Clonturk Community College Bí Cinealta Policy

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1. Key Principles and Policy Integration

1.1 Overview

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of **Clonturk Community College** 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.

1.2 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.

2. 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	28th March 2025	Digital and face-to-face
Students	28th April 2025	Digital and face-to-face
Parents	28th April 2025	Digital and face-to-face
Board of Management	9th April 2025	Face-to-face
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	28th April	Verbal
Date policy was approved: 11th June 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: 17th September 2025		

3. 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):

Clonturk Community College has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of bullying and is committed to preventing bullying behaviour across four domains of Culture and Environment, Curriculum Planning, Policy and Planning and Building Relationships.

3.1 Culture and Environment

- Clonturk Community College is committed to cultivating a respectful and caring school culture where diversity in all its forms is valued, and inclusion is actively promoted. This policy helps prevent bullying by fostering a positive school culture where everyone is treated with kindness and respect.
- Promoting a 'telling' environment where students feel safe and encouraged to report bullying. Encouraging Students to Act Against Bullying.
- If students see bullying happening, they are encouraged to speak up and tell a trusted adult at school. This can be a tutor, year head, teacher, deputy principal or principal.
- If bullying happens online, it's important to report it to a trusted adult so they can help stop it.
- Addressing common barriers to reporting such as fear of retaliation, fear of not being believed, or

concerns about losing access to devices.

- Supporting bystanders to report incidents to a trusted adult without fear of negative consequences.
- Ensuring staff are visible and available in key areas throughout the school, particularly in locations where supervision may be more difficult. This includes staff being aware of interactions in bathrooms, on corridors and the transition between classes.
- Designing and adapting physical spaces to improve visibility and safety, such as:
    - Improving lighting where necessary.
    - Removing visual barriers like window posters.
    - Using seating plans in the classroom
    - Using murals and artwork to display our four pillars of Pride, Ambition, Respect and Kindness.
    - Sanctuary Space to promote diversity, acceptance and display our four pillars of Clonturk.

By embedding these practices into our daily routines, we aim to build an environment that actively discourages bullying and supports all students in feeling valued and safe.

3.2 Curriculum (Teaching & Learning)

- Building self-confidence and preventing bullying by providing activities that help students build self-esteem and respect for others. These activities include lessons in SPHE (Social, Personal, and Health Education) and RSE (Relationships and Sexuality Education).
- Promoting empathy and self-awareness through Connections Programmes and Friends for Life, and wellbeing programmes.
- Clonturk Community College is a School of Sanctuary, and the values are embedded throughout the curriculum.
- These subjects focus on teaching students to appreciate diversity, understand others' feelings, build empathy, and prevent bullying based on gender, identity, ethnicity, race, sexuality or other.
- Teaching respect and responsibility through subjects like Ethical Education, CSPE (Civic, Social, and Political Education), students will learn about the importance of working together as a community.

These programs focus on teaching students to appreciate diversity, understand others' feelings, and prevent bullying based on gender, identity, ethnicity, race or sexuality and other.

All subjects will have these values embedded in the teaching content to promote a whole school and cohesive approach to preventing bullying.

3.3 Policy and Planning

- Wellbeing is at the heart of this policy where the wellbeing of all students is a top priority in our school. We believe that a safe, supportive, and respectful environment is essential for learning and personal growth.
- Our school's Wellbeing Policy, Acceptable Usage Policy, Inclusion for Learning Policy, Code of Positive Behaviour Policy and Gender Positivity Policy all work together to support and reinforce our Bí Cineálta (Be Kind) policy. These policies help to create a positive and respectful school culture.

- To help prevent and address bullying, school staff will participate in continuing professional

development with a focus on Preventing Bullying, Restorative Practice and Trauma-informed Education to best support students and handle bullying effectively. Staff will share their experiences and best practices to ensure the most effective approaches to preventing bullying are used.

- Training on promoting inclusion and diversity is available to all school staff. This training ensures that all students feel valued and respected, and that any bullying related to identity, gender, or other differences is prevented and addressed.

This policy is designed to ensure every student feels safe, supported, and included in our school community.

