



Ashbourne CNS

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Ashbourne CNS 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 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 of consultation		Method of consultation
School Staff	1 – 4/4/2025	Survey
Students	1 – 4/4/2025	Survey
Parents	1 – 4/4/2025	Survey given to all parents
Board of Management		BoM Meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	1/4/2025	Survey given to School Secretary
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 Ashbourne CNS. 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):

a. Culture and Environment

- Ashbourne CNS has an **open-door policy**
- A positive school culture and climate that is **welcoming of difference and diversity** and is based on inclusivity
- Providing **safe physical access**
- **Supervision** upon entry and exit to the school, during class time, yard time and during whole school events (e.g. Assembly)
- Establishment of a **safe telling environment** that encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment
- Identifying a **trusted adult(s)**
- **Seating Plans**
- **Visible displays** around the school that promotes an Anti-Bullying message
- **Display** of pupils' work
- Effective **leadership that promotes and supports a consistent approach** to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour
- **Empowerment of pupil voice** through the Students' Council, check-ins and sharing pupil news during Assembly time
- **Designated areas for pupils** during transitions on the corridors, on yard and at assembly
- Random Acts of Kindness e.g. Christmas Hampers, Easter Eggs, Blue Monday, Ice Cream Truck
- Promotion of **positive relationships** through the teaching of Glasser's Caring Habits and the use of Restorative Practice techniques
- **Class agreement/charter/contract** drawn up and displayed in all classrooms
- **Opportunities to participate** in class and whole school activities to raise self-esteem

b. Curriculum (Teaching and Learning):

- Stay Safe programme
- RSE
- GMGY
- Fuse
- Webwise
- Promotion of Glasser's Caring Habits
- Morning Meetings
- Circle Time
- Learning opportunities that promote collaboration

- Whole school promotion of diversity and inclusion
- Awareness weeks to promote Anti Bullying culture (Anti-Bullying Week, Stand Up to Racism, Safer Internet Day)
- Extra-curricular activities to promote positive wellbeing and self esteem

c. Policy and Planning:

The development and review of the following policies aid the prevention of bullying behaviours at Ashbourne CNS:

- Bi Cineálta Policy
- Student-friendly Bí Cineálta policy
- Code of Behaviour Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Child Safeguarding statement
- SSE Wellbeing in Education
- Supervision Policy
- RSE Policy
- SEN policy
- Staff are made aware that they are all mandated persons in Child Protection matters.
- Staff complete Children First E-Learning Programme.
- Principal & Deputy Principal complete DLP/DDLP training and refreshers

d. Relationships and Partnerships:

- Strong interpersonal connections
- Bullying awareness initiatives
- CPD
- Belong To initiative
- Linking with external services, e.g. NEPS, CAMHS, Túsla, An Garda Síochána
- Collaboration with BoM, PA, Student Council
- Guest Speakers
- Science Blast,
- External led initiatives: Sports Coaches, Creative Schools, Languages Connect, GAA, Credit Union,
- Fundraising events
- supporting the active participation of parents in school life (Multi-Cultural week; People in our Community; Sports Day, etc)

e. Preventing cyberbullying behaviour:

Ashbourne CNS endeavours to prevent cyber bullying behaviours by

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

**The digital age of consent is the minimum age a user must be before a social media or internet company can collect, process and store their data. In Ireland the digital age of consent is 16.*

*Most social media platforms and services have a minimum age requirement and for the majority of these services it is 13 years' old. Therefore technically, children under the age of 13 should not have a social media account. **It is important for their child's safety, that parents are aware of their children's use of technology including smartphones and gaming consoles.***

f. **Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour:**

All pupils including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender pupils, have a right to feel safe and supported at school. Strategies to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour at Ashbourne CNS include the following:

- maintaining an **inclusive physical environment** such as by displaying relevant posters
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- challenging gender stereotypes
- conducting workshops and seminars for pupils, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour
- encouraging pupils to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour
- ensuring that library reading material represent appropriate lived experiences of all pupils and adults

g. **Preventing racist bullying behaviour:**

All pupils, regardless of cultural or ethnic background, have a right to feel safe and supported at school. Strategies to prevent racist bullying behaviour at Ashbourne CNS include the following:

- fostering a **school culture where diversity is celebrated** and where pupils "see themselves" in their school environment
- having the cultural diversity of the school **visible** and on display

- conducting **workshops and seminars** for pupils and school staff to raise awareness of racism
- encouraging peer support such as **peer mentoring** and empathy building activities
- encouraging bystanders to **report when they witness racist behaviour**
- providing supports to school staff to respond to the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language and for communicating with their parents
- providing supports to school staff to support pupils from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma pupils, and to encourage communication with their parents
- inviting speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds
- ensuring that **library reading material and textbooks** represent appropriate lived experiences of pupils and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds

h. Preventing sexist bullying behaviour:

At Ashbourne CNS, we focus on gender equality as part of our school's measures to create a supportive and respectful environment.

