



St Colman's Community College

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

June 2025



cetb

Bord Oideachais agus
Oiliúna Chorcaí
Cork Education and
Training Board



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Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide the best possible education for the students in our care. We want all in our school community to develop and achieve their potential in a positive atmosphere of respect, effort and fairness.

The Board of Management of St Colman's Community 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*.

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, is printed in our student journals and is also available on our website and a 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: Denis O' Shea
(Acting Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: Máirín Lally
(Principal)

Links to the school's mission statement and key principles of best practice

In the light of our Mission Statement, St Colman's Community College BÍ Cinealta Anti Bullying Policy aims to articulate the school's high expectations for behaviour, its plan for the prevention of bullying behaviour and its response to bullying behaviour, along with the plan for implementing Anti Bullying Procedures, with a view to ensuring a happy, safe and secure learning environment for the benefit of all students.

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.

The Board of Management of St Colman's Community College has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour and is therefore, fully committed to ensuring that policy and practice in the school is guided by the four key principles of Cineáltas:

1. Prevention
2. Support
3. Oversight
4. and 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.

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 the 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 the 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.

Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour

- A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards another student is not bullying behaviour. However, a single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be visible to a wide audience and has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and so becomes a repeated behaviour.
- Disagreement between students, or instances where students don't want to be friends or to remain friends, is not considered bullying behaviour unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others including deliberate manipulation of friendship groups.
- Some students with special educational needs may have social communication difficulties which may make them communicate their needs through behaviours that can hurt themselves or others. It is important to note that these behaviours are not deliberate or planned but, in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they can't control.
- Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying.
- These behaviours, while not defined as bullying, can be distressing.
- Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

Criminal Behaviour

- Bullying behaviour can be considered criminal behaviour under certain circumstances and legal consequences can apply. The age of criminal responsibility in Ireland is 12 years. Some online behaviour may be illegal, and students need to be aware of the far-reaching consequences of posting inappropriate or harmful content online. In cases of intimate imagery, the Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020, also known as Coco's Law, criminalises the non-consensual sharing of intimate images and also criminalises threatening to share these images.
- If bullying behaviour involves physical violence or threats of violence, it may be considered assault.
- If bullying behaviour involves discrimination or hate speech targeting a student based on their race, religion, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation or membership of the Traveller community, it may be considered a hate crime under the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989¹¹, and those engaging in such behaviour may face criminal charges.
- If bullying behaviour involves sexual harassment or sexual assault, this may also be considered criminal behaviour. An Garda Síochána is the appropriate authority to investigate alleged criminal behaviour.

Types of bullying behaviour are outlined in the BÍ Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and address bullying behaviour linked here [BÍ Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour](#)

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

General behaviours which apply to all	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 • 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	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/TikTok/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	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)
Homophobic and	Spreading rumours about a person’s sexual orientation

Transgender	• Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation • Name calling e.g., gay, queer, lesbian ... used in a derogatory manner • Physical intimidation or attacks • Threats
Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community	Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background • Exclusion on the basis of any of the above
Relational	This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include: • Malicious gossip • Isolation & exclusion • Ignoring • Excluding from the group • Taking someone's friends away • "Bitching" • Spreading rumours • • Breaking confidence • • Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear • • The "look" • • Use of terminology such as "nerd" in a derogatory way
Sexual	Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching • Harassment
Special Educational Needs, Disability – Learning Difficulties and Gifted	• Name calling • Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs • Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying • Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues. • Mimicking a person's disability • Setting others up for ridicule

Rights and Responsibilities of each member of the school community

Rights	Responsibilities
I have the right to feel safe at school	I have a responsibility to make our school a safe and a secure place

Rights and Responsibilities of students and staff

I have the right to be:	I have to responsibility to ensure that:
1. Treated with respect 2. Physically safe and I expect my property to be safe at school 3. Free from all forms of bullying 4. Able to learn and teach without disruption	1. Others are treated with respect 2. Others are physically safe and the property of others is safe 3. Others are free from all forms of bullying 4. Others/ Students are able to learn without disruption 5. Bullying behaviour is acted upon as appropriate

Rights and Responsibilities of parents

I have the right to:	I have to responsibility to ensure that:
1. Expect that my child is safe in school and can learn without disruption	1. I report bullying behaviour to the school 2. Co-operate fully with the implementation of school policy

Responsibilities of bystanders/witnesses

I should	I should not
1. Say 'no' or 'stop' when I see or hear someone behaving unfairly - be assertive but not aggressive 2. Seek help immediately from an adult, if the situation is dangerous 3. Report when I know that a student is being bullied	1. Join in bullying behaviour e.g. laugh, sneer, mock, fight- offline or online 2. Cheer on somebody who is bullying 3. Stay in a dangerous situation, e.g. a fight 4. Bully the 'bully'

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		
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

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):

Our Wellbeing Policy has been developed in line with national Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice and provides the following four key areas that are essential for a holistic, whole school approach to wellbeing promotion: Culture and Environment; Curriculum (Teaching and Learning); Policy and Planning; and Relationships and Partnerships.

