

# Athlone Community Training Centre



## **Bullying & Harassment Policy**

**Bí Cineálta**

**April 2025**

# Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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The Board of Management of Athlone Community Training Centre 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 Centres 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 centre 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 centre 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 Traveler 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 Centres* 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 centre is required to develop and implement a Bí Cineálta policy that sets out how the centre community prevents and addresses bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within the centre's Code of Behaviour.

## Section A: Development/review of our Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour

All members of our centre community were provided with the opportunity to input into the development/review of this policy.

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
Centre Staff	13/05/2025	Microsoft Teams
Learners	29/04/25	Learner Council
Parents		
Board of Management	29/05/2025	Board of Management Meeting
Wider centre community as appropriate.		Add to centre website
Date policy was approved: 29/05/2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: 29/05/2025		

## Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by the centre. 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):

ACTC is dedicated to fostering a culture where bullying and harassment are unacceptable. Our prevention strategies include:

- **Whole-Community Involvement:** Engaging learners, parents/guardians, staff, and the board of management to collaboratively maintain a respectful and inclusive environment.
- **Environmental Modifications:** Identifying and addressing areas within the centre where bullying is more likely to occur, such as secluded spots or areas with limited supervision. Measures may include installing mirrors for greater visibility and arranging furniture to discourage unsupervised gatherings.
- **Promotion of a Telling Environment:** Encouraging learners to report incidents

of bullying and harassment by displaying a student-friendly version of this policy in common areas and including it in learner handbooks.

- **Education and Training:** Providing regular training for staff and educational sessions for learners on recognising, preventing, and addressing bullying and harassment.

The centre has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

**Supervision and Monitoring:** Ensuring visible and vigilant supervision, particularly for learners who may be more vulnerable to bullying behaviour.

**Record Keeping and Oversight**

- **Documentation:** All incidents of bullying and harassment will be recorded, forming part of a confidential centre record. The DLP and DDLP will be responsible for centre record.
- **Board of Management Reporting:** The centre manager will provide a verbal update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting, including the number of incidents and measures taken to address them, without disclosing personal details of those involved.
- **Annual Review:** This policy will be reviewed annually with input from learners, parents/guardians, staff, and the board of management to assess its effectiveness and make necessary adjustments.

## Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour is (are) as follows:

When bullying behaviour occurs, the centre 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

The steps that will be taken by the centre 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):

### **Reporting and Responding to Bullying and Harassment**

- **Reporting Mechanisms:** Learners and staff are encouraged to report incidents to a designated staff member, such as a tutor or centre manager. Reports can be made verbally or in writing, and confidentiality will be maintained where possible.
- **Investigation Process:** All reports will be taken seriously and investigated promptly. The process will involve:
  - Interviewing all parties involved.
  - Documenting the incident and findings.
  - Implementing appropriate interventions to address the behaviour and support those affected.
- **Follow-Up:** After 20 centre days, follow-up meetings will be conducted with affected learners and their parents/guardians to ensure that the bullying behaviour has ceased and to provide additional support if necessary.

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

### **Support for Learners**

ACTC is committed to supporting learners affected by bullying and harassment by:

- Providing access to counselling services.
- Implementing restorative practices to address and repair harm.
- Offering educational resources on coping strategies and resilience building.

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 Centres*.

### Section D: Oversight

The manager 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 centre year. Where incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred, the manager 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 centre community on the centre's website and in hard copy on request. A student friendly version of this policy is displayed in the centre 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 centre 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: \_\_\_\_\_

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

(Manager)

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