

2025/26



Bí Cineálta Policy

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“Working together, together achieving success”

Ó Fiaich College Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Ó Fiaich 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*.

<https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/bullying-information-for-parents-and-students/>

This Policy applies in class, between classes, on corridors, in the toilets, and while on Campus. It also applies on school trips and while representing the school.

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 (Page 17 & 18):

➤ 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 once 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 nonconsensual 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

There are many different types of bullying behaviour. These can include the following which is not an exhaustive list:

- **Disablist bullying behaviour:**

behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of a perceived or actual disability or additional need

- **Exceptionally able bullying:**

behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their high academic ability or outstanding talents

- **Gender identity bullying:**

behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual gender identity

- **Homophobic/transphobic (LGBTQ+) bullying:**

behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual membership of the LGBTQ+ community

- **Physical appearance bullying:**

behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their physical appearance. Students who “look different” can be mocked or criticised about the shape, size or appearance of their body

- **Racist bullying:**

behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their race or ethnic origin which includes membership of the Traveller or Roma community. Racism is defined in the National Action Plan Against Racism¹³ as “a form of domination which manifests through those power dynamics present in structural and institutional arrangements, practices, policies and cultural norms, which have the effect of excluding or discriminating against individuals or groups, based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin”

- **Poverty bullying:**

behaviour that intends to humiliate a student because of a lack of resources

- **Religious identity bullying:**

behaviour that intends to harm a student because of their religion or religious identity

- **Sexist bullying:**

behaviour that intends to harm a student based on their sex, perpetuating stereotypes that a student or a group of students are inferior because of their sex

- **Sexual harassment:**

any form of unwanted verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on sex which affects the dignity of the student

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	16/05/2025	½ Day closure - using Guidance document and resources, Powerpoints, Videos, posters, flip charts etc. Familiarisation with Bí Cineálta Procedures publication Staff Survey Discussion of and, review of draft policy Group activities around scenarios etc. Q&A staff will regularly review effectiveness of new policy especially with regard to preventing and addressing bullying strategies Staff review & feedback prior to BOM annual review Bí Cineálta New Team established to review and develop Policy
Students	09/05/2025	As part of SPHE present and discuss Bí Cineálta at an age-appropriate level and using the child friendly poster Student Council consulted about poster and management of bullying in school generally Survey of Students Student Voice activities Term 1 2025 – Student Competition to redesign Student Friendly Policy Bí Cineálta Team will meet with student focus group

Parents	16/05/2025	Parent Survey Sent out link to the draft policy and invite feedback and suggestions Consult with Parents' Association HSCL will discuss with Parents/Guardians on Home Visits & school events Year Heads will discuss with parents/Guardians @ Parent Teacher Meetings etc.
Board of Management	Date BOM Meeting 10/09/2025	Send draft policy to all members in advance of the meeting to invite feedback and suggestions Discuss and agree final draft at BOM meeting on 10/09/2025 Ratify and monitor implementation and effectiveness of the policy through feedback from the Principal at each meeting and its annual review BOM representatives attended the ½ Day Closure
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	On Going	Ongoing Professional conversations to be had with bus drivers, workshop providers, local partnerships, other visitors, work experience providers, etc., as appropriate and relevant
Date policy was approved: Date BOM Meeting, 10/09/2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: February 2024 – Anti-Bullying Policy based on 2013 Guidelines		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

Prevention Strategies

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*):

The Board of Management of Ó Fiaich College 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 of best practice in preventing and tackling 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. Relationships between all members of the school community should be based on respect, care, integrity and trust. Open communication between the ETB, 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 set 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 can 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, can help foster an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated through promoting empathy and respect (*Bí Cineálta procedures- Chapter 5- 5.1*).

- Fostering ETB Core Values -Respect, Care, Equality, Community, Excellence
- A positive and inclusive school culture and environment which
 - Is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity
 - Is a 'telling' environment which encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment – Open Door Policy
 - Promotes and models respectful relationships across the school community
- Effective leadership that sets high standards and expectations
- A school-wide approach where each member of staff takes a consistent approach to effective observation and addressing of bullying behaviour
- School staff and school leaders model kindness in their interactions with students and colleagues
- Students promoting kindness and inclusion in peer groups
- Parents as active partners in their child's education, fostering an environment where bullying

is not tolerated through promoting empathy and respect

- A 'trusted adult' who reassures and supports students they have done the right thing by reporting bullying behaviour
- Creating safe, visible physical spaces in school
- Student induction programmes
- Student Care Team
- Active Student Voice
- Student Leaders & Mentors
- Training & upskilling
- Introduction of Restorative Practice
- Check and connect Programme

Curriculum- Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning that is collaborative and respectful is promoted. Students have regular opportunities to work in small groups with their peers, which helps build sense of connection, belonging and empathy among students. The curricular subjects offered to students provide opportunities to foster inclusion and respect for diversity. Schools are encouraged to provide opportunities for students to develop a sense of self-worth through both curricular and extra-curricular programmes.

