Coláiste Treasa

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

1.0 Introduction:

The Board of Management of Coláiste Treasa 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.

1.1 Legal Basis:

These procedures are underpinned by a range of legislation which includes the following:

- **The Education Welfare Act (2006)** provides that the board of management of a recognised school shall, after consultation with the principal of, the teachers teaching at, the parents of students registered at, and the educational welfare officer assigned functions in relation to, that school, prepare, in accordance with subsection, a code of behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school.

- **The Code of Behaviour Guidelines for Schools** requires schools to have an antibullying policy as part of the school's Code of Behaviour.

- Schools have an obligation under the **Equal Status Acts (2000–2018)** to prevent harassment (including sexual harassment) on the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, and membership of the Traveller community.

- **The Children First Act (2015)** places a statutory obligation on schools 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.

- **The Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act (2020**) also known as **Coco's Law** provides that a person who distributes, publishes or threatens to distribute or publish an intimate image of another person (a) without that other person's consent,

and (b) with intent to cause harm to, or being reckless as to whether or not harm is caused to, the other person, is guilty of an offence.

2.0 Definition:

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, 2024 as follows:*

"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."

The core elements of the definition are further described below:

Targeted behaviour:

Bullying is deliberate, unwanted behaviour that causes harm to others, and where the student displaying bullying behaviour knows that their behaviour is or will be perceived as harmful by the child or young person experiencing the behaviour. Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. The harm can be physical, social and/or emotional 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 behavior:

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 many differences. 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.

Please note:

Bullying behaviour can be considered criminal behaviour under certain circumstances and legal consequences may apply.

2.1 Forms of Bullying:

Bullying behaviour can take many forms, which can occur separately or together. These can include bullying behaviours that are described as direct, indirect or online. When investigating reports of bullying behaviour the relevant teacher will work to identify the form(s) of bullying behavior occurring.

2.1.1 Direct bullying behaviour:

Direct Forms of Bullying	Description and examples
Physical	This includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping students, damage to personal property: clothing, mobile phone or other devices, books or other learning material or inference with a student's locker or bicycle.
Verbal	Continual name-calling directed at a student which hurts, insults or humiliates. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance; for example, size or clothes worn or gender identity. It can also refer to a student's accent, distinctive voice characteristics, academic ability, race or ethnic origin.
Written	This includes writing insulting remarks about a student in public places, passing around notes about or drawings of a student.
Extortion	Extortion is where something is obtained through force or threats.

2.1.2 Direct bullying behaviour:

Indirect Forms of Bullying	Description and examples
Exclusion	This occurs where a student is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded or ignored by a student or group of students.
Relational	This occurs when a student's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined.

2.1.3 Online bullying behaviour:

Online bullying behaviour (cyberbullying) is carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text or direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, email, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chatrooms and other online technologies.

This form of bullying behaviour can include:

- sending or sharing nasty, insulting, offensive, and/or intimidating messages or images via text messages, emails, direct messages or other websites or apps

- posting information considered to be personal, private and sensitive without consent

- making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other students

- excluding or disrupting access to a student on purpose from online chat groups, access to accounts or from an online game.

2.2 Types of bullying:

There are many different types of bullying behavior some of which are described below.

Types of bullying	Description or examples
Disablist bullying	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.
Poverty bullying	Behaviour and language that intends to humiliate a student because of a lack of resources.
Religious identity bullying	Behaviour and language that intends to harm a student because of their religion or religious identity.
Sexist bullying	Behaviour and language 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.

2.3 Behaviours that are not bullying:

- A one-off incident of intentional negative behavior towards another student is not bullying behaviour. However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful **public** message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying 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.

Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviours that are not considered bullying are dealt with under the school's Code of Behaviour.

