



Athleague N.S., Athleague, Co. Roscommon, F42 VF95  
Principal: Avril Hickey  
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Phone: 090-6663420 / 085-8388694  
Roll Number: 15308M / Reg. No.: 20133474  
Website: [www.athleaguenationalschool.ie](http://www.athleaguenationalschool.ie)

## **Athleague National School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour**

### **Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour**

- The Board of Management of Athleague National 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.
- We confirm that we will take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the bullying or harassment of our students in whatever form and however motivated.
- 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, in accordance with the Catholic Schedule.
- As a Catholic school, we are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual. No human person is to be devalued, and all have an indispensable part to play in the school community, regardless of difference.

### **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.



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## 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	10 <sup>th</sup> April 2025	Staff Questionnaire
Students	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2025	Student Questionnaire
Parents	4 <sup>th</sup> April 2025	Survey on Google Forms
Board of Management	10 <sup>th</sup> February 2025	Consultation at BOM meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	30 <sup>th</sup> April 2025	Meeting with Principal
Date policy was approved: 16 <sup>th</sup> 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):

### Prevention Strategies

- In developing 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 the 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



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priority and discussed regularly at 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 dialogue with parents, thereby building a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, trust and confidence.
- In continuing to develop prevention strategies, this school will listen to young people and parents, to help establish their particular context and needs. Frequent periods of reflection and engagement by the school, young people and parents, will be used to discern appropriate supports for young people in this school and to help inform future prevention strategies.

#### Culture and Environment

- Create a positive school climate where all students feel safe, respected and valued.
- Promote diversity and inclusion in all aspects of school life.
- Using circle practice in the classroom to build a positive culture and environment.
- Encourage open communication between students, staff and parents. Encourage students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- Establish clear expectations for behaviour and enforce them consistently.
- Promote respectful relationships across the school community.
- Open communication.
- Effective routines/transitions.
- Anti-bullying signs and messages will be displayed around the school. Positive messages that promote friendship and caring attitude will also be displayed.

#### Curriculum (Teaching & Learning)

- Integrate anti-bullying messages into the school curriculum.
- Teach students about bullying and its effects.
- SPHE methodologies.
- Provide opportunities for students to develop social and emotional skills.
- Incorporate lessons on respect, empathy and diversity into the curriculum.
- An annual anti-bullying/friendship day/week.
- The Stay Safe Programme will be fully implemented at appropriate times and levels in the school.
- Behaviour charts in the classrooms.



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- Code of Behaviour for the classroom and playground drawn up with the children in September.
- Buddy benches in the playground.
- Resources such as Weaving Wellbeing Programme, Welcome to Wellbeing Programme, Social Stories etc.
- Explicit teaching and appropriate communication and emotional literacy.
- Group work/collaboration.
- Sensory walk for emotional regulation breaks.

#### Policy & Planning

- Develop a clear and consistent anti-bullying policy that is enforced by staff members.
- Review and update the anti-bullying policy regularly.
- Provide training for staff on how to recognize and respond to bullying.
- Establish clear procedures for reporting and responding to bullying incidents.
- The Acceptable Use Policy was developed in school to include the necessary steps to ensure that access to technology within the school is strictly monitored.
- School policies: the following policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying include: Code of Behaviour, Child Safeguarding Statement, Risk Assessment, Supervision of Pupils, Acceptable Use Policy, SPHE, RSE, PE, SEN/Inclusion Policy.
- Student voice.
- The school's approach to tackling and preventing bullying will take particular account of needs of students with disabilities or with SEN, will join up with other relevant policies and supports and will endeavour to ensure that all services that provide for such pupils work together.
- Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for students with SEN include improving inclusion, focusing on developing social skills, paying attention to key moments such as transitioning from primary to post-primary and cultivating a good school culture which has respect for all and helping one another as central.

#### Relationships & Partners

- Encourage open communication between students, staff and parents.
- Build positive relationships with students and families.
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies including awareness raising measures that build empathy, respect and resilience in students.



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- TPL (Teacher Professional Learning)
- Collaborate with community organisations to provide additional support and resources.
- Guest speakers may be invited to address staff and parent groups at regular intervals in relation to various types of bullying.
- Work with parents and students to educate them about the dangers of cyberbullying by facilitating outside speakers. The programme 'Webwise' will be taught on a regular basis in the school. This programme teaches safe and responsible internet use.
- Clear protocols are in place to encourage parents/guardians to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied. These protocols were developed as part of our communication policy.

#### Preventing Cyberbullying Behaviour

- Explicitly teach the issues of cyberbullying and the importance of using technology safely.
- Monitor student use of technology in the classroom and on school grounds.
- Work with parents and students to educate them about the dangers of cyberbullying by facilitating outside speakers.

#### Preventing Homophobic/Transphobic Bullying Behaviour

- Create a safe and inclusive environment for all students, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Educate students about the importance of respecting all people, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Encourage peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities.

