



Borrisokane Community College

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

March 2025



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Có-mhaoinithe ag an
Aontas Eorpach

Co-funded by the
European Union

Borrisokane Community College

Mission Statement

We seek to promote a caring and committed school community which will facilitate the education of our students and where each individual is valued as a unique human being.

"Is ar scáth a chéile a mhairimid"

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (welfare) Act 2000 and Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools, the Board of Management of Borrisokane Community College has adopted the following Policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour in conjunction with and within the framework of the school's overall Code of 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*.

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: Virginia O'Donoghue Date: 17-06-25

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: Paula Molloy Date: 17-06-25

(Principal)

The core definition above sets out clear criteria to help school communities to prevent, correctly identify and address bullying among students. Alleged incidents of bullying are, however, often complex and must be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The core elements of the definition are further described below:

Targeted behaviour

Bullying is deliberate, unwanted behaviour that causes harm to others, and where the student displaying bullying behaviour knows that their behaviour is or will be perceived as harmful by the child or young person experiencing the behaviour. Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. The harm can be physical (for example, personal injury, damage to or loss of property), social (for example, withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion) and/or emotional (for example, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety) and can have a serious and long-term negative impact on the student experiencing bullying behaviour. 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 still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour.

Repeated behaviour

Bullying takes the form of a systematic pattern of behaviour which is repeated over time. Single offline incidents of intentional negative behaviour involving an imbalance of power are not considered bullying but must still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour. Posting a single harmful message/image/video online, and which is highly likely to be reposted or shared with others can therefore be seen as bullying behaviour.

Imbalance of power

In incidents of bullying, the student experiencing bullying behaviour finds it hard to defend themselves as a result of the abuse of a real or perceived imbalance of power. This imbalance of power may manifest itself through differences in size, strength, age, ability, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, race, ethnic origin including membership of the Traveller and/or Roma communities, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, experience of the care system, disability or the receipt of special education. In incidents of online (or cyber) bullying, the imbalance of power may relate to online anonymity, technical proficiency and possession of information/images/video, and the inability of the targeted student to remove offensive online material or escape the bullying.

Types of Bullying behaviour deemed to be inappropriate: (this list is not exhaustive)

General behaviours which apply to all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g., sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc. • Physical aggression • Damage to property • Name calling • Body Shaming/bullying based on physical appearance • Slagging • The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person • Offensive graffiti • Extortion • Intimidation • Insulting or offensive gestures • The “look” • Invasion of personal space • A combination of any of the types listed • Exclusion • No innocent bystander
Cyber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denigration: Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person’s reputation • Harassment: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual • Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person’s name • Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight • Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online • Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images • Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group • Cyber stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety • Silent telephone/mobile phone call • Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls • Abusive text messages • Abusive email • Abusive communication on social networks e.g., Facebook/Instagram/Tik Tok/Be Real/Twitter/You Tube etc. or on games consoles • Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures • Abusive posts on any form of communication technology
Identity Based Behaviours	<p>Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community)</p>
Homophobic and Transgender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spreading rumours about a person’s sexual orientation • Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation • Name calling e.g., gay, queer, lesbian ... used in a derogatory manner

- To any behaviour that adversely affects the school reputation or the education of any student in the school

Bullying behaviour which occurs outside of school

- Schools are not expected to deal with any bullying behaviour which occurs outside of school when students are not under the care of the school, however if this bullying behaviour continues into the school environment schools are required to address the bullying behaviour.

Rights and Responsibilities of Each Member of the School Community

Right	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have the right to be safe in school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have a responsibility to make our school a safe and secure place for others

Rights and responsibilities of students and staff

I have a right to be:	I have the responsibility to ensure that:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treated with respect • Physically safe and to expect my property to be safe at school • Free from all forms of bullying • Able to learn & teach without disruption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Others are treated with respect • Others are physically safe, and the property of others is safe • Others are free from all forms of bullying • Others/students are able to learn without disruption • Bullying behaviour is acted upon as appropriate

Rights and responsibilities of parents

I have a right to:	I have the responsibility to ensure that:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expect that my child is safe in school and can learn without disruption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I report bullying behaviour to the school • Co-operate fully with the implementation of school policy

Responsibilities of bystanders/witnesses

I should:	I should not:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Say 'no' or 'stop' when you see or hear someone behaving unfairly - be assertive but not aggressive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Join in bullying behaviour for example, laughing at, sneering, 'slagging' or fighting etc.

Board of Management	06/03/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft policy brought to Board of Management at scheduled meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	13/02/2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus group of bus drivers, local shop keepers, GAA/soccer officials in community, caretaker & canteen staff
Date policy was approved:		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

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).

Bullying Prevention aligned with Key Areas of Wellbeing Promotion

Culture and Environment	Curriculum
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open Door Policy Specific reference made to students about zero tolerance to bullying behaviours on a continual basis Active Student Support Team Active Mentoring System Establishment of a Safe Telling Environment Seating Plans Visible Displays around the school Display of students' work Designated area to report bullying issues- Student Voice Post Box Empowerment of student voice- Students' Council, Class Captains, Prefects, Caride, Student representatives on BOM, PA & School Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Various awareness weeks throughout the school calendar e.g. Friendship Week, Anti- Bullying (Cyber Bullying) Week, Stand Up Awareness Week, Internet Safety Week, Think Languages Campaign, Ethos Day/Week (Inclusion & Diversity), Wellfest Week A variety of programmes are run in SPHE and Wellbeing/Guidance Classes e.g. The Decider, Lockers, Fuse, Alert, The Respect Effect, Be in Ctrl etc... Peer Teaching Wellbeing is at the Centre of all subject plans Wellbeing indicators addressed in all areas of Teaching & Learning 1st year transition programme through SPHE/Wellbeing TY Drama

