



**Carrigwohill  
Community National School  
(CNS)**

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

The Board of Management of Carrigtwohill Community 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, 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 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 ( eg: 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 a student experiences repeated harm from another student, but the harm was unintentional, it is not considered bullying. However, it must still be dealt with according to 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.
- Disagreements between students are not considered bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

### **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	February 2025	Staff Meeting to inform staff of new Bí Cineálta action plan Questionnaire to get feedback
	May 2025	Sharing of draft policy to make any amendments
Students	April 2025	Questionnaires (results shared with BOM)
Parents	April 2025	Questionnaire to all parents / guardians (results shared with BOM)
	May 2025	Feedback requested from draft policy
Board of Management	June 2025	Review new policy draft – leading to consultation and final ratification after amendments made where necessary.
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers		Consultation as deemed necessary
Date policy was approved:		
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:**

We strive to:

- Create a positive school climate where all students feel safe, respected and valued.
- Promote open communication between staff and pupils.
- Promote diversity and inclusion in all aspects of school life.
- Create a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.
- Remind all staff and students of our anti-bullying policy regularly in assemblies / morning announcements etc.
- Establish clear expectations for behaviour and enforce them consistently.
- Encourage open communication between pupils, staff and parents.
- Support the idea that our school is a telling environment so that children feel comfortable sharing.
- Display anti-bullying signs and messages around the school.
- Create a positive school culture and climate which:
  - > is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity
  - > encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying
  - > promotes respectful relationships across the school community

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

We strive to:

- Provide teaching and promote learning which is collaborative and respectful fostering inclusion and respect for diversity.
- Teach pupils about bullying and its effects.
- Display child friendly posters explaining what bullying is.
- Teach RSE and SPHE lessons which foster pupils' wellbeing and self-confidence as well as promoting personal responsibility for their own behaviour and actions.
- Model respectful behaviour towards colleagues, pupils and visitors in our school environment.
- Acknowledge and celebrate our diverse school population – through celebrations, GMGY, art work, displays etc.

### **Policy and Planning:**

We strive to:

- Develop a clear and consistent anti-bullying policy that is enforced by all staff members.
- Review and update the anti-bullying policy regularly.
- Establish clear procedures for reporting and responding to bullying incidents.
- Inform parents/guardians that all school policies are available to view on the school website, and hard copies can be requested from the school office.
- Display a version of our Bi Cineálta policy that is easy for children to understand around the

school and on our website.

- Include information on the school's Bí Cineálta policy in the welcome meetings at the beginning of each school year.
- Advise staff of CPD opportunities outside of school with education centres.
  - \* The Acceptable Use Policy was developed to include the necessary steps to ensure that access to technology within the school is strictly monitored.
  - \* The following policies are also particularly relevant to bullying include: Code of Behaviour, Child Safeguarding Statement, Risk Assessment, Acceptable Usage Policy.

### **Relationships and Partnerships:**

- Engage parents and students in actively contributing to the formation of a child friendly Anti Bullying policy.
- Encourage open communication between pupils, staff and parents
- Create positive relationships with pupils and families
- Collaborate with community organisations to provide additional support and resources.
- Invite guest speakers to address pupils and parents in relation to different types of bullying.

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

- Promote digital citizenship.
- Explicitly teach the issues of cyberbullying and the importance of using technology safely.
- Monitor pupils' use of technology in the classroom and on school groups through the use of 'Jamf School' device management.
- Open conversations with pupils about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- Promoting online safety events for parents / guardians who are responsible for monitoring children's activities online.

### **Preventing Homophobic / Transphobic Bullying Behaviour:**

- Create a safe and inclusive environment for all pupils, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour and encourage students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour.
- Educate pupils about the importance of respecting all people, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Challenge gender stereotypes.
- Encourage peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities.

### **Preventing Racist Bullying Behaviour:**

- Teach students about the history and impact of racism e.g. Show Racism the Red Card.
- Promote and celebrate diversity and inclusion in the classroom.

- Encourage bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour
- Ensure the class libraries represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

#### **Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour:**

- Teach pupils about the importance of gender equality.
- Celebrate diversity at school and acknowledge the contributions of all students.
- Ensure all staff members 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.

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

- All staff members should take part in ‘active supervision’ and be present and visible in common areas and yards during breaks.
- Rules of the school yard are reviewed and revised continually and communicated to children regularly.
- If parents indicate a worry about a particular child on the yard, all teachers rostered for yard duty are informed of the concern so that the particular concerns can be addressed satisfactorily.
- The class teacher investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour with a view to establishing the facts and records an incident report form on Aladdin.
- Teachers will liaise with Principal or Deputy Principal regarding any reported bullying cases.
- At home - time in the afternoon, members of the Leadership and Management Team supervise to ensure safe exit from the school. No supervision is provided outside the school gate.
- During out of school activities such as matches, swimming, tours etc. provisions are put in place to ensure adequate levels of supervision are put in place.
- All reports of bullying should be investigated promptly and thoroughly.
- The school should take appropriate action to address the bullying behaviour.

