) who were engaged in bullying behaviour. Following meetings with parents/guardians, sanctions may include verbal reprimands, temporary removal from class, withdrawal of privileges, school community service (obair pobail), rang feabhais, internal suspension, external suspension, and permanent exclusion from school.

Restorative Practice will also be implemented. This places relationships at the core of all problem solving. Bullying is viewed as a violation of people, property, and relationships. The practice involves getting the pupil who engages in the bullying behaviour to reflect upon his/her unacceptable behaviour, experience a sense of remorse, and act to restore a damaged relationship with both the student who is bullied and/or the class and school community.

The essence of Restorative Practice is to bring about good or tolerable relationships when things have gone wrong. It seeks to heal the hurt that has occurred; to put it behind both the student who is bullied and the student who engaged in bullying behaviour. It puts repairing harm done to relationships over and above the need to assign blame and dispense sanctions.

Supports for students affected by bullying

The school will put in place a programme of support for student who have been bullied. The programme where appropriate will involve the following elements:

- Offered appropriate counselling; and
- Provided with opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their social skills and to build their resilience.

Students who have been involved in bullying behaviour may be:

- Provided with counselling to help them to learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others; and
- Provided with appropriate opportunities to build their self-esteem and feelings of self-worth

Students who observe incidents of bullying behaviour will be encouraged to discuss them with their teachers and their parents and to avail of counselling where they feel it may assist them to cope effectively with what they have experienced.

5.12 School Oversight Procedures

At each meeting of the board of management the principal will present an update on the number of incidents of bullying behaviour and the measures taken to prevent and address bullying behaviour since the previous meeting.

The purpose of the update is to inform discussion at board level on the effectiveness of the measures that the school is taking to prevent and address bullying behaviour and the effectiveness of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy.

The update will include the following:

- the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting
- the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that are currently ongoing
- the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the beginning of the school year

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

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

This update will not include any personal information or information that could identify the students involved. The minutes of the board of management meeting will document the number of new incidents of bullying behaviour, the number currently ongoing and the total number of incidents of bullying behaviour since the beginning of the school year as reported by the principal.

The minutes should also note where the board has considered the bullying behaviour verbal update and document when the board has decided that an urgent review of the school's Bi Cineálta policy is required.

The principal will use the template in Appendix 4 as a basis for this report.

Section 6: Review and Evaluation

Coláiste na hInse's Bí Cineálta policy will be reviewed each calendar year or as soon as practicable where the board of management determines that a review is warranted.

The review will be completed with input from the school community which includes the board of management, staff, students and their parents and members of the wider school community (as appropriate).

Coláiste na hInse will engage with our student council and our parents/guardians to obtain their views on the content and effectiveness of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy.

The template contained in Appendix E must be completed to confirm that all aspects of the annual review are completed.

Aside from the annual review, as part of good practice Coláiste na hInse will seek feedback on the implementation of our Bí Cineálta policy on a regular basis. Open discussions with school staff, students and parents around approaches taken to prevent and address bullying behaviour can help support effective implementation.

Where bullying behaviour has had a serious adverse impact on a student, Coláiste na hInse will review the measures taken to prevent and address bullying behaviour, with a view to identifying lessons that could be learned, to prevent a similar situation arising in the future. This may require an update to the school's Bí Cineálta policy.

The school community must be given notice that the annual review has taken place and the form included at Appendix F will be used for this purpose. This confirmation should be published on the school website once the annual review has taken place.

Section 7: Summary of appendices

Appendix 1	Bullying Record Form 1	This form is used to make a record of alleged bullying behaviour among daltaí
Appendix 2	Bullying record form 2	This form is used for reflection on bullying behaviour
Appendix 3	Bullying record form 3	This form is used when a staff member feels bullying behaviour has not been adequately addressed (given to deputy principal/principal)
Appendix 4	Bullying Behaviour Update for Board of Management	This report is presented to the board of management by the principal at each meeting
Appendix 5	Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy	The school's policy must be reviewed at least once per year, or more frequently if deemed necessary.
Appendix 6	Consultation with School Community	Details of when and how members of the school community were consulted on review of policy.
Appendix 7	Bí Cineálta Policy Review Checklist	This checklist is used while reviewing the policy by the board of management
Appendix 8	Student friendly version of bí Cineálta policy	This summary of the policy will be displayed around the school building

Appendix 1

Bullying Record Form (1)

(Please return to Réaltóir)

Student Name:	
Rang group:	
Date:	

Please answer the following questions in as much detail as possible:

What Happened?
Where did it happen?
When did it happen?
Who was involved?
Why do you think this happened?

Signed by reporting teacher: _____ Date: _____

To be completed by Réaltóir only:

Details of Actions taken by Réaltóir

Relevant people notified (where applicable and required)

Person	tick	Name	Date
Caomhnóir			
Réaltóir			
Other Réaltóir			
Leas-Phríomhoide			
Príomhoide			
Guidance Counsellor			
Parent/Guardian			
Reporting teacher			
Other			

Name of Reporting member of staff

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Details of Action taken by Réaltóir

--

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Circle Closed: Yes [] No []

Appendix 2

Bullying Reflection Form (2)

Your Name:	
Rang Group:	
Date:	

Please answer the following questions in as much detail as possible.

