

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

DONABATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE




This policy is to be reviewed by the Board of Management every year.

This Policy was agreed on:

27/5/25

Signature:
(Principal)



Signature:
(Chairperson to the Board of Management)



Donabate Community College

Donabate Community College is a post primary college, which opened in August 2008 under the Patronage of Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB). The college is co-educational and aspires towards excellence in a caring and supportive environment.

The Board of Management is committed to the successful implementation of recent legislation, in particular the Education Act (1998), the Education (Welfare) Act (2000) and the Equal Status Act (2000). The Board fully subscribes to the principles of partnership, accountability, transparency, inclusion and respect for diversity, parental choice and equality.

College Mission

The Board of Management will promote Excellence. Our aim will be to create, with the assistance of parents/guardians, responsible citizens with pride in their community. The development of the whole person will be based on personal responsibility, inter dependence, respect for people and respect for property. Our college will seek to instill integrity, value discipline and punctuality and facilitate the best in academic and non-academic areas. We will value our culture, our tradition, be inclusive of religious beliefs and will seek to be a caring and compassionate community where justice and truth will be the central elements.

Policy Review and Ratification

Donabate Community College is committed to ongoing policy review to ensure clarity, relevance, and compliance with current legislation and best practices. Where amendments to a policy are of a minor or administrative nature and do not alter its overall meaning, purpose, or intent, the school may proceed to seek ratification from the Board of Management without further consultation with stakeholders. However, where substantive changes are proposed that impact the policy's intent, scope, or application, appropriate consultation with relevant stakeholders will be undertaken before submission to the Board of Management for ratification.

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.

1. Targeted Behaviour

Bullying involves intentional and harmful actions directed at others. It occurs when a student knowingly engages in unwanted behaviour that causes harm and is aware that their actions are perceived as harmful by the affected individual. This behaviour is neither accidental nor reckless. The harm caused can take various forms:

Physical (e.g., injury, damage to property)

Social (e.g., isolation, exclusion)

Emotional (e.g., low self-esteem, anxiety, depression)

Such harm can have severe and long-lasting effects on the targeted student. However, if the harmful impact is unintentional, it is not classified as bullying. Nonetheless, these situations still require intervention under the school's code of behaviour.

2. Repeated Behaviour

Bullying is characterised by a repeated pattern of harmful behaviour over time. A single, intentional negative act offline, even if involving a power imbalance, is not considered bullying but should still be addressed under the school's behaviour policy. In contrast, a single harmful message, image, or video posted online can qualify as bullying if it is likely to be reshared or widely circulated.

3. Imbalance of Power

In bullying incidents, the targeted student often struggles to defend themselves due to a real or perceived imbalance of power. This power imbalance can manifest in various ways, including:

- Differences in physical factors such as size, strength, or age
- Social or economic factors like peer influence, status, or financial situation
- Personal attributes such as race, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability
- Experience in care systems or receipt of special education

In cases of online (cyber) bullying, power imbalances may arise from factors like online anonymity, technological expertise, or control over harmful content. The targeted student may feel powerless to remove offensive material or escape the harassment.

Behaviour That Is Not Bullying

A single instance of negative behaviour, while harmful, does not constitute bullying. However, a hurtful message posted on social media may still be considered bullying if it is likely to be shared and cause ongoing harm. Bullying behaviour may be visible to a wide audience and is likely to be shared multiple times, thereby becoming repeated behaviour.

Disagreements between students, or situations where students do not want to be or remain friends, are not considered bullying unless they involve deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude, or manipulate others, including efforts to influence friendship groups negatively.

Some students with special educational needs may have social communication difficulties, which can lead to behaviours that inadvertently cause harm to themselves or others. It is important to recognise that these behaviours are not deliberate or planned; in some situations, they are automatic responses beyond the student's control. Bullying is not characterised by accidental or reckless behaviour.

If a student experiences repeated harm but the behaviour causing it is unintentional, this does not qualify as bullying. Nevertheless, such behaviours, while not defined as bullying, can still be distressing. Schools should address these situations through strategies outlined in their Code of Behaviour.

Culture and Environment

A positive and inclusive school culture and environment is essential to prevent and address bullying behaviour. The school environment should be a space where students and school staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported. Relationships between all members of the school community should be based on respect, care, integrity and trust. Open communication between the patron, boards of management, school staff, students and their parents help to foster a collaborative approach and shared responsibilities in relation to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. The school leadership team influences the school culture and set the standards and expectations for the school community when preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. Each member of school staff has a responsibility to develop and maintain a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and to take a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour. Students can shape the school culture by promoting kindness and inclusion within their peer group and maintain a positive and supportive school environment for all. Parents, as active partners in their child’s education, can help foster an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated through promoting empathy and respect.

