

Meán Scoil Mhuire



Bí Cineálta Policy

Chairperson: Ms Eileen Donohue

Principal: Ms Siobhan Cullen

Date: 30th May 2025

School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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The Board of Management of Meán 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*.

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.

We confirm that we will take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the bullying or harassment of our students in whatever form and however motivated.

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.

As a Catholic school, we are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual. No human 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 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 | 21 st March 2025 1 st April 2025 reminder 9 th May 2025 | Microsoft Forms Survey Half Day School Closure, staff asked to review policy and give feedback. |
| Students | Week beginning 10 th February (1 st , 2 nd , 4 th , 5 th) 3 rd and 6 th year and all years on Teams 4 th , 13 th and 21 st of March 30 th of April | Microsoft Forms Survey. Student Council asked to review policy |
| Parents | 4 th March 2025 11 th March 2025 Reminder email and text 21 st March reminder on student teams | Microsoft Forms Survey in English, Slovak, Spanish and French. |
| Board of Management | 2 nd May, 2025 | Invitation for input via letter |
| Youth Reach and bus drivers | 1 st April 2025 | Email sent and feedback asked for. Principal visited the bus depot. |
| Date policy was approved: 30 th May, 2025 | | |
| Date policy was last reviewed: 30 th May, 2025 | | |

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):

In developing preventative strategies which this school will use to prevent all forms of bullying behaviour, we come from the context of our Catholic ethos where inclusivity permeates the school in a real way.

This school takes positive steps to ensure that the culture of the school is one which welcomes a respectful dialogue and encounter with diversity and difference, by ensuring that prevention and inclusivity strategies are given priority and discussed regularly at board of management and staff meetings.

The dignity and the wellbeing of the individual person is of paramount concern in our Christian response. This school will listen closely to and dialogue with parents, thereby building a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, trust and confidence.

In continuing to develop prevention strategies, this school will listen to young people and parents, to help establish their particular context and needs. Frequent periods of reflection and engagement by the school, young people and parents, will be used to discern appropriate supports for young people in this school and to help inform future prevention strategies.

Strategies used include:

- Whole-school implementation of the FUSE programme during the 2021/2022 academic year. Following this, the FUSE programme is embedded into the SPHE programme for all 1st Years each year.
- Participation in themed weeks (e.g. Anti-Bullying Week, Stand-Up Week, Positive Health Week)
- Student-led (Student Council, Bí Cineálta Student Committee etc.) campaigns such as Kindness Challenges, poster competitions, Catholic Schools Week and Culture Week
- Introduce student-led workshops on anti-bullying to enhance peer education.
- Peer mentoring and prefect system to model positive behavior
- Celebrate diversity through school-wide initiatives and visual representation
- Include support structures for EAL students to ensure equitable access to all anti-bullying efforts.
- Encourage the use of restorative practice and circle time to build relationships

- Provide scheduled class check-ins to help students share concerns and build community.
- Class contracts outlining agreed behaviour and interactions. Emphasis placed on being kind to one another.
- Wellbeing/SPHE lessons delivered which address bullying, inclusion and empathy
- Embedding anti-bullying education into SPHE, CSPE, Digital Literacy and Wellbeing
- Awareness raising through surveys, assemblies, and classroom discussions
- Highlighting different forms of bullying including identity-based and cyberbullying
- Promote a telling environment by addressing both the positive and negative connotations of 'telling'.
- Encouraging students to identify a trusted adult in the school for support
- Continue to provide and supervise extracurricular and lunchtime clubs to support inclusion and peer connection.
- Displaying our *Bí Cineálta Charter* developed with students and signed by Student Council representatives. The charter is also printed in the school journal and signed by each student to affirm their commitment to a kind and inclusive school culture.

Our school's 'Anti-Bullying Charter' (Appendix 2), developed and signed by student representatives, is displayed throughout the building and reinforces a shared commitment to respect and inclusion.

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

- Active supervision of all school spaces including corridors, toilets and lunch areas
- Identification of 'hotspots' for bullying and increased monitoring
- Vigilance by all staff including SNAs, caretakers, and administrative personnel
- Promotion of the culture of telling and confidential reporting via comment boxes and digital forms
- Regular use of sociograms to assess social dynamics in classrooms

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The primary aim in addressing reports of bullying behaviour is 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, class tutors, Year Heads, Guidance Counsellor, Deputy Principal, Principal, Student Support Team and ancillary staff) have a responsibility to report suspected incidences of bullying after engaging with the Three Questions; *Is it targeted? Was harm intended? And Is it repeated behaviour?* Staff should use Appendix 1 'Bullying Incident Report Form' to report the suspected incidence of bullying and send the form, completed to section nine, via email to the relevant Year Head. The relevant Year Head will then investigate and complete the report.

Year Heads and Senior Management are the designated staff responsible for investigating and addressing bullying behaviour. In their absence, the Principal may appoint a suitable alternative.

