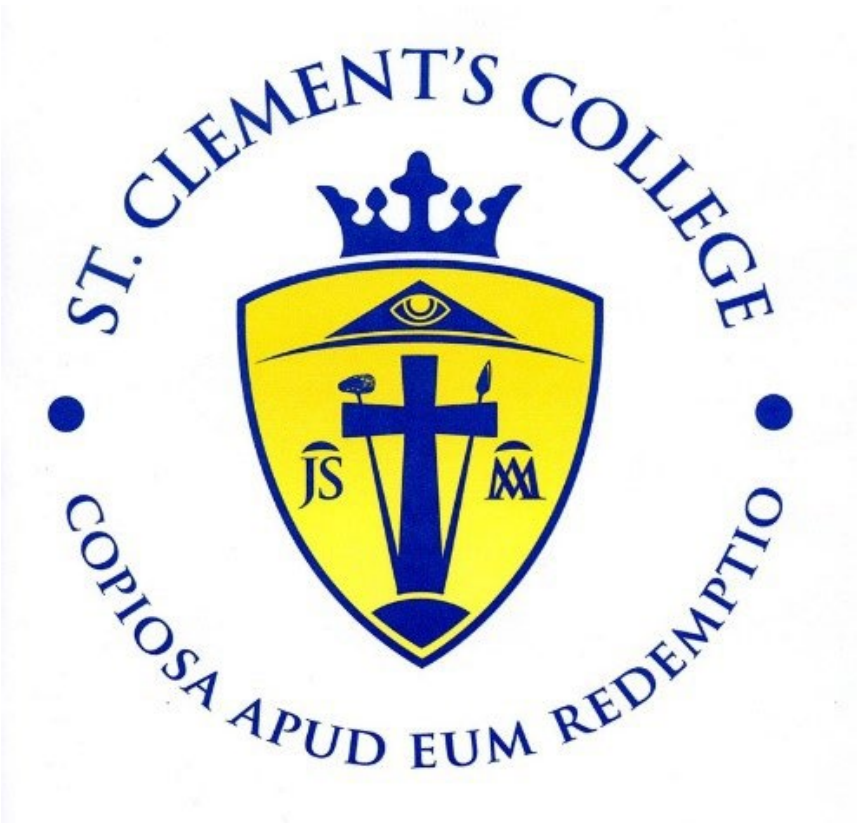

St. Clement's College
Bí Cineálta Policy
to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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Part 1

Mission Statement

St. Clement's College seeks to facilitate the development of each student to his full academic, personal, spiritual and social potential in a Catholic, caring, respectful and safe environment.

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of St. Clement's College developed 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.

Catholic schools have a distinctive understanding of the human person, recognising that every person is created in God's image and likeness and has inherent dignity as a child of God. This is the basis for ensuring that each person in our school is treated with respect and care.
As a Catholic school, we are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual. No human person is to be diminished or devalued, and all have an indispensable part to play in the school community, regardless of difference.

Part 2

Key Principles

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

- A positive school culture and climate which:
    - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
    - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
    - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
- Effective leadership;
- A school-wide approach;
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that:
    - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
    - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic (and LGBTI+) bullying, racist bullying, sexist bullying, and sexual harassment.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of students;
- Supports for staff;
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

The Board of Management will carry out an annual review using Appendix 4.

1.1 Relationships, people and situations included in this policy

All members of the school community are subject to this policy. The situations where relationships may be subject to this policy are varied and include the following:

- School time and including break times.
- School tours and trips, including games and other extra-curricular and co-curricular activities
- All times, even outside the normal school times where the behaviour of any member of the school community adversely affects another member or members of that community (see below).

The relationships, people and situations that this policy addresses are varied and are often somewhat complex. It certainly extends beyond the classroom-based situations where the predominant relationship is between teacher and student.

1.2 Bullying outside the school gates

The school reserves the right to apply its bullying policy in respect of bullying that occurs at a location, activity, function or programme that is not school related if in the opinion of the principal and / or the Board of Management the alleged bullying has:

- created a hostile environment at school for the victim

- infringed on the rights of the victim at the school and/or
- materially or substantially disrupted the education process or the orderly operation of the school.
- Outside the school gate can also be taken to mean online behaviour (i.e. it's not in school).

