

Cloughduv National School Bí Cineálta Policy



Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Cloughduv 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 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 *Cineálta: 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	28 th March 2025	Staff Meeting
Students	May 2025	Survey
Parents	May 2025	Survey
Board of Management	June 2025	Meeting and CPSMA video guidance
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers		
Date policy was approved:	16 JUN 2025	Cloughduv N.S. 021-7336548
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):

Cloughduv National School is committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

- 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 behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
 - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
 - See Appendix 1 of Anti-Bullying Policy
- 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
 - address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

- Supports for staff
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour. Serious behaviour incident forms are kept in the staff room for recording purposes.
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of this Bí Cinealta policy and our Anti-Bullying Policy.
- The school's Wellbeing Team along with the Bí Cinealta Team will represent the student voice and encourage and promote positive behaviour.
- Critical thinking and book talk sessions in each class using the book of the month tackle the themes of preventing bullying behaviour and promoting kindness.
- A reflection area has been developed in the school for children that need time to think about their behaviour. Each child that is asked to spend time here is given a reflection sheet with restorative questioning to complete.
- **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)

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):

- 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.
- Social Media Policy is in the development stages in co-operation with our Parents' Association.
- 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 on Aladdin using the template for this.
- 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
- Raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour and encourage students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour.
- Foster a culture where diversity is celebrated and students "see themselves" in the school environment.
- Challenge gender- stereotypes – equal participation of all. Equal recognition.
- 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 gender.
- 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 sexual harassment of any kind

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

- All Class teachers
- Special Education Teachers
- Deputy principal – Kate Luttrell (acting)
- Principal – Stephen O' Callaghan (acting)

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 (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

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 schools procedures are as follows:

- (i) In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher(s) will exercise his/her/their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type if it has, and how best the situation might be resolved
- (ii) 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 incidents of bullying, they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- (iii) Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher
- (iv) Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
- (v) It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset
- (vi) Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents
- (vii) 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. Children may be asked to write an account of what they have been involved in or witnessed.
- (viii) All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way
- (ix) If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually. Two adults may be present. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements
- (x) 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 anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied
- (xi) In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher(s) that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school may give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school
- (xii) It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any

situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school

(xiii) Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable

(xiv) An additional follow-up meeting with parents of the children involved may take place after an appropriate time to ensure that the matter has been resolved satisfactorily

(xv) Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's Complaints and Grievances procedures. These are in line with the Revised Parental Complaints Procedures adapted by the CPSMA. (Attached in appendices)

RECORDING: Noting and reporting of bullying behaviour is to be documented using the *Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour* (Appendix 3). Other templates, including those from the Anti Bullying Campaign programme can be used if deemed suitable. All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour will adhere to the following:

(i) 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

(ii) 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 is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

(iii) The relevant teacher(s) must use the recording template at Appendix 3 to record the bullying behaviour. Hard copies are available to all teachers.

(iv) The BOM will be notified of any bullying incidents under investigation, while no specific names will be given

The above will be carried out in accordance with the Bí Cinealta Procedures

Note:

The teacher must engage with the students involved and their parents no more than 20 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 school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

As per the school's Anti-Bullying Policy

- **For bullied pupils:**
 - Ending the bullying behaviour,
 - Changing the school culture through ongoing awareness-raising to (a) foster more respect for bullied pupils and for all pupils and (b) foster greater empathy towards, and support for, bullied pupils,
 - Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil (a reassurance bullied pupils often need), through ongoing awareness-raising and through the speedy identification of those involved in bullying and speedy resolution of bullying situations and, after resolution, enabling bullied pupils to complete a victim-impact statement,
 - Making adequate support and/or counselling facilities available to pupils who need them (who seem less resilient and are slower to recover, make friends and enjoy school life again), within or outside the school as applicable, in a timely manner,
 - Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).
 - Implementing a 'buddy system' in the school (*if applicable*).
- **For bullying pupils:**
 - 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,
 - seeking other ways to "catch them doing the right thing" and giving appropriate praise,
 - Supporting them to overcome learning difficulties through Support Staff provision and to overcome emotional and/or social difficulties through class management and pastoral care within the school,
 - Helping those whose self-esteem is low by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school),

- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth, including creating opportunities to use appropriate praise,
- In dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child,
- In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a 'clean sheet' and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.
- Making adequate support and/or counselling facilities available to help remedy underlying issues for those who need them, within or outside the school as applicable, and to help them learn to meet their needs without violating the rights of others.

