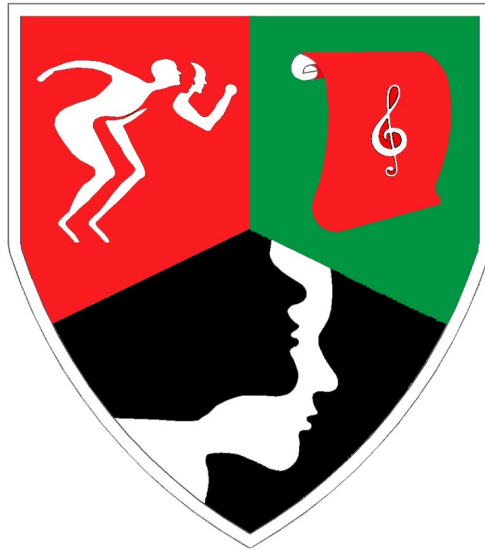


Coláiste de hÍde



Meas - Bród - Comhar

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

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Coláiste de hÍde 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.

Coláiste de hÍde's Mission Statement

Tá sé mar aidhm againn i gColáiste de hÍde an bóthar a réiteach do gach aon dalta a lánacmhainn a bhaint amach le héascaíocht, go hintleachtúil, go fisiciúil, go spioradálta, go cultúrtha, go sóisialta agus go mothálach tré mheán na Gaeilge. Déantar iarracht ar leith ins an scoil féiniomhá dearfach a chothú i ngach aon duine, maille le meas a chothú iontu do gach duine, dá dtimpeallacht agus dá bpobal.

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	24 March - 20 May	Google Form Questionnaire, staff meeting, draft policy emailed to staff and a half day closure to facilitate staff training.
Students	7-20 May 2025	Google Form Questionnaires filled out and discussed in the Wellbeing class with the class tutor or the SPHE class.
Parents	28 April - 20 May	Google Form Questionnaire sent via the school app.
Board of Management	20-22 May 2025	Draft policy emailed for consultation and discussion at BOM meeting.
Date policy was approved:		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies, supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour. 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:

1. Culture and Environment

School values: ethos is how we live, work and relate to each other in our school community. While it encompasses the curriculum and how it is taught, ethos is broader than this. It also relates to shared core values, to the hidden curriculum, to decision-making processes and to the relationships that underpin the daily life of school. All members of our school community aspire to live our values of Respect, Pride and Teamwork as well as the ETB core values of Excellence in Education, Care, Equality, Community and Respect.

Creating safe physical spaces: The creation of safe physical spaces supports psychological safety and is an important measure to prevent bullying behaviour. Corridors, locker areas and shared spaces are bright, well-lit and welcoming. Staff maintain a visible presence during class transitions and break times, helping to create a safe and positive atmosphere.

Students feel a greater sense of belonging to a school community when they are given ownership of their own space through art and creativity. This helps students to identify and to feel a sense of responsibility for their school environment. Our two large murals were whole-school initiatives with focus on the values of Respect, Pride and Teamwork. Students' artwork is often framed around the building and student work is displayed on subject notice boards inside and outside the classroom.

Our school building and grounds are well maintained by our caretaker, cleaners and TY modules such as gardening, which promote a sense of ownership and respect in the school community.

A trusted adult: Students who witness bullying behaviour are supported and encouraged to report the behaviour to a trusted adult in the school so that the behaviour can be addressed. Students who witness bullying behaviour on social media have an important role in helping to address the behaviour by reporting the witnessed behaviour to a trusted adult. The trusted adult will reassure the student that they have done the right thing by reporting the behaviour. The trusted adult should, without delay, inform the relevant yearhead who has responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour. Coláiste de hÍde promotes the concept of “one good adult” through the use of tutors, year heads, our school student support team and the Check&Connect initiative.

Supervision: Appropriate supervision is an important measure to help prevent and address bullying behaviour. Coláiste de hÍde take all reasonable measures to ensure the safety of their students and to supervise students when students are attending school or attending school activities. Staff maintain a visible presence during class transitions and break times, helping to create a safe and positive atmosphere. Various shared areas such as the canteen, corridors and grounds are supervised during breaks and key times of the day to ensure that all students feel safe. Staff presence in these areas encourages positive behaviour, helping students feel comfortable and included when outdoors. Toilets are monitored to ensure safety while respecting students' privacy. Staff supervision is focused on preventing inappropriate behaviour, while maintaining a discreet and respectful approach. Entrance doors from corridors remain open to allow passive supervision while ensuring privacy for students.

