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We provide children with a well rounded education in a safe, nurturing, inclusive environment, where everyone feels happy and respected, facilitating all to reach their full potential.

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of St. Comán's Wood Primary 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	26th Feb. '25 26th Mar. '25	Staff Meeting
Students	Jan - April 2025	Assembly
Parents	29th April, 2025	Parents invited into meeting: speaker Emmet Major from Planet Youth
Board of Management	19th May, 2025	Meeting on the 19th May, 2025 with video from CPSMA
Date policy was approved: 19th May, 2025		

SECTION B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

1. CULTURE and ENVIRONMENT

St. Comán's Wood Primary School:

- Nurtures a positive school climate which is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity.
- Models respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times
- Explicitly teaches pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Consistently tackles the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school- this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils from a particular culture/community, race, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation and/or with a disability or SEN.
- Catches children 'being good' -notices and acknowledges desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Gives positive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Has a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines. Highlights and explicitly teaches school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and common areas.
- Explicitly teaches appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourages pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.
- Follows up and follows through with pupils who ignore the rules.

- Actively promotes the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Promotes respectful relationships across the school community.

1.1 A Telling Environment: According to research conducted in Ireland, there is a persistent tendency not to report bullying incidents (DES, 2024:33). It is important that the school community supports a 'telling' environment.

St. Coman's Wood Primary School:

- Encourages a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance
- Teaches pupils that when they report incidents of bullying, they are not getting others 'in trouble' so much as enabling them to get out of trouble which they may ultimately get if the bullying continues. Neither are they considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly. ' We ensure the pupils know who to tell and how to tell.

1.2 Trusted Adult

The concept of "a trusted adult" is an effective strategy to encourage students to report if they or another student is experiencing bullying behaviour. Staff support this strategy by letting students know that they can talk to them.

Generally in our school the person children trust to talk to is their class teacher. However, some children have built high-trust relationships with the Special Needs Assistant and/or SET teacher working with the class and may choose to talk to them. The trusted adult should reassure the student that they have done the right thing by reporting the behaviour. The trusted adult should, without delay, inform the member who has responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour which is the class teacher.

1.3 Creating safe physical spaces in our school

- Posters/signage promote the school's values such as equality, diversity, inclusion and respect. Displays express respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Pupils are involved in the development of these messages.
- Children are consulted with regard to where they wish to talk to an adult -whether that be in the classroom where they feel safe with people they know or elsewhere. In larger classrooms staff may be able to find a private space but in most of the classrooms in St. Comán's Wood Primary School, this may not be possible. It may be necessary to arrange supervision with a colleague in order to speak to a child, if a staff member deems that the conversation cannot be delayed.

2. CURRICULUM (Teaching and Learning)

Teaching and learning that is collaborative and respectful is promoted. Students have regular opportunities to work in small groups with their peers, which helps build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy among students. (DES, 2024:36)

The following programmes are taught:

- The anti-bullying module of the SPHE programme as it applies during each school year.
- The Stay Safe and RSE programmes which seek to enhance child's self protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying.
- Various other social, health and media education programmes further help to address the problem of bullying behaviour.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and their feedback sought via the Students' Council.

3. POLICY AND PLANNING

The wellbeing of the school community is at the heart of school policies and plans. The school's acceptable use policy, supervision policy, special education teaching policy and Code of Behaviour support the implementation of the school's Bí Cineálta policy.

Staff engage in appropriate teacher professional learning courses to prevent and address bullying behaviour. Staff also share their experiences and examples of best practice at fortnightly class level meetings, monthly staff and APII meetings and weekly/fortnightly API meetings. Discussions promoting inclusion and diversity in the school are encouraged at all staff meetings.

4. RELATIONSHIPS and PARTNERSHIPS

Strong interpersonal connections are a vital part of effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. These interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures in St. Coman's Wood Primary School through informal interactions, the Student Council, fortnightly Assembly, the Parents' Association, the Board of Management and various staff meetings. Parents also actively participate in school life. In St. Coman's Wood, every effort is made to welcome those who may find it difficult or daunting to engage with the school due to being unfamiliar with the education system or due to language or cultural barriers.

Students are encouraged to actively participate in school life. Peer support is encouraged through models such as peer tutoring/ paired reading/ project work/group work etc. The student-friendly version of this policy is used to effectively prevent and address bullying behaviour.

