

Clonmellon NS Bí Cineálta Policy

to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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

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

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

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

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

We confirm that we will take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the bullying or harassment of our students in whatever form and however motivated.

Catholic schools have a distinctive understanding of the human person, recognising that every person is created in God's image and likeness and has inherent dignity as a child of God. This is the basis for ensuring that each person in our school is treated with respect and care, in accordance with the Catholic Schedule.

As a Catholic School, we are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual. No human person is to be devalued and all have an indispensable part to play in the school community regardless of difference.

Definition of bullying

Bullying is 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.

(Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying and Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools)

Our Bí Cineálta policy 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	02/12/2024 28/03/2025	Discussion of measures in place in the school to prevent bullying. Bí Cineálta Half Day- reviewed strategies to prevent bullying, how to identify bullying and the procedure to be followed in the event of a bullying incident
Students	6-16 th May 2025	Students complete an online survey and data analysed
Parents	04/04/2025	Feedback sought on draft Bí Cineálta policy, which was shared with parents.
Board of Management	08/05/2025	Policy shared with Board of Management, as well as feedback from parents. Discussion as to whether any changes needed to address parental feedback.
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers		
Date policy was approved:	8/05/2025	Board of Management meeting
Date policy was last reviewed:	27/04/2026	Board of Management meeting

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):

In developing our preventative Strategies, which the school will use to prevent all forms of bullying behaviour, we come from the context of our Catholic ethos, where inclusivity permeates our school in a real way.

Our Prevention Strategies are outlined using the four key areas of the Wellbeing Framework for practice to ensure that we are continuing to develop a holistic, whole-school approach to wellbeing promotion and addressing and preventing bullying behaviour. We accept that many of our school practices encompass more than one of these areas but will only list them under one heading.

Culture and Environment

- Clonmellon NS staff are very proud of our school culture where bullying is considered unacceptable by all members of our school community and have developed a consistent approach to all incidents of bullying behaviour.
- We strive constantly to make Clonmellon NS a place, where students and school staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported. Respect, care, integrity and trust are fundamental in our approach to all relationships in the school.
- Staff consistently model high standards of behaviour modelled for the students and similarly set high expectations for their behaviour. Kindness, inclusion, empathy and respect towards

each other is promoted within our school and among our school community to ensure all children feel valued and safe.

- Telling environment – Children are encouraged to report any behaviours that impact them negatively and teachers take time to listen to and discuss these behaviours with the child or the class. The school will also promote kind and respectful behaviour by celebrating Hallway Heroes in our monthly attendance assembly, recognising those children that have been observed being kind and thoughtful to others.
- All classroom teachers endeavour to be a trusted adult for the children in the class but on occasion, support teachers and SNAs may take on this role.
- The school is lucky enough to have three playground areas, a running track with playground equipment and a large grass area for break times. The children have designated play areas, scheduled for classes to allow all children to access the different areas.
- The Board of management, Parents' Association and staff work collectively to ensure that Clonmellon NS is safe and welcoming. We have built up a wide range of well-maintained playground activities that children can access at break times.
- We have regularly changed noticeboards (Friendship Week, Affirmations, Hunt the Good) that promote our school values of respect, equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Buddy systems are in place between the sixth class children and the Junior Infants to help them settle into school and play on their yard. Older classes regularly help out the younger classes on Trails around the schools.

