

Bord Oideachais & Oiliúna  
**LUIMNIGH & AN CHLÁIR**

**LIMERICK & CLARE**  
Education & Training Board

Bí Cineálta Policy:  
Preventing and Addressing  
Bullying Behaviour





Limerick Community Special School Dromdarrig Mungret Co Limerick V94DN77	Roll Number: 20579B Phone Number: 0862014881 Email: <a href="mailto:lcss@lcetb.ie">lcss@lcetb.ie</a> Website: <a href="http://limerickcss.ie">limerickcss.ie</a>
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## 1. Introduction

Limerick Community Special School is a co-educational, multi denominational special school which is underpinned by the core values of excellence in education, care, equality, community and respect. In Limerick Community Special School, we are dedicated to helping each student to achieve their individual potential. The school policies are central to ensuring the provision of quality education in a holistic manner.

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Code of Behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management has adopted the following Bí Cineálta Policy within the framework of the school's overall code of 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 of Limerick Community Special School has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

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.

“Education plays a pivotal role in contributing to a democratic, equitable, and just, Irish society. It supports the sense of identity and belonging of all children as members of their community while also contributing to matters of international and global priority. It enables children to see themselves as individuals, with rights and responsibilities, and as part of social groups, including in the classroom and school, the local community, and national and global contexts.” (Primary Curriculum Framework, 2023, p.3)

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.

The implementation of all aspects of this policy will be differentiated for each child to take into account:

- Each student's ability to communicate, with each suspected instance dealt with on a case-by-case basis in agreement with school management. This includes such measures as the use of alternative augmented communication for interviews etc., such as visuals, LAMH and other appropriate material.
- Each student's understanding of the consequences of their actions or those of others, so that students are insofar as is possible, not held accountable for actions they could not reasonably be expected to be responsible for.
- Our students are particularly vulnerable to bullying outside of school and the learning of generalizable life-skills and appropriate ways to deal with others is the ultimate aim of the school's approach to dealing with suspected bullying.

## 2. 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 (2024).

The core elements of the definition are:

### > Targeted behaviour

Bullying is deliberate, unwanted behaviour that causes harm to others, and where the student displaying bullying behaviour knows that their behaviour is or will be perceived as harmful by the child or young person experiencing the behaviour. Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. The harm can be physical (for example, personal injury, damage to or loss of property), social (for example, withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion) and/or emotional (for example, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety) and can have a serious and long-term negative impact on the student experiencing the bullying behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying but, importantly, must still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour.

### > Repeated behaviour

Bullying takes the form of a systematic pattern of behaviour which is repeated over time. Single offline incidents of intentional negative behaviour involving an imbalance of power are not considered bullying but must still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour. Posting a single harmful message/image/video online, and which is highly likely to be reposted or shared with others can therefore be seen as bullying behavior.



## > Imbalance of power

In incidents of bullying, the student experiencing the bullying behaviour finds it hard to defend themselves as a result of the abuse of a real or perceived imbalance of power. This imbalance of power may manifest itself through differences in size, strength, age, ability, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, race, ethnic origin including membership of the Traveller and/or Roma communities, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, experience of the care system, disability or the receipt of special education. In incidents of online (or cyber) bullying, the imbalance of power may relate to online anonymity, technical proficiency and possession of information/images/video, and the inability of the targeted student to remove offensive online material or escape the bullying.