Development/Review of Our Bí Cineálta Policy

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	2 nd May 2025	Discussion and questionnaire
Students	13 th May 2025	The student council were shown the draft policy and asked for their feedback and input
	20 th May 2025	Student Questionnaire

Parents	13 th May 2025	The parent council were emailed the draft policy and asked for their feedback and input
Board of Management	27 th May 2025	Discussion and responsibility for ratifying policy
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	N/A	N/A
Date policy was approved: 27 th May 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: N/A (New policy)		

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):

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies are in place to both prevent and address bullying behaviour and facilitate early intervention where possible. A proactive approach is encouraged during periods of supervision, which occurs before school and during morning and lunch breaks. Designated areas for socialising and eating are assigned to students.

We provide facilities such as a games rooms (board games, chess and lego clubs) and lunchtime sports along with a quiet space during designated lunchtimes, on a needs basis. Each base class has a Tutor who meets with students for check-ins. A Student Support

Team is in place, comprising the Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellors, Year Heads and AEN Coordinator.

Our school community aims to prevent various forms of bullying, including cyberbullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying, racist bullying, sexist bullying, and sexual harassment, as outlined in the Bí Cineálta procedures. Our strategies include:

Preventing Cyberbullying Behaviour

Technology and social media offer many positive opportunities for entertainment, social engagement, and education. However, increased use of technology has made students more vulnerable to cyberbullying and unacceptable online behaviour. At Donabate Community College strategies to prevent cyberbullying include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- We promote digital literacy, digital citizenship, and safe online environments through initiatives such as a digital literacy, assemblies, SPHE classes, and visiting speakers.
- Assembly topics and guest speakers cover themes such as respectful and kind online relationships.
- We have developed and communicated an Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) for technology to students and parents.
- Appropriate online behaviour is outlined in the school's Code of Behaviour.
- We organise online safety events for parents, who play a key role in overseeing their children's online activities.
- Mobile phones are not allowed to be used in school apart from at lunchtime for 5th and 6th years in the designated lunchtime area.

Preventing Homophobic/Transphobic Bullying

All students, including gay, bisexual, and transgender students, have the right to feel safe and supported at school. At Donabate Community College our strategies to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- We maintain an inclusive physical environment by displaying relevant posters and flags throughout the school.
- We hold workshops and seminars for students, staff, and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying, including homophobic behaviour.
- We encourage students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour.

Preventing Racist Bullying Behaviour

Schools today are much more culturally diverse, with students from many different backgrounds. At Donabate Community College we strive to prevent racist bullying by implementing the following strategies, which is not an exhaustive list:

- We foster a school culture that celebrates diversity, where students see their own identities reflected in the environment.
- We strive to showcase the school's cultural diversity through photos and social media content. ☑ We empower bystanders to report incidents of racist behaviour.
- We provide staff with resources to support students learning English as an additional language and to communicate effectively with parents from diverse backgrounds.
- We offer support for students from ethnic minority communities, including Traveller and Roma students, and maintain regular communication with their parents.
- We ensure that library resources and textbooks reflect the lived experiences of individuals from different national, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.

Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour

As a mixed school, we place a strong focus on gender equality as part of our measures to create a supportive and respectful environment. At Donabate Community College, our strategies to prevent sexist bullying include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- We ensure that staff model respectful behaviour and treat all students equally, regardless of their sex.
- We provide equal opportunities for all students to participate in school activities, regardless of gender.

- We celebrate diversity by acknowledging and valuing the contributions of all students.
- We organise awareness campaigns, workshops, and presentations on gender equality and respect during Friendship/Anti-Bullying Week and at other times throughout the year.

Preventing Sexual Harassment

Preventing sexual harassment requires a comprehensive approach focused on education, awareness, and clear policies. At Donabate Community College, we have a zero-tolerance policy for sexual harassment, which is never dismissed as teasing or banter. Strategies include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- We use the updated SPHE curriculum to educate students about healthy relationships and respectful behaviour.
- We promote positive role models within the school community.
- We actively challenge harmful gender stereotypes that contribute to sexual harassment.