3.4 Building Positive Relationships with All Stakeholders to Prevent Bullying

- Promoting a sense of connectedness by building positive relationships within the school community help prevent and address bullying. Our school supports this through student councils, extracurricular activities, parents, our PGTA and our Student Support Team and Board of Management.

- Strengthening school community relationships by promoting age-appropriate awareness programs that explore the causes and effects of bullying. These will include topics like friendships, cyberbullying, identity-based bullying, sexism, and sexual harassment.

- We will encourage students and parents to actively participate in school life through events, committees, and collaborative activities.

- Workshops will be offered to students, staff, and parents to build understanding of the impact of bullying and how we can work together to stop it.

- Our anti-bullying efforts extend beyond the school gates. We will engage with members of the wider school community, such as lollipop persons and nearby businesses, who are in regular contact with students. These community members will be encouraged to share any concerns about bullying behavior with the school, helping us to respond quickly and effectively.

By working together, students, staff, parents, and the wider community, we can create a school environment where everyone feels safe, respected, and included.

3.5 Prevention strategies to target specific bullying:

a) Cyberbullying

- Implementing SPHE curriculum & Digital Media Literacy curriculum which teaches students about responsible online behaviour.
- Having regular conversations with students about respectful and kind relationships online.
- Developing acceptable use policy for technology.
- Promoting or hosting online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online.
- Encouraging students to speak up when they witness/experience cyber behaviour.

b) Homophobic and Transphobic Behaviours

- Maintaining an inclusive physical environment by displaying relevant posters.
- Encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring.
- Challenging gender stereotypes.

- Conducting workshops for students, staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour.
- Encouraging students to speak up when they witness/experience homophobic behaviour.

c) Racist Behaviours

- Fostering school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students "see themselves" in their school environment.
- Conducting workshops for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of racism.
- Encouraging students to speak up when they witness/experience racist behaviour
- Encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour.
- Inviting speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds.
- Ensuring library reading material represent lived experiences of students from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
- Future development of an anti-racism policy

d) Sexist Behaviours

- Ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex.
- Ensuring all students have same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex.
- Celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging contributions of all students
- Organising awareness campaigns on gender equality and respect.
- Encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home.
- Encouraging students to speak up when they witness/experience sexist behaviour.

e) Sexual Harrassment

Preventing sexual harassment requires an approach that focuses on education, awareness, and enforceable policies. Sexual harassment should never be dismissed as teasing.
Strategies to prevent sexual harassment include:

- Using updated SPHE specifications at post primary level to teach students about healthy relationships and how to treat each other with respect.
- Promoting positive role models within the school community.
- Challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment.
- Encouraging students to speak up when they witness/experience sexual harassment.

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):
• Appropriate supervision is implemented to help prevent and address bullying behaviour. • Morning supervision of school gate, five blocks, corridors, classrooms, and toilets from 8:20am – 8:30am. • Mid-morning supervision of five blocks, corridors, classrooms and toilets from 10:25am – 10:50am • Lunchtime supervision of five blocks, corridors, classrooms, toilets and outside areas from 12:50 – 13:25. • Home time supervision of bike racks, road crossings, gate. • Supervision at all extra-curricular activities. • Teachers are actively aware of potential for bullying during the transition between classes. • Adequate staff members will accompany students on trips to supervise. • In addition, we endeavor to provide a selection of lunchtime extra-curricular activities to support a range of preferences and interests.

4. Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

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

4.1 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):

As part of our Bí Cineálta Policy, Clonturk Community College will:

4.1.1 Identify if Bullying Behaviour has Occured

When a teacher or staff member is made aware of a potential bullying incident, the following questions should be considered:

- What happened?
- Where did it happen?
- When did it happen?
- Why might it have happened?

If a group of students is involved, staff will first speak to each student individually. After that, the group will be brought together to ensure everyone understands each other's perspective. All students involved will be supported, and they may also be asked to write down what happened.

Staff will refer to the school's definition of bullying, as outlined in this Bí Cineálta policy and based on national guidelines (Chapter 2) and may use the guiding questions in Appendix C to support decision-making.

Staff will consider the three following questions to determine if bullying has taken place or not:

a. Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?
b. Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?
c. Is the behaviour repeated?

