St Conleth's Infant School

Bí Cineálta Policy

to

Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of St. Conleth's Infant School has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

This policy fully complies with the requirements of Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2024. The Board of Management acknowledges that bullying behaviour interferes with the rights of the child as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We all, as a school community, have a responsibility to work together to prevent and address bullying behaviour and to deal with the negative impact of bullying behaviour. Ireland ratified the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child1 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 (personal injury, damage to or loss of property)

➢ Social: (withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion)

➢ Emotional: (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:

o If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour, but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying, but, importantly, **must be addressed under the school 's code of behaviour.**

o 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.

o Disagreement between students is not considered bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

Types of Bullying:

There are many different types of bullying behaviour. These can include directing bullying at someone focused on the following: disability, exceptional ability, gender identity, LGBTQ+ , physical appearance, racism, poverty status, religious identity, sexism and sexual harassment. This is not an exhaustive list.

Bullying can be Direct:

• Physical: pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping students. Physical assault. Destruction of personal property.

• Verbal: continual name calling which insults, humiliates the student – this may refer to physical appearance, clothes, gender, accent, academic ability, race or ethnic origin.

• Written: Writing insulting remarks in public places, passing notes or drawings about the student.

• Extortion: where something is obtained through force or threats

Bullying can be Indirect:

• Exclusion: where a student is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded or ignored by a student or group of students.

• Relational: Where a student's attempts to form friendships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined, threats, non-verbal gesturing, malicious gossip, spreading rumours, silent treatment and manipulation of friend groups etc can all form relational bullying for a student.

Online bullying behaviour:

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

This can include:

• Sending or sharing of insulting and offensive or intimidating messages or images via online means as mentioned above.

• Posting information which is personal, private or sensitive without consent.

• Making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other students.

• Exclude/disrupt access to a student on purpose on online chat groups/access to accounts/from an online game.

Identifying if Bullying Behaviour has Occurred

Bullying is defined in 'Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying and Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools' as targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society. The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour you should 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.

Note: as stated previously, 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.

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

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred teachers should 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 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)

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	September 2024	Stage 1: Annemarie and Orla attended an online webinar outlining the requirements of the new Bí Cineálta anti-bullying policy
	January 2025	Annemarie and Orla attended an Oide training day outlining the background, identification strategies and prevention strategies as set out by the guidelines
	February 2025	Staff Meeting – Orla reported the main points of the two training days to the staff and outlined the format of the upcoming half day closure for whole staff training
	March 2025	Half day closure facilitated by Orla where staff were given a summary of the background and theory behind the Bí Cineálta policy and given strategies to identify and address bullying behaviour. Opportunities were provided for discussion surrounding our current practices and what amendments may need to be adopted, particularly in relation to our recording procedure and templates. Questionnaires were drawn up to obtain feedback from our whole school community Opportunity was provided for discussion around the

	April 2025 & November 2026- A cross section of staff May2025 November 2026	development of our child friendly policy and our Bí Cineálta walkway. Questionnaires were distributed to all staff and results correlated. Sharing of draft policy with staff to discuss / consult and make any amendments
Students	April 2025 November 2026 April/May 2025 April/May2026 May/June 2025	Questionnaires were distributed to a cross section of pupils and results were correlated. Children engaged in Stay Safe SPHE programme First Class children developed the Student Bí Cineálta policy with their class teachers and their work is displayed in the Bí Cineálta Walkway. Junior Infants and Senior Infants created murals for the Bí Cineálta Walkway based on the Stay Safe Lessons.
Parents	April 2025 November 2026-a cross section of parents June 2025	Questionnaires were distributed to all parents as part of our information gathering and results were correlated. Evidence of our child friendly policy is displayed on our school website and on our social media. Murals from the Bí Cineálta Walkway are displayed on our schools social media and website.
Board of Management	May 2025 Policy reviewed November '25 and November '26	Review new policy draft – leading to consultation and final ratification after amendments made where necessary.
Date policy was approved: 16th November 2026		
Date policy to be reviewed: November 2027		

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 school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.
- Involve parents as active partners in fostering an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated.
- Support the idea that our school is a telling environment.
- Promote the concept of a trusted adult – stay safe linkage – who to tell?.
- Create safe spaces in our school building and yards – visibility
- Incorporate artwork and signs to promote our school values – creation of a school "Bí Cineálta Walkway" promoting rights – equality, inclusion and respect.
- Encourage a sense of belonging with ownership over their own space through art and creativity.
- Create a positive school culture and climate which
  a) is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
  b) encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non- threatening environment
  c) promotes respectful relationships across the school community;

Ways in which we work to achieve these goals are as follows:

- Staff are briefed on the uniform approach we must take to handle all reports of bullying – this is distributed to staff and a copy is displayed on the Staff Room notice board for ease of access also.
- Friendship week activities such as Random acts of Kindness homework, Poster making, slogan making, etc
- Diversity/Europe week where all nationalities are celebrated.
- Playground helpers – students volunteer to support peers on yard to help with games and positive interactions.
- Child Friendly Anti-Bullying Policy was formed with pupil input and is distributed to parents, children and staff to discuss. This policy outlines various ways to tell.
- Parents receive information at times regarding useful information on Anti Bullying.
- Stay safe and SPHE lessons focusing on positive behaviour form part of curricular content in all classes.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils.
- Class and School Charter development as well as notice board and "walkway" to promote kindness and build responsibility amongst pupils.

Curriculum (teaching and learning)

We strive to:

- Provide teaching and promote learning which is collaborative and respectful, fostering inclusion and respect for diversity.
- Display a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact.