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outside of School Trips/Events- E.g. Erasmus+, Foreign Tours, Sporting competitions, Cookery competitions, talent shows, Career events 	
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Supervision & Monitoring

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

In addition to all the practices identified above under Culture and Environment, Curriculum, Planning and Policy and Relationships and Partnerships Borrisokane Community College has the following supervision and monitoring policies to prevent and address bullying behaviour:

- Yard and Corridors and in class - A weekly schedule of student supervision on corridors and yard is developed to monitor student behaviour and wellbeing. Any causes for concern are dealt with and reported to school management.
- All staff are watchful and observe relationships between students in class, note absence patterns and let it be known that high standards of behaviour are always expected
- Survey of Students - Students are surveyed through an online form regularly throughout the year regarding bullying behaviour as part of the school's mentoring sessions.
- Student Support Team – the student support team meet weekly and operate a check and connect system where teachers meet students where concerns may have been brought to their attention

Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

- Year head for each year group assisted by principal and deputy principal

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

will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to consult with them on the actions to be taken to address the behaviour as outlined in the school's Bí Cineálta policy.

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred relevant teachers will consider: **what, where, when and why?**

- If a group of students is involved, each student will be engaged with individually at first
- Thereafter, all students involved will 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)

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

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

Recording of bullying behaviour

Those involved in investigating and resolving bullying behaviour will note, and report developments as follows and, in doing so, they will comply with relevant data protection legislation. It is imperative that all recordings of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

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 bullying.
- Track the review process with students and parents to check if the bullying behavior has stopped and get their feedback.
- Record the date of each engagement and when it is confirmed that the bullying has ceased.
- Note any involvement with external services or support.
- Keep the records according to the school's record-keeping policy and in line with data protection rules.
- If there's a Student Support File, place a copy of the record there to help the support team provide consistent help for the student's wellbeing.

Complaint to Ombudsman for Children:

- If a parent remains dissatisfied after the complaint process, they can contact the Ombudsman for Children if they believe the school's actions negatively affected the student.

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 (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

Students who experience Bullying or Witness Bullying:

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

- Pupils may need counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed.
- In this regard the relevant Student Support Team will work closely with the student to ensure they are actively supported in the school and to engage in school-based activities they enjoy. They may be placed on our school's focus in/out support list and/or engage in check and connect.
- The school's guidance department will also put in place a program of support in conjunction with the Year Head

- If any serious incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred which have had a serious adverse impact on a student
- If a parent has informed the school that a student has left the school because of reported bullying behaviour
- If any additional support is needed from the board of management
- If the school's Bí Cineálta policy needs urgent review in advance of the annual review.

This update does not contain personal or identifying information. See Chapter 7 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

The minutes of the board of management meeting will document the number of new incidents of bullying behaviour; the number currently ongoing and the total number of incidents of bullying behaviour since the beginning of the school year.

The minutes will also note where the board has considered the bullying behaviour verbal update and document when the board has decided that an urgent review of the policy is required.

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.

Appendix B

Alleged Bullying Incident Student Statement Form

DATE: _____

STUDENT: _____

DETAILS: Include time, place, names of alleged perpetrators, names of bystanders. Detail here both sides of the event

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Appendix D

Guide to Providing Bullying Behaviour Update

Guide to providing Bullying Behaviour Update for Board of Management meeting of Borrisokane Community College

Having reviewed the details of the incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the previous board of management meeting, the principal must provide the following information at each ordinary meeting of the board of management:

Total number of new incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the last board of management meeting.	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour currently ongoing.	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the beginning of this school year	

Where incidents of bullying behaviour have been reported since the last meeting, the update must include a verbal report which should include the following information where relevant:

- the trends and patterns identified such as the form of bullying behaviour, type of bullying behaviour if known, location of bullying behaviour, when it occurred etc
- the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour
- any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour
- if any serious incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred which have had a serious adverse impact on a student
- if a parent has informed the school that a student has left the school because of reported bullying behaviour
- if any additional support is needed from the board of management
- if the school's Bí Cineálta policy requires urgent review in advance of the annual review

This update should not include any personal information or information that could identify the students involved.

5. How has the Bí Cineálta policy and student friendly policy been communicated to parents

6. Have all school staff been made aware of the, school's Bí Cineálta policy and the *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post- Primary Schools*? ☐Yes ☐No

7. Does the Bí Cineálta policy document the strategies that the school uses to prevent bullying behaviour? ☐Yes ☐No

8. Has the Board received and minuted the Bullying Behaviour Update presented by the principal at every ordinary board meeting over the last calendar year? ☐Yes ☐No

9. Has the Board discussed how the school is addressing all reports of bullying behaviour? ☐Yes ☐No

10. Is the Board satisfied that all incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed in accordance with the school's Bí Cineálta Policy? ☐Yes ☐No

11. Have the prevention strategies in the Bí Cineálta policy been implemented? ☐Yes ☐No

12. Has the Board discussed the effectiveness of the strategies used to prevent bullying behaviour? ☐Yes ☐No

13. How have (a) parents, (b) students and (c) school staff been consulted as part of the review of the Bí Cineálta Policy?

19. Has the Office of the Ombudsman for Children initiated or completed an investigation into how the school has addressed an incident of bullying behaviour?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Appendix G

Student-Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy



Bí Cineálta

Icon: Two speech bubbles, two hands shaking, a megaphone, a person climbing a ladder, a diamond, a crown.

Bí Cineálta