Section A:

3.0: 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	25/09/24	Staff meeting: Focus group discussion
Students	27/11/24	Online Survey/ Student Council Meeting
Parents	27/11/24	Online Survey
Board of Management	23/09/24 & 4/11/24 & 19/05/25	Discussion
Date Policy was approved		
Date policy was last reviewed		

Section B:

4.0 Preventing Bullying Behaviour

Outlined in the sections below are the practices and procedures in place within the school to assist with the prevention of bullying behaviour. The school endeavors to create a culture whereby

bystanders feel safe to report bullying incidents either in person or by completing a monitored Microsoft form. A culture of kindness and inclusion is fostered promoting positive peer interactions through initiatives listed below.

Culture and Environment	Curriculum
• Active Pastoral Care Team • Tutor System • Year Heads • Budding System • Whole school encouraged to model respectful behaviour • Visible displays around the school reinforcing kindness, respect etc. • Supports a telling environment • Reporting Microsoft Form readily available • Open door policy of SLT • Active Supervision • Empowerment of student voice through an active student council • Lunchtime clubs- chess, games club, room 14, choir, running, sports training etc. • No mobile phone policy • LGBTQ+/ Stand up events • Intercultural Day celebrating diversity • Random Acts of Kindness- Friendship week • Trips / activities throughout the year and at the end of year • Enforce a one way system around the school	• SPHE, RSE & CSPE specifications • Guidance lessons • Digital media literacy module • Friends for life module • Various awareness weeks/events- Stand Up week, Friendship week, Diversity Day, Wellbeing week, etc. • Guest speakers • Wellbeing Workshops • Internet Safety workshops • Team teaching • Variety of teaching & learning strategies • Extra -curricular / co –curricular activities

Policy & Planning	Relationships & Partnerships
• Acceptable Usage Policy	• Pastoral Care System

- Child Protection Procedures
- Code of Behaviour
- Supervision Rotas
- CCTV systems
- Data Protection
- AEN
- First Year Induction Programme
- New Staff Induction
- Droichead- PME supports
- Wellbeing Policy
- Student Voice / student participation in policy
- Year head / Class Tutor referral system

- Year head referral system
- Links created to support active student participation- student council, surveys, focus groups
- Links created to support active parent participation- parent's association, information evenings, parent- teacher meetings.
- Awareness initiatives/ guest speakers to raise awareness of the impact of bullying
- Various awareness weeks/events- Stand Up week, Friendship week, Diversity Day, Wellbeing week, etc.
- Random acts of kindness
- Visual displays reinforcing kindness & respect
- TY Budding System
- TY led lunchtime activities
- Extra-curricular activities
- School tours/ trips/ activities
- Open door policy

4.1 Bullying Prevention Strategies

Communication of policy:

Students are taught the Bí Cineálta policy at the beginning of each school year.

The policy is outlined to staff at the staff meeting at the beginning of each school year and any new staff during the year are briefed on the policy.

The policy is available to view on our school website.

Supervision and Monitoring:

A supervision rota is created for break times and lunchtimes for outdoor and indoor areas.

Toilets are monitored during break times.

Lunchtime activities are organised and supervised by staff for students, e.g. running chess club, art club, games room, choir etc.

The prevention strategies specially aimed at online bullying, homophobic, transphobic, racist, sexist and sexual harassment bullying that are used by the school are outlined below.

Online Bullying – Cyberbullying	Homophobic/ Transphobic Bullying
• Digital Literacy Modules • Online Microsoft Form available for reporting • Support a telling environment • Student workshops on internet safety • Parent workshops on internet safety • Workshops on the impact of cyberbullying • No mobile phone policy • Acceptable Usage Policy for ipads • SPHE Specification • CSPE Specification	• Stand Up Week • Inclusive curriculum to raise awareness – LGBTQ+ figures and topics are incorporated into English, History etc. • Workshops/ Guest Speakers • Encourage empathy building activities • Respect Gender Identity • Pastoral Care Team- student support • School counsellor • Online Microsoft Form available for reporting • Visible displays around the school • Pride Day – pride flag

