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May 1, 2025

St Colman’s NS Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Roll no: 20353V

# Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of St Colman’s NS 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.

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|  | Date consulted | Method of consultation |
| School Staﬀ |  |  |
| Students |  |  |
| Parents |  |  |
| Board of Management |  |  |
| Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers |  |  |
| Date policy was approved: | | |
| Date policy was last reviewed: | | |

# Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

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| 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): |
| At St Colman’s National School, we recognise that prevention is central to fostering a positive school culture and minimising the risk of bullying behaviour. Prevention strategies are embedded across the curriculum, daily routines, school environment, and relationships among pupils and staff.  **Whole-School Preventative Approaches:**   * We actively foster a positive school culture and climate where all members of the school community are respected and included. * Our school promotes the core values of respect, inclusion, empathy, kindness, and responsibility through our Code of Behaviour, Bí Cínealta Policy, and everyday interactions. * The SPHE curriculum (including Stay Safe and RSE) is taught consistently in all classes and incorporates specific lessons on recognising and responding to bullying behaviour. * Anti-bullying awareness weeks, kindness campaigns, and class-based activities promote positive peer interactions and emotional literacy.   **Specific Prevention Strategies:**   1. **Preventing Online (Cyber) Bullying:**    * Digital citizenship is taught through the SPHE curriculum and supported by school internet safety initiatives.    * Pupils agree to an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) and receive lessons on appropriate online behaviour, privacy, and consequences of misuse.    * Parents are regularly informed about online safety through workshops, newsletters, and our school website. 2. **Preventing Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying:**    * **The school explicitly teaches about respecting diversity in families, identities, and relationships.**    * Language and discussions that promote inclusion and respect for all pupils, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation, are modelled and encouraged.    * Staff are trained to respond appropriately to derogatory or discriminatory language. 3. **Preventing Racist Bullying:**    * Pupils explore cultural diversity, anti-racism, and global citizenship through classroom activities and whole-school initiatives.    * The curriculum includes literature, stories, and projects that reflect diverse backgrounds and experiences.    * Racist incidents are recorded, addressed seriously, and followed up sensitively with those affected. 4. **Preventing Sexist Bullying and Sexual Harassment:**    * **Pupils are taught about gender equity, respect, personal boundaries, and consent in an age-appropriate way through RSE and SPHE lessons.**    * Teachers explicitly address and challenge gender stereotyping and sexist comments when they arise.    * A clear reporting system ensures pupils feel safe in reporting any concerns.   **Staff Professional Development:**   * All staff participate in **annual training** to identify, prevent, and appropriately respond to all types of bullying. * Staff are supported to model inclusive behaviour and foster a culture of zero tolerance for discrimination or exclusion.   **Student Voice and Peer Support:**   * Pupils are encouraged to take an active role in creating a kind, welcoming school. Opportunities such as the class charters/agreed rules, and circle time allow pupils to express concerns and help shape the school climate. * Buddy systems, peer mentoring, and class group work encourage friendship-building and inclusivity across all age groups.   **Review and Monitoring:**   * Prevention strategies are regularly reviewed through:   + Feedback from staff, parents, and pupils (via surveys and focus groups)   + Analysis of incidents recorded in the school’s anti-bullying log   + Reflection at staff meetings and School Self-Evaluation (SSE) processes. |

