

Scoil Mhuire Maigh Cuilinn

Polasaí Bí Cineálta 2025/Bí Cineálta Policy 2025



Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire 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:

<https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/bi-cinealta-procedures-to-prevent-and-address-bullying-behaviour-for-primary-and-post-.pdf>

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.

Catholic schools have a distinctive understanding of the human person, recognising that every person is created in God's image and likeness and has inherent dignity as a child of God. This is the basis for ensuring that each person in our school is treated with respect and care, in accordance with the Catholic Schedule: <https://www.cpsma.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Schedule-of-a-Catholic-School-2020.pdf>

As a Catholic school, we are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual. No person is to be devalued, and all have an indispensable part to play in the school community, regardless of difference.

Definition of bullying

Bullying is defined in Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying and Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools as targeted behaviour, online or

offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society. The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

Each school is required to develop and implement a Bí Cineálta policy that sets out how the school community prevents and addresses bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

Section A: Development/Review of our 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	28 th February 2025	Half-Day School Closure
	18 th June 2025	Staff Focus Group
	14 th June 2025	School Leadership Meeting
Students	28 th May 2025	Visit to Classrooms
	12 th June 2025	Pupils Questionnaire
Parents	10 th March 2025	Email to Parents
	4 th June 2025	Anti-Bullying Questionnaire
Board of Management	13 th June 2025	Draft Policy shared via Email
	23 rd June 2025	Board of Management Meeting
Date Policy was Approved	23 rd June 2025	
Date Policy was Last Reviewed		

Section B: 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):

Undertaking re. Dignity and Respect at School

Pupils in each class to sign an undertaking at the start of each school year to treat each person in the school community with dignity and respect. The undertaking will be addressed at the first assembly of the year and discussed in class prior to signing and display within the classroom.

DIGNITY & RESPECT AT SCHOOL: Rang 3 to Rang 6

We, the pupils of 6th Class hereby undertake to treat every member of our School Community of pupils, staff, parents and Board of Management, and guests of the school with DIGNITY and RESPECT at all times. We will do our best to keep our school free from BULLYING, HARASSMENT and DISCRIMINATION of all kinds and to make everyone feel RESPECTED and VALUED and our school a HAPPY, WARM, WELCOMING and INCLUSIVE environment for all.

KINDNESS AND RESPECT AT SCHOOL: Rang 1, Rang 2

We, the pupils of ____ Class promise to treat every person in our school and guests of the school with KINDNESS and RESPECT at all times. We will do our best to keep our school free from

BULLYING, and UNKIND BEHAVIOUR of all kinds and to make everyone feel RESPECTED and that they BELONG and our school a HAPPY, WARM, WELCOMING place for all.

BE KIND: Naí Bheaga, Naí Mhóra

We are Ms. ____ Class. We will be kind to everyone at school. We will be nice to everyone. We will help each other. We will make sure no one is left out. We will play together nicely. We are all good people. We are all friends.

Creating Awareness and Fostering a Telling Climate

- Raising awareness, school wide, on all aspects of bullying, supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extracurricular activities
- Involvement of pupils in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Kindness/Anti-Bullying Week, and other activities that can help to encourage a culture of peer respect and support
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell if they experience bullying behaviour
- Ensuring that bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place
- Drop Box located on the corridor near the office, where pupils can drop notes telling if they or others are experiencing bullying behaviour

Fostering a Positive, Welcoming, Supportive, Egalitarian and Inclusive School Culture and Environment

- Staff members greet children in a friendly manner when they meet, ideally by name
- Staff members model positive and respectful interactions with each other and with pupils in front of other pupils, e.g. greetings, etiquette
- Staff encourage pupils to show respect for each other
- Positive self-esteem is fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences, by acknowledging good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success
- Positive pupil relations on the yard, e.g. high five lines, opportunities to mix with other classes
- Lunch Time Clubs, e.g. Reading, Music, Gaeilge
- Effective supervision of pupils at morning reception, during breaktimes and at evening release
- School Assemblies are held regularly where diversity and inclusion are celebrated
- Regular Classroom Visits by Principal focusing on Dignity and Respect at School
- Culture Day where the different cultures in our school community are celebrated
- Student Council to promote student voice
- Staff Meetings and Secure Internal Messaging (Aladdin) where pupils at risk of experiencing bullying behaviour are discretely identified to relevant staff members, who are requested to be vigilant in monitoring said pupils and the interaction of other pupils with them
- Ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of gender

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

- Full implementation of the SPHE curriculum in our school, including the RSE Programme and Stay Safe Programme
- The Continuum of Support: targeted interventions specific to certain pupils to support emotional regulation and positive and respectful social interactions

- Aistear in Infant Classes, with a particular emphasis on positive and respectful social interactions, taking turns, etc.
- Buddy Reading
- Mind Up
- Walk Tall Programme
- Lust for Life Programme

Policy and Planning

- Bí Cineálta Policy
- Code of Positive Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- SPHE Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Supervision Policy
- Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

Relationships and Partnerships

- Student Council
- Parents' Association
- Board of Management
- Links to Local Clubs and Organisations
- SEN Team
- Student Support Team
- Liaison with Preschool and Secondary Schools
- Parent-Teacher Meetings
- Information Events for Parents, e.g. Infant Induction, Meet the Teacher

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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 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):

APPROACH

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.