Extra-curricular activities: The staff in Coláiste de hÍde provide a wide range of co-curricular and extra-

curricular activities, including musical, knitting, debating, games club, gardening, boxing, basketball, hurling, Gaelic football, soccer, table tennis, darts, mini-business book club, seomra ciúin. These activities are primarily run during lunch time to ensure that students getting the school bus home have the opportunity to participate in extra activities. These activities offer students opportunities to connect, build friendships and reduce unstructured time, fostering a positive and inclusive school environment.

Celebrating success: Coláiste de hÍde and its staff promotes a culture of inclusivity and positivity. Students and staff successes are celebrated at assemblies, announcements over the intercom, school app or on the schools social media accounts. Students are encouraged to live our values everyday and are awarded points on VSware to promote positive behaviours. We formally celebrate success at the end of year at the whole-school Awards Ceremony, 6th year Graduation and 4th year Graduation.

2. Teaching and Learning

Our classrooms are spaces where respect and inclusivity are nurtured. Teachers create supportive and welcoming learning environments where students feel a strong sense of belonging. Clear routines and positive reinforcement help everyone feel secure, while the school's Code of Behaviour provides clear guidance for addressing concerns quickly and fairly. Coláiste de hÍde staff and students developed a 'ready to learn checklist' and a 'visual values poster' to ensure that at the start of every class the routines and expectations are clear and concise which help students feel secure in their environment.

Teachers are encouraged to further their own leadership capacity and professional knowledge by ensuring that they are equipped with the latest teaching and learning strategies and the knowledge to prevent and address bullying behaviour. To encourage teachers in this area, 8 planning hours are ring-fenced for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and teachers can undertake courses or in-services at their own leisure through-out the academic year.

The Social Personal and Health Education (**SPHE**) curriculum aims to help students to feel empowered to create, nurture and maintain respectful and healthy relationships with themselves and others. The Relationships and Sexuality Education (**RSE**) strand also provides space for students to examine and consider relationships and human sexuality which can foster an understanding of diversity which may help to reduce gender and identity -based bullying as well as sexism and sexual harassment. Identity, Multi-Belief and Values Education (**IMBV**) aims to encourage respect and understanding of different beliefs, perspectives and ways of living. IMBV allows students the opportunity to understand and put our values into practice. In Civic Social and Political Education (**CSPE**), there is a focus on the interdependence of people in communities, at local as well as national and international levels.

Students in Coláiste de hÍde are also presented with cross-curricular learning opportunities embedding themes of empathy and inclusion into subjects at both junior and senior cycle such as **English, History, Art, Guidance** and TY modules such as **Care in the Community, Gardening** and **Sustainability**. There is a **Wellbeing** programme in place for 1st to 6th years, with a wide range of programmes and resources that support preventing bullying behaviour. Teachers across all subjects plan for student-driven reflective activities, such as discussions and creative projects, allowing students to engage meaningfully with anti-bullying themes. The **Transition Year Programme** is compulsory which gives students multiple opportunities to develop and grow. The TY **Musical** is embedded into the timetable which offers students structured opportunities to connect, build friendships and ultimately fosters a positive and

inclusive school environment.

Integrating with the Provision Map:

- Support for All: Subjects such as SPHE, RSE, CSPE and Wellbeing. The school's emphasis on relational teaching ensures proactive prevention. All 1st years complete the Ord agus Eagar programme. Celebrating themes during Kindness Week, Stand Up Week, Friendship Week.
- Support for Some: Programmes like Check & Connect, restorative practice, peer mentoring, BIG Brother-Big Sister and drop-in clubs such as knitting or the Seomra Ciúin support social-emotional needs.
- Support for Few: Bespoke interventions and Student Support Plans incorporate outside agencies and targeted strategies e.g. Social Skills groups, Behaviour Plans, Zones of Regulation.

3. Policy and Planning

Our key policies provide a strong framework for supervision and monitoring, helping to create a secure and inclusive environment:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Statement
- Code of Behaviour
- Inclusion Policy
- DEIS Plan
- School Trip Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Whole-School Guidance Plan
- RSE Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy

By embedding these policies into our daily routines, we ensure that all students feel safe, valued and supported.

4. Relationships and Partnerships

Strong interpersonal connections are a vital part of effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. These interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures for students and parents such as the Student Council, Cinnirí, Ethos Ambassadors, Erasmus Programme, Gaelbhratach Committee and Cairde de hÍde.