Definition of Bullying

In accordance with the *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2024* page 17 the core definition of Bullying Behaviour is:

> ***Bullying is targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society.***

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying,
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

In summary, the definition of bullying can be simplified into three words:

Deliberate (targeted), Repeated, Hurtful (causing harm)

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful (or harmful) public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*

2.1 Sexual Harassment

Sexual Harassment is defined as any form of verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person. The unwanted conduct may consist of acts, requests, spoken works, gestures or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other material.

2.2 Harassment

Harassment on the other eight grounds covered by the legislation is any unwanted conduct related to any of the eight grounds (other than gender) where the conduct has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person. The unwanted conduct may consist of acts, written words, gestures or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other material.

2.3 Relational Bullying

Is when a person in a friendship group deliberately sets out to exclude another member of the group or to damage that person's feelings of belonging to the friendship group. This is done through:

- manipulating the members of the group to isolate the victim.
- spreading rumours, telling secrets and gossiping behind backs.
- pretending to be friends but subtly organising things so that the victim is excluded and left without any friends.
- ignoring and turning others against the victim.

2.4 Homophobic, Transphobic and LGBTQI + Bullying

This may involve, but is not limited to:

- Associated name calling.
- Spreading rumours.
- Taunting a person.

2.5 Sexual Bullying

Sex belongs in a relationship of trust, respect, acceptance and understanding. In a society which is increasingly sexualised and where many young people feel pressure to be sexually active, many find themselves bullied sexually, even though they are not ready emotionally or psychologically and may be under the age of consent (17 years). Being forced to do something of a sexual nature or being put under pressure to do sexual acts, including intercourse, when the young person is clearly not ready for it, is bullying and must not be tolerated. It is also wrong and a form of sexual bullying to spread rumours about the sexual activity, perceived or otherwise, of another person.

2.6 Bullying students with Additional Education Needs

This is where a student is treated badly due to their disability or additional education need. This can also apply to bullying those who are exceptionally gifted and can manifest itself through name calling such as swot, freak, geek, etc or exclusion from the group.

2.7 Racial Bullying

This involves some or all of the following:

- Discrimination
- Prejudice
- Comments and insults about
    - colour of skin
    - nationality

- culture
- social class
- religious beliefs
- ethnic background, etc.

2.8 Cyber Bullying

Cyber Bullying has been defined as an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual. Using electronic forms of contact on a once off basis as the nature of these technologies means digital content can be shared and seen by a very wide audience almost instantly and is almost impossible to delete permanently.

Cyber bullying does not involve face to face or physical confrontation. It does not require any close proximity to the cyber victim. Cyber bullying can also be carried out anonymously. Disinhibition exists where young people say and do things online that they would never do face to face. It is conducted in an environment perceived as free from adult supervision. As the fear of discovery is absent, there is no perceived control on the cyber bully's behaviour that exists in 'real world' encounters. The bully becomes disassociated from the turmoil that their actions are causing the 'victim'. This creates a total lack of 'empathy' with the victim or an understanding of the long-term harm their bullying causes.

Previously, bullying is defined as:

Deliberate (targeted), Repeated, Hurtful (causing harm)

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful (or harmful) public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

So, we advise all members of the school community to think before posting.

We promote the **Granny rule**: if you wouldn't your granny to see the message, you wouldn't send it to someone. Words can manipulate the way we think - just because the message doesn't resonate or effect you, doesn't mean it won't do the same for anyone else.

How Cyber Bullying is carried out

Some examples include (but are not limited to):

Mobile Phones

*S*ome examples, but not limited to these*:*

- Messages: Sending or receiving abusive text messages, taking, sending or receiving unpleasant photos and/or videos using mobile phones
- Calls: sending or receiving upsetting phone calls (e.g. malicious prank calls).

Computers / Smart Phones

*S*ome examples, but not limited to these*:*

- Email: Malicious or threatening emails directly to a victim, or about a victim to others.
- Chat rooms: Intimidation or abuse when participating in chat rooms.
- Instant messages: Abusive instant messages (MSN, Yahoo, WhatsApp, Snapchat, etc.)

