



Heywood Community School's

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Department of Education's Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (<https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/bullying-information-for-parents-and-students/>)

Context and Rationale:

Heywood Community School Ethos Statement

In fulfilling its mission the school nurtures and affirms the uniqueness and full development of each individual. It promotes the personal and emotional development of students, staff and management in a caring and respectful environment. The school ethos respects the dignity of each person by listening to their views and encouraging them to question and search for meaning.

We recognise that a school that seeks to actively prevent and address bullying behaviour is a school that exemplifies our mission statement: Heywood Community School provides an education setting in which the person is encouraged to grow at every level – personally, academically, spiritually, socially and culturally.

The Action Plan on Bullying is rooted in the following four key principles:

- **Prevention:** Through the generation of empathy and the provision of training which provides a foundation for knowledge, respect, equality and inclusion
- **Support:** Tangible and targeted supports based on a continuum of needs which provide a framework for school communities to work together
- **Oversight:** Visible leadership creates positive environments for children and young people and all members of our school community
- **Community:** Building inclusive school communities that are connected to society, and that support and nurture positive relationships and partnerships.

We have updated this policy in accordance with the department guidelines and in line with the action plan, all stakeholders were afforded the opportunity to assist us with this.

The Board of Management 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.

This Policy Applies

- In class, between classes and while on the school premises
- While in school uniform
- On the way to and from school
- On any school-based activity, school tours etc.
- To any activity undertaken in the school's name
- To any behaviour that adversely affects the school reputation or the education of any student in the school

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.

Heywood Community School will 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

Culture and Environment

A positive and inclusive school culture is essential for preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. Heywood Community School aims to create an environment where students and staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected, and supported. Relationships among all members of the school community should be founded on respect, care, integrity, and trust.

Open communication among our patrons, Board of Management, school staff, students, and their parents is crucial to fostering a collaborative approach and shared responsibility in preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. The school leadership team plays a vital role in influencing the school culture and setting standards and expectations for the community regarding bullying prevention and response.

Each staff member is responsible for maintaining a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and for adopting a consistent approach to addressing such behaviour. Students are encouraged to promote kindness and inclusion within their peer groups, contributing to a positive and supportive environment for all. **Parents/guardians, as active partners in their child's education, can help foster an atmosphere where bullying is not tolerated by promoting empathy and respect.**

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	26-02-2025	Staff Workshop
Students	14-02-2025 13-03-2025	Student Focus Group, Student Surveys SPHE Lessons Student Council Meetings Assemblies
Parents	14-02-2025 12-05-25	Parent Surveys Parents Association
Board of Management	Monthly BOM Meetings	Board Meetings
Wider school community as appropriate, for example caretakers, secretarial staff, ancillary staff	Ongoing	
Bus Drivers/Providers	Weekly	Communication with a member of SMT
Date policy was approved: May 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour Our Culture and Practice:

This section sets out the prevention strategies that are and 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):

In accordance with our mission statement, we promote a positive school culture where respect is key. This will be evident in:

- Effective Leadership
- Whole-school approach
- Guidance and Chaplaincy
- Student Leadership Teams
- Fair and transparent Code of Positive Behaviour
- Provision Mapping (see appendix III)
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Digital Awareness
- Encouraging Peer Support
- Workshops/guest speakers
- Effective supervision and monitoring of students
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow-up of bullying behaviour
- On going evaluation of the effectiveness of the Cineáltas Procedure

(This list is not exhaustive)

Specific Strategies in Heywood Community School	FREQUENCY
Morning Assembly by Year Group with Year Head and Tutors in attendance	Daily
Tutor Check-In	Every 8 weeks.
Chaplaincy and Guidance Counselling	Daily
Promote awareness of bullying (CSPE, SPHE AND RSE Programmes)	Weekly
Nurture Programme	Weekly (timetabled for few/some)
Dedicated social awareness weeks e.g. Autism Awareness Week, Health and Happiness Week, Inter Faith Week, etc.	Throughout academic year
Meitheal	Support for First Years Transition August-December
Prefects	Active Throughout Academic Year
Student Council	Active Throughout Academic Year
Acceptable Use Policy	All students endorse the AUP on an annual basis. Students' internet use is monitored; internet access is Department of Education defined content filtered (Level 4) and computer sessions are monitored by teachers

Extra-Curricular Activities	Lunch time and after school.
Designated areas for students (lockers and social areas)	Daily Assembly, breaks
Member of Senior Management team links in with bus companies	As required
Post-Primary Transition Programme	Specific programme dedicated to the transition of 6 th class students to post primary school.

Supervision and Monitoring Policies:

In addition to all the practices identified above, the Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring practices are in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

The school is actively addressing specific areas where bullying may occur as identified by students and parents during the consultation process. Consultation of students and parents highlighted the reluctance to report bullying. We encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. Our message to all students is that when they report incidents of bullying, they are not considered to be “telling tales” but are behaving responsibly and kindly.

The school has extensive CCTV surveillance in many areas of the school which is monitored on a frequent basis.

Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school will be included in student journals and displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.

All staff are watchful and observe relationships between students in class, and let it be known that high standards of behaviour, kindness and respect are always expected.

Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The objective in addressing reports of bullying behaviour is to stop the bullying behaviour. All staff have a responsibility to report suspected incidences of bullying by liaising with the Year Head and completing the Bullying Incident Report Form (Appendix 1)

While every staff member has a responsibility to implement our school's Bí Cineálta policy, the staff/teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour are as follows: Senior Management Team and Year Heads. Our Year Heads and Class Tutors meet their year group daily at morning assembly.

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
- Act in a timely manner in accordance with Bí Cineálta guidelines
- inform parents of those involved in accordance with Bí Cineálta guidelines

Identifying Bullying Behaviour:

Steps 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):

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour we will consider the following questions:

1. Is it targeted?
2. Is it causing harm (physical, social or emotional)
3. Is it repeated, and does it involve an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society?

If the answer to **ALL three** of the questions above is **Yes**, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour, and the behaviour will be addressed using the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

Note: One-off incidents may be considered bullying in certain circumstances. Example, 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.

Note: Bullying behaviour can be considered criminal behaviour in certain circumstance and legal consequences can apply.

Where Bullying Behaviour Has Occurred

Step 1	Incidents of alleged bullying will be reported to the relevant Year Head(s) of students involved in the bullying behaviour.
Step 2	The year-head will conduct informal and/or formal (Based on the nature of the report) enquires with all parties. If the incident is considered possible bullying, parents of all parties are informed in a timely manner.
Step 3	If the actions are deemed bullying behaviour, the "Bullying Incident Report Form" is completed by the year-head and reporting teacher during a formal investigation.
Step 4	The staff member (usually Year-Head) communicates findings with students and parents of parties involved. The school will strive to restore relationships using the support systems available.
Step 5	Inappropriate behaviour will be dealt with in line with our code of positive behaviour

Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, it is generally acknowledged that that no one approach works in all situations. International and national research also continues to evolve in this area and the effectiveness of approaches continues to be reviewed. Each school must therefore decide on an approach that is best suited to its own circumstances and in each case.

- All parties involved will be asked to document their understanding of events.
- A record should be kept of the engagement with all involved including the initial 'Bullying Incident Report Form' (Appendix 1).
- 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/guardians.
- The record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour. All correspondence with students and parents/guardian will be recorded.

Follow-Up Where Bullying Behaviour Has Occurred

- The school must engage again with the students involved and their parents no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement.
- 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 school 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
- 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 school 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 should consider using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Positive 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 Board of Management.
- 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

Supports

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

- Counselling for students (Guidance Counsellor/Chaplain)
- Form Tutor & Year Head system
- Building self-esteem and developing social skills
- Use of restorative practices to re-build and maintain relationships
- Co-operation with parents
- Referral to outside agencies (if necessary) in co-operation with parents

Students should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported.

Record Keeping:

All bullying behaviour will be recorded on the 'Bullying Incident Report Form' (Appendix 1). 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:  _____

Date: 20th May 2025

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: 

Date: 20th May 2025

(Principal)

Appendix I = Bullying Reporting Form

Date of report to Year Head: _____

Name of Year Head: _____

Name of student being bullied: _____

Year and Class Group: _____

Date of Initial Engagement with students _____

Date of communication with parents _____

Name/Position (specifically, parent/teacher/student/bus-driver etc.) of person(s) reporting the alleged bullying incident:

Name: _____

Position: _____

Name(s) and class(es) of students allegedly engaged in bullying behaviour:

Names (if relevant) of bystanders:

Anti Bullying Check List: (Please tick the correct column)

	Yes	No
Is it targeted?		
Is it causing harm (Physical, Social or Emotional)		
Is it repeated and does it involve an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society?		

Details of Bullying Behaviour

Type of Bullying:	
Location of alleged bullying incident:	
Brief description of alleged bullying behaviour:	
Impact of alleged bullying behaviour:	
Details of current actions and supports taken: (including if appropriate the date of the engagement with students and parents relevant to this report):	

Details of communication:

--

Follow Up:

Date of proposed 20 Day Follow Up:	
Date parent 1 was communicated with	
Details of conversation with parent 1	
Date parent 2 was communicated with	
Details of conversation with parent 2	
Has the bullying behaviour ceased according to parent 1?	
Was Parent 1 satisfied with how the incident was addressed? If not, what recommendations do they have?	

Other Information:

Appendix 2 - Impact of Bullying on Individuals and the School Environment

1. Emotional and Psychological Distress

- Bullying can cause stress, humiliation, and insecurity.
- Victims of bullying often experience anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem, which can affect their overall mental health.
- Bullying can cause changes in mood and behaviour.

2. Academic Performance

- Bullying can have a detrimental effect on experiences of education and educational outcomes.
- Bullying can lead to decreased concentration, lower grades, and higher absenteeism, impacting students' academic success.

3. Physical Health Problems

- Victims may suffer from physical symptoms such as headaches, stomach aches, and sleep disturbances due to the stress of being bullied.

4. School Climate

- A school environment where bullying is prevalent can become hostile and unsafe, affecting the well-being of all students and staff.

5. Long-Term Consequences

- Bullying can have a severe and profound impact on people in both the short and long term.
- The effects of bullying can persist into adulthood, leading to ongoing mental health issues, difficulties in forming relationships, and challenges in professional settings.