What were you thinking at the time?		
Who has been affected by what has happened?		
How do you think they felt at the time?		
What do you think needs to happen next?		
Signed:	Date:	Time:

To be completed by Réaltóir only:

Restorative Meeting

People in attendance
What was discussed
What was agreed
What action was taken (warning, sanctions, referral, agreement, mediation, other?)

Relevant people notified (where applicable and required)

Person	tick	Name	Date
Caomhnóir			
Réaltóir			
Other Réaltóir			
Leas-Phríomhoide			
Príomhoide			
Guidance Counsellor			
Parent/Guardian			
Reporting teacher			
Other			

Signed:	Date:	Circle closed	
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Appendix 3

Bullying Form (3)

Name of staff member making this report:

Name:	Date:
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Name of student being bullied and rang group:

Name:	Rang:
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Source of bullying report/concern

	Name
Student concerned	
Other student	
Parent/Guardian	
Teacher	
Other	

Location of incidents (please tick)

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School bus/on route to or from school	
Other	

Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant boxes)

Physical Aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to property		Intimidation	
Isolation/exclusion		Malicious gossip	
Name calling		Other (specify)	

Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

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Details of Actions Taken to date

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Signed:	Date
Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal	

Appendix 4:

Bullying Behaviour Update for Board of Management

Date of Board of Management Meeting: _____

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

Was there an update given on each of the following where relevant:

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

Yes [] No []

Signed: _____ (Chairperson Board of Management)

Date: _____

Signed: _____ (Principal)

Date: _____

Appendix 5

Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy

To: _____

The Board of Management of Coláiste na hInse wishes to inform you that:

The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of 27/5/25 [date].

This review was conducted in accordance with Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Signed: Wayne Holley (Chairperson Board of Management)
Date: 27/5/2025

Signed: [Signature] (Principal)

Date: 27/5/2025

Appendix 6

Consultation with School Community

Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

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	11/12/2024.	In person meeting.
Students	20/5/2025	email.
Parents	20/5/2025	email
Board of Management	20/5/2025	email
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers		
Date policy was approved: 27/5/2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: 22 nd October 2024		

Signed: Wayne Harding
(Chairperson to the Board)

Signed: [Signature]
(Principal – Secretary to Board)

Date: 27/5/2025

Date: 27/5/2025

Date of next review: 2nd Sept 2026

Appendix 7

Bí Cineálta Policy Review Checklist

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

1. When did the Board formally adopt its Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour in accordance with the *Bí Cineálta Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*? Insert date when the Bí Cineálta policy was last adopted by the school.

27 / 5 / 20 25

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

Displayed on all classroom doors.

3. What date did the Board publish the Bí Cineálta policy and the student-friendly policy on the school website? 28 / 5 / 20 25

4. How has the student-friendly policy been communicated to students?

Caomhnoiri have gone through the policy with their own rang group.

5. How has the Bí Cineálta policy and student-friendly policy been communicated to parents

Policy is available to parents on parent portal on website.
All parents were emailed a copy of policy.

6. Have all school staff been made aware of the, school's Bí Cineálta policy and the *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying* Yes No

7. Does the Bí Cineálta policy document the strategies that the school Yes No

uses to prevent bullying behaviour?

8. Has the Board received and minuted the Bullying Behaviour Update presented by the principal at every ordinary board meeting over the last calendar year? Yes No

9. Has the Board discussed how the school is addressing all reports of bullying behaviour? Yes No

10. Is the Board satisfied that all incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed in accordance with the school's Bí Cineálta Policy? Yes No

11. Have the prevention strategies in the Bí Cineálta policy been implemented? Yes No

12. Has the Board discussed the effectiveness of the strategies used to prevent bullying behaviour? Yes No

13. How have (a) parents, (b) students and (c) school staff been consulted with as part of the review of the Bí Cineálta Policy?

Discussion at full staff meeting.
Policy presented to parents and students - feedback requested.

14. Outline any aspects of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and/or its

implementation that have been identified as requiring further improvement as part of this review:

School Specific Student Friendly policy (rather than generic) to be developed.

15. Where areas for improvement have been identified, outline how these will be addressed and whether an action plan with timeframes has been developed?

2025/26 academic year

16. Does the student-friendly policy need to be updated as a result of this review and if so why?

Yes, school specific policy to be developed.

17. Does the school refer parents to the complaints procedures if they have a complaint about how the school has addressed bullying behaviour? Yes No
18. Has a parent informed the school that a student has left the school due to reported bullying behaviour? Yes No
19. Has the Office of the Ombudsman for Children initiated or completed an investigation into how the school has addressed an incident of bullying behaviour? Yes No

Appendix 8

Student friendly policy

Appendix 6: Student Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy

Bí Cineálta!

Cóisir na hInne
Cúirt na hOllscoile
2012-2013

We want everyone at our school to feel safe and happy.

If you think that you are being bullied or someone else is being bullied, you need to tell a teacher or another adult that you trust. They will know what to do to help.

Get help!

Tell someone!

Use Anti-Bullying Toolkit on our Student Portal

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

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.

Be Kind

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

Bullying behaviour is when someone keeps being mean or hurtful to others on purpose over and over again.

When it happens a lot.
Not just once.