- Websites: Where secret or personal details are revealed in an abusive way or where nasty or unpleasant comments are posted.
- Social Media: Facebook, X, YouTube, AskFM, Google, Flickr, Instagram, VSCO, BeReal, Gmail, Snapchat, Texting, Instant messages, Discord, WhatsApp, TikTok, etc.

Cyber Bullying Behaviours

Cyber Bullying Behaviours include the following (but not limited to these examples):

- **Flaming**: Online fights using electronic messages with angry and vulgar language
- **Harassment**: Repeatedly sending nasty, mean and insulting messages.
- **Denigration**: 'Slagging' or "Dissing" someone online. Sending or posting gossip or rumours about a person to damage his or her reputation or friendships.
- **Impersonation**: Pretending to be someone else and posting material to get that person in trouble or danger or to damage that person's reputation or friendships.
- **Outing**: Sharing someone's secrets or embarrassing information or images online.
- **Trickery:** Talking someone into revealing secrets/ embarrassing information, then sharing online.
- **Exclusion**: Intentionally and cruelly excluding someone from an online group.
- **Fraping**: Hacking into a person's social networking account to send false/untrue messages or to change details while pretending to be that person
- **Cyber stalking**: Repeated, intense harassment and denigration that includes threats or creates significant fear**.**
- **Exclusion**: Removing, blocking or excluding victim from 'friend list' for no apparent reason.

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.

For the purposes of data collection, students between the age of 13 and 16 years old must have parental permission to sign up to social media services where companies use the legal basis of consent to collect process and store users' data.

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.

2.9 Other

Other types of bullying not included above.

Part 3

Section A: Development/review of our Bi 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	16/04/2026 to 22/04/2026	Survey via MS Forms
Students	16/04/2026	Survey via MS Forms
Parents	16/04/2026 to 22/04/2026	Survey via MS Forms
Board of Management	05/05/2026	BOM Meeting
Wider School Community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers.	16/04/2026 to 22/04/2026	Survey via MS Forms
Date policy was approved:	5th May 2026	
Date policy was last reviewed:	4th June 2025 *Appendix 4 Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation* was used.	

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

In developing the preventative strategies which this school will use to prevent all forms of bullying behaviour, we come from the context of our Catholic ethos, where inclusivity permeates our school in a real way.

This school takes positive steps to ensure that the culture of the school is one which welcomes a respectful dialogue and encounter with diversity and difference by ensuring that prevention and inclusivity strategies are given priority and discussed regularly at our board of management and staff meetings.

The dignity and the wellbeing of the individual person is of paramount concern in our Christian response. This school will listen closely to, and in dialogue with parents, and thereby build a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, trust and confidence.

In continuing to develop prevention strategies, this school will take as much time as is practicable listening to young persons and parents, to help establish their particular context and needs. Frequent periods of reflection and further engagement by the school, young persons and parents, will be used to discern appropriate supports for young people in this school and will help inform future prevention strategies.

The Education and Prevention Strategies

The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows:

- Steps being taken by the school community to create a positive culture that encourages only appropriate behaviour.
- The school aims to take a proactive, preventative role in the first instance. This involves a multi-disciplinary approach on the part of management, staff, parents/guardians and students. In keeping with the school's ethos there is a strong emphasis on the concept of **mutual respect** in all relationships within the school community.

Pastoral Care/Student Support

There is a strong emphasis on pastoral care within the school. Each year is assigned a Year Head. All students are encouraged to visit the Guidance Counsellor, Chaplain, Counsellor or Student Support Team, if and when they need to. Students may be referred to other counselling services.
All students in St. Clement's have a one-to-one "check-in" meeting with the guidance team during the school year where any issues of concern to them can be discussed.

Buddy System

St. Clement's College operates a buddy system which pairs students, typically older students with younger students, to provide support, mentorship, and guidance. This can involve various activities like showing younger students around, organising team-building activities, or mentoring them academically. The buddy system benefits both the "buddies" and the "buddied", fostering social skills, leadership, and a sense of community.

Student Council

Through the Student Council students are enabled to take on leadership roles and assume ownership of and responsibility for school policies that apply particularly to them e.g., Bí Cineálta Policy.