These are the four areas that we have considered when we developed our measures to prevent bullying behaviour

Culture and Environment

A positive and inclusive school culture and environment is essential to prevent and address bullying behaviour. The school environment should be a space where students and school staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported.

How we create this culture and environment

- Relationships between all members of the school community should be/are based on respect, care, integrity and trust.
- Open communication between the patron, boards of management, school staff, students and their parents help to foster a collaborative approach and shared responsibilities in relation to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.
- The school leadership team influences the school culture and sets the standards and expectations for the school community when preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.
- Each member of school staff has a responsibility to develop and maintain a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and to take a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.
- Students shape the school culture by promoting kindness and inclusion within their peer group and maintain a positive and supportive school environment for all.
- Parents, as active partners in their child's education, help foster an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated through promoting empathy and respect.
- Students are encouraged to report all incidents of alleged bullying/bullying behavior and staff support this strategy by letting students know they can talk to them.
- The school has in place an open door policy and students are encouraged to speak to any member of staff if they or a peer is experiencing bullying behaviour.
- When students report to an adult in the school they are reassured that they have done the right thing by reporting the behaviour. Students are supported by staff while the behaviour is being addressed by the relevant staff member.
- Every base class has a class teacher with whom they meet for pastoral care daily. Each year group has an assigned year head and Deputy Principal who facilitate weekly assemblies, liaise with and support students.
- There is a Student Support Team in place which comprises Principal, Deputy Principals, Year Heads, Guidance Counsellors, AEN Coordinators, Home School Community Liaison and School Completion Coordinator.
- Students are assigned designated areas in which to socialise and eat before school and at break and lunchtimes and a proactive approach is encouraged during periods of supervision.
- The school provides a social club at breaktime and offers a wide range of extracurricular and cocurricular activities which take place during break times and after school each day.

Curriculum

We promote a teaching and learning environment that is collaborative and respectful. Students have regular opportunities to work in small groups with their peers, which can help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy among students.

Programme and Subject Provision

- The curricular subjects offered to students provide opportunities to foster inclusion and respect for diversity, we offer a broad and balanced curriculum at both Junior and Senior Cycle and offer all programmes at Senior Cycle (TY, LCA and LC).

- The curricular subjects offered to students provide opportunities to foster inclusion and respect for diversity. Opportunities are provided for students to develop a sense of self worth through both curricular and extracurricular programmes.
- The school facilitates the DCU FUSE Anti Bullying Programme for students and equips parents with the skills and information on bullying and online safety which is vital to successfully supporting our students.
- The updated SPHE specifications aim to help students to feel empowered to create, nurture and maintain respectful and healthy relationships with themselves and others.
- The RSE strand of the specification also provides space for post primary 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.
- Diversity and Inclusion are also explored through the wide variety of subjects offered in the school. Diversity and inclusion is experienced via the ETBI Patron's Framework on Ethos. ETB schools are state, co-educational, multi-denominational schools underpinned by the core values of: Excellence in Education, Care, Equality, Community and Respect.
- In CSPE there is a focus on the interdependence of people in communities, at local as well national and international levels.
- History and, at Senior Cycle, Politics and Society can be used to raise awareness of racism and colonialism. By examining historical and contemporary examples of racial discrimination and colonial legacies, students can develop an understanding of the root causes of bias and prejudice. Resources and materials are also available to support incorporating Traveller culture and history across many areas of the curriculum.
- Weekly assembly themes based on core values.

Policy and Planning

The wellbeing of the school community is at the heart of school policies and plans. The school has a BÍ Cineálta student friendly policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour. Appendix G We use resources and practices as recommended in the Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools, and the FUSE Anti-Bullying and Online Safety Programme developed by DCU Anti-Bullying Centre [Link to fuse here](#)

The following policies support the implementation of a school's BÍ Cineálta policy.