Curriculum and teaching

- Group work is used regularly in classrooms. Children are also given opportunities to engage in peer assessment.
- We are constantly developing our communal sense of self-worth through both curricular and extra-curricular activities. We are engaged in a wide range of athletic activities: football, hurling, camogie, basketball, athletics, soccer, swimming and cycling. We engage in Science Blast every year. We take part in Peace Proms. We bring a range of visitors to the school (Biodiversity, School of Archaeology's Big Dig, Planetarium, Drumming Workshops, authors, etc.) We have a school chess club and take part in Ficheall's tournament every year. We have a gardening club and each class participates in planting a crop in our school garden.
- Our SPHE curriculum seeks to give the children the skills to maintain student's wellbeing, self-confidence and sense of belonging and develop student's sense of responsibility for their own behaviour and actions. Classes also regularly cover lessons on anti-bullying to monitor the classroom culture and provide skills and opportunities to discuss situations they are coping with. These are taken from the Anti-bullying campaign or Fuse websites. We cover the Stay Safe programme on a two year cycle. The Weaving Wellbeing programme is completed in every class to provide the children with skills and tools to enhance their wellbeing and deal with stressors that life may throw at them. We strive to cater for any additional needs among the children with any other programmes that will promote their social and emotional learning: Zones of Regulation, Time to Talk, Fun Friends, Friends for Life, Sparks of Resilience, Get Up Stand Up.
- Classes regularly engage in lessons on how to stay safe online. Safer Internet Day is marked every year with lessons in every class. Cyberbullying and online behaviour is also covered in a yearly visit from Paula O Connor, Don't be Mean Behind your Screen, on safety online. We also try to get the Gardaí in to talk to the classes about online safety.
- Our religious education programme encourages respect and understanding of all people, their different beliefs, perspectives and ways of living. We promote generosity to those that are struggling with Parent Association Christmas Jumper Day in aid of St. Vincent De Paul and Sixth class fundraising for a charity of their choice. Our Student council also hold a fundraiser before Halloween to raise awareness of their goals for that year and fund one of their objectives.

Policy and Planning

- We regularly review our Supervision Policy, especially if any staff or student has expressed concerns about safety on the yard. Timetables are reviewed and additional staff are rostered if problems arise.
- Our SEN team are constantly monitoring the progress of children on the Continuum of Support to ensure that interventions are meaningful and that they are experiencing challenge and success. We also regularly review our SEN policy to ensure it meets the needs of the children in our school.
- Our SPHE programme is constantly under review to ensure that programme is effective and useful.
- Our Wellbeing Plan is also under constant review to adapt and change if we feel the needs of the children or staff are not being met.
- The following policies are reviewed yearly: Acceptable Use Policy, Supervision, Safety Statement, Code of Behaviour.
- The following policies are reviewed within 3 year policy review plan: Digital Learning framework, School Tour Policy,
- To increase awareness and ensure effective implementation, our student council are consulted in reviews of our policies.
- Staff CPD is constantly promoted. First Aid courses are provided every 3 years. The board of management is generally happy to provide funding for necessary training.
- The school is taking part in the Agree to Agree programme. This 3 year incremental programme hopes to develop strong links between home and school and develop a robust Acceptable Use Policy that parents can adopt in their homes.

Relationships and Partners

- Parents' Association – We have a very committed Parents' Association, who arrange many school activities throughout the year. They encourage the children to provide arts and crafts to be sold on the Christmas Market stall. They also run an annual Book Fair in the school, where preloved books are sold. They run several annual events to provide the children with memorable events and also to raise money for the school: Christmas Raffle, Christmas Jumper Day in aid of St. Vincent De Paul, Teas and Coffees after the First Communion. They are happy to support the school in all its endeavours.
- Student Councils contribute to policy review and initiatives for the school. We presently have Green School, Student Council, Active School, Gardening Club and Press Gang in operation.
- Student Clubs – classes operate book clubs, chess clubs.
- Student support teams: Our SEN team work tirelessly to ensure that children with additional needs are catered for. They provide both in-class support but withdraw individual children and groups where necessary. They are in constant communication with the class teacher to ensure that all needs are catered for, in as far as time and personnel allow.
- To ensure that all children can participate in every facet of school life, we strive to ensure that children are regulated and ready for work. To facilitate this, our teachers, SNAs and SEN team encourage children to voice their needs for regulation, be it movement breaks or quiet time. We also strive to develop one to one time with a trusted adult for any child identified as in need of support.
- We have invested in Playground games to provide every child with socialisation opportunities and encourage communication with peers. We have invested in games and activities that will help promote STEAM skills and aptitudes throughout the school.
- Our SEN team and teachers regularly meet with representatives of the secondary schools to discuss the strengths and needs of the students they will enrol. These transition meetings are requested by our school, especially if student is on our Continuum of Support. We also regularly meet with parents of children on the Continuum of Support to discuss their support plans and set achievable targets for the children. Finally, our SEN team meets with our NEPS psychologist, SENO and any other outside agencies to assist us in helping children with

additional needs.