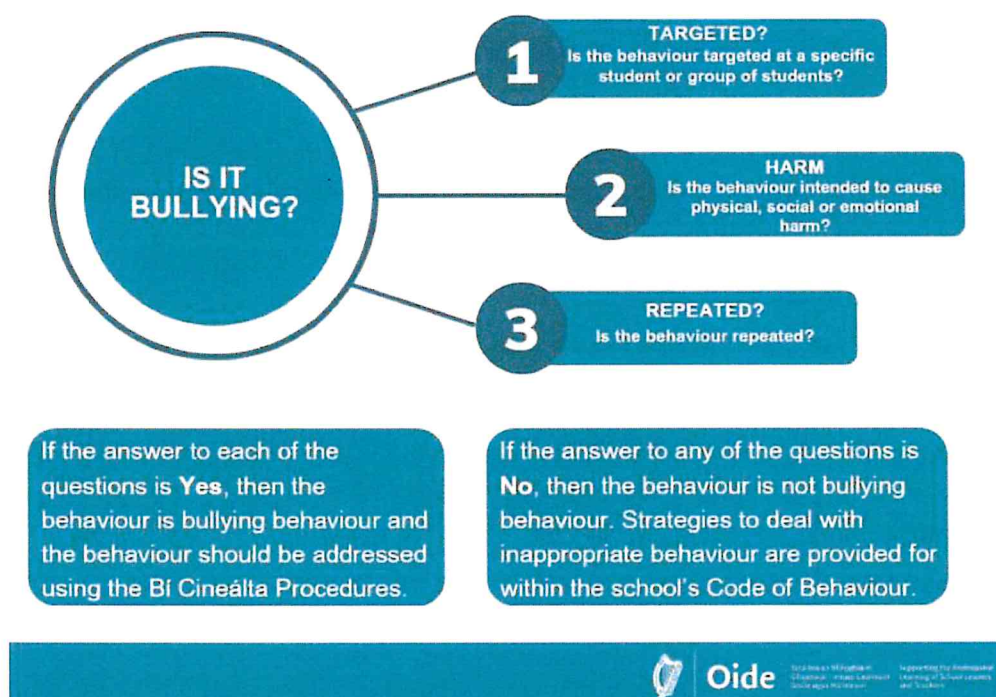


Figure 1. Is it Bullying? (OIDE Glance Card)

### 2.1 Bullying that is not bullying behavior

- A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards another student is not bullying behaviour. However, a single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be visible to a wide audience and has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and so becomes a repeated behaviour.
- Disagreement between students, or instances where students don't want to be friends or to remain friends, is not considered bullying behaviour unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others including deliberate manipulation of friendship groups.



- Some students with special educational needs may have social communication difficulties which may make them communicate their needs through behaviours that can hurt themselves or others. It is important to note that these behaviours are not deliberate or planned but, in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they can't control. Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying. These behaviours, while not defined as bullying can be distressing. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour

### 3. 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	March 2025	Meeting, Survey
Students	April 2025	Student Friendly kind and unkind visuals created for school wide use (Appendix 4) These were trialed Student friendly version of policy.
Parents	March 2025	Survey
Board of Management	May 2025	Meeting
Wider school community as appropriate: Escort and Bus drivers	March 2025	Survey
Date policy was approved: 21 <sup>st</sup> May 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: n/a New Policy		

#### 3.1 Main Outcomes from surveys

Parents completed a hard copy survey with 20 responses from a sample of 30 received from parents, with 95% of responses indicating that their child had never experienced bullying in school. 100% of parents felt their children could talk (communicate) to a staff member if they had a concern about bullying, however this question also posed difficulties for parents considering the communication needs of the students. 100% of parents felt the school is committed to preventing bullying behaviour. Results from parents' survey is represented in pie chart form in Appendix 5.

Staff also completed a hard copy survey, this included teachers, SNA's, bus escorts and drivers. 21 responses were received. 86% of respondents had seen the school's anti-bullying policy and 100% of respondents knew who was responsible for addressing bullying behaviour in the school. 19% of respondents had engaged in professional learning in the area of anti-bullying indicating a need for professional development in this area in the school. 100% of respondents had never seen bullying behaviour in school. Results are represented in Appendix 6.



### 3.2 Preventing Bullying Behaviour

The wellbeing policy statement and framework for Practice provides four key areas that are essential for a holistic, whole school approach to wellbeing promotion:

- **Culture & Environment**
- **Curriculum**
- **Policy and Planning**
- **Relationships and Partnerships**

As a school community we considered these carefully when developing measure to prevent bullying behaviours

#### **Culture and Environment:**

Limerick Community Special School is a neuro-affirmative school with a positive and inclusive culture and environment which is essential in preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. Our mission statement is grounded in a connection and regulation first environment focused on building a strong staff to student trusting relationship. We adhere to the concept of a 'trusted adult' as an effective strategy to encourage students to verbally or non-verbally communicate if they or another student is experiencing bullying behaviour. Staff support this strategy by connecting with students and letting students know that they can talk to them. Our school environment is a space where students and school staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported.

Limerick Community Special School fully adheres to appropriate supervision as an important measure to help prevent and address bullying behaviour. Adequate supervision and visibility of staff on yard duty is essential.

Wellbeing Promotion in Limerick Community Special School:

Establishment of Student Council in 2025/2026 academic year.

Circle Time (daily).

Staff have develop 'Shared School Values for All'

We also include the following to prevent bullying behaviour:

- Modelling of kind hands and kind feet
- Consistent school wide visuals for kind and unkind (Appendix 4)
- Integration with Secondary Schools for IPlay
- Emotions are valid, we model and support with visual aids on this noticeboard).
- Assemblies.
- Student-designed posters throughout the school.

#### **Curriculum (Teaching and Learning):**

Teaching and learning that is collaborative and respectful is promoted in Limerick Community Special School. Students have regular opportunities to work in small groups with their peers, which can help a sense of connection, belonging and empathy among students. 'Circle Time', 'Paired work' & 'Group work' within each curricular area, sharing of work and peer assessment are examples of this.

