

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Clonkeen College has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

This policy fully complies with the requirements of *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2024*.

The Board of Management acknowledges that bullying behaviour interferes with the rights of the child as set out in the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*. We all, as a school community, acknowledge our responsibility to work together to prevent and address bullying behaviour and to deal with the negative impact of bullying behaviour.

Clonkeen College is 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. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that **is not bullying behaviour** are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour. The detailed definition of bullying is provided in Chapter 2 of the *Bí Cineálta: Procedures*.

Section A: Development/Review of our Bi Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

All members of the Clonkeen College school community were provided with the opportunity to input into the development/review of this policy.

	Date Consulted	Method of Consultation
School Staff	2024/2025 Academic Year	Online Survey Whole Staff Meeting Professional Team Meetings
Students	2024/2025 Academic Year	Online Surveys (all students) Focus Groups (some students)
Parents	2024/2025 Academic Year	Online survey (all parents)

		Focus Group: Some Parents
Board of management	2024/2025 Academic Year	Board of Management Meetings
Wider school community	2024/2025 Academic Year	One to one interviews
Date policy was approved: 3rd June 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: 3rd June 2025		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles in preventing bullying behaviour, in line with the *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice*.

The *Wellbeing Framework for Practice* provides the following four key areas that are essential for a holistic, whole-school approach to wellbeing promotion and preventing bullying behaviour: **Culture and Environment**; **Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)**; **Policy and Planning**; and **Relationships and Partnerships**.

Culture and Environment

- A positive and inclusive school culture and environment where students and school staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported.
- Open communication between the Edmund Rice School's Trust, the Board of Management of Clonkeen College, school staff, students and their parents.
- Effective school leadership that influences the culture and sets the standard for the school community when preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.
- Opportunities for students and their parents to shape the school culture by promoting kindness and inclusion.
- Fostering 'a telling environment' in which students feel comfortable to talk about their concerns regarding bullying behaviour.
- School staff letting students know that they are a 'trusted adult' and that they can talk to them about any issues concerning them regarding bullying behaviour.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of students during break and lunchtimes.
- The creation of safe physical spaces in school, such as the pergolas and picnic tables in the school yard.

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

- A teaching and learning culture that is collaborative and respectful.
- The implementation of the updated SPHE (*Social Personal and Health Education*) and RSE (*Relationships and Sexuality Education*) specifications.
- The implementation of CSPE (*Civic Social and Political Education*), Religious Studies and History specifications.

- As part of the *Level Two Learning Programme*, students with a moderate general learning disability learn a definition of bullying and the steps to take should one experience bullying.

Policy and Planning

- The wellbeing of the school community is at the heart of school policies and plans.
- Student wellbeing is considered by departments and included in subject plans.
- The school endeavours to offer a robust CPD programme for teachers.
- Supporting the participation of students in the development and implementation of school policies via the Student Council and Head Boys.

The school has a range of other policies that support the implementation of the Bí Cineálta policy:

- Code of Behaviour
- Relationship and Sexuality Education Policy
- Guidance Plan
- Acceptable Use Policy: Bring Your Own Device
- SEN Policy
- SPHE Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy

Relationships and Partnerships

- Vibrant and extensive extracurricular activities that encompass both sporting and non-sporting activities.
- Awareness initiatives such as Stand Up Week, Multicultural week and the Amber Flag.
- Partnerships with organisations that prevent homophobic, transphobic and racist bullying.
- An active student voice via the Student Council, Head Boys and student participation in professional meetings, including Board of Management meetings.
- Supporting, encouraging and acknowledging acts of kindness across the school community.
- Engagement with members of the wider school community who are in regular contact with students.

Preventing Cyberbullying Behaviour

The Board of Management acknowledges that technology and social media have provided many positive opportunities for entertainment, social engagement and education. Technology is a part of life that can impact even the youngest members of society. However, the increase in the use of technology has led to students becoming increasingly vulnerable to cyberbullying or unacceptable online behaviour. The Board of Management, along with the

entire school community, is committed to proactively addressing the challenges posed by cyberbullying and fostering safe online environments via the school curriculum, school policies and broader school initiatives.

The school cannot be expected deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, the school will support the students involved.

Preventing Homophobic/Transphobic Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Clonkeen College acknowledges that all students including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students, have a right to feel safe and supported at school and on school related activities. This is supported through the school curriculum in SPHE and through initiatives such as Stand Up Week and school announcements.