We at Coláiste de hÍde pride ourselves in our partnerships with our feeder primary schools. We host students from 3rd to 6th class at our dedicated transition days Lá na mBunscoileanna (Rang 4 agus 5) and Lá Spóirt agus Spraoi (Rang 3) as well as during Easter and August Camps (Rang 6) and the after school Ógras youth club (Rang 3 - Bliain 2). These days and activities offer students opportunities to connect, build friendships and support their peers, fostering a positive and inclusive school environment.

Coláiste de hÍde has a long standing and knowledgeable Student Support Team in place which

comprises the Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor, AEN Coordinator, HSCL Officer, School Completion Project Worker and relevant Assistant Principals. The Student Support Team meets weekly to review and address the needs of students, ensuring they receive the necessary support. They operate a Check&Connect system where teachers meet students where concerns may have been brought to their attention. The SST also offers Behaviour for Learning support to help students develop positive behaviours and attitudes towards learning.

Coláiste de hÍde supports the active participation of parents in school life, including those who may find it difficult or daunting to engage with the school due to being unfamiliar with the education system or due to language or cultural barriers. This is done through our Parents Association Cairde de hÍde, coffee mornings, bingo days, HSCL/SCP home-visits and regular contact via the school app or phone.

The school utilises external agencies to support students and staff - Psychological Support Services, Jigsaw, Pieta House, NEPS, CAMHS, Trinity Access Programme, Oide - this list is not exhaustive. We invite guest speakers at various points of the year to deliver age--appropriate awareness initiatives that may look at the causes and impacts of bullying behaviour including those dealing with navigating friendships, identity--based bullying, racist bullying, homophobic/transphobic bullying, sexism and sexual harassment.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The staff with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour are as follows: Members of the Student Support Team and the relevant Yearhead. However, all staff members share the responsibility of reporting any incidents of bullying that come to their attention. To support timely and consistent reporting, a dedicated form is available to all staff from the staffroom. This form enables staff members to submit concerns or observations related to bullying behaviour directly to the relevant teacher for action. This collaborative approach ensures that all reports of bullying behaviour are addressed promptly and consistently, in line with the Bí Cinéalta Policy.

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:

At Coláiste de hÍde we take a thoughtful and step-by-step approach to addressing bullying behaviour. Our primary goal is to stop the behaviour and to support everyone involved, ensuring students feel safe, respected and valued. This process is designed to ensure a fair, consistent and supportive response for all students involved. It is also our hope to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

1. Identifying and assessing if bullying behaviour has occurred

When we receive a report of bullying behaviour, we follow these steps to understand the situation:

- i) Gather information: We begin by collecting details about the incident, including what happened, where and when it occurred and why it may have happened. If relevant, the school's CCTV system may be reviewed to assist in our investigation.
- ii) Speak with each student individually: We talk to each student involved one-on-one. This includes the student who may have experienced the bullying, the student(s) displaying the behaviour and any others who may be involved.
- iii) Bring the students together (if appropriate): If it is helpful, we may bring the students together to talk about what happened. This discussion is carefully facilitated to ensure it is respectful and constructive.
- iv) Collect written accounts: If necessary, we may ask students to write down their version of events. This can help clarify details. Where relevant, digital or photographic material from the students may also be requested to ensure clarity and accuracy in the inquiry. These accounts may be further clarified later.

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour, staff have to look at bullying as it is defined in *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying* and *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*. The behaviour must be targeted at a specific student or group of students, intended to cause harm and repeated. One-off incidents that cause significant harm (e.g., a harmful social media post) may also be treated as bullying. Incidents can occur where behaviour is unacceptable and hurtful but the behaviour is not bullying behaviour, this behaviour may be dealt with under the school's Code of Behaviour.

2. Approaches taken to address the bullying behaviour and to review progress

When bullying behaviour is confirmed, the following steps are taken:

- i) Engage with the student experiencing the bullying behaviour: We ensure the student feels heard, supported and reassured. Their views on resolving the situation are valued and considered, though our primary focus is ensuring that the bullying behaviour stops and that a

constructive path forward is established. The focus here is not on punishment but on addressing the behaviour in a way that fosters understanding, encourages accountability and creates a safer, more respectful environment for everyone involved.