We use the following resources throughout the school: 'Talkabout Social Skills Group with Assistant Psychologist'

Prevention and awareness raising measures focusing on cyber-bullying by educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour and how to stay safe while online (AUP Policy)

Curriculum components and programmes which are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying and the promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness. The SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships. The Stay Safe & RSE programmes at primary level are personal safety skills programmes which seek to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying. The ethical programme emphasises respect for self and others. The post-primary programme includes similar learning through its SPHE and RSE programmes.

The work may be extended into many other areas such as Art, Drama and Physical Education.

### **Policy and Planning:**

The wellbeing of the school community in Limerick Community Special School is at the heart of all school policies and plans.

There are a range of policies/initiatives which support the implementation of our school's Bí Cineálta policy which include:

- Our Acceptable Use Policy.
- Code of Behaviour Policy.
- SPHE/Wellbeing Plan (SSE).
  - Crisis Prevention Intervention Training for staff, Safety Interventions Policy
- CPD on Trauma Informed Practice

We use Government resources including:  
Autism Good Practice Guidelines  
NCSE RELATE

### **Relationships and Partnerships:**

Our School's Mission Statement has a strong emphasis on a connection and regulation first environment. 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 such as:

- PACE approach (Playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy)
- Student Council (to be formed 25/26)
- Wellbeing Activities: Walks, Iplay, Horseriding, Swimming, Art, Music
- Kindness Certs/Awards.
- LCSS Green Day
- Circle Time.
- Communication with secondary schools/preschools.
- Fostering mutual respect.
- Partnerships with schools and parents initiative; .

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

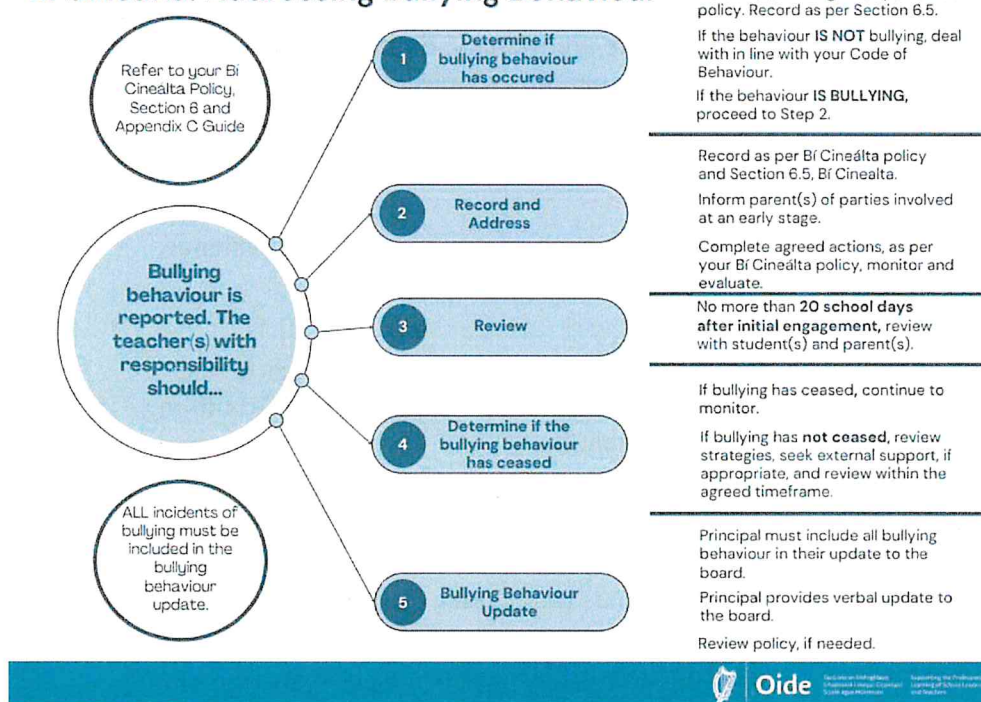
- Yard Duty of Teachers and Large SNA Team
- Escorts on each Bus Route
- Monitoring of pupils' interactions with each other and reporting to Class Teacher
- Teaching/Modelling keeping hands and feet to yourself.



- Sensory Input a priority to keep children regulated
- Supervision on Internet/ Implementing AUP policy
- Implementing the SPHE curriculum
- Staff supervision if child has an ipad as a reward
- IT system have blocked social media accounts
- Fostering a school culture where diversity and inclusion is celebrated and where students 'see themselves' in their school environment.
- RSE Curriculum, Stay Safe, 'All Together Now' - An Educational Awareness Programme by Dr. Seline Keating.
- Having the cultural diversity of school visible and on display.
- Variety of Books with many diverse characters
- Goodness me Goodness You Patrons' Programme

### 3.3 Addressing Bullying Behaviour

#### Bí Cineálta: Addressing Bullying Behaviour



**Figure 2.**  
**Addressing**  
**Bullying**  
**Behavior (OIDE**  
**Glance Card)**

teacher(s) with  
responsibility for  
addressing

The

bullying behaviour is (are) as each Classroom

Teacher. **When behaviour occurs, the school will:**

- Determine if Bullying Behaviour has occurred
- Record Bullying Behaviour and inform parents at an early stage.
- Ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour is heard and reassured
- Inform Parents/Guardians
- School staff will identify the supports needed for the student who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties and ensure that their needs are met.
- Conduct all conversations with sensitivity.
- Consider the age and ability of those involved.
- Seek to ensure the privacy of those involved.
- Identify supports required.