Peer instruction and education through the Student Council takes many forms e.g. speaking to individual class groups, announcements on intercom from the Student Council. During the school year the Students Council also supports various relevant themed days and weeks (e.g. Colours Days, Mental Health Week, Open Nights).

Teachers

Teaching and learning that is collaborative and respectful is promoted. Students have regular opportunities to work in small groups with their peers, which can help build sense of connection, belonging and empathy among students.

Teachers on a daily basis, foster a safe environment for learning by knowing and using their students' names, by managing class-room dynamics using seating plans and identifying grouping arrangements, by being mindful of methodologies that suit varying abilities, by being mindful of the many different personalities ranging from shy to dominant, by being friendly but always maintaining an appropriate professional distance and where practicable incorporating anti-bullying themes in their classes.

The implementation and effectiveness of the Bí Cineálta policy is included as an agenda item for staff meetings where necessary to ensure that concerns about the policy or the welfare of individual pupils can be shared and effectively addressed. Teachers of SPHE may work with Student Council to highlight the adverse effects of bullying.

Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians play a vital role in the process as they instil values in their children e.g. the importance of mutual respect, the recognition that bullying is not 'cool' but that 'telling' or 'reporting' is the responsible and courageous thing to do. Parents'/guardians' role is vital also in supporting the school's policies and procedures and in ensuring that their children are aware of these by reading the Student Journal with them and participating in school led initiatives, such as attending talks organised by the school relating to the subjects of bullying, social media, etc.

Non-Teaching Staff

All staff are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them to any member of the teaching staff, or to the Deputy Principal or the Principal.

School Programmes

A comprehensive SPHE and Student Support Programme is delivered in the school. It encourages the students to show respect for themselves and others. It recognises the importance of students having a healthy self-esteem, as they are less likely to either be the bully or the victim if they feel good about themselves. The programme highlights the effects of bullying through relevant material. The SPHE programme is also supported in the school by RE, CSPE and Transition Year Programmes. Classes may attend presentations on bullying.

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.

Additional Education Needs

The school provides a very extensive Additional Education Needs programme led by the AEN co-ordinating team. A complete timetable of Learning Support and Resource Teaching is provided to those who need specific tuition and great care is given to ensure all are safe from the type of bullying outlined previously.

Extra-Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities

Strong interpersonal connections are fundamental to effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. These connections are supported through formal and informal structures including student councils, school clubs, parents' associations, and student support teams.

The following initiatives, though not exhaustive, strengthen relationships and partnerships between members of our school community:

- Age-appropriate awareness initiatives examining causes and impacts of bullying behaviour, including navigating friendships, identity-based bullying, racist bullying, homophobic/transphobic bullying, sexism, and sexual harassment.
- Supporting active student participation in school life.
- Through our Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) coordinator, facilitating parental engagement in school activities, particularly for those who may find interaction with the school challenging due to unfamiliarity with the education system or language/cultural barriers.

- Workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents/guardians to raise awareness of bullying impact.
- Activities that build empathy, respect and resilience such as Amber Flag/Wellbeing Team Team and Mental Health Week.
- Comprehensive anti-bullying education as part of first year induction programme.
- Bonding activities for each year group.
- QR code enabling students to report worries about mental health/bullying.
- Promoting acts of kindness
- Teaching problem-solving skills.

Students are encouraged and supported to participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, many occurring during lunch periods and after school. Participation fosters bonding among students and encourages mutual support, appreciation, and respect.

Preventing cyberbullying behaviour

The promotion of digital literacy, digital citizenship and fostering safe online environments. Strategies to prevent cyberbullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- implementing the SPHE curriculum.
- implementing the Digital Media Literacy curriculum which teaches students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship
- having regular conversations / assemblies with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online through.
- developing and communicating an Acceptable Use Policy for technology and the internet.
- referring to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour.
- promoting or hosting online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online.
- holding an Internet Safety Awareness Day to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour.

Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour

All students including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students, have a right to feel safe and supported at school.

Strategies used to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- implementing the SPHE curriculum.
- maintaining an inclusive physical environment such as by displaying relevant posters.
- Stand Up Week, encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic/transphobic behaviour.
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities.
- challenging gender stereotypes.
- conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour.

Preventing racist bullying behaviour

Schools have become much more culturally diverse over the last number of decades. Students attending our school come from many different cultures and backgrounds.

