

Scoil Mhuire, Moylagh

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire, Moylagh 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 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.

Definition of bullying

Bullying is defined in Cineálta: 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	5 th March 2025 – Ongoing	Staff Discussion Staff Questionnaire
Students	21 st March – Ongoing	1 st – 6 th Class – Online Survey 5 th & 6 th Class – Whole class discussion Junior & Senior Infants – Survey using smiley faces Assembly to discuss our approach to prevent bullying
Parents	6 th March 21 st March 2025	Information shared via email Survey Completed online Coffee Morning to discuss new procedures in the school
Board of Management	17 th February 2025 16 th May 2025 26 th May 2025	Board of Management meeting Information Shared via email Video provided by the CPSMA
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers		
Date policy was approved:		
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).

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.

The Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice provides the following four key areas that are essential for a holistic, whole school approach to wellbeing promotion: Culture and Environment; Curriculum (Teaching and Learning); Policy and Planning; and Relationships and Partnerships. These four areas should be considered by a school when developing measures to prevent bullying behaviour.

Culture & Environment

A positive and inclusive school culture and environment is essential to prevent and address bullying behaviour. 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.

The school environment should be a space where students and school staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported. The following are intrinsic to this:

- Relationships between all school members should be based on respect, care, integrity and trust.

- Open communication to foster a collaborative approach and shared responsibility for preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.
- School leadership influences school culture and set standards and expectations for the school community.
- 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.

The following are steps we take in Scoil Mhuire, Moylagh to ensure our school culture and environment is a place where the prevention of bullying is to the fore:

Creating a Telling Environment

- The staff of Scoil Mhuire, Moylagh repeatedly reinforce the message that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported. As a school, it is vital that the students inform us as soon as possible of any incident that has occurred. This ensures issues can be dealt with in a prompt manner.

Reassurance is given that all incidents of bullying will be dealt with in a safe manner. Pupils will gain a confidence in telling, which is of vital importance.

- Bystanders can be the key to resolving bullying. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
 - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
 - Hand note up with homework.
 - Ask a parent(s)/guardian(s) to tell on your behalf.
 - Ask a friend/ peer to tell on your behalf.

- Administer a confidential questionnaire.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

A Trusted Adult

The concept of “a trusted adult” can be an effective strategy to encourage students to report if they or another student is experiencing bullying behaviour. Students who witness bullying behaviour are supported and encouraged to report the behaviour to a trusted adult in the school so that the behaviour can be addressed. Students who witness bullying behaviour on social media have an important role in helping to address the behaviour by reporting the witnessed behaviour to a trusted adult.

All staff members in Scoil Mhuire, Moylagh uphold this strategy by letting students know that they can talk to them about their concerns confidentially and be fully supported in resolving a situation that is causing them distress. All staff members work to establish a culture of trust and reliability with the students in our care and are vigilant in observing behavioural changes or indications of anxiety in our students.

The trusted adult reassures the student that they have done the right thing by reporting the behaviour. The trusted adult should, without delay, inform the member of staff who has responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour. In the first instance this is the class teacher. If unsure who to inform or in the absence of the regular class teacher, the trusted adult should inform the Principal or Deputy Principal. The trusted adult should continue to support the student, as appropriate, while the behaviour is being addressed by the relevant member of staff.

Creating Safe Physical Spaces in School

The creation of safe physical spaces supports psychological safety and is an important measure to prevent bullying behaviour. Spaces that have a clear line of sight make it easier for school staff to supervise students. Hidden spaces in hallways, around staircases and in the schoolyard can be areas where there is a greater risk for bullying behaviour to occur.

In Scoil Mhuire, Moylagh we:

- ✓ ensure the provision of good lighting in classrooms and on corridors
- ✓ have CCTV cameras on all areas outside where the children play
- ✓ ensure that while children are outside on break, that no child returns to the classroom without permission from the supervising teacher
- ✓ ensure that all doors are kept open during supervised breaks
- ✓ ensure that school staff who are supervising at break times, including during yard duty, have full visibility by actively walking around the school yard and checking in with groups of children as they do so. When deemed necessary, extra supervision is provided during breaktimes
- ✓ ensure that all school staff are proactive in monitoring children on corridors etc. irrespective of whether they are directly involved in their care
- ✓ promote the school's values such as equality, diversity, inclusion and respect through visual aids, posters, zoned areas in the school yard, buddy bench, relevant picture books and class novels.

Students can feel a greater sense of belonging to a school community when they are given ownership of their own space through art, creativity and community activism. This helps students to identify and to feel a sense of responsibility for their school environment.