5. PREVENTING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Technology and social media have provided many positive opportunities for entertainment, social engagement and education. However, the increase in the use of technology has led to students becoming increasingly vulnerable to cyberbullying or unacceptable online behaviour. *Technically, children under the age of 13 should not have a social media account. Parents will be reminded of this.*

Strategies we use to prevent cyberbullying behaviour include the following:

- Implementing the SPHE curriculum
- Having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- Communicating our acceptable use policy for technology

- referring to appropriate online behaviour in the Code of Behaviour
- promoting online safety events for parents
- organising the local Community Garda and others in the community to speak to the children and parents about appropriate online behaviour

5.1 Preventing homophobic/ transphobic bullying behaviour: All adults including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender adults have a right to feel safe and supported in the school community.

5.2 Preventing racist bullying behaviour

In St. Comán's Wood Primary diversity is celebrated and a 'sense of belonging' is nurtured in the school through assemblies, school concerts, celebrations etc. This diversity is visibly on display.

5.3 Preventing sexist bullying behaviour

In our school gender equality is monitored on an ongoing basis as part of the school's measures to create a supportive and respectful environment.

6. SCHOOL SUPERVISION and MONITORING

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)

- School staff who are supervising at break times i.e supervising classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra- curricular activities are visible. An API has responsibility for drawing up yard rotas.
- Supervision extends to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- Hidden spaces outside are designated as 'no go areas'.
- The school offers a mix of organised activities during break time and during after-school activities in order to accommodate a range of preferences and interests.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teachers with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour are as follows:

- **Primarily the mainstream class teacher**

The trusted adult (class teacher/SET teacher/ SNA/ secretary) , who is made aware of alleged bullying behaviour, informs the child's class teacher.

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 (speaking to students away

from the main student body)

- > 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

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

The definition in this policy above sets out clear criteria to help our school identify bullying behaviour.

Incidents can occur where behaviour is unacceptable and hurtful but the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies that deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

The children alleged to have bullied or been bullied will be engaged individually first using open ended questions. When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the teacher considers the following: **what, where, when and why?**

If a group of students is involved, each child will be engaged individually at first. Thereafter, all students involved will be met as a group.

At the group meeting, each child will 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 also be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident. This will be a standard procedure and does not necessarily imply that a pupil is guilty of misbehaviour.

The class teacher does not apportion blame but rather treats bullying behaviour as a 'mistake' that can and must be remedied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise (see Appendix A) that bullying will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter.

If a pupil has signed a promise but then chooses to break that promise and continue the bullying behaviour, this can no longer be considered a mistake. In this event parents/guardians will be informed and requested to countersign their daughter/son's promise. Breach of this additional promise is regarded as a grave matter and a serious sanction may be imposed by the school authorities in line with the school behaviour policy.

The parents of the bullied child will also be informed. A meeting will be arranged with the class teacher and principal to speak to the parents of the bullied child and the school's

programme for supporting pupils who have been bullied, discussed. A plan of action will be decided.

The teacher must engage with the students and parents involved no more than **20 school days** after the initial discussion to review progress following the initial intervention. Even though the bullying behaviour may have ceased, 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 behaviour. It can take time for relationships to settle and for support to take effect. In some cases, relationships may never be restored to how they were before the bullying behaviour occurred.

Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.

Where bullying behaviour has occurred when children are not under the care or responsibility of the school

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, St. Coman's Wood Primary School will deal with it in accordance with this Bi Cinealta Policy.

Where the student displaying the bullying behaviour is not a student in the school, but the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour is a student in the school, the school should support the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as appropriate and engage with them and their parents to determine what steps can be taken.

APPROACHES to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour (see Chapter 6 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

Given the complexity of bullying behaviour it is generally acknowledged that no one approach works in all situations. International and national research also continues to evolve in this area and the effectiveness of particular approaches continues to be reviewed.

Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour need support. School staff should identify the support needed for the student who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties and ensure that their needs are met. Approaches such as restorative practice and mediation should only be used to address bullying behaviour when the teachers involved have been trained in how to engage in these methods and the students involved have agreed to their use.

Requests to take no action

A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than "look out" for them. The student may not want to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They may feel that telling someone might make things more difficult for them. Where this occurs, it is important that the

member of staff shows empathy to the student, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the student to work out together what steps can be taken to address the matter and how their parents will be informed of the situation. It is important that the student who has experienced bullying behaviour feels safe.

Parents may also make schools aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action. Parents should put this request in writing to the school or be facilitated to do so where there are literacy, digital literacy or language barriers. However, while acknowledging the parent's request, schools may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

Recording

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*. All documentation regarding bullying incidents will be securely retained in the school until the children involved reach 21 years of age. (9 years after the child leaves 6th class).

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:

Date: 19th May, 2025



(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: 

Date: 19th May, 2025

(Principal)

