Coláiste Dún Iascaigh School Bí Cineálta **Draft Policy** to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Coláiste Dún Iascaigh has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

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

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

We are committed to ensuring that all students who attend our school are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our students is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our students and we are fully committed to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

We confirm that we will, in accordance with our obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the harassment of students or staff on any of the nine grounds specified: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

Definition of bullying

Bullying is defined in *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying* and *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* as targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society. The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

Each school is required to develop and implement a Bí Cineálta policy that sets out how the school community prevents and addresses bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

Section A: Development/review of our Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour

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

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	2nd May 2025	Staff Half Day – Whole Staff Inservice
Students	April / May 2025	Surveys across all year groups Focus groups including Student Council
Parents	May 2025 23rd June 2025	Survey Focus group with Parents Association
Board of Management	10th June 2025	Discussion and presentation of policy to BOM

Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	April / May / June 2025	Focus Group
		• Bus Eireann Inspector / Drivers
		• Clubs safeguarding officers
		   o GAA
		   o Soccer
		   o Comhaltas

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):

Bullying Prevention aligned with Key Areas of Wellbeing Promotion

Culture and Environment

- Open Door Policy
- ETB Core Values – Care, Respect, Community,
- Staff modelling positive behaviour
    - Promote Kindness: Be kind days
    - Growth mindset – With effort, I can achieve.
- Open (self/peer/parent/staff referral to counsellors
- Chaplain room
- Creating Safe places eg Chess Room, new tiered seating in canteen
- Active Student Support Team
- Active Mentoring System
- Establishment of a Safe Telling Environment
- Seating Plans
- Phone pouches
- School diary contains code of behaviour and antibullying information
- Classroom management committee – visible classroom expectation are displayed in each room
- Connect time – focus on ethos, going through info in journals
- Visible Displays around the school
- Display of students' work
- Designated area to report bullying issues -Student Voice Post Box
- Empowerment of student voice-Students' Council, Class Captains, Mentors, Student representatives on BOM (Board of Management) and PA (Parents Association)
- Focus Groups
- Designated areas for each different yeargroups of students – Older students not permitted into 1st and 2nd year areas
- Separate designated toilets for year groups (1st&2nd, 3rd&4th, 5th& 6th)
- Lunchtime Sports Blitz (Soccer)
- Lunchtime Activities / Clubs – Chess, Creative writing, Art club, Debating, Greenschools, library etc

- An Cuan

- Member of senior management links with bus drivers

- School counsellors

- Year Heads – Visible and active

- Chaplain

- School Care Team

- Interventions – BFL, Check and Connect, Alert, Decider Programme

- Attendance Monitoring

- Dress up days

- School Musical / Show – inclusive to all yeargroups

- Arts and Culture Week / Night

- Volunteering culture

- Fundraising for charitable causes

- School Awards event

- Supervision

- Grandparents day – Ethos events

- Promotion of student voice – student council, focus groups, connect time, surveys etc

- Positive social media platform

- Cleaning rota

- Christmas walk – inclusive to all

- Services for all faiths and none

Curriculum

- Friday Wellbeing class for 1st years

- Various awareness weeks throughout the school calendar e.g. Friendship Week, Anti- Bullying (Cyber Bullying) Week, Internet Safety Week, Ethos Day/Week (Inclusion & Diversity), Culture week, Walk in my shoes

- Variety of programmes are run in SPHE and Wellbeing/Guidance Classes e.g. The Decider skills, Check and Connect, Lockers, Fuse, Alert, BFL, The Respect Effect, SPHE units of learning on friendship and antibullying
    - Values in friendships
    - Healthy and Unhealthy relationships
    - Boundaries
    - Types of Relationships
    - Bullying awareness – definition, types, role of bystander, be an upstander, who to tell, how

to tell

- CSPE – Being a good citizen (respect and responsibilities)
- RSE programme
- ICT programme – Internet safety module
- Peer Teaching
- Droicheead
- Co-curricular -Humourfit workshop, guest speakers
- Wellbeing is at the Centre of all subject plans
- Wellbeing indicators addressed in all areas of Teaching & Learning
- 1 st year transition programme – Primary visits, information nights, one to one meetings, surveys, cat testing, etc
- AEN meetings, school, culture of inclusion, world dyslexia awareness day, updates to staff from management & AEN meetings, regular staff meeting updates, whole school AEN, yearly meetings of AEN lead teachers and class teachers
- Staff CPD on area of anti-bullying
- Whole school survey regarding bullying
- Tutorial classes
- Wellness day for each Year Group throughout the year
- TY walks
- School assemblies
- Classroom management strategies
- Classroom expectations

Relationship and Partnerships

- Relationship between staff and students
- Parent information nights
- Linking with external services e.g. NEPS, CAMHS, Tusla, Gardaí, HSE, Barnardos, Jigsaw
- Linking with BOM, PA, Students' Council, Local clubs, Community Activities
- TY programme, linking with the community- church, tidy towns, playground supports and events, reading programme in primary school etc
- Fundraising events e.g. Special Olympics
- Chaplain (Links also with other Chaplains in the ETB)
- Guidance Counsellors
- School Liason

- Guest Speakers

- Extra-Curricular (Coaches)

- Mentors

- Leading learners

- Student Care Team

- ETB talent show

- Musical

- Linking with ETB and other schools under different areas (Ethos, Teaching and Learning, Digital Planning, Provision mapping)

- Diocesan Advisor Links

- Gaisce

- JP2 Awards

- Staff V's Students Sports games (Badminton, Soccer..)