Strategies to prevent sexist bullying behaviour at Ashbourne CNS include the following:

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

i. Preventing sexual harassment

Ashbourne CNS has a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment. Sexual harassment should never be dismissed as teasing or banter.

Strategies to prevent sexual harassment at Ashbourne CNS include the following:

- teaching our pupils about healthy relationships and **how to treat each other with respect and kindness**
- promoting **positive role models** within the school community
- **challenging gender stereotypes** that can contribute to sexual harassment

j. Effective Supervision and Monitoring at Ashbourne CNS

Ashbourne CNS uses the following supervision and monitoring procedures to prevent and address bullying behaviour (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

- Pupils are supervised upon entry to the school building each morning from 9.00 – 9.10am.
- Teachers and SNAs are timetabled to supervise at yard time.
- Staff on yard duty ensure that all areas of the yard can be seen/monitored.
- In the event of a 'Wet Day', teachers on yard duty monitor the classes during 'yard time'.
- In the event of a class being 'split', the visiting pupils remain with the assigned class until the end of the day and are released from school by the assigned class teacher.
- Teachers supervise their classes while they participate in workshops/coaching sessions with external providers.
- Visits outside of the school premises are planned to ensure that sufficient supervision of pupils is provided.
- Teachers release pupils from Junior Infants to 1st class to parents/guardians.
- Parents/Guardians must give permission if pupils are allowed to go home without a parent/guardian present.
- If pupils are given permission to travel to another area of the school building, they travel in pairs.
- Teachers bear in mind pupils who may have recently clashed when organising groups for collaborative work/teams etc with a view to giving space for the pupils involved to heal.

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

a. Responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour:

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

The member of teaching staff who has responsibility for investigating and dealing with bullying is referred to as the “relevant teacher”. At primary level, the relevant teacher will normally be the class teacher. (see Section 6.8.3 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

The Principal and ISL member work collaboratively with relevant class teacher and SET if required. These staff members work together to investigate the claim of bullying behaviour and to resolve any issue found.

b. Procedure for investigation, resolution and review

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):

Procedure for Investigation

- On report of an alleged bullying incident the Teacher/SET and Principal/ISL member will enact the ‘**Anti-Bullying Incident Report Form**’ (See Appendix 1)
- Class teachers/ SET will initially investigate alleged bullying behaviours/ incidents through a ‘Responsive Circle’ (See Code of Positive Behaviour section 7.2.2). The teacher should consider the following: What? Where? When? How? And Why?
- Alleged behaviours and incidents which are of a serious nature, or which involve children from several classes may be referred to the Principal/ ISL member for further investigation.
- Principal, ISL members and relevant teachers negotiate a list of interviewees that could provide relevant information.
- Interviews take place individually with Principal/ ISL member or class teacher/ SET where the restorative practice questions will be used to conduct the interview (See Code of Positive Behaviour section 7.2.2).

If a group of students is involved,

- each pupil will be engaged with individually at first
- Thereafter, all students involved will be met as a group
- At the group meeting, each student should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other’s views

- Each student should be supported as appropriate, following the group meeting
- It may be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident(s)
- The following three questions should be considered to determine if bullying has occurred.
 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 behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Nevertheless, non-bullying incidents can occur where behaviour is unacceptable and hurtful. Strategies to deal with these incidents are provided for within the **Code of Behaviour**.*

*****Important Note:** 'One-off' incidents may be considered bullying in certain circumstances. A single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying as it has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and thus becomes a repeated behaviour.*

- Staff members conducting interviews record the date and information gathered through interview. The records are saved under the relevant child/children's profile(s) on Aladdin. Records include date of interview, people present at interview and information gathered.
- 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.