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: Stephen Hayes Date: 16 JUN 2025
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: S. Hayes Date: 16 JUN 2025
(Principal)

Appendix: Useful Resources for Parents & Children – Bí Cineálta Policy

Mental Health & Wellbeing

Jigsaw (Mental Health Support for Young People aged 12-25)

Website: <https://jigsaw.ie>

Freephone: 1800 544729

Childline – 24/7 Listening Service for Children

Website: <https://www.childline.ie>

Freephone: 1800 66 66 66 | Text: 50101

SpunOut – Youth Information Website (Age 16+)

Website: <https://www.spunout.ie>

YourMentalHealth.ie (HSE Resource)

Website: <https://www2.hse.ie/mental-health/>

Anti-Bullying & Behaviour Support

National Anti-Bullying Centre – DCU

Website: <https://antibullyingcentre.ie>

Barnardos Ireland (Family Support Services)

Website: <https://www.barnardos.ie>

Tel: 01 453 0355

Parentline – Advice & Listening for Parents

Website: <https://www.parentline.ie>

Helpline: 01 873 3500

Online Safety & Digital Wellbeing

Webwise – Internet Safety for Parents and Schools

Website: <https://www.webwise.ie/parents/>

Includes guides on social media, gaming, and cyberbullying.

Be Safe Online – Irish Government Portal for Online Safety

Website: <https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/be-safe-online/>

ISPCC Digital Ready Hub (Supporting Online Resilience)

Website: <https://www.ispcc.ie/digital-hub/>

Educational Support

National Council for Special Education (NCSE)

Website: <https://ncse.ie/parent-information>

Nessy Learning (Literacy Support for Home and School Use)

Website: <https://www.nessy.com>

Help My Kid Learn – Literacy & Numeracy Support at Home

Website: <https://www.helpmykidlearn.ie>

Revised Parental Complaints Procedure



Note:

- A copy of this procedure will be available for parents/legal guardians on the school website and/or on request from the school. This procedure comes into effect on the 1st of January 2024.
- Under the Education Act 1998, legally, all schools are managed by the school's Board of Management, on behalf of the school patron.

Purpose/Objective

The parental complaints procedure was revised and agreed by the Irish National Teachers' Organisation and the management bodies of primary schools, the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association, the Church of Ireland, An Foras Pátrúnachta, the Muslim Primary Education Board, Educate Together and the National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education in 2023. It is designed to provide an open and clearly defined process to facilitate parents/legal guardians in raising concerns about their own child/children in an agreed, fair and transparent manner.

It is recognised that parents/legal guardians are the primary educators in a child's life and as such from time-to-time concerns may arise which they may need to engage with the school. It is expected that engagement will be timely, courteous and resolution focused to ensure that the important relationship between the parent and school can be preserved and respected. It is expected that all parties concerned will engage proactively.

Procedural Points

The procedure is a staged procedure where every effort is made to resolve matters at the earliest possible stage. In most cases, concerns will be dealt with either informally or formally at the earlier stages of the procedure. Where it has not been possible to agree a resolution at the earlier stages, the procedure does allow for the escalation of the matter to the Board of Management. This procedure sets out, in four stages, the process to be followed in progressing a complaint and the specific timescale to be followed. It is expected the parties will follow each stage in sequence.

- Where the term written correspondence is used, this refers specifically to a letter or email correspondence from a parent/legal guardian(s).
- Only complaints about a teacher which are written and signed by a parent/legal guardian, and which relate to their own child, will be investigated.
- Where a complaint raised by a parent/legal guardian is deemed by the employer/board of management to relate to the following, this procedure will not apply;
 - matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education;
 - frivolous or vexatious complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a teacher in a school; or
 - complaints in which either party has recourse to law or to another existing procedure.
- In all circumstances, any form of written correspondence for the attention of the Board of Management must be supplied to the Chairperson of the board of management **only**. Any deviation from this could be deemed prejudicial and as acting outside the scope of this agreement.
- **Days in this procedure refer specifically to school days.** A school day is a day on which the school is in operation. Holiday periods, school closures and leaves of absences are not counted as school days for the purpose of this procedure.
- Group/collective complaints are not provided for and each parent/legal guardian raising a concern will be dealt with separately through this process.
- The procedure is a domestic forum and accordingly, neither management nor the INTO intends that there would be legal representation at any stage.
- Issues should be raised in a timely manner. It is in the best interests of the child that issues are raised to achieve early resolution at the earliest possible stage with the teacher, ideally while the pupil is in that teacher's class.

Formal Stage 1 Discussion

Formal Stage 2 Written (10 days)

Formal Stage 3 Board of Management (20 days)

Formal Stage 4 Decision (5 days)