It is important to note that not all unacceptable or hurtful behaviour meets the definition of bullying. In such cases, the behaviour will be addressed under the school's Code of Positive Behaviour.

4.1.2 When Bullying Behaviour has been Determined to have Occurred

All school staff will take clear, supportive action when bullying is reported or witnessed.
These steps include:
Reporting the bullying to the anti-bullying coordinator who will get the student to fill in an initial report form.

The anti-bullying coordinator will ensure the follow steps are carried out:

- Ensuring the student who experienced the bullying is listened to and supported promptly.
- Taking appropriate action to stop the behaviour and support all students involved.
- Providing support for both the student who experienced the bullying and the student who displayed the behaviour, helping both manage relationships and feel safe in school.
- If bullying happens outside school but affects a student's experience in school, the school will take appropriate steps to support the student and address any impact in the school environment.
- If the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is not a member of our school, but the affected student is, we will still support the affected student and work with their parents to decide on the next steps.

4.2 Principles for Addressing Bullying Behaviour

All school staff must follow these key principles:

- Make sure the student experiencing bullying feels listened to and reassured.
- Respect the privacy of all involved.
- Speak sensitively and appropriately, taking age and ability into account.
- Listen to the views of the student experiencing bullying on how best to address the issue.
- Take timely action.
- Inform parents/guardians of all students involved as early as possible.

If a student is worried about their parents being contacted, the school will create a plan and carefully manage communication in a way that keeps the student safe and supported. The school will also be mindful of possible communication barriers (e.g., literacy or language needs).

4.3 Monitoring and Reviewing Progress After Intervention

Following an initial intervention in a bullying case, the teacher must meet again with the students and parents involved within 20 school days to review progress. This follow-up meeting ensures that the supports put in place are effective and that all students involved are feeling safe and supported.

- During the review, the following factors should be considered:
- The nature and seriousness of the bullying behaviour
- The success of the strategies used to stop the behaviour
- The current relationship between the students involved

Even if the bullying behaviour has stopped, continued monitoring, support, and supervision may be needed for both the student who experienced the bullying and the student who displayed the behaviour. Healing and restoring relationships can take time, and in some cases, relationships may not fully return to how they were before the incident.

If the bullying behaviour continues:

- The teacher will reassess the strategies used, in consultation with the students and parents involved.
- A new plan of action will be agreed upon, including follow-up meetings within a set timeframe until the behaviour has stopped.
- If it becomes clear that the bullying behaviour is ongoing or escalating, the school may use additional behaviour management strategies as outlined in the Code of Positive Behaviour. Where appropriate, disciplinary measures may be considered. These decisions will be handled in partnership with the student involved, their parents/guardians, and the school leadership.

The aim is always to support positive behaviour change while maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students.

The Board of Management will carry out their obligations as outlined in the Bí Cineálta procedures.

4.4 Requests to take no action

A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff do 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. 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.

5. Support Approaches

The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour:

Choosing the Right Approach

There is no single solution to bullying behaviour. The school will choose approaches that are best suited to the specific situation and needs of the students involved in a fair and supportive way. **S**upports will be used in response to bullying behaviour initially. These responses will always prioritise safety, promote accountability, and support positive change for all students involved. If bullying behaviour continues, we will refer to our Code of Positive Behaviour.

5.1 Support for the Student Affected by Bullying

- Access to our Guidance Team or emotional support where appropriate.
- Peer mentoring or buddy systems to promote connection and confidence.
- Increased check-ins with a trusted adult.
- A tailored re-integration plan to help the student feel safe, included, and supported if time away from the school or class has occurred.

5.2. Support for the Student Displaying Bullying Behaviour

- Restorative work (only after safety has been secured and accountability has been taken)
- Social skills training to help with conflict resolution, empathy, and communication.
- Goal-setting plans to encourage responsibility for behaviour and to support. positive change.

5.3 Support for Bystanders or Witnesses

- SPHE-based sessions focused on developing confidence, assertiveness, and responsible peer action.
- Peer-led initiatives that empower students to speak out and support one another.
- Focus on restorative actions for bystanders when appropriate, following a period where emotional safety has been re-established,

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6. Sanctions and Support

Sanctions and supports will be implemented consistently and fairly, with sensitivity to the needs, age, and understanding of all students involved. All actions will be aligned with the school's Code of Positive Behaviour and the principles of our Bí Cineálta policy.

