

Scoil Mhuire



Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire, Clondalkin 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.

The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

A positive school culture and climate which:

- is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
- encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and promotes respectful relationships across the school community;

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 steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent all 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 everybody 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 devalued and everybody has a 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.

Scoil Mhuire 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	March /April 2025	Half Day Closure Staff Survey Croke Park Hours Staff Meeting
Students	18/03/2025 - 21/03/2025	Student Survey
Parents	24/03/2025 -28/03/2025	Parents Survey
Board of Management	13/10/2025	Board Meeting
Wider school community as appropriate		
Date policy was approved: 13/10/2025		
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:

Prevention Strategies

In developing the 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 our 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 our board of management and staff meetings.

The dignity and 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 further 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.

Culture and Environment

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- The promotion of the value of diversity and inclusion in all aspects of school life.
- Encourage open communication between students, staff and parents.
- Encourage students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- Establish clear expectations for behaviour and enforce them consistently
- Promote respectful relationships across the school community.
- Anti-bullying messages and signs will be displayed around the school. Positive messages promoting friendship and caring attitudes will also be displayed.
- Intercultural Week - where children exhibit traditions and information from their home countries in the hall.
- "Spreading Kindness" Wall. Classes to visit and add to it.

Curriculum (Teaching & Learning)

- Integrate anti-bullying messages into the school curriculum.
- Teach pupils about bullying and its effects.
- SPHE Methodologies
- The Stay Safe Programme will be fully implemented at appropriate levels.
- Behaviour charts displayed in classrooms.
- Code of conduct for the classroom and the playground drawn up with the pupils at the beginning of each school year.
- Picture books with themes of anti-bullying, diversity, acceptance, self-identity and resilience are incorporated as part of our Literacy programmes for the first two weeks of each term.
- Pupils Bí Cineálta posters displayed in the school.
- Group work/collaboration.
- Emotional regulation breaks
- Zones of regulation.

Policy and Planning

- Establish clear procedures for reporting and responding to bullying incidents.
- Pupil voice
- School Policies: The following policies, activities and practises which are particularly relevant to bullying include: Code of Behaviour, Child Safeguarding Statement, Risk Assessment, Acceptable Use Policy, Attendance, SPHE, RSE, PE, SEN/Policy.
- The schools approach to preventing and tackling bullying will take particular account of the needs of the pupils with disabilities or with SEN, will join with other relevant school policies and supports to ensure that all the services that provide for such pupils work together.

Relationships and Partnerships

- Encourage open communication between pupils, staff and parents.
- Group Parent/Teacher meetings before the end of September.
- Collaborate with community organisations to provide additional support and resources.
- Collaborate with parents and pupils to educate them about the dangers of cyberbullying. The Webwise programme will be taught in school. This programme teaches safe and responsible internet use.
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities.

Preventing Cyber Bullying

- Explicitly teach the issues of cyber bullying and the importance of using technology safely.
- Monitor the use of technology in the classroom and on school grounds.
- Work with parents and pupils to educate them about the dangers of cyberbullying by facilitating outside speakers

Preventing Homophobic/Transphobic Bullying Behaviour

- Create a safe and inclusive environment for all pupils, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- Educate students about the importance of respecting all people, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- INTO Different Families Same Love lessons to be covered at all class levels.

Preventing Racist Bullying Behaviour

- Teach students about the history and impact of racism.
- Promote diversity and inclusion in the classroom.
- Provide support to students who have been targeted by racist bullying.
- Ensure that library reading material represents appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour

- Teach students the importance of gender inequality.
- Celebrate diversity at school and acknowledge the contributions of all students

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

All teachers take part in yard supervision which is organised by a timetable for five teachers daily.

- All staff must adhere to the Bi Cineálta Policy and the Code of behaviour to provide a safe environment for all children
- Clear and effective communication is ensured among all staff regarding the Code of Behaviour. These will be revised at the beginning of the school year with the pupils
- All student teachers and long term substitutes will be provided with a copy of the Bi Cineálta Policy and the Code of Behaviour.
- All pupils must be supervised as they leave the school building.