Racist	Sexist
• Anti –racism education: SPHE specification • Intercultural Day to celebrate diversity • Student workshops to raise awareness • Invite guest speakers from diverse backgrounds	• All staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally- monitor school culture- be aware of sexist language. • Challenge gender stereotypes • Gender Equality Education
Sexual Harassment	
• SPHE Specification to teach students about healthy relationships and appropriate boundaries • Clear Policy and procedures • School Counsellor	

Section C:

5.0 Addressing Bullying Behaviour:

The following sections outline the channels through which bullying behaviour can be reported, the teachers with responsibility for addressing bullying behavior, the steps taken by the school to determine if bullying behaviour has occurred, the approaches taken to address the bullying behaviour and the supports available to those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour.

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

5.1

Reporting Bullying Behaviour:

Students, parents, non-teaching staff, visitors or members of the wider community should feel welcome to report any concerns regarding bullying behaviour to any member of staff. All members of staff have a responsibility to report any concerns in relation to bullying to a member of the Anti-bullying team.

The school's anti-bullying team comprises of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Heads and the Pastoral Care team. This team of teachers have responsibility for addressing and investigating bullying behaviour and will be referred to as the relevant teacher in subsequent sections.

Students can also report any concerns via a Microsoft Form which is emailed to all students. Responses are monitored by a member of the Pastoral Care team.

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

5.2. Procedures for Investigating Allegations of Bullying Behaviour

Teachers with responsibility for addressing and investigating bullying behaviour will be referred to as the relevant teacher.

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour the relevant teacher(s) should consider the following questions:

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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.

Please 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 likehood of being shared multiple times and thus become 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.

The following procedures serve to guide the relevant teachers through the process of investigating allegations of bullying behaviour.

- The relevant teacher will meet with the student who alleges they are being bullied to take account of the actions they have experienced. Identify what happened, where the incident(s) took place, when it occurred and why it may have happened.
  It can be helpful to have the student write down their account of the incident(s).
- The relevant teacher will meet the student who has been identified as engaging in bullying behavior to take their account of the incident. It can be helpful to have the student write down their account of the incident(s).
- If a group of students is involved, each student will be engaged individually first. It may also be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident.
- 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.
- These meetings will be facilitated as discreetly as possible but total discretion is very difficult to realise in a school environment.
- All investigations will be conducted with sensitivity and due regard to all of the students involved.
- When investigating the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions

  What?
  Where?
  When?
  Why?
  Who?
- The relevant teacher may consult with any staff member or other persons during the course of their investigations.
- The relevant teacher will complete a record of the investigation form.
- The relevant teacher will report on the investigation to the Principal / Deputy Principal and they will exercise their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurs and how best the situation may be resolved.

Please note*:*
A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, schools should deal with it in accordance with their Bí Cineálta policy.

5.2.1
Investigation Record

The record investigation form (Appendix A)should document the following details:

- date of the initial engagement with named students involved and their parents.

- the form and type of bullying behavior

- details of what allegedly happened

- agreed actions to be taken to address the behavioiur

- the views of the students and parents regarding the agreed actions and supports to be taken to address the bullying behaviour

- date of a follow up meeting to review if the bullying has ceased

- engagements with external supports, if any

Please note:
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.

5.3 Procedures for Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The primary aim in dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore as far as practicable the relationships of the parties involved.

In any case where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred:

- The relevant teacher will record the bullying behaviour and any agreed actions taken.

- Parent play an integral role in partnership with schools 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 inform with them on the actions to be taken to address the behaviour.

- The relevant teacher will make it clear to the student(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

that they have breached the Bí Cineálta Policy. The relevant teacher will make reasonable efforts to get the student(s) engaged in bullying behaviour to see the situation from the perspective of the student who is being bullied.