Policy and Planning

- Staff wellbeing promoted (committee, noticeboards..)

- Seating plan

- Policy on 'one to one meeting/counselling'

- 'Limits of confidentiality statement' for counselling situations'

- Student support plans

- SEN policy

- CPD for staff

- Bi Cineálta Policy – presentation to staff, surveys, focus groups

- Code of Behaviour Policy and Review Committee

- Acceptable Use Policy

- Child Safeguarding

- Phone pouch policy

- Data Protection

- PASS surveys

- Staff aware that they are all mandated persons, child protection procedures handed out each year as reminder and complete Children First E-Learning Programme.

- Principal & Deputy Principal complete DLP/DDLP training and refreshers

- 2 Staff travelling to extra curricular activities

- 1st year class formation – 4 criterias

- Teaching and Learning focus groups

- Wellbeing Compliant

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):

In addition to all the practices identified above under Culture and Environment, Curriculum, Planning and Policy and Relationships and Partnerships Coláiste Dún Iascaigh has the following supervision and monitoring policies to prevent and address bullying behaviour:

- Yard and Corridors and in class - A weekly schedule of student supervision on corridors and yard is developed to monitor student behaviour and wellbeing. Any causes for concern are dealt with and reported to school management.

- All staff are watchful and observe relationships between students in class, note absence patterns and let it be known that high standards of behaviour are always expected

- Survey of Students - Students are surveyed through an online form regularly throughout the year regarding bullying behaviour

- Student Support Team – the student support team meet weekly and operate a check and connect system where teachers meet students where concerns may have been brought to their attention

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Yearheads for each year group assisted by deputy principals and principal

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

- ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour is heard and reassured

- seek to ensure the privacy of those involved

- conduct all conversations with sensitivity

- consider the age and ability of those involved

- listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation

- take action in a timely manner

- inform parents of those involved

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):

- 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.

- In investigating bullying behaviour or addressing bullying behaviour in any way, Year Heads are welcome to seek the assistance and support of the principal, the deputy principal or the student support team at any time. Indeed, given the extent to which the principal and deputy principal are privy to all kinds of personal information about students, it would be prudent for year heads to check in with either of them before taking any action in relation to bullying behaviour.

- 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)

- Concerns about or allegations of bullying will be investigated and addressed in accordance with Section 6 Bi Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools.

- *Parents are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with the school, in addressing bullying behaviour. Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties 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 as outlined in the school's Bí Cineálta policy.

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

- If a group of students is involved, each student will be engaged with individually at first
- Thereafter, all students involved may be met as a group
- At the group meeting, each student may 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)

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.

Recording of bullying behaviour

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*.

Those involved in investigating and resolving bullying behaviour will note and report developments 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 B)

- Document the following details: - Type and form of bullying behavior (if known). - Where and when it took place. - The date of the first engagement with the students and their parents.

- Include the views of students and parents on actions to address the bullying.

- Track the review process 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.

- 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.

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 include:
    - The nature of the bullying behavior
    - The effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying.
    - 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.
    - 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.

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, it is important that the member of staff shows empathy to the student, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the student to work out together what steps can be taken to address the 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 should put this request in writing to the school or be facilitated to do so where there are literacy, digital literacy or language barriers. However, while acknowledging the parent's request, schools may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

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 pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

- Pupils 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 be placed on our school's focus in/out support list and/or engage in check and connect.
- The schools guidance department will also put in place a program of support in conjunction with the Year Head
- The learning strategies applied within the school will also allow for the enhancement of the pupil's self-worth

Students who display bullying Behaviour:

- 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.
- 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.

Links with other policies:

- Code of Behaviour
- Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- Wellbeing Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement

Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools

Section D: Oversight

The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting. This update will include the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting, the number of ongoing incidents and the total number of incidents since the beginning of the school year. Where incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred, the principal will also provide a verbal update which will include where relevant, information relating to trends and patterns identified, strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant. This update does not contain personal or identifying information. See Chapter 7 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

This policy is available to our school community on the school's website and in hard copy on request. A student friendly version of this policy is displayed in the school and is also available on our website and in hard copy on request.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed, following input from our school community, each calendar year or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this policy refers.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Principal)