



# Athboy Community School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

## Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying

### Behaviour

The Board of Management of Athboy Community School 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/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	4 April 2025, April 2025, May 14, 2025	Staff Training, 4 April, Wellbeing Survey April 2025, Draft Policy 14 May 2025
Students	April 2025, 19-23 May 2025	Wellbeing Survey, Year Group Assemblies
Parents	April 2025, 12 May 2025	Wellbeing Survey April 2025, Parents Association Meeting 12 May 2025
Board of Management	June 2025	Draft Policy
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	19-23 May	Bus drivers Survey
Date policy was approved: 18 June 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

## 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):

The Board of Management of Athboy Community School recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of students and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

- a. A positive school culture and climate which
  - Is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity
  - Encourages students to disclose incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment
  - Promotes respectful relationships across the school community
- b. Effective leadership
- c. A school-wide approach
- d. A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact
- e. Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness

raising measures) that

- Build empathy, respect and resilience in students, and
  - Explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying
- f. Effective supervision and monitoring of students
- g. Supports for staff
- h. Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies) and
- i. On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying and Inclusion Policy

The school community supports a “telling” environment, where students feel safe to report incidents of bullying.

The school provides “safe spaces” for students such as the library where students can have a quiet time at lunchtime which is supervised.

## Education and Prevention Strategies

The education and prevention strategies used in the school are as follows;

- a. **Core Values** - We work hard to ensure that our core values of Care, Courage and Support are embedded in our Care System, in our Learning Code, in our policies, protocols and in our daily classroom routines.

b. **Programmes**

The Care Team also run a series of programmes aimed at groups of students at different stages which include;

- *Tackle your Feelings* – a mental health programme aimed at developing student self-awareness, selfcare and their emotions encouraging them to take care of their mental health
- *MindOut* - a universal programme first developed in 2004 to support the social, emotional and mental well-being of young people aged 15-18 years old in Irish schools
- *Alert Programme* - A taught programme on self-regulation.
- *Getting It Together: Organisational Skills* programme developed by the NBSS

The SEN Team also run a series of programmes for students which include;

- *Check and Connect: A Structured Adult Mentoring Intervention* for students
- *Vocabulary Enrichment Programme* - An Intervention to Improve Vocabulary Skills with First-Year Students but is suitable for older students too
- *SNIP* – a literacy programme
- *Transition Programme from primary to post-primary* - The AEN coordinator and the 1<sup>st</sup> year year head and class tutors work with the students to support the bonding process as they transition to secondary school

- c. **The Nurture Classroom** is a programme which runs parallel to the timetable in which a team of teachers work with small groups of targeted students for two to three hours a week. The trauma-based response to adverse childhood experiences aims to reverse a negative perspective of school which the students may have as a result of their life experiences. These students may be avoiding school, acting out in classes or have

withdrawn from school life and friends entirely. The classes are tailored to create a safe space where students can build good relationships with teachers, SNAs and peers with a view to creating an attachment and a more positive view of school and education. Participating students' progress is measured through the Boxall Profiling System which provides a record of progress and a means for the school to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme.