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| 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): |
| St Colman’s National School is committed to providing a safe and caring environment where all pupils are supported and supervised appropriately throughout the school day. Effective supervision and monitoring are key preventative measures in addressing bullying behaviour and fostering a positive school climate.  **Key Measures in Place:**   1. **Classroom Supervision**    * Teachers remain with their classes during lesson time and ensure that positive behaviour and respect are consistently modelled and reinforced.    * Seating plans and groupings are arranged to support inclusion and reduce opportunities for exclusion or unkind behaviour. 2. **Yard Supervision**    * A clear and consistent yard duty rota ensures that all areas of the playground are adequately supervised at all break times.    * Staff are trained to actively monitor pupil interactions, identify early signs of conflict or exclusion, and intervene proactively where needed.    * Yard zones and activities are organised to encourage cooperative play and positive peer engagement. 3. **Transition Supervision**    * Specific attention is given to supervision during transitions such as:      + Entering and exiting the building      + Moving between classrooms or to the yard      + Lining up and dismissal times    * Pupils are supported to follow respectful routines during these times, reducing opportunities for unobserved conflict. 4. **Digital and Online Supervision**    * All digital activity within the school is monitored through the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) and teacher supervision.    * Children are educated on appropriate online interactions, and digital behaviour is monitored regularly in line with our cyberbullying prevention strategies.    * Note: The digital age of consent is the minimum age a user must be before a social media or internet company can collect, process the user’s data. Children between 13 and 16 must have the consent of a parent/guardian to sign up to social media services. Most social media platforms have a minimum age requirement and for the majority of these is 13 years old. 5. **Monitoring of High-Risk Areas**    * Staff are aware of and monitor locations where bullying behaviour is more likely to occur (e.g. corridors, toilets, cloakrooms).    * These areas are regularly reviewed and included in school walkabouts and supervision plans. 6. **Pupil Voice and Reporting Mechanisms**    * Pupils are encouraged to speak to a trusted adult if they witness or experience unkind behaviour.    * Worry boxes, circle time, and regular check-ins support ongoing communication between children and staff.    * The school promotes a culture of "telling" and uses restorative approaches when issues arise. 7. **Recording and Follow-Up**    * All serious incidents of bullying are recorded in the Anti-Bullying Log and followed up in line with the *Bí Cineálta* procedures.    * Staff track patterns and respond promptly to any recurring issues, ensuring appropriate support is in place for all involved. |

**Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour**

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

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

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| 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): |
| At **St Colman’s National School**, we are committed to responding to all reports of bullying behaviour in a prompt, supportive and fair manner. Our approach is rooted in our **Bí Cínealta** (Be Kind) ethos and is aligned with the national *Bí Cineálta* procedures.  The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour is (are) as follows:  The class teacher will oversee recording of bullying reports for students in their class – this includes using the procedure guidelines to investigate reports of bullying and recording bullying behaviour on Aladdin.  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  **1. Steps to Determine if Bullying Behaviour Has Occurred**  When a report of unkind or harmful behaviour is made, the following steps are taken to assess whether bullying has occurred:   * **Listening Carefully**: A trusted adult listens to the pupil(s) making the report and gathers initial information. * **Initial Inquiry**: The teacher or relevant staff member speaks with those directly involved, using **restorative questioning** and a calm, non-judgmental tone. * Two staff members can be present when engaging with children individually initially without parents’ notification and presence. * Two staff members can be present when engaging with a group of children to investigate what happened. Teacher’s discretion can be used with this approach about when best to use it. * A group meeting will provide the opportunity for the children to give 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 also be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident. * **Establishing Facts**: Key questions include:   + Is the behaviour repeated or part of a pattern?   + Is there an imbalance of power?   + Is the behaviour intended to hurt, exclude, or control? * **Record Keeping**: The teacher records the incident using the school’s standard reporting templates. * **Referral to Designated Person**: If the incident meets the definition of bullying, it is referred to the **Designated Anti-Bullying Staff Member** (usually the Deputy Principal or Principal) for formal follow-up.   **2. Approaches to Address Confirmed Bullying Behaviour**  When bullying behaviour is confirmed, a **progressive, relationship-based response** is implemented, focusing on:   * **Restorative Conversations**: Pupils involved are supported to take responsibility, understand the impact of their behaviour, and restore relationships where possible. * **Parental Involvement**: Parents/guardians of all parties are informed and invited to work in partnership with the school. * **Support for the Target**:   + Check-ins with a trusted adult   + Building confidence and friendships   + Ensuring they feel safe and heard * **Support for the Pupil Engaging in Bullying**:   + Exploring reasons for the behaviour   + Teaching empathy and alternative behaviours   + Setting clear expectations for future behaviour   **Other possible interventions** may include:   * Circle time or peer group discussions * Social skills programmes or individual behaviour support plans * Temporary changes to groupings, seating or play areas to support positive interaction   In cases of **serious, ongoing or repeated bullying**, additional actions may include:   * Behavioural contracts * Formal sanctions in line with the Code of Behaviour * Referral to external supports (e.g. NEPS, counsellors)   **3. Reviewing Progress and Follow-Up**  To ensure resolution and prevent recurrence:   * **Follow-Up Conversations**: Staff check in regularly with both the target and the pupil involved to monitor progress. * **Monitoring Period**: Teachers track behaviour over a defined monitoring period (e.g. 20 school days). * **Formal Record Keeping**: Progress is noted on follow-up forms and retained in the school’s Anti-Bullying Log (as per *Bí Cineálta* procedures).   The following details should be included on the record:   * + Form i.e. physical, verbal, written, extortion , exclusion or online (See section 2.5 of Bí Cineálta procedures page 21)   + Type i.e. disablist bullying bahaviour, exceptionally able bullying, gender identity bullying, homophobic/transphobic bullying, physical appearance bullying, racist bullying, poverty bullying, religious identity bullying, sexist bullying, sexual harassment (See section 2.7 of Bí Cineálta procedures page 24)   + Where and when ( if known)   + The date of initial engagement with the students and their parents   + The views of the students and their parents\* regarding the action to be taken to address the bullying behaviour (\*only in relation to their own child)   + When review takes place, it should be noted if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of the students and parents in relation to this.   + Note the date of reviews and engagements   + Note the date that the bullying behaviour has ceased   + Any engagement with external services/ supports should also be noted   + If a school support file exists for a pupil involved, schools are encouraged to place a copy of the record on the file   Relevant teachers will record incidents of bullying behaviour on the pupil file on Aladdin.   * **Parent Updates**: Parents are updated on progress and next steps. * **Review at Staff Level**: Where patterns emerge, the issue may be discussed (confidentially and sensitively) at staff meetings to inform whole-school prevention strategies. * **Requests no action taken:** A student who reports bullying behaviour may ask a member of staff not to do anything and just “look out” for them due to not wanting to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They might 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 behaviour. It must be made clear to the pupil that other parties may need to be informed for their welfare. Parents may also make the school aware of bullying behaviour and specifically request that no action is to be taken by the school. Parents should put this in writing to the school. However, schools may decide that based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour through the Bí Cineálta procedures and/or the Code of Behaviour where appropriate. * **Complaint process:** If a parent is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with these procedures, they should be referred to the school complaints procedure. In the event that a student and/or parent is dissatisfied following the complaints procedure, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for children.   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. |