Addressing Bullying Behaviour

In Donabate Community College, responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour lies with Year Heads who will liaise with Deputy Principals/Principal.

The primary aim in addressing reports of bullying behaviour should be to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the students involved, rather than to apportion blame. All staff (class teachers, year heads, guidance counsellor, Deputy Principals, principal) have a responsibility to report suspected incidences of bullying. These should be brought to the attention of the Year Head who will complete a Bullying Incident Report Form (Appendix 1).

Students and or/parents should report bullying behaviour to any member of staff with whom they

feel comfortable. The member of staff then contacts the Year Head of that student and the Year Head deals with the report.

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

The school may seek support from various resources when working with students affected by bullying, including:

- Counselling services (through guidance or other services)
- Building self-esteem and developing social skills
- Restorative practices to rebuild and maintain relationships. Restorative practice is an approach to addressing bullying by fostering dialogue between those harmed and those responsible, aiming to repair relationships and build a sense of accountability and community.
- Cooperation with parents
- Referral to outside agencies if necessary
- National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)
- Oide
- Webwise
- National Parents Council
- Dublin City University (DCU) Anti-Bullying Centre
- Tusla

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):

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

1. Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group?
2. Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social, or emotional harm?
3. Is the behaviour repeated?

If the answer to all these questions is "Yes," then the behaviour is considered bullying and should be addressed according to the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

Strategies for Addressing Bullying Behaviour

- Engage with each student individually.
- Document the incident and actions taken.
- Review the situation with students and their parents no later than 20 school days after initial engagement.
- If bullying persists, re-evaluate strategies in consultation with students and their parents and set a new timeframe where needed.

Requests to Take No Action

A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask a member of staff not to take any action other than to "look out" for them. The student may not want to be identified as the person who reported the bullying behaviour. They might worry that telling someone could make their situation worse. In such cases, it is crucial for the staff member to show empathy, handle the situation sensitively, and collaborate with the student to determine what steps can be taken to address the issue. Together, they should agree on how the student's parents will be informed. It is essential that the student who has experienced bullying feels safe and supported.

Parents may also notify the school of bullying behaviour and request that no action be taken. In such

instances, parents should put their request in writing or be facilitated to do so if there are literacy, digital literacy, or language barriers. While the school should acknowledge the parent's request, it may still decide, based on the circumstances, that addressing the bullying behaviour is appropriate.

Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools

All bullying behaviour will be recorded on 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 support 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*.

Oversight

The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting (Appendix 2). 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.

Appendix 1 – Bullying Behaviour Report Form



Staff Member Bullying Report Form (Confidential - To be submitted to the Year Head and DPs)

Section 1: Details

- Staff Member Name:
- Date of Report:
- Date of Incident:
- Time of Incident:
- Location of Incident:
- Name(s) of Student(s) Affected and Tutor Group(s):
- Name(s) of Alleged Perpetrator(s) and Tutor Group(s):
- Any Witnesses? (If yes, list names and roles):

Section 2: Description of Incident

(Provide a detailed and factual description of the bullying incident, including any actions taken by the staff member at the time.)

Section 3: Nature of Bullying (Tick all that apply)

- Physical (hitting, pushing, damaging property)
- Verbal (name-calling, insults, threats)
- Social (exclusion, spreading rumors, humiliation)
- Cyberbullying (online harassment, sharing private information)
- Prejudicial (race, religion, gender, disability-based bullying)
- Sexual (inappropriate comments, gestures, harassment)

Section 4: Additional Comments or Concerns

(Include any relevant background information, previous incidents, or ongoing concerns.)

Section 5: Year Head/DP Review and Actions *(For Year Head/DP Use Only)*

- Year Head/DP dealing with report:
- Date report received:
- Names of Students and Dates of Interviews:

- Date that Parents/Guardians Notified:
- Records taken of:
 - Student Interviews (including their views regarding actions to address the bullying)
 - Parent notification (including their views regarding actions to address the bullying)
- External Services engaged? (if yes, specify name and type of service):
- Review date to check that bullying has ceased (within 20 days):
- Has bullying ceased after review?:

Year Head Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 2

Providing Bullying Behaviour Update - Board of Management Oversight Report

Date: _____

Date of last meeting: _____

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

Total number of new incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the last board of management meeting.	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour currently ongoing.	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the beginning of this school year.	

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 where relevant:

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

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

Appendix 3

Review of the Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual (calendar) review of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and its implementation in consultation with the school community. As part of the review, this document must be completed.