- Decide, agree and complete appropriate action following consultation with students and parents.
- Review the case not more than 20 days later
- If bullying has ceased, continue to monitor
- If bullying has continued, review strategies, seek external supports, and review again.
- At each BOM Principal will include all bullying behavior in an update to Board. (Appendix 2)
- The 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 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.
- Parents may 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.

**The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour.**

Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, it is generally acknowledged that no one approach works in all situations. We will therefore decide on an approach to the bullying behaviour that is best suited to its own circumstances.

- Comfort Reassurance
- Sensory Input
- Preferred Activities
- Teaching kind and unkind through visuals (Appendix 4), LAMH and AAC use.
- Approaching the topic at circle time.
- Increased supervision on the yard (making staff aware-looking how we can support these children).
- Discussions about friendships: Importance of kindness.



## 4.0 Recording Reports of Bullying

All alleged bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the form and type of bullying behavior (if known), where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with students and parents regarding the actions to be taken to address bullying behaviour. 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*.

It is imperative that bullying incidences are recorded in an objective and factual manner. Noting and reporting of bullying behaviour is to be documented using the template for recording bullying behaviour (Appendix 1). All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The class teachers must use the recording template (Appendix 1) to record the bullying behaviour and inform the Principal. The class teacher must engage with the students involved and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement. It should document the review with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of the students and their parents in relation to this. It is important to document the date of each of these engagements and the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased.

### 4.1 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. (Appendix 2).

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.

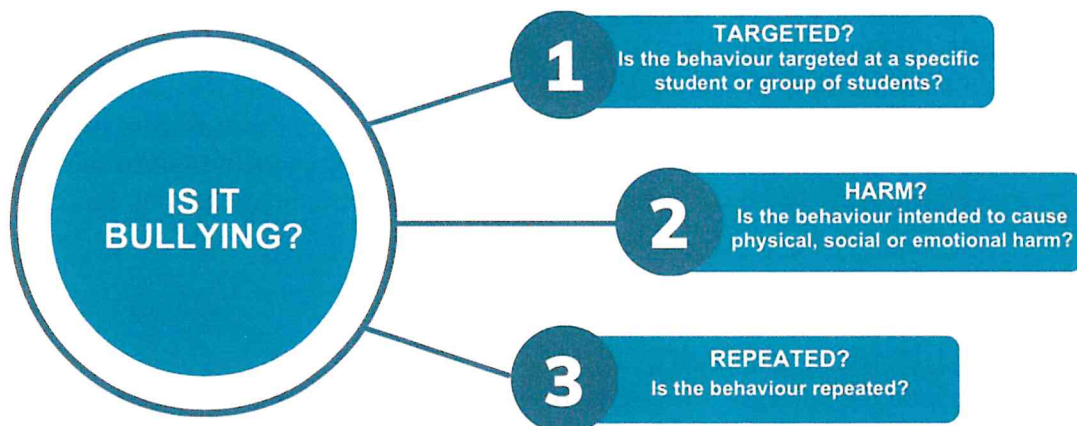
Signed:   
(Chairperson of board of management)  
Date: 19/6/25

Signed:   
(Principal)  
Date: 19/6/25

## FORM 1 - Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour

*If the bullying allegation meets the criteria for the definition of Bullying as per the Bí Cineálta procedures, (including online bullying) this Form should be completed.*

### Is it Bullying?



If the answer to each of the questions is **Yes**, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour and the behaviour should be addressed using the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

If the answer to any of the 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.