The inclusion of spaces within schools for collaborative learning can also play a part in fostering a sense of belonging. Our school grounds are well maintained to promote a sense of ownership and respect in the school community. Through engagement with Pride of Place and the Green School initiative, the children are given the responsibility to care and look after the school. This has had a positive impact to date in our school. Public spaces are decorated with samples of the children's artwork and projects. Reminders of our "THINK" and "RESPECT" mottoes are displayed throughout the school.

Self-Worth and Self-Esteem

Ensuring that all children have a positive sense of self-worth and self-esteem is vitally important when creating an environment and culture that prevents incidents of bullying

behaviour. Scoil Mhuire, Moylagh employs the following to enhance self-worth and self-esteem:

- ✓ Foster and enhance the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities.
- ✓ Pupils will be provided opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- ✓ The following strategies and initiatives may be used:
 - Stay Safe, Walk Tall & RSE materials and associated videos.
 - Lunchtime sports activities organised by the Active School committee during the school year that encourage inclusion and having fun playing with friends.
 - Acts of Kindness acknowledged by class teacher and principal.
 - Student 'shout outs' at our school assemblies that highlight kindness and friendship.
 - Positive affirmations by teachers and staff in classrooms and on yard.
 - Student Council to allow and encourage pupil voice.
 - Green Schools/Active Flag committees.
 - School Zen Den area
 - Zones of regulation and 5 point scale
 - A Code of Behaviour that rewards good behaviour.

Ways in which we work to achieve these goals are as follows:

- Staff are briefed on the uniform approach we must take to handle all reports of bullying.
- A Wellbeing Week and Friendship week will take place each year with an emphasis on kindness and friendship.
- Playground helpers – students from 3rd – 6th class support infant classes on the yard to help with games and positive interactions.
- Yard Buddies to ensure that everyone has someone to play with at break times.

- Child Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy was formed with pupil and parent input and is distributed to parents, children and staff to discuss. This policy outlines various ways to tell.
- Parents receive information at times regarding useful information on Anti Bullying, Stay Safe and SPHE lessons which focus on positive behaviour.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils.
- Celebrating school, class and individual achievements through our assemblies.
- Foster positive relationships between pupils and staff members in order to nurture connections and establish open communication.

Supervision

Appropriate supervision is an important measure to help prevent and address bullying behaviour. Schools are required to take all reasonable measures to ensure the safety of their students and to supervise students when they are attending school or attending school activities.

In Scoil Mhuire, Moylagh, we strive to ensure that full supervision is maintained during the school day. The allocation of personnel for supervisory duty is regularly reviewed at staff meetings and additional staff provided where necessary. Local arrangements are in place between class teachers who have been on yard duty to ensure their class is supervised if they are absent. Class teachers (or teachers on duty) accompany their classes to the yard at break times and collect them from their lines when break is over to ensure supervision is maintained on corridors. Additional supervision is provided for school tours and other events which take place off the school premises such as theatre visits, book readings, sporting events etc.

Please see Scoil Mhuire, Moylagh, Supervision Policy available on request from the school office.

Curriculum – Teaching & Learning

In Scoil Mhuire, Moylagh, we strive to:

- Provide teaching and promote learning which is collaborative and respectful, fostering inclusion and respect for diversity.
- Display a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact.

Ways in which we work to achieve this:

- Teach SPHE and RSE content which fosters student's well-being and self-confidence as well as promoting personal responsibility for their own behaviours and actions.
- Model respectful behaviour towards colleagues, pupils and visitors in our school environment.
- Curricular and Extra-curricular activities can help to develop a sense of self-worth, working together, inclusion and respect.
- Students are given regular opportunities to work in small groups with peers, which can help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy.
- Acknowledgment of our diverse school population – celebrating diversity and culture in our school through art, displays, photographs, international events.
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and to explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying.
- Supports for staff;
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

Policy & Planning

The wellbeing of the school community should be at the heart of school policies and plans.

There are a range of other policies within the school that can support implementation of a school's Bí Cineálta policy. These include:

- Student friendly Bí Cineálta policy
- Code of behaviour
- Child safeguarding statement
- Acceptable use policy
- Supervision
- RSE Policy
- Special Education policy
- SSE Wellbeing in education

Students

Supporting the participation of students in the development and implementation of school policies and plans can help increase awareness and ensure effective implementation. Through the development of our Student Council, regular assemblies, in-class discussions and surveys we seek to involve students proactively in Wellbeing and Anti-Bullying initiatives and their implementation.

