Ballinode Community College

Clarion Road, Ballinode, Sligo 72360M

Bí Cineálta Anti Bullying Policy

Appendix A

School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Ballinode College 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.

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	3rd April 2025	Training Day and Survey
Students	9th April to 1st May 2025	Survey
Parents	4th April to 11th April 25	Survey
Board of Management	27th May 2025	Meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	From 3rd September.	Personal Message from staff member.

Date policy was approved: 27th May 2025
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 (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):
Wellbeing programmes SPHE Racial Awareness/Ethos Week Class tutor anti-bullying questionnaire Social Education, LCA Inclusion for education for students with SEN School Completion project Youth project workers Anti-Bullying awareness week, anti-bullying lessons delivered in SPHE We encourage • students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behavior in a non-threatening environment • students to promote respectful relationships across the school community; • Effective leadership; • A school-wide approach;

- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
- 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.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils.
- Supports for staff;
- Has 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.

Ballinode Community College strives to create a positive school culture and climate which

- is welcoming differences and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
- encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behavior in a non-threatening environment and
- promotes respectful relationships across the school community.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the school community's commitment to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. This policy aims to create a safe and supportive environment for all students, staff, and stakeholders.

2. Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined as repeated, intentional behaviour by an individual or group that causes harm or distress to another individual. This can be physical, verbal, emotional, or cyberbullying.

3. Prevention Strategies

To prevent bullying, the school will implement the following strategies:

- **Education and Awareness**: Assemblies to educate students, staff, and parents about bullying, its effects, and how to prevent it.
- **Positive School Culture**: Promoting a positive, inclusive school culture where diversity is celebrated, and respect is paramount.
- **Student Empowerment**: Encouraging students to speak up against bullying and support their peers.
- **Staff Training**: Providing ongoing training for staff to recognize and address bullying effectively.

4. Reporting and Responding to Bullying

- **Reporting Mechanisms**: Establishing clear, confidential reporting mechanisms for students, staff, and parents to report bullying incidents.
- **Investigation**: Promptly investigating all reports of bullying in a fair and impartial manner.
- **Support:** Providing support and counselling for victims of bullying to help them cope and recover.
- **Consequences for Bullies**: Implementing appropriate disciplinary actions for those found guilty of bullying, in line with the school's Code of Behaviour.

5. Monitoring and Review

- **Regular Monitoring**: Regularly monitoring the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy through surveys, feedback, and incident reports.
- **Policy Review**: Reviewing and updating the policy annually to ensure it remains effective and relevant.

6. Communication

- **Policy Dissemination**: Ensuring that the anti-bullying policy is communicated to all members of the school community, including students, staff, and parents.

Open Dialogue: Encouraging open dialogue about bullying and promoting a culture where

everyone feels comfortable discussing their concerns.

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying and identity-based bullying including, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

Wellbeing Programme ·

- SPHE Curriculum
- CSPE Curriculum
- RSE Programme
- Class Tutor Anti Bullying Questionnaire
- Social Education for LCA
- Inclusive education for students with SEN
- School Completion Project and Youth Liaison project workers
- Anti-Bullying Awareness week with Anti-Bullying Lessons delivered in SPHE class

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

- All areas of high risk monitored
- Check and connect
- Tutors
- Year heads
- School Completion
- HSCL
- Bullying Prevention Strategies Audit (completed by staff on April 3rd, 2025)
- Supervision of corridors, toilets and outside areas during break and lunchtime
- Each staff member has a responsibility for school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable.
- There is a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour
- The promotion of kindness and inclusion is part of our mission statement
- Parents help foster an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated by promoting empathy and respect
- It is important that a school environment promotes a telling environment
- The trusted adult model is ingrained into the school culture
- The school is seen as a safe physical space
- The SPHE specification aims to help students to feel empowered to create, nurture and maintain respectful and healthy relationships with themselves and others
- The Bí Cineálta policy and the student friendly policy are at the heart of our school policy and plan

Supervision and Monitoring Policies

1. General Supervision

- **Increased Staff Presence**: Ensure that staff members are present in key areas of the school during break times, before and after school, and during transitions between classes.
- **Designated Supervision Zones**: Identify and monitor areas where bullying is more likely to occur, such as playgrounds, hallways, toilets, and canteen.

2. Classroom Monitoring

- **Proactive Classroom Management**: Teachers should use proactive classroom management techniques to create a positive and inclusive classroom environment.
- **Regular Check-Ins**: Conduct regular check-ins with students to discuss their well-being and address any concerns they may have.
- **Anonymous Reporting**: Provide students with anonymous reporting options to encourage them to report bullying incidents without fear of retaliation.

3. Online Monitoring

- **Monitoring Software**: On School devices.
- **Digital Citizenship Education**: Teach students about responsible online behaviour and the importance of reporting online bullying.
- **Parental Collaboration**: Work with parents to monitor students' online activities and address any concerns related to online bullying.

4. Incident Reporting and Response

- **Clear Reporting Channels**: Establish clear and accessible reporting channels for students, staff, and parents to report bullying incidents.

- **Immediate Response**: Ensure that all reports of bullying are addressed promptly and

appropriately by designated staff members.

- **Documentation**: Maintain detailed records of all reported bullying incidents, including the actions taken and the outcomes.

5. Support and Intervention

- **Support for Victims**: Inform students of counselling and support services for victims of bullying to help them cope and recover.
- **Intervention for Bullies**: Implement intervention programs for students who engage in bullying behaviour to address the underlying causes and promote positive behaviour change.

