Appendix A
School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of O'Carolan College, Nobber, Co.Meath   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 1ecognize 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	07/04/2025	Half day meeting in follow up to Form online survey
Students	31/03- 05/04/2025	Forms online survey
Parents	31/03- 05/04/2025	Forms online Survey
Board of Management	24/06/2025	BOM meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	September 2025	Document circulated to Bus drivers, parents and students.
Date policy was approved: 24.06.2025		
Date policy was last reviewed:24.06.2025		

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):

- **Curricular Approaches**: Anti-bullying education during Tutor Time, SPHE, CSPE; updated and relatable resources, scenario-based learning, and guest speakers.

- **Awareness Campaigns & Visibility**: Year-round anti-bullying reminders, Stand Up Week, Pride Week, Autism Awareness Week, Cultural Week, and increased visibility of the Anti-Bullying Committee (ABC).

- **Reporting & Communication**: Anonymous boxes, QR code audits, student incident report forms, staff updates via Compass, and clear reporting procedures shared with students and parents.

- **Supportive Environment**: Safe spaces (SASS certified rooms, LGBTQ+ posters), wellbeing clubs (e.g., lego club, book club), and restorative practices like apology letters and reflective interviews.

- **Community & Training**: Guest talks (e.g., Gardaí), SOAR Foundation workshops, Belong To & CyberSAFE training, parental info evenings, and more SASS training.

- **School Culture**: Promoting kindness through initiatives like Hidden Heroes and Compass Chronicles, with activities linked to the Code of Behaviour and a zero-tolerance policy toward all types of bullying.

- **Inclusive Strategies**: Specific supports for SEN students, visual aids, and a strong focus on educating students on various forms of bullying (e.g., homophobic, racist, sexist, sexual harassment).

- **Transition & Supervision**: Enhanced 1st-year induction with ABC visuals, year mentoring, increased supervision, lockers in safe areas, and review of mobile phone policy.

- **Partnerships & Programmes**: Use of programmes like Fuse and One Good School, and pastoral care from wellbeing tutors.

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):

- **Supervision Areas**: Staff supervision of toilets, locker areas, corridors, yard, and bus duty at home time, with a clear handover protocol.

- **Lunchtime Monitoring**: Supervised lunchtime clubs and open rooms (Sonas & SEN Rooms).

- **Audits & Reporting**: Regular anti-bullying audits (termly/yearly), anonymous/suggestion boxes, and online referral systems to inform the Anti-Bullying Committee (ABC).

- **Staff-Student Connections**: Tutors and Year Leaders maintain close relationships with students, with SNAs providing additional support.

- **Class Protocols**: Student leaders report to the office if a teacher is absent.

- **Policy & Training**: Anti-Bullying Policy, Inclusion & Diversity Policy, Code of Behaviour, and SASS training for staff.

- **Resources & Awareness**: Use of SPHE/CSPE resources, Anti-Bullying Week initiatives, and introduction of victim statements.

- **Communication & Support**: Weekly care team meetings, drop-in services, and teacher access to sensitive information via password-protected documents.

- **Trips & Safety**: Adequate teacher supervision on all school trips.

- **Community Links**: Gardaí visits to address anti-social behaviour.

- **Governance**: Bullying cases are reported to the Board of Management.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

All Staff have responsibilities, particular responsibilities for follow up lie with Tutors and Year Leaders in cooperation with the AB Committee/Bi Cinnealtas Team.

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):

- **Initial Reporting**: Incident reports are taken from the students involved to evaluate if bullying behaviour is present.

- **Notification Process**: The Anti-Bullying Committee (ABC) is informed, with escalation involving the Tutor, Year Head, and Board of Management as needed.

- **Parental Involvement**: Parents are informed and updated throughout the process, including follow-ups during and after a 20-day monitoring period.

- **Ongoing Monitoring**: Students involved are followed up with for at least 20 days, with key check-ins every 4 weeks.

- **Surveys & Audits**: Anonymous surveys for students, parents, and teachers (via Microsoft Forms) to gather broader insights.

- **Student Support**:
  - Detailed, dated records are kept.
  - Staff are encouraged to stay observant and actively listen to students.
  - Emotional and practical support is provided to students who have experienced bullying.

- **Response to Bullying Behaviour**:
  - Restorative practices and reflection templates are used with students who engage in bullying behaviour.
  - Time is allocated for AB

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):

- **Emotional Support**:
  - A "listening ear" approach and confidential spaces are provided.
  - Regular check-ins with Tutors, Year Leaders, Guidance Counsellors, HSCL, and the Care Team.
  - Guidance staff support both victims and students who have engaged in bullying.

- **Restorative & Reflective Practices**:
  - Restorative meetings and optional apology letters.
  - Reflective documents completed by those who engaged in bullying.
  - Formalised scripts are used to maintain consistency in responses.
  - 20-day follow-up checks with victims and perpetrators.

  Education & Prevention:

- Year-group specific anti-bullying lessons to address incidents and promote positive behaviour.

- Enhanced SPHE lessons led by student input to make content more relatable and impactful.

- Ongoing initiatives and awareness campaigns to promote kindness.

- **Communication & Reporting Tools**:
  - Improved visibility and access to the Anti-Bullying QR code (including in diaries or on Compass).
  - Ladder of referral displayed in visible areas.
  - Designated email for reporting concerns.
  - Compass updates shared termly with parents/guardians to encourage at-home conversations.

- **Parental & Staff Involvement**:
  - Parental contact throughout the process.
  - Staff receive regular updates on bullying cases to ensure a united response.

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.

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: Paul McCabe   Date: 24.06.2025

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: Brian Goggins   Date: 24.06.2025

 (Principal)