- The relevant teacher along with the Principal / Deputy Principal will exercise their professional judgement to determine how best the situation may be resolved.
- The student experiencing the bullying behaviour will be supported by making them feel listened to, reassured and inform them of any actions.
- The student displaying the bullying behaviour may be offered support to help them control their emotions, manage relationships and understand the consequences of their behaviour.
- The relevant teacher will implement a sanction or invention. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour the relevant teacher will decide on the intervention method(s) that are best suited to each specific case.
- This intervention or sanction will be communicated to students and parents involved. In any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required is a private matter between the student being disciplined, his/her parents and the school.
- If bullying behaviour has occured the followed Code of Behaviour may apply:
    First Offence: Verbal warning, parents to be informed immediately and the student is given a lunchtime detention.
    Second Offence: formal letter sent home and the student is given four lunchtime detentions.
    Third Offence: Suspension.

5.4 Follow –up procedure

- The relevant teacher will meet with the students involved and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement to review progress following the intervention.
- In determining whether this issue has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must as part of his/her professional judgement take the following factors into account:
    ♦ Whether the bullying has ceased
    ♦ Whether the relationship between the students involved has been restored as far as practicable
    ♦ The effectiveness of the strategies used to address bullying behaviour
- The details of the follow up meeting should be recorded.
- The relevant teacher will offer ongoing support to all students involved even if the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not ceased the teacher will consult with the anti- bullying team and agreed further actions will be implemented. A timeframe will be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased. The school may consider using strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.
- If a parent is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by the

school, in accordance with these procedures, they should be referred to school's complaints procedures. Additional information relating to school's complaints procedures can be found at: Complaints about schools

- Thereafter, if a parent or guardian is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled they make a compliant to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions may have had a negative effect on the student. The office of the ombudsman can be contacted at oco@oco.ie

6.0 Supports

Supports are available within the school and through external agencies for students who experience, witness or display bullying behaviour. Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour may need support.

6.1 The following approaches may be used by school staff to support students

- The relevant teacher check- ins with and supports the students to help rebuild their confidence.
- Referral to school counsellor.
- Referral to school pastoral care team.
- Program of support facilitated by the school counsellor in conjunction with the Year Head.
- Encourage students to speak to their parents and guardians.

6.2 Outside agency support available

The school in certain circumstances may also seek the support and advice of TULSA, EWO, NEPS, NCSE, NPC, Webwise, DCU Anti-Bullying Centre and second level school support services.

Resources for Post–Primary Schools
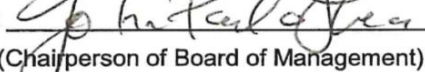
Section D

7.0 Oversight

The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting. This update will include:

- the number of investigations of possible bullying situations that have taken place since the last meeting,
- the number of current ongoing investigations, the total number of verified bullying situations since the beginning of the school year
- the number of these that were successfully resolved.

Where bullying behaviour has 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.

This policy has been made available to our school community on the school website. A student friendly version of this policy is displayed in the school and is also available on our website.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed following input from our school community by the Board of Management once in every calendar year or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this policy refers. The school community will be given notice that the annual review has taken place.

Signed: _____   Signed: _Veronica Walsh_____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)   (Principal)

Date: 22/02/2025   Date: 22/9/ 2025

Date of next review: ____/____/_____

Appendix 1: Bullying Incident Report Form

1. Name of student being bullied: _____

2. Name(s) of students allegedly engaged in bullying behaviour:

    _____

    _____

3. Date of alleged incident: _____

4.Form of bullying behaviour (tick as relevant)

Physical		Relational bullying	
Verbal		Extortion	
Damage to personal property			
Exculsion/isolation			
Cyber-bullying			
Written bullying			

5.Type of bullying: (tick as relevant)

Disablist		Racist	
Exceptionally able		Poverty	
Gender identity		Religious identity	
Homophobic		Sexist	
Transphobic		Sexual Harassment	
Physical appearance			

6.Brief description of bullying behaviour:

7.Impact of bullying behaviour:

8.Details of action taken:

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal: _____

Signed: _____   Date: _____

(Year Head)