Ways in which we work to achieve this:

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

Policy and planning

The aim of St. Conleth Infant School's Bí Cineálta policy is

- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils, parents/guardians.
- To promote a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To ensure appropriate supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
- To develop procedures for noting, investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To implement a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- To work with appropriate agencies in countering all forms of bullying and promoting anti bullying behaviour.

➢ The Acceptable Use Policy, Supervision policy, Special Education Policy and Code of Behaviour all support the implementation of the Bi Cineálta policy.

- Effective leadership is a key component with Principal, Deputy Principal, DLP, DDLP, and all middle management focused on supporting the implementation of this policy.

Relationships and Partnerships

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

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

Preventing Cyber Bullying, Homophobic/Transphobic bullying, Racist bullying, Preventing sexual harassment.
In addition to previously mentioned strategies, the school has the following in place to prevent and address bullying:

- Staff at all times endeavour to encourage pupils to show respect for each other. Implementation of the SPHE curriculum.
- Positive self-esteem is fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences, by acknowledging good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success.
- Digital Media Policy includes learning about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship. AUP also developed for technology in our school.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed regularly with the pupils.
- Staff are particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of bullying/ being bullied.
- All disclosed incidents of bullying are investigated thoroughly and consistently by following the correct procedure as outlined to staff and recorded using the template for this (See Appendix A)
- School wide awareness raising on all aspects of bullying, supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extracurricular activities.
- Involvement of pupils in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Kindness/ anti-bullying week, and other activities that can help to pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Refer to appropriate online behaviour when using devices and in SPHE lessons.
- Promote online safety events or material for parents
- Shared folder of resources for teaching of bullying
- Challenge gender- stereotypes – equal participation of all leading to equal recognition.
- Foster a culture where diversity is celebrated and students "see themselves" in the school environment.
- Ensuring the library has material with reflects our diverse school population from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
- Modelling of respectful behaviour by staff of all irrespective of sex.
- Ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of gender
- Making clear that our school has a zero tolerance approach to harassment or bullying behaviour of any kind with enforceable policy - See Code of Behaviour.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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 recording bullying behaviour on the correct form on Aladdin
- The DDLP will follow up after twenty days to investigate if bullying has ceased.
- All staff will be vigilant to bullying behaviour.
- Principal will inform Board of Management of incidences of Bullying.
- Deputy principal /SENCO
- Assistant Principal
- Anti- Bullying Policy co-ordinator is available to provide up to date information and supports if needed to assist class teacher in addressing concern

---

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

The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

a) While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the 'Relevant Teacher(s)', the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' will use his/her/their professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
b) If it is established by the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' that bullying has occurred, the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
c) The 'Relevant Teacher(s)' must record the bullying incident in the Bí Cineálta folder by adding an **"Alleged Bullying Behaviour Report".**
The 'Relevant Teacher' **must inform the Principal.**

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame).

With this in mind, the school's procedures are as follows:

- In investigating and dealing with bullying the teacher(s) will exercise his/her/their judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type if it has, and how best the situation might be resolved.

- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the 'Relevant Teacher(s)'. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report instances of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly. Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, SNAs, caretakers and cleaners are encouraged to report any incidences of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or disclosed to them, to the Class Teacher.

- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.

1. On being informed of an alleged incident of bullying, the teacher dealing with the report will first speak to the victim(s) and discuss the feelings which the victim(s) experienced because of the bullying behaviour.
   Initial investigations of bullying will be done in class where possible, but some incidents might be best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.

2. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' should seek answers to questions of what, where, who, when and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
   If a group is involved each member should be interviewed individually at first.

3. Where the 'Relevant Teacher(s)' has/have determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's Bí Cineálta anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the perspective of the pupil being bullied.

4. The "Relevant Teacher" does not apportion blame but should make an effort to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter.

5. When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is identified, the "Relevant Teacher" will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, and the strategy adopted and the suggested intervention , as well as any other relevant information. This will be recorded in the appropriate Bí Cineálta folder and kept in the Principal's office.

   Once an "Alleged Bullying Behaviour Report" has been added to the Bí Cineálta, parents of all pupils involved must be informed.
   The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for the pupil.

6. Follow-Up Where Bullying Behaviour has Occurred

- The teacher 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 teacher 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 teacher 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 Positive 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

7. The School will maintain care for the victim over time. This will be done by speaking to the child a number of weeks after the incident to check on their continuing welfare. The child's parents will also be consulted.

8. If a child makes a report of bullying, but asks that nothing is to be done about it, the relevant teacher will support the child appropriately to explore how it will be handled sensitively and how parents may be notified. If a parent does so, they must submit in writing that they require no further action to be taken, but even so, the school may still deem it necessary to be investigated and handled appropriately.

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

Supporting pupils who exhibit bullying behaviour:

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

- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honourable thing and giving them praise for this,

- Making adequate counselling facilities available to help those who need it learn other ways of meeting their needs besides violating the rights of others

- Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in

Section D: Oversight

The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting using Appendix D.

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 (Appendix E).

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 (see Appendix F)

Signed: _____

(Chairperson of board of management)

Date: 16.11.2026

Signed: _____

(Principal)

Date: 16/11/'26

Appendix A:

"Alleged Bullying Behaviour Report"

This report will be stored in the Bí Cineálta folder and kept in the office.

1. Name of student being bullied: _____

2. Class: _____

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

_____

_____

_____

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:

_____

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

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Reporting Teacher)

Appendix B:

Behaviour monitoring checklist

This checklist will be kept in each yard duty book as a way of monitoring reoccurring behaviours

Is it bullying?

Listen, observe and report if needed.

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

Who is reporting the behaviour?

Who is the behaviour affecting?

Is it happening more than once?