- Code of Behaviour Policy
- Whole school wellbeing Policy to include SPHE, RSE, CSPE & PE
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Online Learning Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Critical Incident Policy
- Whole School Guidance Plan
- AEN Policy
- Dignity in the Workplace Policy
- Individual Subject Dept Policies

Student and Parent Voice

- Supporting the participation of students and parents/guardians in the development and

implementation of school policies and plans helps increase awareness and ensure effective implementation. We do this by surveying all parents on a regular basis and through focus groups with the parents association and the student council.

Staff Development and Voice

- All school staff are also consulted in the development of Policy and Procedures in the school. Staff engage in teacher professional learning courses that support them in preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. School staff are given opportunities to share their experiences and examples of best practice.

School Strategic Plan and School Improvement Plans

- Our school strategic Plan has focus areas for example Creating a Positive School culture, learning and learners, enhancing positive relations

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 such as student councils, school clubs, parents' associations and student support teams.

Student Council

- We have an opt-in and nominated student council which ensures those students who are most interested in developing the student voice in the school feel supported and can connect and engage with our school community.

Student Mentors

- We have trained TY mentors who support first year students as they transition from primary school to post primary. This system is built on care and trust and

School Clubs

- We have an extensive extra curricular activity programme which aims to ensure that all students can feel a connection and belonging in our school.

Parents Association

- Our parents' associations play an active role in the development of our school. The main focus of their regular meetings is how we can make our school a better, more positive place for all students. All of our Parents Association meetings are open to all parents to attend.

Student Support Team

- We have a student support team in the school. This includes the Principal, Deputy Principals, Guidance team, SENCO, AS class coordinator, HSCL, SCP and BFL teacher. They meet on a weekly basis.
- We also have an AEN team who meet weekly with a Deputy Principal.
- Our Guidance Team also meet on a weekly basis to discuss school wide issues and supports across year groups

Open door Policy and Positive relationships with staff

- Our Principal, Deputy Principals lead an open door policy for all staff and students in the school. We aim to develop positive relationships with all students and work to promote a culture where students can approach any member of staff to discuss any issue which is affecting them in school, including any bullying behaviours.

Awareness Initiatives

- Our weekly assembly themes address the topic of Bullying, specifically where we look at relationships, friendships and respect.
- Everyone participates in Anti-bullying Week, which takes place on an annual basis and covers many topics throughout the week and leading up to and proceeding it.
- We hold a wellbeing week, celebrating inclusion and diversity by hosting cultural events and participating in events such as Rainbow Day, ASIAM, BelongTO and LGBTQ+ events.

BelongTo

- We have achieved BelongTo accreditation

Restorative Practice Team

- We are engaging with the connect RP programme and working with the school community to become an RP school by: teaching accountability and problem solving, promoting acts of kindness, supporting activities that build empathy, respect and resilience

Engaging with members of the wider school community:

Communication with parents, guardians and the wider community is central to the development, implementation and review of the school's Bí Cinealta Anti Bullying policy. We continue to work to build relationships with the wider school community.

- Local businesses
- EWO
- Middleton Resource Centre
- Community Garda
- Youth Diversion
- School bus driver
- REALT
- NCSE
- NEPS
- HSCL
- SCP

The school community aims to prevent cyberbullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying, racist bullying, sexist bullying and sexual harassment as outlined in sections 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8 and 5.9 of the Bí Cinealta procedures. [Bí Cinealta Procedures](#)

Education and Prevention Strategies

The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school to prevent and address bullying behaviour include the following, these strategies are underpinned by the core values of respect, care, equality, excellence in education and community to promote a positive school climate and culture where all members of our school community are treated equitably regardless of their race, gender, religion/belief, age, family status, civil status, membership of the Traveller community, sexual orientation, ability or socio-economic status.