(Bí Cineálta procedures- Chapter 5- 5.2).

- A shared understanding of what bullying is, its impact and bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour.
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-
 - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils
 - promote inclusion and diversity
 - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including homophobic, transphobic, racist, sexist bullying and sexual harassment as appropriate.
 - provide teaching and learning in SPHE that equips students with skills to build positive relationships, resolve conflicts and recognise and deal with bullying behaviour
- SPHE Curricular & other Programmes to include:
 - RSE, Fuse, Lockers, Alert, Shield, Belong To, (**Update in 2025-26**)
- Teaching methodologies to include -e.g.
 - Group work/Collaboration
 - Role - play, acting out scenarios to teach students how to deal with/handle situations with kindness
 - Extra - curricular activities to develop positive self - worth

- Co-Teaching
- Inclusive approaches and language
- Whole school Initiatives – e.g. Homework Project, #MSC
- Various themed weeks throughout the school calendar

Policy and Planning

The wellbeing of the school community should be at the heart of school policies and plans. Supporting the participation of students in the development and implementation of school policies and plans can help increase awareness and ensure effective implementation. (*Bí Cineálta procedures- Chapter 5- 5.3*).

- Bí Cineálta Policy developed, communicated, implemented and reviewed in consultation with all partners
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies)
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the Bí Cineálta Policy
- Student Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment
- Acceptable Use Policy
- SPHE & RSE Policy
- AEN/SEN Policy
- DEIS Plan
- Wellbeing interwoven into DEIS policies and others
- Health and Safety Policy Statement
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils (both within school and on Campus, unstructured activities, trips, etc.)
- Teacher Professional Learning and other such relevant supports for staff
- Engaging in training available for school staff which relates to promoting inclusion and diversity in schools
- Sharing of best practice and CPD Resources among school staff and departments
- Establishment of Communities of Practice within Ó Fiach and with our sister schools
- To Consider 2026 – Supervision Policy

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. (*Bí Cineálta procedures- Chapter 5- 5.4*).

- Strong interpersonal connections supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as Student Council, Student Leaders, Parents' Association, student focus groups etc.
- DEIS Partnership with Parents and Others Plan
- Partnership approach with external agencies – CAMHS, NEPS, Tusla, Gardai
- Student and parent/guardian active participation
- Workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying
- Promoting acts of kindness and activities that build empathy, respect and resilience e.g. Random Acts of Kindness Day during Well Being Week, Darkness into Light etc
- Intercultural Culture Day/Week
- Teaching problem solving skills
- Critical Thinking Skills
- Promoting self-awareness and awareness of others
- Encouraging peer mentoring and buddying etc.
- Introduction of Restorative Practice

Preventing cyber bullying behaviour:

Technology and social media have provided many positive opportunities for entertainment, social engagement and education. However, the increase in the use of technology has led to students becoming increasingly vulnerable to cyberbullying or unacceptable online behaviour. (*Bí Cineálta procedures-Chapter 5- 5.5*).

Ó Fiaich College strives to proactively address these challenges by promoting digital literacy, digital citizenship, and fostering safe online environments.

Strategies to prevent cyberbullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- implementing the SPHE curriculum
- implementing the Digital Media Literacy curriculum which teaches students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship
- having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- developing and communicating an acceptable use policy for technology
- referring to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour
- promoting or hosting online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online*
- promoting Internet safety day to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour

(Note: The digital age of consent is the minimum age a user must be before a social media or internet

company can collect, process and store their data. In Ireland the digital age of consent is 16. Children between 13 and 16 must have parental permission to sign up to social media services. Most social media platforms have a minimum age requirement and for the majority of these, it is 13 years old. Therefore, children under the age of 13 should not have a social media account).

Preventing homophobic/ transphobic bullying behaviour:

All students including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students, have a right to feel safe and supported at school.

Strategies to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- maintaining an inclusive physical environment such as by displaying relevant posters
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- challenging gender stereotypes
- conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour
- encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour

Preventing racist bullying behaviour

As our school becomes more culturally diverse, we strive to prevent potential racist bullying behaviour.

Strategies to prevent racist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students “see themselves” in their school environment
- having the cultural diversity of the school visible and on display
- conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of racism
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour
- providing supports to school staff to respond to the needs of students for whom English is an additional language and for communicating with their parents
- providing supports to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma students, and to encourage communication with their parents
- inviting speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds
- ensuring that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds

Preventing sexist bullying behaviour:

Ó Fiaich College will focus on gender equality as part of the school’s measures to create a supportive and respectful environment.

Strategies to prevent sexist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex
- ensuring all student have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex
- celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contribution of all students
- encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home

Preventing sexual harassment:

Ó Fiaich College promotes a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment. It strives to support this through a focus on education, awareness and clear enforceable policies. Sexual harassment should never be dismissed as teasing or banter.