- ii) Informing parents: Parents of all parties involved are contacted promptly (this may not be immediately). If a student has concerns about parental involvement, we handle the matter with sensitivity and provide appropriate support.
- iii) Assess whether the student displaying bullying behaviour has the capacity to rectify the situation (where appropriate): In some cases the relevant staff member may believe that the situation may be rectified without escalation, the student responsible for the behaviour may be given an opportunity to take responsibility for their actions and address the issue directly. This could involve: Acknowledging the impact of their behaviour, making a commitment to cease the behaviour, engaging in a restorative approach with the student affected, if appropriate or correcting or undoing any harm caused where possible. This option is entirely at the discretion of the school and does not apply to serious, repeated or harmful behaviour. Where the behaviour is not rectified or where there is concern regarding its impact, the matter will escalate in accordance with this policy.
- iv) Stopping the behaviour: Depending on the situation we may use strategies like restorative practices, mediation or other approaches to address the behaviour.
- v) Documenting the incident: All incidents and actions taken are documented, including the nature of the behaviour, the location and time and the views of students and parents.
- vi) Implement disciplinary measures (if required): While our focus is on resolution and understanding, disciplinary action may be taken if necessary. Such decisions are made on a case-by-case basis and in line with the school's policies. Any sanctions implemented will remain a matter between the student being sanctioned, their parents and the school authority.
- vii) Provide support for all parties: Support for both the student experiencing bullying and the student displaying the behaviour may involve the Guidance Counsellor, SCP, HSCL or other staff members. Such supports may also be identified through the Student Support Team within the school's Continuum of Support:
 - Support for All (Tacaíocht do Chách): Whole-school approaches like FUSE, Narrative4 and Rang Folláine.
 - Support for Some (Tacaíocht do Roinnt): Interventions such as Circle Time, restorative practices, and counselling.
 - Support for a Few (Tacaíocht don Bheagán): Behaviour Support Plans (BSPs), tailored guidance, referrals to external specialists and counselling.

3. Monitoring, follow-up and reviewing progress

Coláiste de hÍde are committed to ensuring that bullying behaviour does not recur. Our follow-up steps include:

- Review meetings: Cases may be discussed at SST/API meetings within 20 school days to assess progress and gather feedback.
- Document outcomes: Ensuring clear records of progress and any further actions taken, including updates to Student Support Plans if necessary.
- Ongoing supervision: Monitoring the situation to maintain positive relationships and extra counselling if needed.
- Adjusting strategies: Exploring additional approaches if the behaviour persists which may

include further investigations or referrals to external supports such as NEPS or Tusla. Further support sessions, facilitated by the Guidance Counsellor, SCP or another member of staff, may also be arranged to rebuild trust and understanding among those involved.

4. Requests to take no action or non-reporting

If bullying behaviour is not reported, the school cannot take action to address it. Students and parents are encouraged to report concerns promptly. If a student or parent requests that no action be taken, the school will:

- Show empathy and handle the matter sensitively.
 - Work with the student or parent to agree on a plan that ensures safety.
 - Consider the broader implications, including the potential impact on others, by non-action.
- However, if the welfare of any student is at risk, the school authority reserves the right to take appropriate action.

5. Commitment to continuous improvement

We are dedicated to continuously improving our approach to addressing bullying behaviour. These procedures are reviewed annually to ensure they meet the evolving needs of the Coláiste de hÍde community.

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

For Students Who Experience Bullying:

- Regular check-ins are conducted to monitor progress, offer reassurance and adapt support as necessary to ensure students feel safe and supported over time. This may be through school guidance counselling, home visits from HSCL or SCP or a supportive adult via the Check&Connect initiative.
- Involvement in wellbeing-building programmes such as 'Friends for Life', Seachtain an Chineáltais, Narrative4, Restorative Practice Circles and Social Skills groups.
- Tailored supports through Student Support Plans if bullying is impacting their wellbeing or learning.
- For students who may require additional support, we can recommend access to external services such as Jigsaw. Referral to CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) may be made by a GP, providing pathways of care.

For Students Who Witness Bullying:

- The school promotes a culture where students are encouraged to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying in a non-threatening environment. This empowerment is supported by 'Lig Uait agus Léirigh Meas' and student council initiatives.
- We implement education and prevention strategies into Wellbeing classes that build empathy, respect, and resilience in students such as Narrative4, Seachtain an Chineáltais, Cinnirí.

For Students Who Display Bullying Behaviour:

- The school offers positive behaviour support to help students develop positive behaviours and attitudes towards learning. Students are supported to reflect and change through restorative practices

and Guided Behaviour Reflection Plans.

- Students have access to guidance counselling and early parental engagement.
- For students who may require additional support, we can recommend access to external services such as Jigsaw. Referral to CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) may be made by a GP, providing pathways of care.

This is not an exhaustive list, all students are dealt with on a case-by-case basis and these supports should be considered alongside this policy document as a whole.

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 in hard copy in the students journals.

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: _____
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Principal)