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, to address the bullying behaviour and to review progress are as follows (see Chapter 6 of the BÍ Cineálta procedures):

- Reports investigated by the relevant teacher using observation, interviews, and sociograms
- Engage with all parties involved using calm, restorative language
- Where appropriate and by agreement, restorative circles will be used, facilitated by trained staff
- Parents/guardians informed early in the process
- Follow-up supports provided, including Student Support Team involvement
- Incidents of bullying behaviour formally recorded

- Principal/Deputy Principal consulted as needed
- Reports may be submitted using a QR Code found in the student journal. This QR code is linked to a confidential Form which will be monitored by a designated staff member, the Bí Cineálta Coordinator.
- A follow-up review and monitoring period will be implemented to ensure the bullying behaviour has ceased

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):

- Peer mentor and pastoral support
- Restorative circles and follow-up check-ins
- Engagement with external agencies (e.g. youth services) where necessary
- Counselling referrals where appropriate
- Whole class lessons and workshops on inclusion and empathy

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*.

All bullying reports will be formally recorded using the school's *Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour* (Appendix 1).

Section D: Oversight

The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting. This update will include the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting, the number of ongoing incidents and the total number of incidents since the beginning of the school year. Where incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred, the principal will also provide a verbal update which will include where relevant, information relating to trends and patterns identified, strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant. This update does not contain personal or identifying information. See Chapter 7 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

This policy is available to our school community on the school's website and in hard copy on request. A student-friendly version of this policy is displayed in the school and is also available on our website and in hard copy on request.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed, following input from our school community, each calendar year or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this policy refers.

Targets and timelines for bullying prevention initiatives are tracked by the Bí Cineálta Coordinator and reviewed and updated annually.

Signed:  Date: 09.09.2025
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed:  Date: 09.09.2025
Principal



Appendix 1

Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour.

| |
|--|
| |
| |
| |
| |

3. Source of bullying concern/report

(tick relevant box(es))

4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))

(tick relevant box(es))

| | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|---|------------|--------------------------|
| Pupil concerned | <input type="checkbox"/> | / | Playground | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other pupil | <input type="checkbox"/> | | Classroom | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Parent | <input type="checkbox"/> | | Corridor | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Teacher | <input type="checkbox"/> | | Toilets | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other | <input type="checkbox"/> | | School Bus | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | | Other | <input type="checkbox"/> |

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es))

| | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| Physical Aggression | <input type="checkbox"/> | Cyber-bullying | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Damage to property | <input type="checkbox"/> | Intimidation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Isolation/Exclusion | <input type="checkbox"/> | Malicious Gossip | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Name Calling | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other(specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> |

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

| | | | | |
|------------|-------------------------|--------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Homophobic | Disability/ SEN related | Racist | Membership of Traveller Community | Other (specify) |
| | | | | |

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken

10. Views of Student(s) and Parents/Guardians

11. Follow up supports

Signed: _____ (Reporting Teacher)

Date: _____

Date submitted to Relevant Teacher (Year Head) _____

Signed: _____ (Year Head)

Date of review: _____

Appendix 2



Bí Cineálta Charter

We, the students and staff of Meán Scoil Mhuire, commit to:

- Treat everyone with kindness and respect
- Speak out against bullying
- Support those affected
- Report concerns to a trusted adult
- Promote empathy and inclusion

Signed by Student Council Representative:

_____ Date: _____



Appendix 3

Bí Cineálta Whole-School Action Plan

Start Date: September 2025

Compiled from student, parent and staff survey feedback.

1. Raise Awareness and Visibility

- Share anti-bullying policy with all stakeholders via website and email.
- Display visual reminders in key school areas (e.g., hallways, bathrooms, classrooms).
- Use student-designed posters and QR codes for reporting

2. Strengthen Prevention Through Education

- Implement FUSE and Bí Cineálta-related lessons across all year groups.
- Introduce age-appropriate SPHE/Wellbeing modules focused on empathy and inclusion.
- Deliver assemblies and themed weeks like Anti-Bullying Week, Kindness Challenges, and Spirit Week.

3. Improve Supervision and Hotspot Monitoring

- Review break/lunch/corridor supervision schedules.
- Identify high-risk areas and ensure increased staff visibility.
- Use sociograms and student feedback to inform hotspot areas.

4. Foster a Whole-School Culture of Kindness

- Train and support peer mentors, prefects, and student leaders.
- Encourage circle time, restorative conversations, and check-ins across tutor groups.
- Involve all staff (teaching and non-teaching) in promoting a respectful school climate.

5. Engage and Empower Parents and Community

- Offer practical guides and tips for parents to talk about bullying at home.
- Include parent voices in annual reviews of the policy.
- Collaborate with external agencies and Youth Services for workshops and supports.

6. Build Staff Confidence and Consistency

- Provide CPD on relational aggression, online safety, and restorative practice.
- Clarify roles in responding to bullying—use real-life examples.
- Create staff cheat sheets for referral procedures and supports available.

7. Monitor, Evaluate and Share Progress

- Survey students, parents, and staff annually to review impact.
- Share updates with the school community through newsletters and BOM reports.
- Celebrate progress and spotlight positive contributions across the school.