Strategies to prevent racist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- implementing the SPHE and CSPE curriculum.
- Multicultural Day/Week
- Interfaith Day
- fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students "see themselves" in their school environment.
- having the cultural diversity of the school visible and on display.
- conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of racism.
- encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour.
- providing supports to school staff to respond to the needs of students for whom English is an additional language and for communicating with their parents.
- providing supports to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma students, and to encourage communication with their parents/guardians.
- inviting speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds.
- ensuring that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Preventing sexual harassment

Preventing sexual harassment requires an approach that focuses on education, awareness and clear enforceable policies as sexual harassment should never be dismissed as teasing or banter.

Strategies to prevent sexual harassment include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- using the updated SPHE specifications at post-primary level to teach students 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.

Many of the preventative strategies listed above can be implemented by schools to prevent all types of bullying behaviour.

Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying:

The SLT ensures that there is adequate supervision in classrooms, on corridors and in assembly areas. Supervision will also be provided at both morning break and lunch break. Particular attention is paid to what might be considered to be 'black spots' in the school campus.

The school's Code of Behaviour and policies such as the Acceptable Usage Policy and Supervision Policy, support the positive culture that opposes inappropriate behaviour.

The school also is active in organising outside speakers on the subject of bullying and supports the work of staff and the Student Council to counteract bullying in our school.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

Those with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour are as follows:

- Principal.
- Deputy Principal.
- Year Heads.
- Class Teachers.

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. (*Please note:* while staff will maintain confidentiality, we cannot guarantee that students or parents/guardians will not share information).
- 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.
- act in a timely manner.
- inform parents of those involved, where it is safe to do so.

Procedures to deal with alleged or confirmed instances of bullying

The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

The class teacher will usually be the initial point of contact if an alleged bullying incident or situation is observed. However, the relevant teacher who will carry out further investigation will most likely be the Year Head or the Deputy Principal. If an incident is of a more serious nature, it will be necessary to report directly to the Principal, who may also take an active role in the investigation procedure.

The school also has a *"Student Support Team"* (SST) which meets every week at a set time and includes the Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor, AEN Co-ordinator, and HSCL Coordinator.

The school also has a '*Year Head Team*' which includes the Principal, Deputy Principal, HSCL Coordinator and Year Heads and may also include any other staff member required for a specific situation or student.

One or both teams may be convened at short notice if the bullying situation is of such a serious nature to warrant such a response.

Formal Process

Stage 1

Note: Stage 1 must be completed within 20 school days.

- Alleged/perceived bullying behaviour should be reported (by the member of the school community, the member's parents/guardian, a by-stander, ancillary staff, SNAs, bus driver) initially to any member of the teaching staff.
- The relevant staff member will recite the definition of bullying to the person who has reported the incident. Definition is:

Deliberate (targeted), Repeated, Hurtful (causing harm)

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful (or harmful) public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

- The incident may be recorded using *Appendix One: Incident Report Form for completion by member of teaching staff* and a student may be asked for a report which could then be attached to Appendix 1.
  Note: The teacher may look for advice from the Year Head to check if it would be advisable to fill out *Appendix 1*.
- If the teacher believes that the incident needs further clarification, she/he will consult with the Year Head or Deputy Principal, who in turn, will keep the Principal informed of the situation.
- A calm problem-solving approach will be taken by the *relevant teacher(s)* when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour.
- All cases will be treated seriously, investigated with care, outside the classroom situation and with all possible confidentiality (while complying with Children First Guidelines re confidentiality). Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- Sensitivity and respect will be shown to both the person making the complaint and to the subject of the complaint. A *No Blame/Shared Concern* approach is used to promote the openness that will be required by members of the school community to explore any impacts that have occurred as a result of behaviours.
- Following exploration of events, the members of the school community move to take restorative actions to resolve the situation.
- The facts will be established, formally documented and signed by those involved.
  - what happened?
  - who did what?
  - where?
  - when?
  - who else was there?
  - and any other relevant questions.
- Where a group or 'gang' is involved, each person will be interviewed separately and may also be interviewed as a group. Again, this will be documented and signed.
- If at the end of **Stage 1** it has been established that bullying has occurred **A Promise Agreement** (**Appendix 6**) will be signed by the student(s) who engage in bullying behaviour.
- The school must engage with the students involved and their parents/guardians again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement

Stage 2

Recurrence of bullying behaviours:

- Breach of the **Promise Agreement** is regarded as a very serious matter.
- If it is established that bullying has recurred, the student(s) will be subject to sanctions according to the School's Code of Behaviour.
- Support will be offered to all students involved through our Student Support Team.
- Referrals may be made to outside agencies if necessary.