- Induction Programmes
- Team Building Activities
- SOS
- Transition to Post primary school programme
- Year Head/Class Teacher Structure - Student Assemblies
- Guidance Counselling
- Care Team
- School Environment - visuals - Wellbeing Walk
- Wellbeing Programme - SPHE/CSPE/PE/RSE
- Digital Learning
- RSE Programme
- Anti bullying programmes for all year groups - FUSE anti bullying Programme
- Anti Bullying Week
- Mentoring Programme
- Social Clubs
- School Trips
- Student Voice
- Students Council
- BFL Program
- Check and Connect
- LGBTQI+ Working Group
- Ally Group
- SCP
- HSCL
- Parent's Communication Site
- Information sessions for parent's guardians
- Sports and Cultural Activities
- Celebrating Diversity e.g. Cultural Day
- Supporting EAL students

Supervision and Monitoring

The Board of Management of St Colman's Community College confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

- A weekly schedule of student supervision on corridors, outside toilets and in designated social areas is developed to monitor student behaviour and wellbeing. Any causes for concern are dealt with and reported to school management.
- All staff monitor and observe relationships between students in class, note absence patterns and let it be known that high standards of behaviour are expected at all times.
- Social Club and lunchtime soccer leagues run at big lunch for 1st and 2nd Year students
- A range of extra curricular clubs and activities run at various lunchtimes
- The implementation and effectiveness of the School's anti-bullying policy will be an agenda item at staff meetings – so the concerns about the policy and/or the welfare of individual students can be shared and effectively addressed.
- In the interest of security cameras are located in the school corridors.
- Student Support Team – the student support team meet weekly and operate a referral and check and connect system where teachers meet students where concerns may have been brought to their attention
- Data gathered through the reporting templates (Appendix A & B) will be collated and analysed annually with a view to monitoring levels of bullying behaviour and identifying issues requiring attention. This analysis will complement the information gathered through sociograms and surveys.
- At least once in every school term, The Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out the following.
 - the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying Behaviour Update recording template (see Appendix D) since the previous report to the Board.
 - confirmation that all cases referred via the recording template (Appendix D) have been or are being dealt with in accordance with the Bí Cinealta Anti Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools. The minutes of Board of Management meetings will record the Principal's report but in doing so will not include any identifying details of the students involved

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The whole school community has a responsibility to prevent and address bullying behaviour. Our school works in partnership with Cork ETB, the school's board of management, staff, students and parents in developing and implementing our Bí Cineálta policy.

The primary aim in addressing reports of bullying behaviour should be to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the students involved, rather than to apportion blame.

- The **relevant teachers** for investigating and dealing with bullying in St Colman's CC will be the Year Head assisted by the Deputy Principal and Principal.

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):

Reporting Bullying Behaviour

Students and or/parents should report bullying behaviour to any member of staff with whom they feel comfortable, but their main point of contact will be their Year Head. All staff, students or parents may

- Directly approach a member of staff at an appropriate time
- Write a signed note e.g. with homework
- Make a phone call to the school and ask for a call back or make an appointment to meet with the Year Head.
- Ask a parent/guardian or friend to speak on their behalf
- Discussing an incident of bullying with a teacher or another trusted adult within the school.
- Where a member of the teaching staff has a concern about a student being bullied, either as a result of a personal observation or as a result of receiving a report from a third party, the teacher should without delay refer the matter to the Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal.

Incidents of bullying behaviour, no matter how trivial, which are drawn to the attention of a staff member, will be dealt with in the following manner

The staff member will

- Listen, take notes, reassure the student, ensure the students safety as far as possible
- Use 'Appendix A 'Identifying if bullying has occurred'.
- Fill out 'Appendix B' Alleged Bullying Behaviour Reporting Form'.
- All reported instances will be passed on to the Year Head for investigation

We work to ensure that the person being bullied feels safe and secure at all times. Therefore the person being bullied will be consulted in conjunction with their parents about the matter and how the school is to proceed in the first instance.

Identifying If bullying behaviour has occurred.

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

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

The Relevant Teacher will

- Identify if bullying behaviour has occurred by analysing incidents of alleged bullying and seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why.
- This will be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- If a group of students is involved, each student will be engaged with individually at first.
- Thereafter, all students involved should be met as a group (this will only happen by agreement with students and parents)
- At the group meeting, each student will be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views.
- Each student will 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 (Student Incident Form)

The definition of bullying provided above sets out clear criteria to help the Year Head to identify bullying behaviour. Relevant teacher will use Appendix A to make this determination.

In investigating bullying behaviour or addressing bullying behaviour in any way, the relevant teacher is welcome to seek the assistance and support of the Year Head, Deputy Principal, Principal or the Student Support Team at any time.

Incidents can occur where behaviour is unacceptable and hurtful but the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies that deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

Where bullying behaviour has occurred.

“Given the complexity of bullying behaviour it is generally acknowledged that no one approach works in all situations. International and national research also continues to evolve in this area and the effectiveness of particular approaches continues to be reviewed. Each school must therefore decide on an approach that is best suited to its own circumstances.”