Sanctions will only be applied after all supportive measures have been exhausted:

- Sanctions will be meaningful, educative, and appropriate to the nature and context of the behaviour.

- They are intended to support learning and accountability, not to punish in isolation.
- Sanctions will be balanced with support, ensuring the student displaying the behaviour is guided toward positive change and not excluded from opportunities for growth.

Sanctions and supports will be implemented consistently and fairly, with sensitivity to the needs, age, and understanding of all students involved. All actions will be aligned with the school's Code of Positive Behaviour and the principles of our Bí Cineálta (Be Kind) policy.

Working Together

We believe that preventing and addressing bullying is a shared responsibility. By involving staff, students, parents, and the wider community, we aim to create a kind, respectful, and inclusive school environment

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

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*.

8. 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.

9. Clonturk Community College – Bí Cineálta Anti-Bullying Forms

Form 1: Student and Teacher Report Form

Clonturk Community College – Bí Cineálta Anti-Bullying Reporting Form (Initial Report)
To be completed by the teacher with the student where possible and given to the Anti-bullying Coordinator

Student Name:	
Class/Year Group:	
Name of Reporting Teacher/Staff Member:	
Date of Report:	
Location of Incident:	

Description of the Incident
(What happened? Where and when did it happen?)

Names of Students Involved
- Student Affected:
- Alleged Student(s) Displaying Bullying Behaviour:

Type of Behaviour (Tick all that apply):
☐ Verbal (name-calling, teasing)
☐ Physical (pushing, hitting)
☐ Social (exclusion, spreading rumours)
☐ Online/Cyber
☐ Homophobic/Transphobic
☐ Racist
☐ Sexist
☐ Sexual Harassment
☐ Other: _____

Action Taken by Teacher:
☐ Listened to student and documented account
☐ Referred to Anti-Bullying Coordinator
☐ Contacted parents (if urgent or necessary)
☐ Other: _____

Signature of Reporting Teacher: _____
Date: _____

Form 2: Anti-Bullying Coordinator Incident Investigation & Intervention Form

Student Affected:	
Reported by:	(Staff member)
Date Received:	
Coordinator Name:	

Investigation Details

1. How was the incident investigated?
(Include steps taken to gather accounts and context)

2. Who was the investigation delegated to (if applicable)?

☐ Year Head
☐ Guidance Counsellor
☐ Class Tutor
☐ Other: _____
☐ External Agency (specify): _____

3. Parent/Guardian Consultation Dates:

- Student Affected: _____
- Student Displaying Behaviour: _____

Outcome of Investigation

☐ Bullying behaviour confirmed
☐ Behaviour does not meet the definition of bullying (referred to Code of Positive Behaviour)

Supports and Actions Implemented

For the Student Affected:

☐ Guidance Counselling
☐ Peer Support/Buddy System
☐ Increased Check-ins
☐ Safety/Reintegration Plan
☐ Other: _____

For the Student Displaying Behaviour:

☐ Restorative Practice
☐ Behaviour Plan
☐ Social Skills Support
☐ Parental Meeting
☐ Disciplinary Action (as per Code of Positive Behaviour)
☐ Other: _____

For Bystanders/Witnesses (if applicable):
☐ SPHE-Based Intervention
☐ Peer-Led Awareness Session
☐ Other: _____

Coordinator Signature: _____
Date: _____

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Form 3: 20-Day Follow-Up Review Form

Student Affected:	
Student Displaying Behaviour:	
Date of Original Incident Report:	
Review Date (within 20 school days):	
Review Conducted by:	

Follow-Up Meeting Details
☐ Parents of student affected consulted
☐ Parents of student displaying behaviour consulted
☐ Student affected reports feeling safe and supported
☐ Behaviour has ceased
☐ Relationship between students improved
☐ Further monitoring needed
☐ Additional support/sanctions required _____
☐ New actions agreed:
_____

Next Steps (if required):
☐ Additional meetings scheduled
☐ Behaviour management referral
☐ Referral to external support
☐ Updated plan of action to be implemented

Review Completed by (Signature): _____
Date: _____