- d. Referral to external programmes run by outside Agencies in the case of a few students for whom the mainstream setting proves very challenging. Some of the agencies included: The SMART PProgramme (South Meath Area Response to Teenagers), Youth Advocate Programme (Garda Diversion Unit), Trim Family Resource Centre.
- e. **Student Leadership** – The school actively develops leadership opportunities for students, these groups include:
- Involvement of the Student Council in contributing to a safe school environment is encouraged e.g. Buddy System, student mentoring and other student support activities to encourage a culture of care and support.
  - LGBTQI Group - a group who promote the inclusion of students who are LGBTQIplus and help organise themed weeks, eg, Stand Up Week
  - Prefects – 6<sup>th</sup> Year Students who act as role models to younger students and who actively participate in positive behaviour promotion through the School Asset Portfolio System
  - Junior Mentors – a group of 2<sup>nd</sup> Years who work with 1<sup>st</sup> Years to help with the transition from primary to post primary school
  - Senior Mentors – a group of Transition Year students who help organise themed weeks, sporting events and other occasions throughout the year (RP Mentors)
  - Digital Student Team- a group of students interested in ICT and supporting students with their own devices
  - Amber Flag – A programme aimed at raising awareness of resilience and mental health
  - Display of the Bí Cineálta Student Friendly poster around the school (see Appendix A)
- f. **Continuing Professional Development** - The school encourages teachers to participate in CPD opportunities around student wellbeing as they arise. Whole staff professional development on bullying is given to ensure that all staff develop an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to prevention and intervention.
- g. **Curricular Strategies** - There are a number of curriculum components and programmes which are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying and the promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness.

At post-primary level, the updated SPHE specifications aim to help students to feel empowered to create, nurture and maintain respectful and healthy relationships with themselves and others. The RSE strand of the specification also provides space for post-primary students to examine and consider relationships and human sexuality which can foster an understanding of diversity which may help to reduce gender and identity-based bullying as well as sexism and sexual harassment. These classes give class tutors the opportunity to explore and discuss issues relating to bullying with the students they know well and have a relationship with. The 1<sup>st</sup> Years do Stand Up, Get Up, a resilience programme for young teenagers. The FUSE five week module is taught to students during

their SPHE Class in 1<sup>st</sup> Year 2<sup>nd</sup> Year. The Lockers Programme is run for Junior Cycle students to address cyberbullying.

- Cross-curricular opportunities are made and allow for a fostering of positive relationships, CBA planning between departments can make topics come alive for students, (CBA Policy in draft for 2023-24)
- **General Subjects** - There is space within the teaching of all subjects to foster an attitude of respect for all: to promote the value of diversity; to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour. In English, we use literature to stimulate discussion. In Geography and History, we use references to colonisation, exploitation and dictatorships to illustrate the negative aspect of power. We extend the work into many other areas such as Art, Religious Education and Physical Education.
- All students from 1<sup>st</sup> to TY study Digital Media Literacy to ensure that our students understand the power of social media and of how to be safe and to observe safety protocols while using the world wide web.
- The **Gender Studies Module** in Transition Year tackles issues around stereotyping, LGBTQI Issues, transphobic and homophobic bullying and many other relevant topics.
- **Sustainable Development Goals Programme** in TY encourages students to consider how to live in a more sustainable way and how by working together in pursuit of common goals we can live more harmoniously together and plan for a better future.
- **Young Social Innovators (YSI) Programme** in TY looks at how students can develop a socially based initiative that will benefit some element of our community and by their actions show empathy and understanding towards others.

h. **Awareness** - We work to raise the awareness of bullying so that all members of the school community understand what bullying is and how the school deals with bullying behaviour. The subject is discussed with each year group at the start of the year

- Students, parents/guardians are informed of the Anti-Bullying and Inclusion policy on admission. This policy is made available to all members of the school community. It is circulated to new members of staff and published on the school website.
- Clear procedures for reporting bullying for teachers and for students (Appendices 1A & B) are in place and visible around the school
- We organise themed weeks for the whole school community to create awareness of various issues e.g. Wellbeing Week; Friendship Week, Stand Up Week; Multi-cultural Week, Neurodiversity Awareness Week
- We conduct annual surveys of parent(s)/guardian(s) students and staff in relation to mental health and wellbeing and specifically bullying.
- We use class sociograms (Appendix E) to investigate possible bullying behaviour
- We have regular school or year group assemblies hosted by Year Heads and attended by Care Team members, the Deputy Principal and Principal regularly
- **Extra Curricular Activities** provide opportunities to promote strong student/staff relationships. We promote co-operation and group enterprise through team sports, school clubs and societies as well as through practical subjects. Sporting activities in particular can provide excellent opportunities for channelling and learning how to control aggression.