Procedure to follow *when* bullying behaviour has occurred

Ashbourne CNS will use the following approaches to support those who **experience, witness and display** bullying behaviour (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

- ensure that the pupil 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 pupil 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
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- A Solving Circle will be facilitated by a Restorative Practice facilitator (Principal/ ISL member/ relevant teacher) with those involved in a particular incident/particular incidents (See Code of Positive Behaviour section 7.2.2)
 - When all parties reach an understanding of all perspectives and when a solution has been met, a verbal agreement is made between all individuals in the circle about what behaviour they will be expected to display going forward. The Restorative Practice facilitator records the incident and agreement on Aladdin.
 - Through this, the repair of relationships and rebuilding of trust will be initiated.
 - All parties will be reintegrated into their environments comfortably with clear guidance on expected behaviours.
 - Relevant staff members will be notified, and observations will be made to ensure that the expected behaviours are being displayed by the individuals involved. Dates of subsequent check-ins with all parties involved will be recorded.
 - All documentation created during this process will be stored securely on Aladdin.
 - Parents of parties involved will be notified of the actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour

c. Requests to take no action

A pupil who reports bullying behaviour may ask a member of staff not to do anything and just “look out” for them due to not wanting to be identified as having told someone about the

bullying behaviour. They might 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 pupil to work out together what steps can be taken to address the behaviour.
- It must be made clear to the pupil that other parties may need to be informed for their welfare.

Parents may also make the school aware of bullying behaviour and specifically request that no action is to be taken by the school. *Parents should put this in writing to the school.* However, schools may decide that based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour through the Bí Cineálta procedures and/or the Code of Behaviour where appropriate.

d. Determining if the bullying behaviour has ceased

The teacher must engage with the students and parents involved ***no more than 20 school days*** after the initial discussion to review progress.

Factors to consider in the review include:

- the nature of the bullying
- the effectiveness of strategies use to address the bullying behaviour
- the relationship between the students involved

Ongoing supervision of both the pupil(s) experiencing bullying behaviour and the pupil(s) displaying bullying behaviour may be required as well as continued support. It can take time for relationships to settle and for supports to take effect. In some cases, relationships may never be restored to how they were before the bullying behaviour occurred.

If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the pupils and parents and agree to meet again over an agreed timeframe until the bullying behaviour has ceased.

Where it becomes clear that the pupil who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school should consider 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 pupil, their parents and school.

e. Recording bullying behaviour

All incidents of bullying behaviour will be recorded using Form (see section 2.5 of Bí Cineálta procedures). The following details should be included on the record:

- type of behaviour (see section 2.7 of Bí Cineálta procedures)
- where and when (if known)
- the date of initial engagement with the pupils and their parents

- the actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour
- the views of the pupils and their parents* regarding the action to be taken to address the bullying behaviour (*only in relation to their own child)

When review takes place, it should be noted:

- if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of the pupils and parents in relation to this.
- note the date of reviews and engagements
- note the date that the bullying behaviour has ceased
- any engagement with external services/ supports should also be noted
- if a School Support File exists for a pupil/pupils involved, a copy of the record will be attached to the pupil's support file

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.

f. Complaints Procedure

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 the school complaints procedure.

In the event that a student and/or parent is dissatisfied following the complaints procedure, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for children.

Section D: Oversight

a. The Role of the Principal:

The principal is responsible for overseeing that the Restorative Practice steps are followed as outlined in the school's Code of Positive Behaviour and that records are maintained on Aladdin.

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.)

b. The Role of the Board of Management:

The Board of Management is responsible for overseeing that the Anti-Bullying Procedures outlined in this policy are in keeping with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools (2003), and that the implementation of the school's Anti-Bullying procedures are being enacted.

c. The Role of Ashbourne CNS staff:

All staff are required to follow the Restorative Practice approaches outlined in the Code of Positive Behaviour and the Anti-Bullying Policy when bullying incidents arise. They are also required to record all incidents on Aladdin and to follow up with the parties involved until the bullying has been resolved and relationships have been restored.

d. The Role of Parents:

Parents are responsible for educating their children about bullying and the types of bullying that exist, and how it is dealt with within the school in accordance with the Code of Positive Behaviour and the Anti-Bullying Policy. When Solving Circles are initiated as part of the process of resolving the bullying incidents, parents will respectfully contribute to the process.

e. Accessibility:

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.

f. Policy Review:

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. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron (LMETB) and the Department.

Signed: _____

Chairperson of BoM

Signed: _____

Principal

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____