The following procedures will be in place for dealing with individual cases of reported bullying:

- **Investigation:** which will be prompt and thorough communicating with all parties.
- **Follow-Up:** The school will take appropriate and timely action to address any confirmed cases.
- There will be a **Bí Cineálta pupil folder** which will contain information on pupils with specific bullying/behaviour concerns and maintained by the principal.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

- Class Teacher
- ISMT

When bullying behaviour occurs, the following principles must be adhered to:

- 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 :

Procedures for investigating and dealing with Bullying

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, where practicable, the relationships of the parties involved rather than to apportion blame.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved pupil's, parents / guardians understand this approach from the beginning.

In these procedures, the "relevant teacher" is the member of staff who has responsibility for investigating and dealing with the bullying.

Incidents of bullying which occur outside school will only be dealt with if they have a negative impact within school.

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

- 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 all three questions is yes**, the school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach

Reporting Bullying Behaviour

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any member of staff
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff including secretary, SNAs, caretaker, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

The relevant teacher may liaise with the Bí Cineálta Liaison Officers responsible for bullying to support the teacher in dealing with any bullying incidents.

Investigating and Addressing Incidents

Investigation Process:

- The relevant teacher will exercise professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and decide on the most appropriate resolution in a fair and consistent manner.
- Templates for reporting and feedback of bullying will be available on Aladdin under the Bí Cineálta heading
- Parents/Guardians of pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and to assist in resolving the issue and restoring relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
- Investigations should take place outside the classroom to ensure privacy.

Group Incidents

- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first.
- The teacher should then conduct a group meeting where each pupil relays their account of what occurred to ensure clarity.
- The teacher must check in individually with each group member afterwards to ensure they are supported and protected from retaliation or possible group pressure.

- Pupils may be asked to provide written statements outlining their version of events to aid in clarity and documentation.

Communication with Parents

- When bullying is confirmed, the teacher will inform the parents/guardians of all parties at an early stage and keep them updated on further developments.
- The school will give parents/guardians an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce the decisions being taken by the school and support provided to the pupils.
- In such circumstances where the pupil expresses concern about their parents being informed, the school will develop an appropriate plan to support the pupil.

Responding to Bullying Behaviour

- Efforts will be made to help the pupil understand the impact of their behaviour.
- Disciplinary action, where necessary, will be treated as a private matter between the pupil involved, their parents/guardians, and the relevant staff.
- In line with the school's code of behaviour, bullying is treated as a serious offence, and disciplinary measures will follow the procedures outlined in the policy.

Pupil requests no formal action

- A pupil may report bullying but also request that staff do nothing other than watching out for them, due to fear of retaliation, escalation or identification.
- Staff must respond with empathy/discretion, working closely with the pupil to
 - Agree on appropriate next step
 - Develop a plan for parental communication
 - Ensure the student feels safe and supported at all times.

Follow up Procedures

- To assess whether the bullying case has been resolved adequately, the relevant teacher must consider:
- If the bullying has ceased.
- If the issues and relationships between parties have been resolved/restored, as far as possible
- Feedback from pupils, parents/guardians, and school leadership to be documented on Aladdin also.
- If bullying is still taking place, sanctions and disciplinary measures will follow in line with the Code of Behaviour.
- Follow up meetings with the relevant parties should happen separately within 20 school days of the initial intervention.
- If parents/guardians are not satisfied, they must be referred to the school's complaints procedures policy.
- If complaints are exhausted, schools must inform parents of their right to contact the Ombudsman for Children.

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

Support Strategies

Whole School Approach:

- Promote a "telling school" culture
- Encourage pupils to speak out and not to be bystanders.
- Incorporate a variety of class-based programmes (e.g. Stay Safe, Walk Tall)

Support for pupils who experience bullying:

Support for pupils who witness bullying

- Reinforce the "telling school" approach
- Help students understand the role they can play.
- Ensure confidentiality.
- Teach empathy,

Support for students who display bullying behaviour.

- Listen and support the pupil.
- Encourage ownership and accountability.
- Handle the process impartially.
- Apply an intervention programme tailored to the needs of the pupil.

Documentation

- 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. 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: Ray Walsh
(Chairperson of board of management)

Date: 13-10-2025

Signed: Síghen McKiernan
(Principal)

Date: 13-10-2025