## Education and prevention strategies to counter Cyberbullying

- i. We promote the positive use of technology; discuss etiquette, personal safety issues and digital literacy.
- ii. Social Media Policy - we are in the process of drafting our social media policy and it will be updated every year
- iii. Junior cycle students do curricular ICT subjects in the form of Digital Media Literacy and Coding and through these subjects they learn about safe use of the internet
- iv. The introduction of Yondr pouches is a response to negative social media interactions which put students at risk of cyber bullying. Phones are placed in pouches before entry into school and are locked until students leave in the evening.
- v. We run a Safe Internet themed week each year to focus on safe use of the internet We work to prevent Cyberbullying by educating students on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while online and also on developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber bullying.
- vi. Cyberbullying is treated as a whole school community issue and another form of bullying within the school's Anti-Bullying policies and procedures. We teach students that bullying is wrong. We help them understand that cyberbullying is hurtful and wrong and to always treat others on and offline with respect . Even though a message may be posted online just once by a student it can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be seen by a wide audience where it is intended to be shared or has a likelihood of being shared multiple times and is thus repeated.
- vii. Inform and educate students and parents of the School's Acceptable Use Policies (AUPs) and the sanctions for the misuse of ICTs to cause hurt and distress to others
- viii. We participate in the Dream Space Microsoft Ambassadors programme for TYs and students enter competition for the Safer Internet Day Ambassador Leadership Award run by Webwise.
- ix. Teach students that the Internet is not a private place and they should guard their private information online.
- x. Teach students that they have rights and responsibilities online.

The following additional strategies may be used from time to time:

- Promote anti-bullying (including cyberbullying) awareness days and events.
- Parents are supported in their role by being able to meet with the tutors, year heads and Care Team at any time.
- Workshops on Cyberbullying conducted along with regular updates on the correct usage of the internet.

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 -**

- CCTV is in operation and many aspects of bullying are interwoven into the school's Learning Code. We ensure that there is adequate supervision during the school day.
- Toilets are supervised at breaks and the school has a policy of three students being allowed in the toilets at the one time to minimize opportunities for bullying, intimidation or anti-social behaviour.
- Non-teaching and ancillary staff are encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant year head.

### **Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour**

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

YYear Heads

---

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):

## **12. Procedures for investigating and dealing with Bullying**

The procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

### **12.1 Reporting Bullying Behaviour**

- A student or parent may bring a concern of bullying to any staff member in the school who will refer it to the year head initially, who investigate it.
- All staff including non-teaching staff such as secretaries, SNAs, caretakers and cleaners are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the year head initially.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the year head initially who will refer it to the Deputy Principal when it has been confirmed to be a bullying incident.

### **12.2 Investigating and dealing with incidents**

- The primary aim for the Year Head in receiving reports of bullying is to conduct an initial investigation and to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame). In investigating and dealing with bullying, the year head will exercise their professional judgement based on this policy to determine whether bullying has occurred (ie, the behaviour is targeted, repeated and involves an imbalance of power) and how best the situation might be resolved. The year head will refer any issues which are not resolved after the initial report to the Deputy Principal/Principal.
- Year Heads take a calm, unemotional problems solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by students, staff or parents.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the year head. Interviews will be held with the relevant students and those involved will be asked to write an account of the incident or if the student does not wish to or is unable to write the account, they can dictate the account to the year head and have it read back to them and sign their account.
- The Principal will be informed that an investigation has been initiated.
- Parents and students are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible through counselling.
- Incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved. All interviews are conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all students concerned. Students who are not directly involved also provide very useful information in this way. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the year head seeks answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This is done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner. The sociogram interview (Appendix E) can be an effective way of establishing what happened if the year head deems it appropriate.
- In cases where it has been determined by the year head/ the Deputy Principal that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved are contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to explain the actions being taken. The school gives parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their students.
- Where the Year Head/Deputy Principal has determined that a student has engaged in bullying behaviour, it is made clear to them how they are in breach of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and efforts are made to enable them to see the situation from the



perspective of the pupil being bullied. If a student is involved in bullying they will be warned to stop and parents will be informed as above. The student may receive a Learning Code sanction such as a Red Note or a detention. Professional help may be recommended for the student where it is considered necessary by the school. The student's behaviour will be carefully monitored and recorded. Serious and continuous bullying may result in the student being brought to the Board of Management.