- Follow-up meetings with the parties involved will be arranged separately. If they are agreeable to having a meeting together to support a positive outcome this will also be facilitated.
- Parents/guardians who are dissatisfied with the process must have access to the school's complaints procedure and must be informed of its existence.

Procedure for Recording Bullying Behaviour

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.

1. The Board of Management ensures that the school has a clear procedure for formal noting and reporting of bullying behaviour and these are documented in the school's Bí Cineálta policy. Records are kept in accordance with the Data Protection legislation.

2. The relevant teacher must use her/his judgement in relation to records kept on alleged bullying incidents which include discussions and actions taken. If in doubt he/she should confer with the Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal, who may refer the matter to the "Year Head Team" or the "Student Support Team" for consultation.

3. If the relevant teacher concludes that an actual bullying incident or situation has occurred, written records must be kept (i.e. *Appendix 1* and *Appendix 2*). This will allow for a more timely and comprehensive resolution of the bullying problem and allow for greater possibility of restoring or at least improving the relationship between bully and victim.

4. The relevant teacher must also record on standard form (*Appendix 2*) any bullying behaviour which has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 days of it first occurring. Furthermore, the school has a policy that bullying behaviour must be reported without delay to the Principal or Deputy Principal.

5. It is advisable to keep and maintain proper records in the event of repeat occurrence of the particular bullying behaviour or where there is a pattern of a continuum of behaviour.

6. Records may also be required if a parent/guardian files a complaint against the school about the procedure followed in dealing with a particular bullying incident. (Standard complaints procedure must be made available to parents wishing to make a complaint).

Programme of Support for those affected

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

The school has a *"Student Support Team"* (SST) which meets every week at a set time and includes the Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor, AEN Co-ordinator and HSCL Coordinator.

The school also has a "*Year Head Team"* which includes the Principal, Deputy Principal, SCP Key Worker, HSCL Coordinator and Year Heads and may also include any other staff member required for a specific situation or student.

These groups can identify the best procedures to help the victim of bullying and the bully and ensure that 'restorative justice' has been achieved. Each case can be dealt with separately and the required support can be put in place, which can include the intervention of one, some or all of the following:

- Principal,
- Deputy Principal,

- Year Head,
- Class Teacher,
- School Guidance Counsellor,
- School Counsellor,
- AEN Co-ordinator,
- Student Support Team.
- Home School Community Liaison Coordinator,
- School Completion Programme Key Worker,
- Parents/Guardians,
- Relevant Outside Agencies.

St. Clement's College, inspired by its Mission Statement, seeks to facilitate the development of each student to his full academic, personal, spiritual and social potential in a Catholic, caring, respectful and safe environment. The school endeavours to respond effectively and sensitively to issues of bullying when they occur and will provide the necessary support for any student affected by bullying. This includes: the victim of bullying; the bully and will not forget the bystander.

The school is committed to making all stakeholders aware of its *Bí Cineálta Anti-Bullying Policy* and to ensuring that it is a working document that informs the whole school community of the ongoing determination to eradicate all forms of bullying (see Education and Prevention Strategies above).

Section D: Oversight

The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting. This update will include the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting, the number of ongoing incidents and the total number of incidents since the beginning of the school year. Where incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred, the principal will also provide a verbal update which will include where relevant, information relating to trends and patterns identified, strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant. This update does not contain personal or identifying information. See Chapter 7 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

This policy is available to our school community on the school's website and in hard copy on request. A student friendly version of this policy is displayed in the school and is also available on our website and in hard copy on request.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed, following input from our school community, each calendar year (at the next Board of Management meeting nearest to the date of the last review) or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this policy refers.