- Children have a wide range of curricular and extra-curricular activities to get involved with: school teams (football, hurling and camogie, soccer). We also provide ukulele lessons as part of our music curriculum. Our school choir provides beautiful music in all our religious celebrations. We have participated in Peace Proms for a number of years.
- Parents have ready access to their child's teacher and can either contact the teacher themselves using the teacher's email or making an appointment through the office. We have Parent Teacher meetings once annually, usually in November but parents are free to contact teachers with any concern at any time. We have an open day in October for parents and in June for children joining us the following September. We also host a parent Information Meeting in September for these parents to explain how they can best help their children. Parents of Children with additional educational needs are consulted when drawing up Individual Education Plans.
- Every year the school engages in activities that build empathy, respect, resilience during Friendship Week, Internet Safety Day, etc. At different times throughout the year, Friendship week, Advent, we focus on promoting Acts of Kindness between the children.
- Peer support/ peer mentoring – As well as in class peer support systems, we operate a buddy system between our junior Infant and Sixth classes. The older children meet their buddy at the gate in the morning and walk the track with them, while encouraging them to build friendships with their own classmates. The Sixth (and sometimes Fifth) class supervise the Infant and Junior yard during break times. At regular intervals throughout the year, the class teachers will organise activities that they can complete together, e.g. Maths Trails, paired reading, Story time, Christmas activities, etc.

This school takes positive steps to ensure that the culture of the school is one which welcomes a respectful dialogue and encounter with diversity and difference by ensuring that prevention and inclusivity strategies are given priority and discussed regularly at our Board of Management and staff meetings.

The dignity and wellbeing of the individual person is of paramount concern in our Christian response. The school will listen closely to and dialogue with parent, thereby building a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, trust and confidence.

In continuing to develop prevention strategies, this school will listen to young people and parents, to help establish their particular context and needs. Frequent periods of reflection and further engagement by the school, young people and parents, will be used to discern appropriate supports for young people in this school and help inform future prevention strategies.

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour :

Supervision Policy

The school reviews its Supervision policy on a yearly basis, with the supervision rota regularly reviewed by staff and amended to address any issues that arise throughout the year. Teachers are aware of their responsibility to report any concerns to the principal or a member of the ISM team and to ensure that the issue has been addressed. We have a teacher supervising each play area at break times, where possible with SNA support for children with additional needs playing in this area. Children are supervised from the opening of the gates at 9am in the morning until they leave the school at the end of the school day. We also ensure that there are two members of staff travelling with any group of students leaving the school premises and that all school tours have adequate supervision for the needs of the children in the group.

Our supervision policy clearly outlines the duties of the teacher, while on supervision: To ensure that children are following our school rules and playing in a kind and inclusive manner. Children who fail to follow these rules are given an age appropriate sanction. Constant and serious misbehaviours are reported to the class teacher. The principal will also be involved in the case of any repeated and intentional acts of disrespect towards any member of our school.

Code of behaviour

Our Code of Behaviour sets out our expectations in terms of acceptable behaviour. Our goal is to enable the child to understand that the rules are there to keep all members of our community safe.

SEN policy

This policy outlines how we identify and prioritise the children needing additional supports in school. Behavioural issues are one of the areas outlined in this report.

Acceptable Use Policy

This policy provides guidance on online behaviours. It also includes our goals for the Agree to Agree programme, to which parents opt in/out.

School Tour Policy

SPHE school plan

Student Council Policy

Dignity at Work Policy

Parental Communication Policy

Substance Use Policy

Well Being Policy

Child Protection Statement and Risk Assessment

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour is (are) as follows: **Class teacher** (If the class teacher is absent when the report comes to light, then the principal or deputy principal will speak with the children, rather than the substitute teacher)

Principal may become involved at a later stage if initial supports are not effective. Teacher on supervision and SNA on duty will report behaviours to class teacher. Sixth class children helping with supervision will not correct children but will encourage good behaviour and report misbehaviours to class teacher or teacher on yard supervision.