P 44, Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools

The School reserves the right to investigate allegations of bullying (and to take disciplinary action where necessary) where bullying is perpetrated by a member of the school community and it impinges on the work or well-being of a student in the school, even where the bullying acts are committed outside of the school/college.

The School reserves the right, in accordance with Section 6 Bi Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools to seek the assistance of agencies such as NEPS, the HSE, and the Gardaí, where it deems such assistance is necessary to dealing effectively with bullying behaviour. In any case, where the School/College deems bullying behaviour to be potentially abusive (Section 2 Bi Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools) it will consult with the HSE’s Children and Family Services to assist it in drawing up an appropriate response or to obtain advice or to make a formal child protection report to the HSE or the Gardaí (as appropriate) in accordance with the DES Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary (revised 2023)

- Where the Year Head has deemed Bullying has occurred the Year Head will record any instances of Bullying on a school record form.(Appendix C)
- In the first instance a restorative practice and mediation approach to dealing with the bullying behaviour will be taken by the Year Head.
- Parents are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with schools, 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.
- 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
- Listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation.
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved will be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the student who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.

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, school staff will show empathy to the student, will deal with the matter sensitively and speak 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 will be asked to put this request in writing to the school.

However, while acknowledging the parent's request, the school may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour

Recording of bullying behaviour

Those involved in investigating and resolving bullying behaviour will note and report all details as follows and, in doing so, they will comply with relevant data protection legislation. It is imperative that all recording 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 A,B & C)
- This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with students and parents.
- Track the progress 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 supports.
- The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented.
- 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.
- All files and documents will be stored with a Bullying Case file number in the Principal's office and records will be included in each relevant student's file.

Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred

Engagement with Students and Parents:

- The Year Head/Deputy Principal/Principal must engage with the students involved in the bullying and their parents.
- This engagement should occur no later than 20 school days after the initial contact.

Factors to Consider:

- During this engagement, important factors to consider and document include
 - The nature of bullying behavior.

- The effectiveness of the strategies used to address bullying behaviour.
- The relationship between the students involved.

Review of Strategies:

- If the bullying behavior has not stopped, the year head/deputy principal/principal should:
 - Review the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour
 - Consult with the students involved and their parents to determine next steps.

Agree on a Timeframe:

- A timeframe should be set for further engagement and follow-up until the bullying behavior ceases.

Further Action if Bullying Continues:

- If the bullying behavior continues, the school should consider using strategies from the school's Code of Behaviour to address the inappropriate behavior.

Disciplinary Sanctions:

- If disciplinary sanctions are necessary, the matter should be handled between the student, their parents, and the school.

If Parents Are Unsatisfied:

- If a parent is not satisfied with how the bullying has been addressed, they should refer to the school's complaints procedures, as outlined in the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

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

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 students affected by bullying is as follows: Students 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 also engage in check and connect.
- The schools Guidance Department will also put in place a program of support in conjunction with the Year Head and DP
- The learning strategies applied within the school will also allow for the enhancement of the student's self-worth

Students who display bullying Behaviour:

- Students who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

- The Year Head in conjunction with the relevant Student Support Team will work closely with the student in this regard.

Outside agency support:

The school in certain circumstances may also seek the support and advice of TUSLA, EWO, NEPS, NCSE, second level school support services, HSE and any other agency deemed appropriate to support the school in dealing with incidents of bullying.

Oversight

Periodic Summary Reports to the Board of Management

The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting. (Appendix D)

This update will include

- the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting
- the number of ongoing incidents
- 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
- any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant.
- 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 and
- if the school's Bí Cineálta policy requires urgent review in advance of the annual review

This update does not contain personal or identifying information.

Annual Review of the Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management must undertake an annual (calendar) review (Appendix E) or as soon as practicable where the board of management determines that a review is warranted of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and its implementation in consultation with the school community.

The review will be completed with input from the school community which includes the board of management, staff, students and their parents and members of the wider school community (as appropriate).

The school will engage with the student council and the parents association to obtain their views on the content and effectiveness of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy.

The school community will be given notice that the annual review has taken place and the form included at Appendix F will be used for this purpose. This confirmation will be published on the school website once the annual review has taken place.

Appendices

Appendix A

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour the Year Head should consider the following questions:

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 should 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.