Signed: _____ **Date:** 5th May 2026

Ms Patricia Kieran, Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: _____ **Date:** 5th May 2026

Mr Michael O'Connor, Principal

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

Guide to Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The whole school community has a responsibility to prevent and address bullying behaviour. Schools should work in partnership with their patron, board of management, staff, students and their parents to develop and implement their Bí Cineálta policy.

This appendix is intended as a guide to addressing bullying behaviour. It is based on the information contained in Chapter 6 of the *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.*

Approach

The primary aim in addressing reports of bullying behaviour should be to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the students involved, rather than to apportion blame.

When addressing bullying behaviour teachers should:

- ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured
- seek to ensure the privacy of those involved > conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- consider the age and ability of the students 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

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

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.

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour you should consider the following questions:

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.*

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

If the answer to any of these questions is **No**, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour.

Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred teachers should consider what, where, when and why?

- if a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first
- thereafter, all students involved should be met as a group
- at the group meeting, each student should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views > each student should be supported as appropriate, following the group meeting
- it may be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident(s)

Where bullying behaviour has occurred

- parents are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with schools, in addressing bullying behaviour. Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the students involved must 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
- it is important to listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation > a record should be kept of the engagement with all involved
- this record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known (see Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the Bi Cineálta procedures), where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students involved and their parents > the record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour

Follow up where bullying behaviour has occurred

- the teacher must engage with the students involved and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement
- important factors to consider as part of this engagement are the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the students involved
- the teacher should document the review with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and their parents in relation to this
- the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased should also be recorded
- any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted
- ongoing supervision and support may be needed for the students involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased
- if the bullying behaviour has not ceased the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents. A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased
- if it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school consideration should be given to 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 student, their parents and the school
- if a parent(s) is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with *the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*. they should be referred to the school's complaints procedure
- if a parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions have had a negative impact on their child.

Appendix 1: Incident Report Form for completion by member of teaching staff

Name of person making report to member of teaching staff:

Date of incident(s) occurring:

Details of Incident

Only details which are pertinent to the incident should be recorded. Where suspicions/allegations of bullying are made this should be clearly indicated. Please attach any written accounts by students.

The definition of bullying is:

Deliberate (targeted), Repeated, Hurtful (causing harm)

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful (or harmful) public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

This was explained to the student.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Relevant Teacher

Appendix 2: Incident Report Form for completion by member of teaching staff

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name:	Year:	Class:

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in behaviour

3. Source of bullying concern/report

(✓tick relevant box(es)**)**

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

4. Location of incidents

Yard	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
Bus	
Other(specify)	

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)**)**

Physical Aggression	
Damage to Property	
Isolation/Exclusion	
Name Calling	

Cyber-bullying	
Intimidation	
Malicious Gossip	
Other (specify)	

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic	Disability/AEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)

Appendix 2 continued

8. Brief Description of perceived bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Relevant Teacher

Date submitted to the Principal/Deputy Principal: **Date:** _____

*Note: The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances

Appendix 3 Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.
- Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure there is adequate school yard/outdoor supervision.
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying "hot spots" and "hot times" for bullying in the school.
- Hot spots tend to be in the school yard/outdoor areas, toilets, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
- Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms
- Support the establishment and work of student councils.

Appendix 4: Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.

Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day-to-day work?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Principal

Appendix 5(a): Solving an issue of alleged bullying – No Blame/ Shared Concern Approach

The Relevant Teacher (Class Tutor, Year Head, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor or Principal, whoever is most appropriate) must complete the bullying behaviour report sheet (see Appendix 1). The Relevant Teacher will investigate the incident by talking to all parties.

His or her first actions will generally be on a no-blame or shared concern so that all parties are made aware of the impact of the named behaviours. All parties are made aware of the discipline procedures in place if necessary.

The relevant teacher does not apportion blame but rather treats bullying behaviour as a 'mistake' that can and must be remedied. This encourages students to report bullying knowing that they are not getting anyone in trouble.
A discrete approach is adopted given the sensitivity of the situation. All parties are questioned and no allegations are made.

The Seven Steps…

- **Step One** – **Interview with the member of the school community**:

Teacher arranges to talk with member.

- **Step Two** - **Convene a meeting with the people involved**:

The teacher arranges to meet with the person/people who were involved (this will not include the reporting member at this stage). It is likely that if a group a people that each person will meet separately with the teacher.