<b>School Assigned Personnel completing this form.</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal</li> <li>• Deputy Principal</li> <li>• Teacher</li> </ul>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Name and Class of pupil experiencing bullying behaviour</b>	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Name(s) &amp; classes of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour</b>	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Form(s) of Bullying: (2.5)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical</li> <li>• Verbal</li> <li>• Written</li> <li>• Extortion</li> <li>• Exclusion</li> <li>• Relational</li> <li>• Online</li> </ul>



4.	<b>Type of Bullying: (2.7)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disablist</li> <li>• Exceptionally able</li> <li>• Gender-identity</li> <li>• Homophobic/transphobic</li> <li>• Physical appearance</li> <li>• Racist, poverty</li> <li>• Religious identity</li> <li>• Sexist bullying</li> <li>• Sexual harassment</li> </ul>
	<b>Other (please state)</b>	
5	<b>Location of incident(s)</b>	
6	<b>Date of incident(s)</b>	
7	<b>Name of person(s) who reported the concern.</b>	
8	<b>Brief description of bullying behaviour and its impact:</b>	
9.	<b>Date of initial engagement with pupil(s) harmed and pupil(s) engaging in harm.</b>	
10.	<b>Names of, and date of initial engagement with parent(s) of student(s) experiencing the bullying behaviour.</b>	
11.	<b>Name of, and date of initial engagement with parent(s) of student(s) displaying bullying behaviours.</b>	
12.	<b>Details of actions taken.</b>	
13.	<b>Views of pupils and parents regarding actions to be taken.</b>	
14.	<b>Date of Review to determine if bullying behaviour has ceased.</b>	
15.	<b>Details of Engagement with external supports (if any).</b>	

16.	Date of behaviour ceasing.	
17.	If bullying behaviour has not ceased, what further actions have been agreed?	
18.	Signed: Class Teacher	
19.	Date:	
20.	Additional Comments.	
21.	Parent Declaration: I agree that the actions of the school and all involved have addressed the bullying behaviour at this point.	
22.	Date:	
23.	Agreed Report	
This report will be filed in the Principal's Office.		
Date filed in Principal's Office:		



## Appendix 2: Bullying Behaviour Update to Board of Management

Bullying Behaviour Update for the Board of Management of Limerick Community Special School in accordance with section 7.1 of the Bí Cineálta Procedures for Schools.

Date of meeting: \_\_\_\_\_

Having reviewed the details of the incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the previous board of management meeting, the principal provided the following information at the ordinary meeting of the board of management: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Total number of <b>new incidents</b> of bullying behaviour reported since the last board of management meeting.	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour <b>currently ongoing</b> .	
<b>Total number</b> of incidents of bullying	

Where incidents of bullying behaviour occurred, a verbal report was also given following guidelines from Bí Cinneálta: Yes ☐ No: ☐

This update should not include any personal information or information that could identify the students involved.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School Principal

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson of the BOM:

### Verbal Report Summary (for Principals use only)

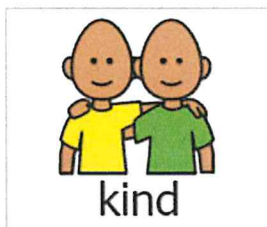
Where incidents of bullying behaviour have been reported since the last meeting, the update must include a verbal report which should include the following information were

relevant: (This update should not include any personal information or information that could identify the students involved.)

The <b>trends and patterns identified</b> such as the form of bullying behaviour, type of bullying behaviour if known, location of bullying behaviour, when it occurred etc.	
The <b>strategies used to address</b> the bullying behaviour	
Any <b>wider strategies to prevent</b> and address bullying behaviour	
If any <b>serious incidents of bullying</b> behaviour have occurred which have had a serious adverse impact on a student	
If a parent has informed the school that a <b>student has left the school</b> because of reported bullying behaviour	
If <b>any additional support is needed</b> from the board of management	
If the <b>school's Bí Cineálta policy requires urgent review</b> in advance of the annual review	



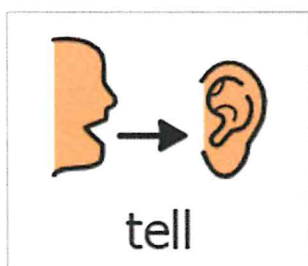
Limerick Community  
Special School  
'Be Kind' Policy for  
Students



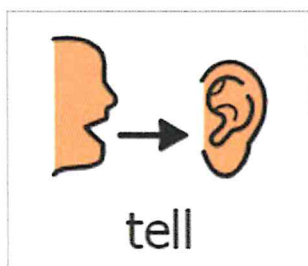
Everyone in Limerick Community Special School should feel safe and happy.



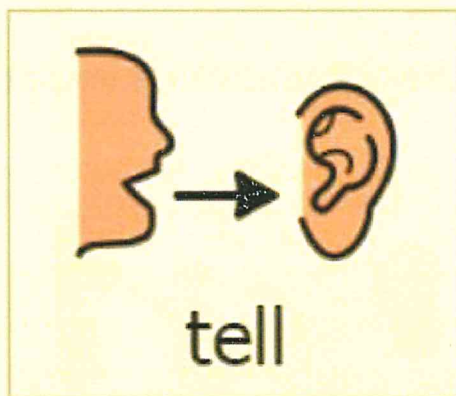
Please tell an adult in school if you think you are being bullied. They can help.