When addressing bullying behaviour teachers should:

- ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured
- seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- consider the age and ability of the students involved
- listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- take action in a timely manner
- inform parents of those involved

IDENTIFYING IF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR HAS OCCURRED

Reports of Bullying Behaviour should be investigated by the teacher to whom the bullying behaviour was initially reported.

The teacher should inform the Principal that an investigation has commenced.

The teacher may enlist the help of other relevant staff members during the course of the investigation.

The teacher must first consider whether the reported behaviour meets the definition of Bullying.

Bullying is defined in Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying and Bì 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.

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

- Is the behaviour **targeted** at a specific student or group of students?
- Is the behaviour **intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm**?
- Is the behaviour **repeated**?

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

If the answer to any of these questions is **No**, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour.

Behaviour that is unacceptable and hurtful, but does not meet the criteria for bullying behaviour will be addressed in line with the school's Code of Positive Behaviour.

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.

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the teacher should consider the following:

- What?
- Where?
- When?
- Why?

If a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first. Thereafter, all students involved should be met as a group.

At the group meeting, each student should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views.

Each student should be supported, as appropriate, following the group meeting.

The students involved should be asked to write down their account of the incident.

The Investigating Teacher may consult with any staff member or other persons during the course of their investigation in order to seek guidance or further relevant information.

WHERE BULLYING BEHAVIOUR HAS OCCURRED

Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the students involved must be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to consult with them on the actions to be taken to address the behaviour.

The views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour must be taken into account when deciding how best to address the situation.

A record should be kept of the engagement with all parties involved, e.g.

- a. pupil(s) experiencing bullying behaviour
- b. pupil(s) engaging in bullying behaviour
- c. parents of a. and b. above

The **Record of Bullying Behaviour** (Appendix 1) should document the form and type of the bullying behaviour, where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students involved and their parents.

The **Record of Bullying Behaviour** should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour

FOLLOW UP WHERE BULLYING BEHAVIOUR HAS OCCURRED

- The teacher must engage with the students involved and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement
- Important 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 teacher 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
- The date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased should also be recorded
- 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 teacher 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 consideration should be given to using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school
- If parents are 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 complaints procedures
- If parents are 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

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

Scoil Mhuire adopts a whole school approach to supporting for pupils who have:

- experienced bullying behaviour
- engaged in bullying behaviour

Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, no one intervention/support programme works in all situations.

SUPPORTING PUPILS WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

- Ending the bullying behaviour
- Indicating clearly that the bullying behaviour is not the fault of the targeted pupil
- Timely identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations
- Helping pupils who have experienced bullying behaviour to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school)
- Helping the pupil through restorative practice to
 - Articulate how they have been affected by the behaviour
 - Express their feelings
 - Feel believed and supported
 - Restore the relationship with the other pupil(s), if desired

SUPPORTING PUPILS ENGAGING IN BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

- Promoting honesty with pupils to admit to engaging in bullying behaviour
- Fostering respect for and empathy with all pupils
- Clarifying that pupils engaging in bullying behaviour who change their actions are not blamed or punished
- Indicating that pupils engaging in bullying behaviour who change their actions are doing the right thing and providing adequate praise for such.
- Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school)
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- Helping the pupil through restorative practice to
 - Understand why they engaged in the behaviour
 - Feel empathy for the pupil(s) who experienced the behaviour
 - Make amends
 - Restore the relationship with the other pupil(s), if desired
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils’ feelings of self-worth through the SPHE curriculum
- In dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child
- In dealing with bullying behaviour, seeking resolution and offering a fresh start and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform

All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with students and parents. The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented. If the bullying behaviour is a child protection concern the matter will be addressed without delay in accordance with Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Section D: Oversight

The Principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each Board of Management meeting.

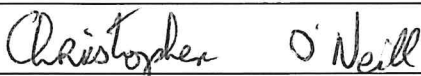
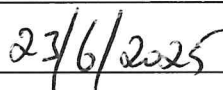
This update will include the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting, the number of ongoing incidents and the total number of incidents since the beginning of the school year. (Appendix 2)

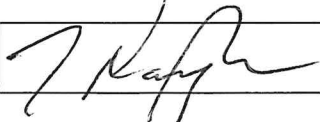

Where incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred, the principal will also provide a verbal update which will include where relevant, information relating to trends and patterns identified, strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour 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:	
Chairperson, Board of Management			

Signed:		Date:	
Principal			