- **Step Three** – **Explain the problem:**

The teacher tells them about what the reporting member is experiencing and feeling.

- **Step Four - Share responsibility:**

The teacher does not attribute blame. When it can be acknowledged the individual/group is responsible a response can then be planned.

- **Step Five – Ask the individual/group for their ideas**:

The individual/group is encouraged to suggest a way in which the reporting member could be helped to feel happier.

- **Step Six – Provide a Promise:**

The individual/group signs a promise in the presence of the Relevant Teacher that the behaviour will not continue. This promise will be counter-signed by parents/guardians. If the promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter.

- **Step Seven – Meeting possibility**

Where beneficial the members may wish to meet to discuss the situation face-to-face and this will be facilitated by the teacher at any stage through the process.

- **Step Eight – Follow-up meeting:**

About a week later the teacher discusses with the relevant members of the school community, including the reporting member, how things have been going. If the promise is broken, this can no longer be treated

as a mistake. Breach of the promise is regarded as a very serious matter and the student(s) concerned may be suspended (outlined in *Stage 2 Recurrence of bullying behaviours*).

Appendix 5(b): The "No Blame Approach" to Bullying

Background:

- Developed by Barbara Maines and George Robinson, the philosophy is based on long-standing work with pupils with emotional and behavioural problems; it is a positive approach to punishment.
- Since bullying is an interaction which establishes group identity, dominance and status at the expense of another, then it is only by the development of higher values such as empathy, consideration, unselfishness, that the bully is likely to change their behaviour and function differently in social settings.
- Investigation and interrogation rarely get to the bottom of the problem or situation.
- Rather, it seems as though this leads to the bullies being hostile, and punishments are futile as they may lead to the reporting member of the school community being hurt. All this attention on the bully leads to a shift of attention from the reporting member.
- The *"No Blame Approach"* has been used effectively in primary and secondary schools as well as college environments (Maines and Robinson, 1994).

Why it Works:

The first thing the "No Blame Approach" does is focus on how the victim is feeling; focusing attention on feelings, draws attention away from blame. This causes the bully and supporters to think about the impact of their behaviour.

- It draws the bystanders and non-involved students into finding a solution to the problem.
- It is a whole school approach; it relies on group dynamics and the empathy of the group members.
- No one has to hide behind an untrue picture of what happened as no one is going to be blamed for anything that occurred.

Why it's Popular:

- It deals with potentially complex situations in a straightforward way.
- There is no need for extensive and difficult investigations.
- It brings about change quickly, it's easy to use and it works.

In Addition:

- Nothing about this approach is manipulative or requires specific training beyond an understanding of the seven steps of the approach.
- Does not assume that teachers are or can become therapists as the approach is based upon those skills that a teacher already possesses i.e., the ability to work effectively with individuals and groups.

Limitations of the Approach:

- Some people suggest that the *"No Blame Approach"* be used in only certain bullying situations (i.e., the less serious bullying cases).
- It may be difficult to reward a decrease in misbehaviour, thinking that it is not right to reward a child for behaviour that is expected in another child.
- For the *"No Blame Approach"* to reduce bullying, the whole school must be committed to it. In pilot studies, lack of training for all members of the teaching staff on issues related to bullying and the no blame approach led to lack of success.
- Lack of training for parents/guardians in understanding the need for co-operation with the school's policy on bullying has also been a problem.

Appendix 6: Promise Agreement

Promise Agreement
for St. Clement's College

Name of person making the promise:

The definition of bullying behaviour is:

Deliberate (targeted), Repeated, Hurtful (causing harm)

This was explained to me.

The behaviour I engaged in was in breach of St. Clement's College's Bí Cineálta policy.

I promise to treat all members of St. Clement's College's school community fairly, equally and respectfully and I promise that I will comply with the school's Bí Cineálta policy.

I am aware that any subsequent breach will be subject to the sanctions according to the school's Code of Behaviour (as noted on Page 16 in Stage 2 of the Bí Cineálta Policy).

Note: additional information for this Promise Agreement may be attached to this document.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____
Student

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____
Parent/Guardian

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____
Principal/Deputy Principal/Year Head