Please tell an adult in school if you think someone else is being bullied. They can help.



Tell  
someone!

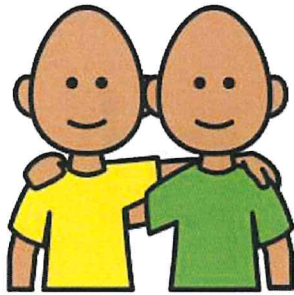




# Get help!



# Bí Cineálta



kind

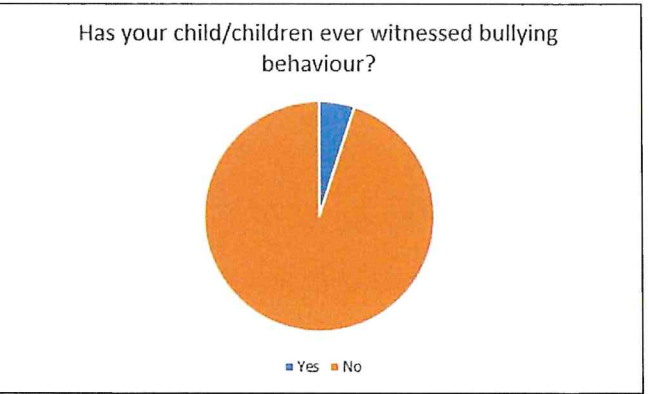
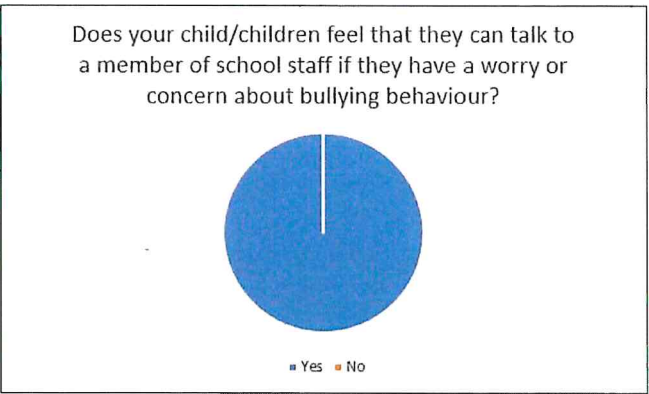
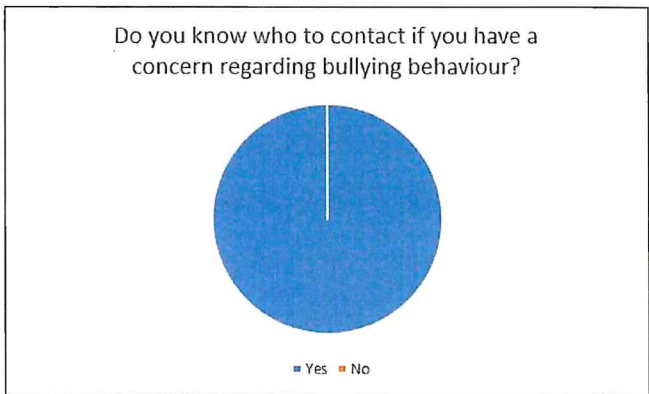
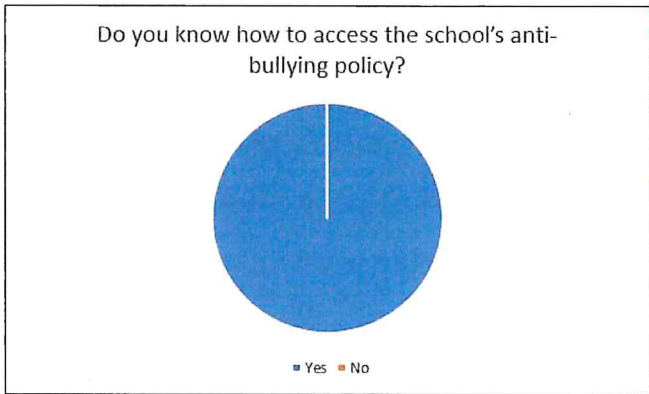
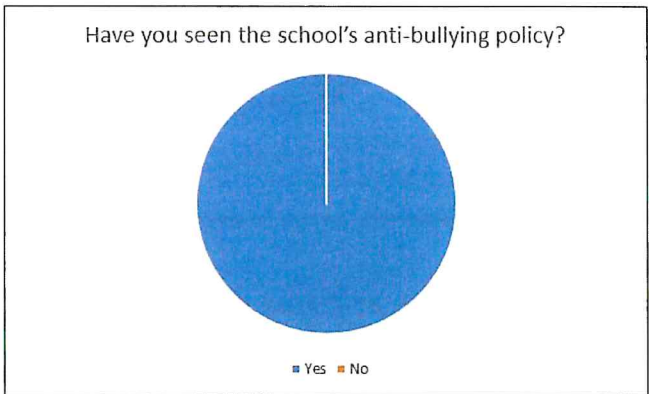
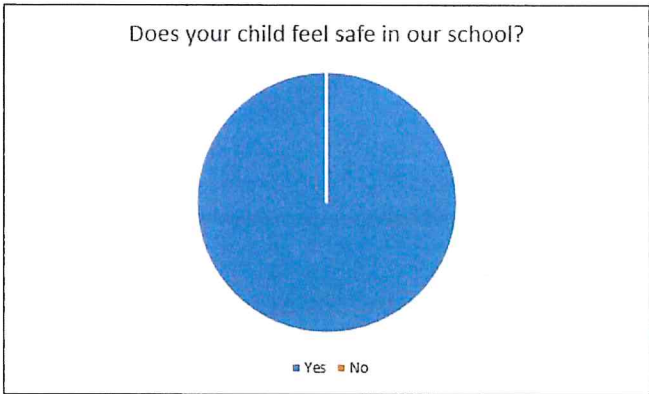