#### Preventing Racist Bullying Behaviour

- Teach students about the history and impact of racism e.g. 'Show Racism the Red Card'.
- Promote diversity and inclusion in the classroom.
- Provide support to students who have been targeted by racist bullying.
- Ensure that library reading material represents appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

#### Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour



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- Teach students about the importance of gender equality e.g. ‘Gender Equality Matters’.
- Celebrate diversity at school and acknowledge the contributions of all students.



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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

- **Staff Supervision:** All staff members should be trained to recognize and respond to bullying behaviour. They should be present and visible in common areas and playgrounds during break times.
- **Student Supervision:** Class teachers should supervise students during class time and break times. They should be aware of what is happening in their classrooms and on the playground.
- **Visitor Supervision:** Visitors to the school should be supervised at all times. They should not be left alone with students.

#### Monitoring

- **Incident reporting:** The class teacher investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour with a view to establishing the facts and records on an incident report form.
- **Incident investigation:** All reports of bullying should be investigated promptly and thoroughly. The investigation should include interviews with the student who reported the incident, the student who was allegedly bullied, and any witnesses.
- **Follow-up:** The school should take appropriate action to address the bullying behaviour.

#### Additional Policies:

- Code of Behaviour Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement & Risk Assessment
- Data Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- External Speakers & Coaches Policy
- School Tours/Excursions Policy
- S.P.H.E. Policy
- Health & Safety Statement
- Acceptable Usage Policy
- Induction of New Teachers Policy

By implementing these policies, Athleague National School can create a safer and more positive school environment for all students.



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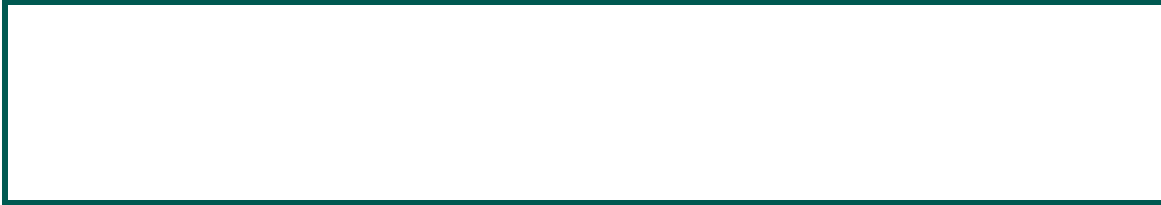
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## Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

- The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour is (are) as follows:  
The four mainstream class teachers: Ms. Avril Hickey, Ms. Deirdre Kenny, Mr. Seán Óg Higgins & Ms. Margaret Fannon.
- 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



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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):

The school's procedures for investigation, following-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies that may be used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

- Class teacher(s) investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour with a view to establishing the facts and managing the behaviour.
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the class teacher(s) will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved. Class teacher(s) should consider the following: what, where and when?
- Class teacher(s) will be fair and consistent in their approach when addressing bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
- Interviews will be conducted outside the classroom in a fair and consistent way. If a group has been involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first and thereafter, as a group when each child will be asked for his/her account of what happened. It may be helpful to ask the student involved to write down their account of the incident.
- The following principles must be adhered to when addressing bullying behaviour:
  - 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 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.
- Non-teaching staff such as special needs assistants (SNA's) caretakers, cleaners are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behavior witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to a class teacher.
- School staff should know what to do when bullying behaviour is reported to them.
- A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, schools



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should deal with it in accordance with their BÍ Cineálta policy.

- Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour need support.
- Parents are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with schools, in addressing bullying behaviour.
- The primary aim of the class teacher(s) investigating bullying is to resolve issues and to restore relationships. Ongoing supervision and support may be required for both the student who has experienced the bullying behaviour as well as the student who has displayed the bullying behaviour. In some cases, relationships may never be restored to how they were before.
- The parents/guardians of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school will give the parents/guardians an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the support provided to the pupils.
- It must be also made clear to all involved (each set of students and parents/guardians) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter (under GDPR) between the student being disciplined, his/her parents/guardians and the school.
- When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the teacher(s) will complete a report to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information.
- The incident will be recorded on an 'Incident Report' sheet and placed on the student's file.
- The class teacher(s) must engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 days after the initial discussion to review progress following the initial intervention.
- If the bullying behaviour has not ceased the class teacher(s) 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 actions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school.
- If a parent(s)/guardian(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 Schools, they should be



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referred to the school's complaints procedures.

- 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 effect on the student.

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

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

- Managing the bullying behaviour.
- Supporting the pupils who have experienced bullying behaviour, displayed bullying behaviour and witnessed bullying behaviour.
- Promote a positive school culture where pupils feel safe, respected and valued.
- Raising awareness of the appropriate programmes and teacher training.
- Helping pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills e.g. participation in group work in class, team activities during and after school, small social groups with S.E.T.
- Making it clear that adopting the strategies is a positive step towards creating a more respectful and inclusive school environment.
- In dealing with challenging behaviour, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on positive reinforcement.
- Circle time activities.



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- 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 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: Anthony Flaherty

(Chairperson of board of management)

Date: 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2025

Signed: Avril Hickey

(Principal)

Date: 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2025