Parents/Guardians

Here in Scoil Mhuire, Moylagh, we value the input from parents/guardians in our policy development. Parents/guardians are informed of policy development and review and they are invited to share their opinions and ideas through surveys, coffee mornings and PA meetings at the draft stages and their opinions are sought before ratification.

School staff & management

Engaging in appropriate teacher professional learning courses can support school staff to prevent and address bullying behaviour. School staff should also share their experiences and examples of best practice. There is a range of training available for school staff which relates to promoting inclusion and diversity in schools. School staff members regularly engage in CPD and share their experiences and examples of best practice. This has included the incorporation of strategies such as Restorative Practice, Brain Calm, mindfulness, yoga Trauma training and Behaviour of Concern training.

School management has engaged with initial Bí Cineálta training and will facilitate whole staff training in this school year.

Relationships & Partnerships

Strong interpersonal connections are a vital part of effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. These interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as student councils, school clubs, parents' associations and student support teams.

The following, which is not an exhaustive list, could be considered to strengthen relationships and partnerships between members of the school community:

- age appropriate awareness initiatives that look at the causes and impacts of bullying behaviour including those dealing with navigating friendships, identity based bullying, racist bullying and homophobic/transphobic bullying.
- supporting the active participation of students in school life
- supporting the active participation of parents in school life, including those who may find it difficult or daunting to engage with the school due to being unfamiliar with the education system or due to language or cultural barriers
- conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying
- supporting activities that build empathy, respect and resilience
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring
- promoting acts of kindness
- teaching problem solving
- hosting debates

Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying recognises the importance of positive relationships across the whole education community to promote empathy, understanding and respect. The meaningful involvement of the board of management, staff, students and their parents in the development, implementation and review of their school's Bí Cineálta policy and student friendly version is essential to effectively prevent and address bullying behaviour.

Preventing Cyberbullying behaviour

Technology and social media have provided many positive opportunities for entertainment, social engagement and education. However, the increase in the use of technology has led to students becoming increasingly vulnerable to cyberbullying or unacceptable online behaviour.

Scoil Mhuire, Moylagh strives to proactively address these challenges by promoting digital literacy, digital citizenship, and fostering safe online environments.

Strategies to prevent cyberbullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- implementing the SPHE curriculum
- implementing the Digital Media Literacy curriculum which teaches students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship
- having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- developing and communicating an acceptable use policy for technology
- referring to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour
- promoting or hosting online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online*
- holding an Internet safety day to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour

(Note: The digital age of consent is the minimum age a user must be before a social media or internet company can collect, process and store their data. In Ireland the digital age of consent is 16. Children between 13 and 16 must have parental permission to sign up to social media services. Most social media platforms have a minimum age requirement and for the majority of these, it is 13 years old. Therefore, children under the age of 13 should not have a social media account).

It is important for their child's safety, that parents are aware of their children's use of technology including smartphones and gaming consoles.

Moylagh NS Parent's Association, with the support of school staff and the BOM, has introduced a voluntary smartphone code which actively encourages parents to delay giving their child a smartphone until they have completed their primary schooling.

Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour

All students including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students, have a right to feel safe and supported at school.

Strategies to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- maintaining an inclusive physical environment such as by displaying relevant posters
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- challenging gender– stereotypes
- conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour
- encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour

Preventing racist bullying behaviour

Schools have become much more culturally diverse over the last number of decades. Students attending schools come from many different cultures and backgrounds. Students from diverse backgrounds may face discrimination and prejudice and may be subject to racist bullying behaviour.

Strategies to prevent racist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive

list:

- fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students “see themselves” in their school environment
- having the cultural diversity of the school visible and on display
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour
- providing supports to school staff to respond to the needs of students for whom English is an additional language and for communicating with their parents

- providing supports to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma students, and to encourage communication with their parents
- inviting speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds
- ensuring that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds

Preventing sexist bullying behaviour

Preventing sexist bullying behaviour Schools should focus on gender equality as part of the school's measures to create a supportive and respectful environment. Scoil Mhuire, Moylagh is a mixed school from Infant to 6th class. Gender equality is woven into every aspect of our programme for learning.

Strategies to prevent sexist bullying behaviour include the following:

- ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex
- ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex
- celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contributions of all students
- organising awareness campaigns, workshops and presentations on gender equality and respect
- encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home

Preventing sexual harassment

See Chapter 5, p.41, Bí Cineálta Procedures: <https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/bi-cinealta-procedures-to-prevent-and-address-bullying-behaviour-for-primary-and-post-.pdf>

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.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

class teachers

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

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

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):

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the teacher should consider the following: What, Where, When and Why?