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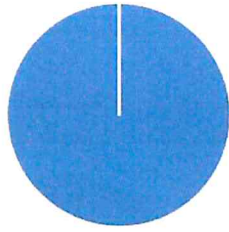


Appendix 5: Parent Survey Responses

N=20

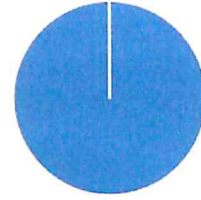


If yes, were you happy with how this was dealt with? If no, please explain:



■ Yes ■ No

Do you feel this school is committed to dealing with bullying behaviour and its prevention? If no, please explain:



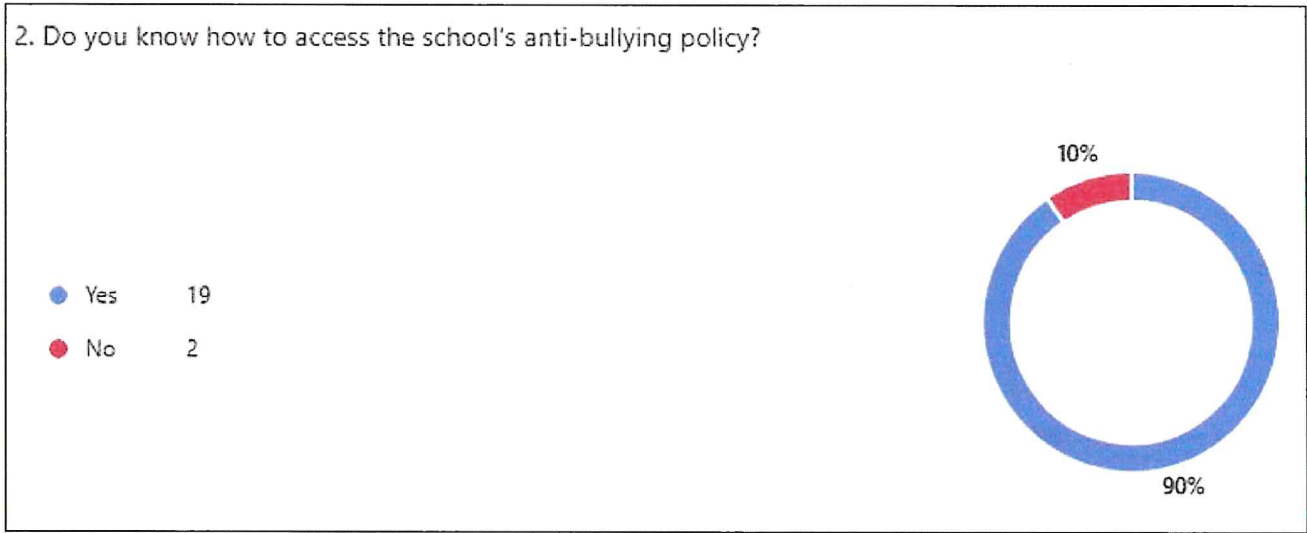
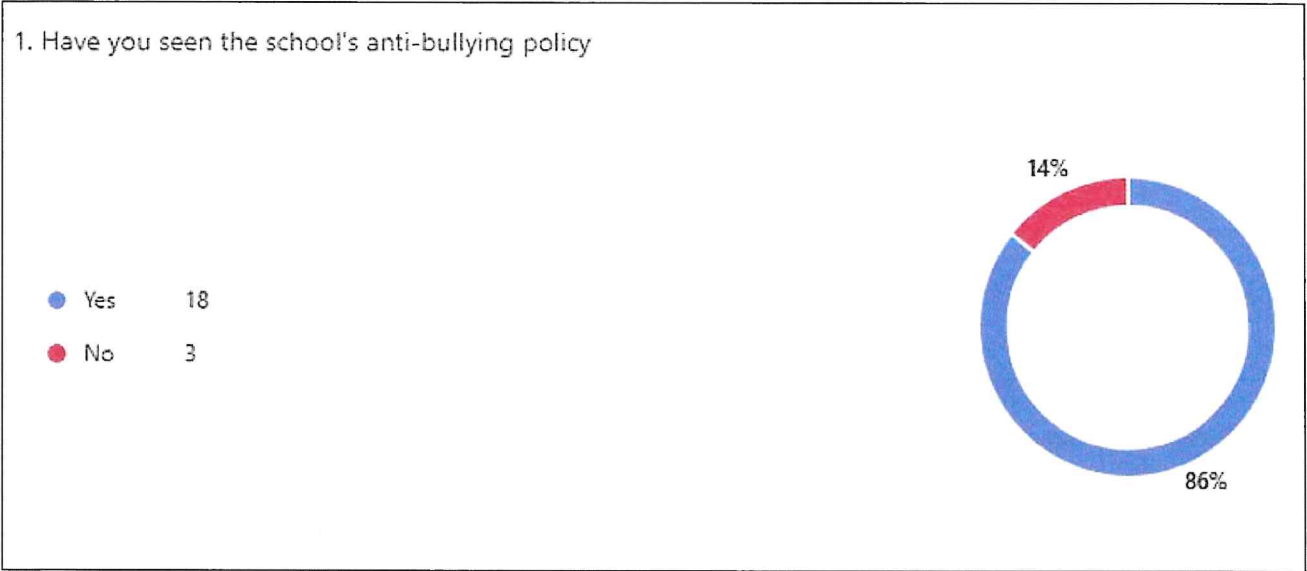
■ Yes ■ No