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| 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): |
| The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour, in line with Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures:  **Support for Pupils Who Experience Bullying Behaviour:**  The school will respond promptly and sensitively to all reports of bullying.  A restorative approach will be prioritised, supporting the pupil’s wellbeing while also focusing on re-establishing safety and connection in the school environment.  Pupils will have access to a trusted adult, such as a class teacher or support teacher, and may be offered check-in supports or a restorative conversation to address the harm caused and promote healing.  Parental engagement will be sought where appropriate to ensure a collaborative response.  Additional supports may include SPHE-based lessons, access to the student support team, and ongoing monitoring.  **Support for Pupils Who Witness Bullying:**  Witnesses will be reassured that they were right to come forward and will be protected from any retaliation.  They will be given the opportunity to discuss what they saw, how it made them feel, and what they can do if they witness similar behaviour again.  Bystander empowerment strategies will be included in class teaching and whole-school awareness initiatives to promote speaking up and being an ally.  Restorative circles or peer group discussions may be used to strengthen group relationships and foster collective responsibility for wellbeing.  **Support for Pupils Who Display Bullying Behaviour:**  The school will avoid punitive responses as a first step, instead opting for restorative and relational approaches that help the pupil understand the impact of their actions.  Staff will work to build empathy, emotional regulation, and social skills through structured conversations, reflection tasks, and targeted support where necessary.  The pupil will be offered opportunities to repair relationships, including restorative meetings, supported apologies, and participation in group activities focused on inclusion.  A behaviour support plan or additional interventions may be used if required.  Engagement with parents/guardians will be critical to ensure consistent messaging and support both at home and at school.  These approaches reflect the core values of the Bí Cineálta procedures: kindness, empathy, respect, responsibility, inclusion, and wellbeing. The school will monitor outcomes, review the effectiveness of the support measures, and adjust practices in line with pupils’ evolving needs. |

Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post­Primary Schools

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: Date: (Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: Date: (Principal)

Appendix A: Pupil Friendly version of the Policy

Our Pupil Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy

🌟 **Our Kindness Promises** 🌟  
**We promise to:**

1. **Use kind words** – no name-calling or teasing.
2. **Help each other** – we share and include everyone.
3. **Listen to others** – everyone deserves to be heard.
4. **Respect differences** – we are all special in our own way.
5. **Tell someone** if we see or feel unkindness – speak to a teacher or a trusted adult.
6. **Be a good friend** – we look out for each other.
7. **Use gentle hands** – no hurting or pushing.
8. **Make our school safe and happy** – every day.

When we are kind, we make our school a better place for everyone.  
Everyone belongs. Everyone matters. Everyone can be kind.



Appendix B: Sample Pupil Friendly Version Poster

A poster with text and pictures of kids

AI-generated content may be incorrect.