Bí Cineálta Policy Review

1. When did the Board formally adopt its Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour in accordance with the *Bí Cineálta Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*?

2. Where in the school is the student- friendly Bí Cineálta policy displayed?

3. What date did the Board publish the Bí Cineálta policy and the student- friendly policy on the school website?

___/___/20

4. How has the student-friendly policy been communicated to students?

5. How has the Bí Cineálta policy and student- friendly policy been communicated to parents

6. Have all school staff been made aware of the, school's Bí Cineálta policy and the *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post- Primary Schools*?

Yes ___ / No ___

7. Does the Bí Cineálta policy document the strategies that the school uses to prevent bullying behaviour?

Yes ____ / No ____

8. Has the Board received and minuted the Bullying Behaviour Update presented by the principal at every ordinary board meeting over the last calendar year?

Yes ____ / No ____

9. Has the Board discussed how the school is addressing all reports of bullying behaviour?

Yes ____ / No ____

10. Is the Board satisfied that all incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed in accordance with the school's Bí Cineálta Policy?

Yes ____ / No ____

11. Have the prevention strategies in the Bí Cineálta policy been implemented?

Yes ____ / No ____

12. Has the Board discussed the effectiveness of the strategies used to prevent bullying behaviour?

Yes ____ / No ____

13. How have (a) parents, (b) students and (c) school staff been consulted with as part of the review of the Bí Cineálta Policy?

14. Outline any aspects of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and/or its implementation that have been identified as requiring further improvement as part of this review:

15. Where areas for improvement have been identified, outline how these will be addressed and whether

an action plan with timeframes has been developed?

16. Does the student- friendly policy need to be updated as a result of this review and if so why?

17. Does the school refer parents to the complaints procedures if they have a complaint about how the school has addressed bullying behaviour?

Yes ____ / No ____

18. Has a parent informed the school that a student has left the school due to reported bullying behaviour?

Yes ____ / No ____

19. Has the Office of the Ombudsman for Children initiated or completed an investigation into how the school has addressed an incident of bullying behaviour?

Yes ____ / No ____

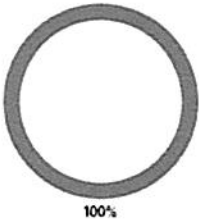
Appendix 4 – Results of Staff Survey 2nd May 2025

Responses 53	Average Time 04:38	Duration 11 Days
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1. Have you seen the school's anti-bullying policy?

[More details](#)

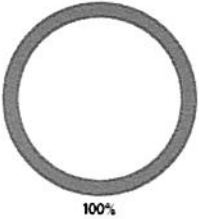
- Yes 53
- No 0



2. Do you know how to access the schools's anti-bullying policy?

[More details](#)

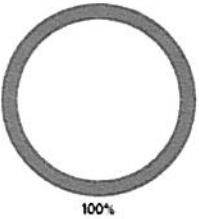
- Yes 53
- No 0



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

[More details](#)

- Yes 53
- No 0



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

[More details](#)

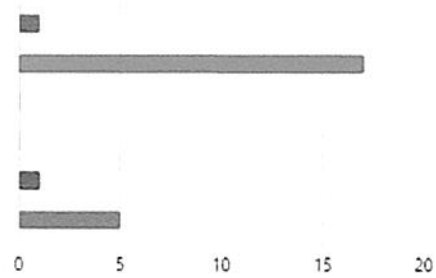
- Yes 39
- No 14



8. If yes to the above what form of bullying behaviour occurred

[More details](#)

- Physical 1
- Verbal 17
- Written 0
- Extortion 0
- Exclusion 1
- Relational 5



9. How did you deal with the incident and were you happy with the outcome?

[More details](#)

24
Responses

Latest Responses

...

6 respondents (24%) answered Year head for this question.

[Update](#)



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

[More details](#)

51
Responses

Latest Responses

"Corridors"

"I would say on the corridors, in bathrooms, or break times as it's less likely t..."

"Classroom"

...

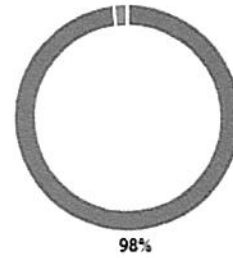
14 respondents (27%) answered Corridor for this question.



11. Do you feel that this school is committed to dealing with bullying behaviour and it's prevention?

[More details](#)

- Yes 52
- No 1



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

[More details](#)

24
Responses

Latest Responses

"I think we could be stricter on the iPads, as in doing regular checks. It is very..."

