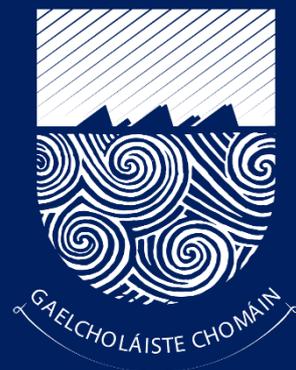


# Gaelcholáiste Chomáin

Ros Dumhach  
Béal an Átha  
Co. Mhaigh Eo  
F26 YR99



Polasaí

## Bí Cineálta

Dáta: 22-05-2025

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Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna  
Mhaigh Eo, Shligigh agus Liatroma  
*1 Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim*  
Education and Training Board

The Board of Management of Gaelcholáiste Chomáin has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

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

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

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

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

## Definition of bullying

Bullying is defined in *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying* and *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* as:

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

The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the *Bí Cineálta* procedures.

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

***It is important to note that 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.***

*To identify if bullying behaviour has occurred three questions need to be considered:*

1. Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?
2. Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?
3. Is the behaviour repeated?

If the answer to each of the questions is **YES**, then the behaviour **IS** bullying behaviour and this behaviour should be addressed using the *Bí Cineálta* Procedures.

If the answer to any of the questions is **NO**, then the behaviour **is not** bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided within the school's Code of Behaviour.

## Section A: Development 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	28/03/25	Staff Training Day Staff Survey
Students	21/03/25	Student Survey
Parents	19/03/25	Parents Survey
Board of Management	22/05/25	Discussion at Meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	20/05/25	Bus Drivers C.L.G. Cill Chomáin
Date policy was approved: 22/05/2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: Not applicable		

The four key areas of wellbeing were considered when developing this policy. These key areas are essential for a holistic approach to wellbeing promotion.

### Culture and Environment

Creating a positive and inclusive school culture is essential for both preventing and addressing bullying. The school should be a place where students and staff feel safe, supported, connected, and that they truly belong. Respectful, caring, and trusting relationships among all members of the school community are fundamental.

Open and ongoing communication between the patron, board of management, school staff, students, and parents fosters a collaborative approach, where everyone shares responsibility for preventing and dealing with bullying.

School leadership plays a key role in shaping the school's culture by setting clear standards and expectations. Every staff member has a duty to uphold a culture where bullying is not accepted and to respond consistently and appropriately when it occurs.

Students contribute to the school environment by encouraging kindness and inclusion within their peer groups, helping to build a positive and supportive atmosphere for all. Parents, as active

partners in their children's education, support this effort by promoting empathy and respect, helping to reinforce that bullying behaviour is not acceptable.

We ensure a positive and inclusive school by:

- Creating and promoting a "telling environment"
- Year Head System creates a sense of having a trusted adult.
- Promotion of Cultural Diversity and Difference
- Our Ethos – Care, Respect, Inclusive and Equality
- Ensuring Universal Access
- Create safe physical spaces
- Appropriate Supervision – Including before and after school, break times and out of school activities.

## Curriculum (Teaching & 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.

The curricular subjects offered to students provide opportunities to foster inclusion and respect for diversity. Schools are encouraged to provide opportunities for students to develop a sense of self worth through both curricular and extracurricular programmes.

This is achieved through:

- SPHE Curriculum
- CSPE Curriculum
- Senior Cycle RSE
- Guidance
- Wellbeing Programme
- SEN
- School Clubs

## Policy & Planning

The wellbeing of the school community should be at the heart of school policies and plans. The following policies can support implementation of a school's Bí Cineálta policy:

- Acceptable Use Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- A student friendly version of the Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour must be displayed.

Engaging in appropriate teacher professional learning courses can support school staff to prevent and address bullying behaviour. School staff should also share their experiences and examples of best practice through Teach Meet sessions and on the school's MS Teams digital platform.

## 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 such as:

- Student Council
- School clubs
- Parents' Association
- Student support teams
- Check & connect programme
- Staff mentoring

The following is considered to help strengthen relationships and partnerships between members of the school community:

- workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying
- supporting activities that build empathy, respect and resilience
- promoting acts of kindness
- teaching problem solving

Members of the wider school community can also assist with the prevention of bullying behaviour in school. These members of the wider school community can be encouraged to report any bullying behaviour to the school as appropriate.

These members may include the following:

- School bus drivers
- Education welfare officers
- Homeschool community liaison officers - from other schools
- School completion project workers
- Local businesses that are close to the school
- NEPS
- Local Youth Projects
- Community Guards

\*SCP – The School Completion Programme is operated on a block basis in Gaelcholáiste Chomáin.

## Section B: Preventing 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. A pro-active approach is encouraged during periods of supervision and staff are assigned designated areas in which to supervise. Supervision is provided before and after school and at morning and lunch breaks. Students are assigned designated areas in which to socialise and eat. Students who may not wish to have their lunch in the main hall are facilitated in the Home Economics room.

Each year group has a designated year head. The year head meets with the class group on a regular basis. Each morning a member of the care team meets all students in the main hall for roll call and a check in.