- It is made clear to all involved (each set of students and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, their parents and the school.

### **12.3 Follow up**

In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the year head must, as part of their professional judgement, take the following factors into account:

- Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
- Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
- Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable;
- Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s) or the school Principal or Deputy Principal.

Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together through Restorative Practice at a later date if the student who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect and is engaged with through the students.

Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents may seek a meeting with the Principal to discuss the matter in full and make a complaint if necessary through the school's complaints procedure.

In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the Principal will advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

### **12.4 Procedures for recording bullying behaviour:**

All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant GDPR legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour adhere to the following:

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents must be reported to the year head.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the year head.
- If it is established by the Year Head/ Deputy Principal that bullying has occurred, the year head must keep a written record of the reports using the Anti-Bullying Record Form (see Appendix C), the students' accounts will be recorded on Bullying Incident Statements (see Appendix D).
- A record of the actions taken and any discussions with those involved will also be retained.
- The year head will inform the Deputy Principal of all incidents being investigated.
- The school in consultation with the year heads will develop a protocol for the storage of all records retained by each year head.
- In cases where the year head/deputy principal consider that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 10 school days after they have

determined that bullying behaviour occurred, the matter will be discussed in a meeting with the principal, deputy principal and year head with a view to resolving the situation.

The following list of behaviours must be reported to the Principal or Deputy Principal immediately in accordance with the school's Learning Code and Child Protection Policies:

- ☐ Any violent, verbal or physical aggression or action by a student directed towards another student;
- ☐ Any assault by a student on another student;
- ☐ Any form of sexual harassment or assault;
- ☐ Any sexually explicit or offensive text or picture, cyber or otherwise.
- ☐ Any possession of, or distribution of pornographic material; cyber or otherwise;
- ☐ Any comment by a student about themselves or another student which refers to suicide or self-harm;
- ☐ Any behaviour(s) deemed to require the intervention of An Garda Síochána, or the Health Service Executive.

The Principal will report any confirmed incidences of bullying to the Board of Management the next meeting.

It is not the remit of the Anti-bullying procedures to deal with reported allegations of bullying/harassment between students and staff and/or parents/guardians and staff. These should be dealt with directly by the Principal. In relation to staff-to-staff incidents the school's Dignity at Work policy should be referred to.

<b>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Students</b>	
<i>Note: Bullying is behaviour that is repeated, targeted and involves an Imbalance of Power.</i>	
Anyone may report a possible bullying issue to a staff member who will immediately refer it your Year Head.	
1	<p>The Year Head will speak to the students involved individually and in confidence in a Year Head's Office.</p> <p>The year head will listen to the students involved and all witnesses to the situation to find out what happened and will decide if it meets the threshold for bullying, ie, it is targeted, repeated and involves an imbalance of power. If not, the students engaged in the behaviour will be issued with a warning to stop the behaviour.</p> <p>Parents/guardians will get a phone call to explain what has happened.</p> <p>At the weekly Year Head Meeting, Bullying issues are discussed with the Principal and Deputy Principal.</p>
2	<p>If the situation meets the threshold for bullying, the student who had been targeted fills out the Bullying Incident Report Form.</p> <p>The student(s) who engaged in the behaviour fills out an Incident Form. Any witnesses to the behaviour may also be asked to fill out an Incident Form.</p> <p>The year head will discuss the situation with Mr O'Dowd/Ms Garrihy</p>
3	The year head will formally meet the parents/guardians engaging in the behaviour into school to discuss the behaviour. Depending on the situation, a sanction may be issued at this point. Students and parents/guardians will be informed that any further incidence of bullying may result in a more serious sanction.
4	Parents of student(s) who has been targeted are updated and may be invited to the school.
5	At all stages of the process, students are invited to engage in a counselling session with the Care Team.
6	Serious bullying may result in a student being asked to leave the school.
7	All records are retained/filed by the year head, the Deputy Principal and the Principal
<p><b>All bullying complaints must be followed up on as soon as possible.</b></p> <p><b>All complaints must be reviewed after 20 school days from the initial discussion, and if the bullying behaviour has not ceased, further strategies must be implemented in consultation with parent/student and further reviews done until the behaviour has ceased.</b></p>	