...

5 respondents (21%) answered school for this question.

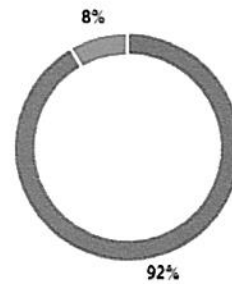
control over the iPads behaviour and interactions complete ownership
class interactions school approach weak students students and other members
students have things bullying school students form of bullying
Group take bullying year group staff towards students teachers school is very vigilant
Insistence from some teachers stricter on the iPads interactions and behaviour

Appendix 4 – Student Survey 20th May 2025

21. Do you feel safe in school?

[More details](#)

- Yes 310
- No 28



22. If no, please explain

[More details](#)

35
Responses

Latest Responses
...

9 respondents (26%) answered safe for this question.

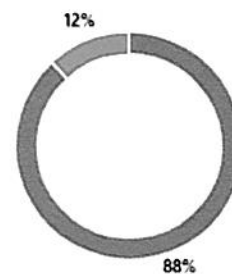
Word cloud content:

- extreme fear
- students in my year
- Year heads
- types of people
- People make me uncomfortable
- physically i feel
- school
- No
- Year
- Irish people
- safe
- People
- Irish people
- year scary
- kinda feel
- photo and videos
- second year
- People take pictures
- pictures of people
- lot of people
- cycle of that idea

23. Have you learned about bullying behaviour in school?

[More details](#)

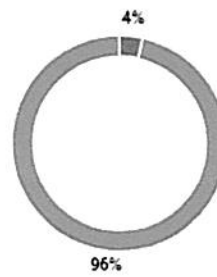
- Yes 299
- No 40



24. Are you being bullied in any way? *If yes, please tell an adult at home or at school. They can get you help.*

[More details](#)

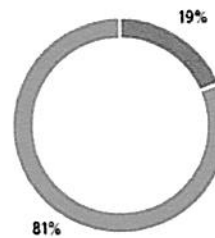
- Yes 12
- No 329



25. Is there anyone in class being picked on by others?

[More details](#)

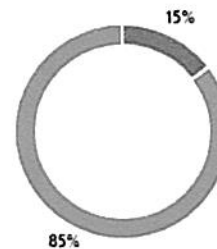
- Yes 63
- No 275



26. Is anyone being excluded, or ignored on purpose?

[More details](#)

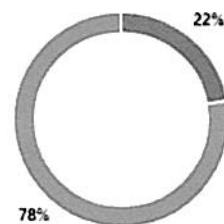
- Yes 50
- No 287



27. Is anyone spreading rumours or gossip online or offline?

[More details](#)

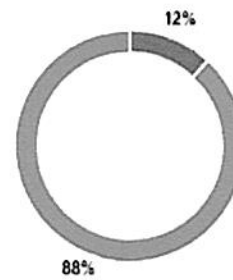
- Yes 76
- No 263



28. Are pupils from other classes giving anyone in your class a hard time?

[More details](#)

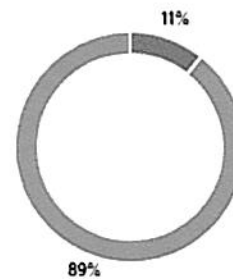
- Yes 40
- No 297



29. Are there any areas in school where you feel unsafe?

[More details](#)

- Yes 36
- No 303



30. If yes, please tell us where

[More details](#)

50
Responses

Latest Responses
"Everywhere"
...

12 respondents (24%) answered toilets for this question.

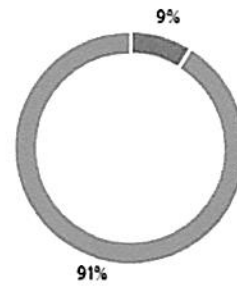
[Update](#)



31. Are there any areas in school where you feel unsafe?

[More details](#)

- Yes 28
- No 296



32. If yes, please tell us where

[More details](#)

36
Responses

Latest Responses
"Everything"
...

7 respondents (21%) answered no for this question.

[Update](#)

no place eggs place full of people not being the best
concern in my opinion Hallway people **no Toilets** area
base room unsafe safe wall urinal
Certain Classrooms answer on question reason as my last answer

33. Have you seen bullying behaviour happening recently?

[More details](#)

- Yes 32
- No 306

