SN Mhuire, Barntown

Roll No; 17913Q

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of SN Mhuire, Barntown 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 BoM 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. As a Catholic school, we are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual.
No human person is to be devalued and everybody has a part to play in the school community, regardless of difference.

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 of this policy.

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	19/02/2025	Questionnaire
Students	10/03/2025	Questionnaire/Focus Group/Student Council
Parents	09/03/2025	Questionnaire via Microsoft Forms
Board of Management	30/06/2025	Previous meeting discussion & ratification
Wider school community	Term 2	Newsletters
Date policy was approved: 30th June 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed:N/A		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by this school to address all forms of bullying behaviour, in whatever form and however motivated, including online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment. (see chapter 5) 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.

In conjunction with this Anti Bullying Policy, the school also has the following **policies** in place;

- Code of Behavior
- Child Safeguarding Statement & Risk Assessment
- Acceptable Usage Policy
- Mobile Phone/Electronic Device Policy
- SPHE/RSE Policy
- Ethos and Mission Statement
- Supervision Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Safety Statement

The school ensures that **Pupil Voice** is represented in our school through various committees; Student Council, Corpoideachas Crew, Literacy Leaders, Grúpa Gaeilge and the Green Schools Committee. The pupils on these committees are elected by their classmates and meet with the School Principal and other staff members regularly.

Whole School Assemblies take place each Friday which are presented by senior pupils from 5th & 6th classes with all other classes rostered to give presentations on their class work throughout the year.

The school's **Golden Rules** are presented termly at assembly which use positive language to emphasis anti-bullying, code of behaviour and school ethos – focusing on respect for all.

Safer Internet Day takes place each year in school, with an external facilitator delivery workshops

for all pupils from 1st – 6th classes and an evening webinar for parents.

In September 2025 the school, with the support of the Parents' Association implemented the **Smart Phone Voluntary Ban** in line with guidance from the Department of Education
In each classroom, teachers devise a **class code of conduct** with their pupils input and agree on age-appropriate rewards and consequences
Use of **circle time** as a strategy for class discussions around behaviour towards each other in school

Whole school **friendship weeks** will take place to promote anti-bullying messages and preventative measures.

A **Buddy system** is in place, between 6th class & Junior Infants and 5th class & Senior Infants. 6th class pupils also act as 'yard leaders' teaching games to younger pupils while developing a sense of responsibility and empathy themselves.

Promotion of the core values of **respect, inclusion, care and kindness** amongst the pupils and all members of the school community in line with the school's Ethos and Mission Statement.

Enable the **full participation** of all pupils regardless of their background or academic ability in all aspects of school life.

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 school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):
In line with the school's Supervision Policy, supervision begins before school in the school yard and upon dismissal of pupils at home-time.
Teachers and SNAs complete break and lunch time supervision and a monthly roster is circulated by the Deputy Principal.
Yard areas are clearly visible with classes given designated areas.
Pupils are to remain in their yard area and must ask a teacher or SNA if they can leave the yards.
Staff are requested to wear high-viz vests to ensure they are easily identified by pupils.
Yard toilets (at the rear of the building nearest to the yard) are designated for Junior classes and Senior classes.
The school's Golden Rules are on display at the back door leading out to the yard and outline expectations of behaviour towards each other for pupils.
Supervising teachers are informed by class teachers of particular issues that may require close supervision and monitoring.
Supervising teachers and SNAs report any behavioural issues back to the class teachers.
Pupils are encouraged to report issues to any members of staff, we are a 'telling school' where pupils are encouraged to 'act as upstanders not bystanders' and to look out for all other pupils.

Yard leaders and buddies from 5th & 6th classes, support and model rules of games for younger pupils.

In conclusion, 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 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.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

- Class teachers,
- teachers on yard supervision or
- Teachers supervising school activity
- Principal and/or Deputy Principal

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):

Identifying if Bullying Behaviour has occurred

Bullying is defined in Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying and Bí Cineálta 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.

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour you 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 school's Code of Behaviour.

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred teachers should consider what, where, when and 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
- it may be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident(s)

Where bullying behaviour has occurred;

- 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
- it is important to listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- a record should be kept of the engagement with all involved
- this record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known (see Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the Bi Cineálta procedures), where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students involved 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

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 the school 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 a parent(s) is 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 a parent is 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):

Pupil experiencing bullying behaviour

- Listen to the child and provide them with the time and opportunity to discuss what happened
- Provide reassurance to them
- Monitor the situation
- Remind child of school rules re: bullying and lessons from SPHE/Stay Safe
- Liaise with external services if required
- Provide relevant information to other teachers and SNA when appropriate
- Promote awareness of bullying amongst supervising teachers
- Liaise with parents/guardians
- Restore relationships (where possible)
- Record conversations, relevant information and agreed outcomes

Pupil witnessing bullying behaviour

- Listen to the child and provide them with the time and opportunity to discuss what happened
- Provide reassurance to them
- Monitor the situation
- Remind child of school rules re: bullying and lessons from SPHE/Stay Safe
- Liaise with external services if required
- Provide relevant information to other teachers and SNA when appropriate
- Promote awareness of bullying amongst supervising teachers and SNAs
- Liaise with parent/guardians
- Record conversations, relevant information and agreed outcomes

Pupil displaying bullying behaviour

- Listen to the child and provide them with the time and opportunity to discuss what happened
- Establish background information
- Discuss expectations regarding appropriate and acceptable behaviour towards other pupils
- Remind child of school rules re: bullying and SPHE/Stay Safe lessons
- Monitor and observe behaviour for agreed period of time
- Explain consequences of bullying actions
- Liaise with external services if required
- Provide relevant information to other teachers and SNA when appropriate
- Promote awareness of bullying amongst supervising teachers and SNAs
- Liaise with parents/guardians
- Record conversations, relevant information and agreed outcomes
-

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: Fr John Carroll

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: Mrs Nicola Roche

(Principal)

Date: 30th June 2025