- if a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first and 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
- it may be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident(s)

Bullying is defined in Cineálta: 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’.

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour the relevant teacher(s) should consider the following questions:

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

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

Note: One-off incidents may be considered bullying in certain circumstances. 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.

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

Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the Scoil Mhuire, Moylagh’s Code of Behaviour.

Where bullying behaviour has occurred

School staff should know what to do when bullying behaviour is reported to them or when they witness bullying behaviour. The school’s Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour and the studentfriendly policy should clearly explain what actions will be taken when bullying behaviour is reported. (See Chapter 4).

A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved.

Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, schools should deal with it in accordance with their *Bí Cineálta* policy. Where the student displaying the bullying behaviour is not a student in the school, but the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour is a student in the school, the school should support the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as appropriate and engage with them and their parents to determine what steps can be taken.

It is important for school staff to be fair and consistent in their approach to address bullying behaviour. Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour need support.

It is important that the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour is engaged with without delay so that they feel listened to, supported and reassured. School staff should identify the supports needed for the student who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties and ensure that their needs are met.

A student's agency or sense of power can be decreased when they experience or witness bullying behaviour. When a student tells an adult that they feel that they are experiencing bullying behaviour they may feel that they are taking back some control over what is happening to them. It is very important that a student's agency is not decreased further by adults deciding what will happen next without listening to the student and involving them in deciding on the actions that will be taken.

Parents are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with schools, in addressing bullying behaviour. 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.

Given the complexity of bullying behaviour it is generally acknowledged that no one approach works in all situations.

Recording bullying behaviour

All incidents of bullying behaviour should be recorded.

- The record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known, where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students and their parents.
- The record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour.
- It 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. It is important to document the date of each of these engagements and the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased. Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted.
- These records should be retained in accordance with the school's record keeping policy and in line with data protection regulations.
- Where a Student Support File exists for a student, schools are encouraged to place a copy of the record on the student's support file. This will assist the school's student support team, where they exist, in providing a consistent and holistic response to support the wellbeing of the students involved. Where a Student Support Plan exists, the plan should be updated to incorporate response strategies and associated supports.

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.

Requests to take no action

A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than “look out” for them. The student may not want to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They may feel that telling someone might make things more difficult for them. Where this occurs, it is important that the member of staff shows empathy to the student, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the student to work out together what steps can be taken to address the matter and how their parents will be informed of the situation. It is important that the student who has experienced bullying behaviour feels safe.

Parents may also make schools aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action. Parents should put this request in writing to the school or be facilitated to do so where there are literacy, digital literacy or language barriers. However, while acknowledging the parent’s request, schools may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

Determining if bullying behaviour has ceased

The teacher must engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress following the initial intervention. Important factors to consider as part of the review 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.

Even though the bullying behaviour may have ceased, ongoing supervision and support may be required for both the student who has experienced the bullying behaviour as well as the student who has displayed the behaviour. It can take time for relationships to settle and for

supports to take effect. In some cases, relationships may never be restored to how they were before the bullying behaviour occurred.

If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students and parents and agree to meet again over an agreed timeframe until the bullying behaviour has ceased.

Where it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school should consider 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.

Complaints process

If a parent is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with these procedures, they should be referred to the school's complaints procedure.

Additional Information relating to schools' complaint procedures are available at the following link: <https://www.gov.ie/en/policyinformation/parentalcomplaints/>

In the event that a student and/or parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, a student and/or parent 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 Office of the Ombudsman for Children can be contacted at ococomplaint@oco.ie.

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):

Supporting those who experience bullying behaviour:

- Ending the bullying behaviour,
- Fostering respect for bullied pupils and all pupils,
- Fostering greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils,

- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through annual awareness-raising programmes,
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations,
- Making adequate counselling facilities available to pupils who need it in a timely manner (subject to available funding)
- Helping bullied pupils 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).

Supporting those who have engaged in bullying behavior

- Making it clear that bullying pupils when dealt with in accordance to the code of behaviour, and have reformed have the opportunity of a 'clean sheet'.
- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honorable thing and giving them praise for this,
- Making adequate education opportunities available to help those who need it learn other ways of meeting their needs besides violating the rights of others,
- 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),
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth,
- In dealing with negative behavior 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 with a 'clean sheet' and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.

Supports available to schools to help with addressing bullying behaviour

- National Educational Psychological Service - NEPS
- Oide
- Webwise
- National Parents Council
- Dublin City University Anti-Bullying Centre
- TUSLA

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: Carolus Tuite Date: 01/09/25
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: Gaianne McPhillips Date: 01/09/25

(Principal)