6. Policy Review and Improvement

- **Regular Review**: Conduct regular reviews of the supervision and monitoring policies to ensure their effectiveness and make necessary improvements.
- **Feedback Mechanisms**: Gather feedback from students, staff, and parents to identify areas for improvement and ensure the policies remain relevant and effective.

7. Training and Development:

Provide ongoing training for staff on effective supervision and monitoring techniques to prevent and address bullying behaviour

- Morning, Break, Lunch & after school supervision.
- Toilet Supervision
- Monitoring iPads through Classroom App
- Classroom Expectations are displayed in the classrooms
- Tutor Meetings
- Provision of awareness weeks on the topics of racism and bullying.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Bullying behaviour can be reported to any staff member who will bring it to the attention of the Year Head. The Year Head will investigate the bullying behaviour.

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
- act in a timely manner
- inform parents of those involved

The steps that will be taken by the Ballinode Community College to determine if bullying behaviour has occurred, the approaches taken to address the bullying behaviour and to review progress are as follows (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

The following questions will be considered
Did the behavior occur
Is the behavior targeted
Is the behavior intended
Is the behavior repeated

- Each Trusted Adult has a responsibility to report the bullying incident to the Year head. After a Report of Bullying:
- Both students will be interviewed by their Year Heads.
- Records will be kept, and the incident recorded on vsware.
- Students may write an account of what has happened.
- When two or more incidents are reported to the year head, they will investigate and report the incident to the Deputy Principal.
- Further investigation will take place if necessary and a record kept.
- Details and paperwork will be entered into a folder under the students names, stored on one drive with access permitted to Year Heads.
- Deputy Principal & Principal to be emailed to state new entry into folder.
  In cases where the Year Head considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the Year Head in the recording template at Appendix 2

The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

Summary of Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying Behaviour

1. Reporting and Investigation:

Reporting: Any student or parent can report bullying to any teacher or staff member (trusted adult). Non-teaching staff (e.g., secretaries, SNAs) are also encouraged to report incidents.

Year Head Role: The primary goal is to resolve issues and restore relationships, not to assign blame. The year head uses professional judgment to determine whether bullying occurred and how best to address it.

Confidentiality: Investigations should be private, conducted outside the classroom, and handled sensitively.

2. Investigation Process:

All reports, including anonymous ones, must be investigated.

Interviews are conducted with the students involved separately, followed by a group meeting to clarify the accounts.

Written accounts from students may be requested.

The parents of both the victim and the perpetrator should be contacted early to explain the actions being taken.

Teachers should maintain a calm, problem-solving approach during investigations.

3. Intervention and Follow-up:

If bullying is confirmed, the student involved is made aware of the breach of the anti-bullying policy, and efforts are made to understand the situation from the victim's perspective.

Disciplinary actions, if necessary, are a private matter between the school, the student, and their parents.

Follow-up meetings are scheduled to ensure the situation is resolved and, if appropriate, to bring the parties together later.

4. Recording and Documentation:

All incidents are recorded, and relevant details are stored in a folder accessible by year heads, on Sharepoint.

After 20 days, if the bullying has not been resolved, the case must be recorded for further review.

Records are updated and shared with the Deputy Principal and Principal.

Parents who are dissatisfied with the school's handling of a case can appeal to the Board of Management or the Ombudsman for Children.

5. Serious Bullying Cases:

If bullying is severe or abusive, the school must consult with HSE Children and Family Social Services or the Gardaí.

Concerns about a child that are unclear should be discussed with the Designated Liaison Person to determine if further action is needed.

These procedures emphasize the importance of restoring relationships, involving parents, maintaining confidentiality, and acting promptly and professionally to resolve bullying cases.

- Listen to the student
- Parents should be contacted
- A record should be kept of the engagement with all involved
- The deputy principal/principal will follow up after 20 days with the parents and student

Support for Those Who Experience Bullying

1. **Counselling Services**: Provide access to school guidance counsellor or external mental health professionals to help victims cope with the emotional impact of bullying.
2. **Safety Plans**: Develop personalised safety plans to ensure the victim feels safe and supported at school.
3. **Parental Involvement**: Engage parents in the support process, keeping them informed and involved in their child's recovery.
4. **Regular Check-Ins**: Conduct regular check-ins with the victim to monitor their well-being and ensure the bullying has ceased.

Support for Those Who Witness Bullying

1. **Education and Awareness**: Educate students about the importance of reporting bullying and supporting their peers.
2. **Anonymous Reporting**: Provide anonymous reporting options to encourage witnesses to come forward without fear of retaliation.

Support for Those Who Display Bullying Behaviour

1. **Behavioural Interventions**: Implement behavioural intervention programs to address the underlying causes of bullying behaviour.
2. **Counselling and Support**: Introduce students to services to help bullies understand the impact of their actions and develop empathy.
3. **Restorative Practices**: Use restorative practices to repair relationships and promote understanding between the bully and the victim.
4. **Parental Involvement**: Engage parents in the intervention process, ensuring they are aware of their child's behaviour and involved in their improvement.

Monitoring and Follow-Up: Regularly monitor the bully's behaviour and provide ongoing support to ensure positive changes are sustained

School's programme for working with pupils affected by Bullying.

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows

- Support for students affected by bullying (Check and Connect, SPHE and Wellbeing programmes)
- Counselling
- Self Esteem programme offered by youth workers

Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

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

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 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:_ Date: 27th May, 2025

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed:_ Date: 27th May 2025

(Principal)