Appendix B

St Colman’s Community College
Alleged Bullying Behaviour Reporting Form

When completed by the staff member this form should be given to the relevant teacher for investigating and addressing alleged bullying behaviour.

Source of Report (Tick as Appropriate) Parent __ Student __ Staff-Member __ Survey __ Other __

Name of person who reported the alleged bullying (if appropriate) _____

Date initially reported: _____

Name of Student who is allegedly being bullied _____

Name(s) and Class(es) of students involved in Alleged Bullying Behaviour

Name		Class	
Name		Class	
Name		Class	
Name		Class	

Initial details of Incident (Attach Student Incident Accounts to this form)

Was it determined that bullying was taking place(Appendix A) (Please Circle) Yes No

If yes, this form should be given directly to the relevant teacher (year head)

If not, what actions were taken?

Date	Action	By Whom

Signed _____ Date _____

Appendix C

St Colman's Community College Record of Bullying Behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____ Year Group _____ Class _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

Name		Class	
Name		Class	
Name		Class	

3. Source of bullying concern/report tick relevant box(es))* 4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es)) *

Source		Location	
Student Concerned		School Grounds	
Other Student		Classroom	
Parent		Corridor	
Teacher		Toilets	
Other		School Bus	
		Online	
		Other	

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

--

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

Physical Bullying Behaviour		Exclusion	
Verbal Bullying Behaviour		Relational	
Written Bullying Behaviour		Online Bullying Behaviour	
Extortion		Other (specify)	

7 .Description of bullying behaviour and its impact. Please attach all student accounts, minutes of meetings to this form

Steps Taken

Parents/Guardians Contacted	
Request to take no	
Restorative Practice and Mediation Approach taken where appropriate and agreed	
Meetings with students	
Disciplinary Sanctions (Code of Behaviour)	
Follow Up Meeting	
Agreed date that bullying behaviour has ceased	

Date of follow -up meeting with parent/guardian and student _____

Agreed date that bullying behaviour has ceased _____

Signed _____(Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

Action Taken in Response to Incident Report

(Please record dates, times, phone-calls, consultations with Parents, Teachers, Year-Heads, Guidance-Counsellor, Principal etc. as relevant)

[illegible]

Appendix D

Board of Management Bullying Behaviour Update

Guide to Providing Bullying Behaviour Update for board of management meeting of

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 the 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.

Appendix E

Review of the Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual (calendar) review of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and its implementation in consultation with the school community. As part of the review, this document must be completed.

Bí Cineálta Policy Review

1. When did the Board formally adopt its Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour in accordance with the *Bí Cineálta Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*?
Insert date when the Bí Cineálta policy was last adopted by the school.

____/____/20____

2. Where in the school is the student friendly Bí Cineálta policy displayed?

3. What date did the Board publish the Bí Cineálta policy and the student friendly policy on the school website? ____/____/20____

4. How has the student friendly policy been communicated to students?

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 with as part of the review of the Bí Cineálta Policy?

14. Outline any aspects of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and/or its implementation that have been identified as requiring further improvement as part of this review:

15. Where areas for improvement have been identified, outline how these will be addressed and whether an action plan with timeframes has been developed?

16. Does the student friendly policy need to be updated as a result of this review and if so why?

17. Does the school refer parents to the complaints procedures if they have a complaint about how the school has addressed bullying behaviour?

Yes ____ No ____

18. Has a parent informed the school that a student has left the school due to reported bullying behaviour?

Yes ____ No ____

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 F

Notification regarding the board of management's annual review of the school's BÍ Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management of *St Colman's Community College* confirms that the board of management's annual review of the school's BÍ Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour and its implementation was completed at the board of management meeting of

This review was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Education's BÍ Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Signed: _____

(Chairperson of board of management)

Date:

Date of next review:

Signed: _____

(Principal)

Date:

Appendix G

Child Friendly Bí Cineálta Anti Bullying Policy

St Colman's Community College
Student Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy



Bí Cineálta!

Be Kind!

We want everyone at our school to feel safe and happy.

If you think that you are being bullied or someone else is being bullied, you need to tell a teacher or another adult that you trust. They will know what to do to help.



If a student tells a staff member that they think they are being bullied, we will:

- > talk with the student
- > ask the student what they want to happen
- > work out a plan together
- > talk to their parents
- > talk to the other student(s) involved
- > talk with the other student's parents

Bullying behaviour is when someone keeps being mean or hurtful to others on purpose over and over again.

When it happens a lot
Not just once.