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 at an early stage /when bullying behaviours are first identified

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:

With all incidents of poor behaviour in school, our first step is to determine whether they fall under the remit of our Bí Cinéalta policy or our Code of Behaviour. Then the steps outlined in the relevant policy will determine the steps to be followed.

Step 1 - Identifying if bullying has occurred

The class teacher will elicit what happened, where it happened, when it happened and the events that led to the incident being reported. Each individual involved will be spoken to individually and their view of the events will be recorded, writing down their account of the incident if their age and ability allow. If a group of children are involved, each student will be engaged with individually at first. Thereafter the children involved should meet as a group, where each child is asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views.

In the event that the class teacher is absent for any reason, then the principal/ deputy principal will take on this duty.

To determine whether the reported behaviour is bullying behaviour, the class teacher will 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.

If the answer to any of these questions is no, then the unacceptable behaviours will be addressed using our Code of Behaviour.

Step 2 – Where Bullying has occurred

If behaviours fall under the Bí Cineálta policy, all students, those experiencing the bullying behaviours and those displaying the bullying behaviours will be supported, listening to their perspective and involving them in the actions to be taken to deal with the issue. The primary aim in addressing reports of bullying is always to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore, as far as is practicable the relationship of the parties involved.

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
- > All incidents of bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, the date of initial engagement with the pupils and parents. The actions and supports agreed to address the bullying behaviour will be documented.
- > the record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour

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*.

Our school is only responsible for dealing with bullying issues that occur when the students are under the care and responsibility of the school. However, if this bullying behaviour has an impact in the school, school is required to support the students involved. If the student displaying the bullying behaviour is not a student in our school, we will support the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as appropriate and engage with them and their parents to determine what steps can be taken (As per Dept. of Education Bí Cineálta procedures)

Requests to take no action:

If students requesting that no action be taken for fear that will make the situation more difficult for them, staff will deal with the matter sensitively and work out what steps can be taken to address the matter and inform parents of the situation. If parents make school aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and request that the school take no action, parents will be required to put this request in writing but will be made aware that based on the circumstances, the school will decide if it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

Step 3 – Determining if the bullying has ceased

Within **20 days** of the initial discussion, progress of the intervention will be reviewed, evaluating the effectiveness of the strategies used and the present relationship between the students involved. Parents will be contacted in this evaluation to elicit their opinions, as well as the opinions of the

students. If the strategies have been unsuccessful and no changes in behaviour have been noted, then a further approach will be utilised. Ongoing supports may be required for the inappropriate behaviours to be modified. If following a second review, the situation has not improved, then the school will adopt the procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour.

- 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
- The file will be attached to the students' files and any interventions will be encompassed in their Continuum of Support files.
- if it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then 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):

Class teachers may complete a lesson/ lessons on bullying to address an issue in their class. Class teachers are already covering a lesson on bullying at least once every 8 weeks. The class teacher may decide to use any of the anti-bullying lessons that are available. The teachers have a range of programmes available to them on Webwise (HTML Heroes, All Aboard Digitown, My Selfie and the Wider World), the antibullyingcampaign.ie website, the suite of lessons provided by the Anti-Bullying institute and the FUSE programme (Dublin City University Anti-Bullying centre)

The class teacher may decide to use the anti-bullying campaign class survey to determine what is happening in the class. While time consuming, this can often highlight behaviours that children themselves are uncomfortable about.

The National Educational Psychological services (NEPS) may be contacted to look for advice on the matter. They will decide if the case demands direct involvement or if they will support the school with advice on best practice.

The teachers may look for resources on OIDE to help in this particular situation. If necessary, the school may look for an advisor to visit the school and offer support.

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: Seamus R. Date: 27/4/26
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: David C. Date: 27/4/26
(Principal)