The school community aims to prevent cyberbullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying, racist bullying, sexist bullying and sexual harassment as outlined in sections 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8 and 5.9 of the Bí Cineálta procedures. The following strategies are used to prevent bullying as per above:

- Promotion of a positive and inclusive school environment and culture
- Effective Leadership
- Whole-school approach
- Fair and transparent Code of Positive Behaviour
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Recognising and Celebrating diversity
- Support for all students
- Promote awareness of bullying (CSPE, SPHE AND RSE Programmes)
- Anti-Bullying workshops/guest speakers
- Effective use of School Completion Programme
- Effective supervision and monitoring of students
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow-up of bullying behaviour
- On going evaluation of the effectiveness of the Cineáltas Procedure

## 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 practical, the relationships of the students involved, rather than to apportion blame. All staff (class teachers, classroom assistants, year heads, guidance, Deputy Principal, Principal, Care team, Ancillary staff) have a responsibility to report suspected incidences of bullying. These should be brought to the attention of the Principal and a Bullying Incident Report Form should be completed ( Appendix 1). 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

### Identifying if Bullying Behaviour has Occurred

#### Step 1: Identifying if Bullying Behaviour has Occurred:

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the teacher should consider the following:

1. Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?
2. Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?
3. Is the behaviour repeated?

If the answer to each of the questions is **YES**, then the behaviour **IS** bullying behaviour and this behaviour should be addressed in line with the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

If behaviour is deemed as bullying, then it is important that all school staff should know what to do when bullying behaviour is reported to them or when they witness bullying behaviour.

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the teacher should consider the following: what, where, when and why?

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

Where the student displaying the bullying behaviour is not a student in the school, but the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour is a student in the school, the school should

support the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as appropriate and engage with them and their parents to determine what steps can be taken.

## Step 2: Where Bullying Behaviour has Occured:

School staff should know what to do when bullying behaviour is reported to them or when they witness bullying behaviour.

The school will not be 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, we are required to support the students involved.

Where the student displaying the bullying behaviour is not a student in the school, but the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour is a student in the school, the school should support the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as appropriate and engage with them and their parents to determine what steps can be taken.

School staff must be fair and consistent in their approach to address bullying behaviour. Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour need support.

It is important that the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour is engaged with without delay so that they feel listened to, supported and reassured. School staff should identify the supports needed for the student who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties and ensure that their needs are met.

The following principles must be adhered to when addressing bullying behaviour:

- ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured
- seek to ensure the privacy of those involved – unless there is a concern for their safety
- 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

*Parents are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with our school, in addressing bullying behaviour. Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties 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 as outlined in this policy.*

*In circumstances where a student expresses concern about their parents being informed, the school should develop an appropriate plan to support the student and for how their parents will be informed.*

*The school should consider communication barriers that may exist when communicating with parents, for example, literacy, digital literacy or language barriers.*

## All incidents of bullying behaviour must be recorded.

Bullying behaviour must be recorded on the designated reporting form (Appendix 1) and must include the following:

- the form and type of bullying behaviour as per sections 2.5 and 2.7 of the Bí Cineálta procedures
- where and when it took place
- the date of the initial engagement with the students and their parents
- the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour.
- the review with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and their parents in relation to this. It is important to document the date of each of these engagements
- the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools has ceased.
- Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted.
- These records should be retained in accordance with the school's record keeping policy and in line with data protection regulations.

*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.*

## Step 3: Follow up where Bullying Behaviour has Occurred:

- The school must engage with the students involved and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement
- important factors to consider as part of this engagement are the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the students involved
- the school should document the review with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and their parents in relation to this
- the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased should also be recorded
- any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted
- ongoing supervision and support may be needed for the students involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased
- if the bullying behaviour has not ceased the school should review the strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents. A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased
- if it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school consideration should be given to using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the

school's Code of Behaviour. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school

- if a parent(s) is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools. they should be referred to the school's complaints procedures
- if a parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions have had a negative effect on the student

## Supports

The school may seek the support of any of the following when working with students affected by bullying

- Counselling services
- Building self-esteem and developing social skills
- Use of restorative practices to re-build and maintain relationships
- Co-operation with parents
- Referral to outside agencies (if necessary) in co-operation with parents
- National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)
- Oide
- Webwise
- National Parents Council
- Tusla

## Record-Keeping

All bullying behaviour will be recorded on the 'Bullying Incident Report Form' (Appendix 1). 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 practical after there has been a material change in any matter to which this policy refers.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal)

## Appendix 1: Bullying Incident Report Form

1. Name of student being bullied: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name(s) and class(es) of students allegedly engaged in bullying behaviour:

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4. Source of bullying concern/report (tick as relevant):

Student concerned	
Other student(s)	
Teacher	
Parent	
Other	

5. Location of incident(s) (tick as relevant)

School Yard		Classroom	
Bus		Toilets	
Out-of-school		Changing Rooms	
Corridor		Other	

6. Name of person(s) who reported the alleged bullying concern:

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7. Type of bullying behaviour (tick as relevant):

Physical		Gender-identity bullying	
Verbal		Extortion	
Damage to personal property		Written bullying	
Exculsion/isolation		Relational bullying	
Cyber-bullying		Other	
Intimidation			

8. Brief description of bullying behaviour:

9. Impact of bullying behaviour:

10. Details of action taken:

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Follow up procedures:

Date of initial engagement with students and their parents

Student and parental views

Review with students and parents

Date ceased

Engagement with external services