## **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 practicable, the relationships of the students involved, rather than to apportion blame.*

The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour is (are) as follows:

- The class teacher will oversee recording of bullying reports for students in their class – this includes using the procedure guidelines to investigate reports of bullying and reporting to principal or deputy principal in order to record bullying behaviour on the correct form on Aladdin.

- Class teacher will follow up after twenty days to investigate if bullying has ceased.
- All staff will be vigilant to bullying behaviour.
- Principal will inform the 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

The steps that will be taken by the school to determine if bullying behaviour has occurred, the approaches taken to address the bullying behaviour and to review progress are as follows:

#### **Identifying if Bullying Behaviour has Occurred:**

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour we will consider the following questions:

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

If the answer to each of the questions above is **yes**, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour and the behaviour should be addressed using the Bí Cineálta procedures.

If the answer to any of the questions is **no**, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour and the teacher should refer to the schools Code of Behaviour.

*Note: One off incidents may be considered bullying in certain circumstances. A single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and thus becomes a repeated behaviour.*

Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the school will consider what, where, when and why?

- If a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first.
- Thereafter, all students involved can be met as a group, if appropriate. At the group meeting,

each student should be asked for their account of what happened.

- 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).

*A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved.*

### **Where bullying behaviour has occurred;**

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

- Record all incidents of bullying behavior (using appendix B)
- Document the following details:
  - Type and form of bullying behavior (if known).
  - Where and when it took place.
  - The date of the first engagement with the students and their parents.
- Include the views of students and parents on actions to address the bullying.
- A record will be kept on Aladdin of the engagement with all involved.

### **Determining if bullying behaviour has ceased:**

- Teachers must engage with the student and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement to review progress. Factors to consider in the review include:
  - the nature of the bullying
  - the effectiveness of strategies use to address the bullying behaviour
  - the relationship between the students involved
- The date that bullying behaviour has ceased should be recorded.
- Any engagement with external services should be noted.
- Ongoing supervision and support may be needed for the students involved.
- If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the teacher should review the strategies use in consultation with the students involved and their parents and a timeline agreed for further engagement.
- Where it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school should consider 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 school.
- 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 complaints procedure.
- In the event that a student and/or parent is dissatisfied following the complaints procedure, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for children.

### **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.

### **Support:**

The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour.

#### **Supporting students who experience bullying:**

- **Rapid Response:** Promptly investigate and resolve bullying incidents to halt the behaviour swiftly.
- **Reassurance and Support:** Affirm that the targeted student is not at fault, commend them for speaking up, and provide appropriate support.
- **Parental Involvement:** Inform and engage the parents or guardians of the affected student.
- **Follow-Up:** Conduct a review with the student and their parents 20 school days after the initial report to ensure the bullying has ceased.
- **Confidence Building:** Encourage participation in activities that foster friendships and social skills, such as group work, team sports, and extracurricular programs.
- **Skill Development:** Offer guidance on assertiveness, emotional regulation, and anger management as needed.
- **Professional Support:** Refer to counselling or external services like NEPS or Tusla when appropriate.

#### **Supporting students who witness bullying:**

- **Creating a 'Telling' Environment:** Display a student-friendly version of the school's Bí Cineálta policy in visible areas to encourage reporting.
- **Education and Empowerment:** Teach students about the importance of reporting bullying and provide clear guidance on how to do so.
- **Acknowledgment:** Recognise and praise students who report bullying incidents, reinforcing positive behaviour.

#### **Supporting students who display bullying behaviour:**

- **Relational approach:** Focus on helping students understand the impact of their actions and work towards restoring relationships.

- Behavioural Interventions: Implement strategies aligned with the school's Code of Behaviour to address and correct inappropriate behaviour.
- Parental Engagement: Involve parents or guardians in developing and implementing strategies to address the behaviour.
- Monitoring and Review: Regularly assess the effectiveness of interventions and make necessary adjustments.
- External Support: Seek assistance from professionals or agencies when additional support is needed.

### **Outside agency support:**

The school in certain circumstances may also seek the support and advice of TUSLA, EWO, NEPS, NCSE, second level school support services, HSE and any other agency deemed appropriate to support the school in dealing with incidents of bullying.

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: **Liam Ahern**  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: 10th June 2025

Signed: **Teresa Coughlan**  
(Principal)

Date: 10th June 2025