<b>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Staff</b>	
<i>Note: Bullying is behaviour that is repeated, targeted and involves an Imbalance of Power.</i>	
<b>When a student indicates directly or indirectly to you that they are being bullied, or in any way mistreated by another, please follow these procedures</b>	
1	Refer matter to the Year Head unless the nature of the report dictates that you inform the DLP immediately.
2	The Year Head speaks to the students involved discretely and individually in a private place. If the issue does not meet the above criteria, the year head will counsel all students involved appropriately. The Year Head will also contact parents of the child accused of bullying and the child who may have been bullied.
3	If the year head determines that the situation meets the threshold for bullying, ie, that the behaviour is repeated, targeted and involves an imbalance of power, they will report it to the Deputy Principal and will fill out Anti-Bullying documentation.
4	The issue(s) are further investigated by the year head who completes the Anti-Bullying Record. All students involved including witnesses to the behaviour fill out the Bullying Incident Report Form.
5	Parents of student(s) who has been targeted and students who have engaged in the behaviour are updated and may be invited to the school.
6	At all stages, students are offered counselling with the Care Team. Disciplinary sanctions may apply for repeated or serious incidents to the student(s) engaged in bullying behaviour, eg, red note, detention
7	Serious bullying may result in the student being suspended/expelled
8	A Report on the number of Bullying cases is brought to the Board of Management at every meeting
9	All records are retained/filed by the year head, the Deputy Principal and the Principal
<p><b>All bullying complaints must be followed up as soon as possible.</b></p> <p><b>All complaints must be reviewed after 20 school days from the initial discussion, and if the bullying behaviour has not ceased, further strategies must be implemented in consultation with parent/student and further reviews done until the behaviour has ceased.</b></p>	

#### **Requests to Take No Action:**

Where parents request that no action be taken they should be asked to put the request in writing but the school may decide that it is appropriate to address the behaviour.

#### **Determining if bullying behaviour has ceased:**

The teacher must engage with the students and parents no more than 20 days after the initial discussion to review progress following the initial intervention. The process of the investigation, the nature of the behaviour and the strategies used to resolve it as well as the relationship between the students involved will be factors to consider in this review. If the behaviour has not ceased, the teacher should review the strategies in consultation with the parents/students used and agree to meet again over an agreed timeframe until the bullying has ceased.

### 1.5 Supports for students affected by Bullying

The school's programme of support for working with students affected by bullying is as follows:

- a. **Restorative Practice:** A support structure for students who have experienced bullying is in place in Athboy Community School which is called RP Connect. The Board of Management have invested in this three year licence which offers training, mentorship and resources to embed Restorative Practice as the underlying relational approach for staff and students.
- b. **Care Team** - Our Care Team meet weekly and maintain a register of students who need extra support around mental health and wellbeing. Within the Care Team a wide variety of supports are available to students. Our Chaplain and Guidance Counsellor offer one to one counselling for students through a referral system. The SEN Coordinator is responsible for the Continuum of Support document in which all of the supports provided for students as well as the SEN register. The SENCO also oversees all of the Student Support Files and is familiar with the needs of the more vulnerable students in the school. The principal and deputy principal ensure that staff have access to the resources and to the time needed to maximise the supports given to students.
- c. We maintain open communications between the school, parents and outside agencies where necessary. We work together to resolve the situation and protect the person being bullied.
- d. A programme of support for those students involved in bullying behaviour is also part of the school's intervention process. Students involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those with low self-esteem, opportunities are developed to increase feelings of self-worth. Therefore, we recognise that it is important that the learning strategies applied within the school allow for the enhancement of the pupil's self-worth. Students who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others. The Care Team and the student's One Good Adult may be called upon to help the student in this regard.
- e. Students who observe incidents of bullying are encouraged to discuss them with teachers.
- f. In a case where sanctions need to be imposed, they will be enforced, as per the school's Learning Code, by the Year Head, Deputy Principal or the Principal.
- g. Following an investigated incident of bullying, relevant teachers, Year Heads, Class Teachers, members of the Care Team and break-time supervising staff will monitor the behaviour of the students involved.
- h. Staff will be informed of necessary developments in bullying incidents, at staff meetings or on a one-to-one basis with the Year Head. They will be asked to monitor and observe the students or classes involved in specific incidents and to pass on these observations to the relevant teacher(s).
- i. Parents or guardians will be informed of serious incidents and, if necessary, they may be required to join in the restorative based approach to resolving the issue.
- j. A referral system will be in place to ensure that all incidents will be dealt with. If those investigating can't resolve the issue it will then be referred onto the following people
  - Teacher/Tutor
  - Year Head
  - Care Team Member - Guidance Counsellor/Chaplain/AEN Coordinator
  - Deputy Principal
  - Principal
  - Outside Agencies
- k. **Information for Parents**

Parents are made aware that the school will deal with their concerns about bullying in a sensitive and intuitive manner. These measures can be put in place before any formal interventions and may work without a formal investigation.

Some of the supports which can be put in place to help a child who is at risk of being bullied or

- of being bullied again, the school can organise measures such as;
- Seating plans for the student with students they feel safe with
  - Special attention of the class tutor who sees the student every day
  - Observation by teachers, SNAs and supervising staff at breaktimes and at the start and end of school
  - Sociograms to see what the culture of the class is and if students are aware of exclusion or bullying of any kinds by any student(s) towards others
  - Encourage extra curricular activity uptake by students to create new friendships and interests to allow them to shift friend groups if needed.
  - Referral to the Care Team, psychotherapist, art therapist etc...

### **1.5 Referral of serious cases to the HSE**

In relation to bullying in schools, Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011(Children First) and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools provide that in situations where “the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school must consult the HSE Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan”.

Serious instances of bullying behaviour (as determined in accordance with this policy) in accordance with the Children First and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, are referred to the HSE Children and Family Services and/or Gardaí as appropriate.

The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools also provide that where school personnel have concerns about a child but are not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, the Designated Liaison Person must seek advice from the HSE Children and Family Social Services. (TUSLA)

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 app 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:  
(Chairperson of board of management)

Date:

Signed:  
(Principal)

Date:

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



Athboy Community School - Student Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy –“Be Kind”

# Bí Cineálta! – Be Kind!

Everyone at our school to feel safe and happy.

Bullying behaviour is when someone keeps being unkind or hurtful to others on purpose over and over again.

Ask for help

Let someone know

If a student lets a staff member know that they think they are being bullied, we will:

- talk with the student
- ask the student what they want to happen
- work out a plan together
- talk to their parents
- talk to the other student(s) involved
- talk with the other student's parents

If you think that you are being bullied or that someone else is being bullied, please inform an adult that you trust. They will know how to help.

Our school has a Bí Cineálta policy to try to stop bullying behaviour.

We look at this policy every year to see what is working well or what could work better.

We will ask you what you think.