Is there anything else you would like to say about the school's approach to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour?

I believe the school's approach to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour is important, and providing ongoing education on kindness and respect can also make a big difference open communication involving parents etc

Appendix 6: Staff Responses

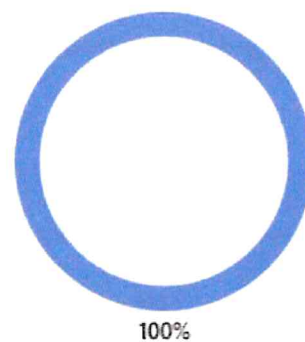
N=21





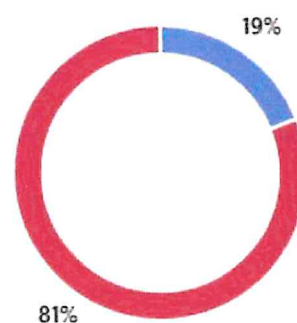
3. Do you know who is responsible for responding to and addressing bullying behaviour in your class/school?

● Yes 21  
● No 0



4. Have you engaged in any professional learning in this area?

● Yes 4  
● No 17



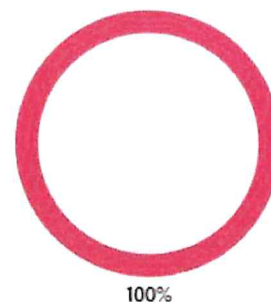
5. If not, how might you upskill to ensure you can support the school's Bí Cineálta policy?

2 respondents (18%) answered Online course for this question.

Research/courses role model Summer course intervene properly  
Online Workshop **Online course** willing  
available resources Online webinar bullying policy course on bullying classroom learning  
training and CPD

7. Can you recall the most recent incident of bullying behaviour that was reported to you at this school?

● Yes 0  
● No 21



9. Where is bullying behaviour most likely to occur in this school?

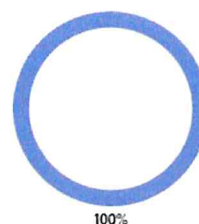
4 respondents (24%) answered Classrooms for this question.

Word cloud for Question 9:

- Classrooms (largest)
- yard
- Unsure
- Anyplace at anytime
- older
- Playground and classroom
- classes
- bullying in school
- children
- Anywhere
- school hours
- younger
- staff members
- maybe it occurs
- place
- classroom groups
- senior classes
- Classroom/yard
- mixed
- bus

10. Do you feel that this school is committed to dealing with bullying behaviour and its prevention?

● Yes 21  
● No 0



11. If yes please explain your answer

4 respondents (25%) answered open for this question.

Word cloud for Question 11:

- open school (largest)
- Policy in place
- principal
- Supportive community
- Anti
- Deputy Principal
- Clear policies
- principal about any concerns
- open discussions
- bullying is likely
- bullying policy
- door policy
- New school
- children
- staff member
- safe clam
- tone of respect
- staff are very open