Preventing Racist Bullying Behaviour

The Board also acknowledges that students attending Clonkeen College come from many different cultures and backgrounds, which enriches the school community. The Board is committed to ensuring that all students feel safe and supported in school regardless of their ethnicity or country of origin. This is supported through the school curriculum in SPHE and through initiatives such as Multicultural Week.

Preventing Sexist Bullying

The Board acknowledges that, regardless of the fact that Clonkeen College is an all-boys school, the school community will focus on gender equality as part of school's measures to create a supportive and respectful environment. This is supported through the school curriculum in SPHE and through school staff modelling respectful behaviour.

Preventing Sexual Harassment

The Board acknowledges that preventing sexual harassment requires an approach that focuses on education. The school adopts a zero-tolerance approach to incidents of sexual harassment. The school has implemented the updated SPHE specifications to teach students about healthy relationships and how to treat each other with respect and kindness.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Clonkeen College acknowledges that the whole school community has a responsibility to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

The primary aim in addressing reports of bullying behaviour is to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the students involved, rather than to apportion blame. Teachers, students and parents can report bullying behaviour using a bullying report form.

The Teachers with Responsibility for Investigating Bullying Behaviour are as follows:

- Ms. Gibson (First Year)
- Mr. Faherty (Second Year)
- Ms. O'Rourke (Third Year)
- Ms. Mooney (Transition Year)
- Ms. Healy (Fifth Year)
- Mr. O'Shaughnessy (Sixth Year)
- Mr. McGloughlin (Additional Educational Needs Co-ordinator)

The Board of Management of Clonkeen College is aware that while Year Heads and the AEN co-ordinator are responsible for investigating and addressing bullying behaviour, the process may involve collaboration with teachers, class tutors, the Guidance Counsellor, the Deputy Principal and the 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.
- listen to the views of the alleged perpetrator.
- take action in a timely manner.
- inform parents of those involved.

Requests to Take no Action

Parents(s)/guardian(s) are entitled to request, in writing, that the school take no action regarding incidents of bullying behaviour. However, certain circumstances may require intervention by the school despite a request to take no action by parent(s)/guardian(s).

Identifying if Bullying Behaviour has occurred

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour, the following questions will be considered during the investigation by the investigating teacher:

1. Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?
2. Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?
3. Is the behaviour repeated?

If the answer to each of the questions above is Yes, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour and the behaviour will be addressed using the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

Note: One- off incidents may be considered bullying in certain circumstances. A single hurtful message **posted on social media** can be considered bullying behaviour as it has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and thus becomes a repeated behaviour.

If the answer to any of these questions is No, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred, investigating teachers will consider what, where, when and why? If a group of students are involved, each student will be engaged with individually at first. It may be helpful to ask students to write down their account of the incident.

Where Bullying Behaviour has occurred

The Board of Management acknowledges that parents are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with the school, in addressing bullying behaviour. Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the students involved 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.

The views of the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour will be taken into account as to how best address the situation.

Follow up Where Bullying Behaviour has occurred

The Board of Management acknowledges the importance of following up with the students involved and their parents if bullying behaviour has occurred. The investigating teacher will engage with students and their parents no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement.

The investigating teacher will document the review with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and hear the views of the students and their parents in relation to this.

If it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the relevant student may be issued with sanctions, as per the Code of Behaviour, **up to and including expulsion from Clonkeen College.**

If parent(s)/guardian(s) is/are not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with the *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, then they should make a complaint, as per the school's complaints procedures, to the investigating teacher.

The investigating teacher, in collaboration with the Deputy Principal and/or the Principal will endeavour to deal with the complaint and any issues that arise during the investigation process. If parent(s)/guardian(s) is/are still not satisfied with how a complaint has been handled, they are entitled to make a complaint to Board of Management.

If parent(s)/guardian(a) is/are still not satisfied with how a complaint has been handled, they are entitled to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions have had a negative effect on the student.

The School will Use the Following Approaches to Support those who Experience, Witness and Display Bullying Behaviour:

- Support from teachers, special needs assistants, tutors, year heads, guidance counsellor, additional educational needs coordinator, deputy principal and principal.
- Support from outside agencies, including the *National Educational Psychological Service* (NEPS) and *Tusla*.

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 Board of Management requests the principal to 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 will not contain personal or identifying information.

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: L. Hogan

Date: 3/6/2025

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: E. Melly

Date: 3/6/2025

(Principal)