Strategies to prevent sexual harassment include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- promoting positive role models within the school community
- challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment

Supervision and monitoring policies

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):

The Board of Management 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.

The relevant supervision and monitoring policies and procedures are as follows:

- Bí Cineálta Policy & Student Friendly version
- Campus Supervision Rota
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Trips & Tours Policy (LMETB)
- If patterns of inappropriate behaviour are detected these are investigated and documented,
- A report on supervision and incidents of bullying behaviour will be given at each BOM meeting

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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.

Responsibility to address bullying behaviour

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

The relevant **Year Head/s** will act the main instigator/s, and may be supported in this role by other members of staff, where appropriate, these may include:

- ✓ Form Tutor
 - ✓ Teacher the bullying incident was referred to
 - ✓ Programme Co-Ordinator
 - ✓ Guidance Counsellor
 - ✓ Principal
 - ✓ Deputy Principal
 - ✓ HSCL
 - ✓ BFL
 - ✓ SCP
- All school staff have a responsibility to implement the Bí Cineálta Policy

When addressing bullying behaviour teachers should:

- 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
- act in a timely manner
- inform parents of those involved

Student friendly approach:

- ✓ 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

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):

Guide to Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The whole school community has a responsibility to prevent and address bullying behaviour. Ó Fiaich College will work in partnership with LMETB, board of management, staff, students and their parents to develop and implement their Bí Cineálta policy.

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

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.

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour you 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.

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred teachers should consider what, where, when and why?

- if a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first thereafter, all students involved should be met as a group at the group meeting, each student should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views each student should be supported as appropriate, following the group meeting it may be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident(s)

Where bullying behaviour has occurred

- 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 must 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
- it is important to listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- a record should be kept of the engagement with all involved
- this record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known (see Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the Bí Cineálta procedures), where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students involved and their parents
- the record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour
- Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred
- the teacher must engage with the students involved and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement
- important factors to consider as part of this engagement are the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the students involved
- the teacher should document the review with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and their parents in relation to this
- the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased should also be recorded any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted
- ongoing supervision and support may be needed for the students involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased
- if the bullying behaviour has not ceased the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents. A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased
- if it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school consideration should be given to using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school
- if a parent(s) is 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. they should be referred to the school's complaints procedures
- if a parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, they may 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 (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

In school supports which are provided for pupils affected by bullying and designed to raise their self-esteem to develop friendships, social skills and build resilience include the following:

- The person investigating will keep in contact with the victim to offer support and to ensure that there is no retaliation.
- Student care team who may identify students who may require targeted intervention.
- NCSE National Council for Special Education
- Reinforcement of messages around cyber safety and digital citizenship to parents and students through talks, expert guest speakers, workshops
- Class teacher/ year head, guidance counsellor
- Peer ministers
- Wellbeing ambassadors
- Wellbeing week/ day/ activities
- Tutor class
- Individual bonding days
- School based counselling will be offered to both parties.
- Bystanders will be encouraged to discuss incidents with their year head or class teacher.
- Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

Referral of serious cases to Tusla

Section 10 of the Children First Act, 2015 places a statutory obligation on schools, as a “provider of a relevant service” to ensure, as far as practicable, that each child attending the school is safe from harm while attending school or otherwise participating in school activities.

Teachers registered with the Teaching Council are Mandated Persons under the Children First Act. They have a legal obligation under the Act to report harm of children that meets or is above a defined threshold to Tusla, and also to assist Tusla if requested, in assessing a concern which is the subject of a mandated report.

If the concern does not reach the threshold for mandated reporting, but a teacher feels that it is a reasonable concern about the welfare or protection of a child, a report should be made to Tusla under the Children First National Guidance. The Children First National Guidance applies to everyone. All school staff and volunteers must report reasonable concerns to Tusla.

The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (Revised 2023) provide that all school staff should report reasonable concerns to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) who may take advice and/or report the concerns to Tusla. If the staff member is a registered teacher and the concern is at or above the threshold of harm at which a mandated report must be made the concern shall be submitted as a mandated report to Tusla jointly by the DLP and the registered teacher.

The Children First Act defines harm as assault, ill treatment, neglect or sexual abuse and covers single and multiple instances. The threshold of harm is reached where the mandated person believes

that a child's health, development or welfare have been, or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected.

The Children First National Guidance document 2017 is the national, overarching guidance with regard to child safeguarding. The Guidance provides that in cases of serious instances of bullying where the behaviour is regarded as possibly abusive, a referral may need to be made to Tusla or An Garda Síochána as appropriate.

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.

www.ofiaichcollege.ie

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: Arlene Doherty (Acting Chair 10 th Sept.)	Chairperson of Board of Management
Date: 10/09/2025	
Signed: <i>Padraig Mc Govern</i>	School Principal, Secretary of Board of Management
Date: 10/09/2025	

