



Scoil Bhríde Mionloch

School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour 2025-2026

The board of management of Scoil Bhríde 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 June 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. Bullying is a children's rights issue. Bullying interferes with the following rights of the child:

- The right to freedom of expression (Article 13)
- The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 14)
- The right to freedom of association and freedom of peaceful assembly (Article 15)
- The right to privacy (Article 16)
- The right to be protected from all forms of abuse and neglect (Article 19)
- The right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health (Article 24)
- The right to education (Article 28)
- The right to enjoy their own culture, religion or language (Article 30)

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

Core definition of Bullying as defined in Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying and Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools;

- 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.
- Bullying behaviour involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society.

A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards a student is not bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

However, a sinful harmful message on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be visible to a wide audience and has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and so becomes a repeated 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 the development/review of this policy.

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	Croke park hours June 2025	Staff questionnaire. Staff were provided with the opportunity to discuss the new Bí Cineálta action plan and stemming from this discussion, staff were informed of the important

		points in dealing with an incidence or report of bullying-notice board in staff room with the relevant information displayed as well as resources and record form. Staff given time to discuss and relay feedback. Sharing of draft policy with staff to discuss/consult and make any amendments
Students	June 2025	Students were given a questionnaire to seek their input in developing an Anti-Bullying policy in Child Friendly Format-their wording, examples and suggestions were all taken into account when drafting this policy. Students created posters to display in the classrooms.
Parents	June 2025	Feedback sought from parents in the form of a questionnaire. Policy created with this information in mind.
Board of Management	June 2025	Review new policy draft-leading to consultation and final ratification after amendments made where necessary.
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	June 2025	Staff surveyed
Date policy was approved:		
Date policy was last reviewed: 01/09/2025		

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.

Catholic Ethos

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 which inclusively 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 support for young people in this school and to help inform future prevention strategies.

Culture and Environment

Positive school culture and environment

- We promote a positive and inclusive school culture and environment where students and school staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported.
- Relationships between all members of the school community are based on respect, care, integrity and trust. Open communication between the patron, board of management, school staff, students and their parents help to foster a collaborative approach and shared responsibilities in relation to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.
- The school leadership team influences the school culture and set the standards and expectations for the school community when preventing and 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.
- All staff can watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- We will work together as a school community to maintain a space that is warm, bright, safe and welcoming.

- Children's work will be displayed.
- We have a Wellness Board, a Sensory Room, a quiet reading space and well maintained outdoor play areas.

A Telling Environment:

- Scoil Bhríde school community supports a 'telling' environment.
- Students are encouraged to feel comfortable to talk about concerns regarding bullying behaviour.
- We actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.

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.
- Staff will support this strategy by letting students know that they can talk to them.
- 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.
- The trusted adult in these situations will reassure the student that they have done the right thing by reporting the behaviour.
- The trusted adult will, without delay, inform the member of staff who has responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour.
- At primary level this will be the class teacher.

A safe physical space:

Scoil Bhríde will take the following measures to create safe physical spaces:

- Ensure the visibility of school staff who are supervising at break times including yard duty through the use of high vis jackets.
- Artwork and signage to promote the school's values such as equality, diversity, inclusion and respect.
- Inclusion of spaces within schools for collaborative learning to foster a sense of belonging.

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

SPHE and the Wellbeing curricula aim to foster students' wellbeing, self-confidence, and sense of belonging and to develop students' sense of personal responsibility for their own behaviours and actions. Students' social and emotional learning skills can be improved through the SPHE curriculum. Other opportunities to enhance wellbeing and foster inclusion and respect for diversity that are provided in Scoil Bhríde are as follows:

- Friendship week
- Na croíanna
- Religious education
- Gaeilgóirí na Seachtaine
- Science week
- Seachtain na Gaeilge
- Sport and external coaches
- School choir
- Stay Safe
- RSE
- Walk Tall

Policy and Planning:

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

- BÍ Cineálta policy
- Student friendly BÍ Cineálta Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- SPHE School Plan

Relationships and 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.
- age- appropriate awareness initiatives that look at the causes and impacts of bullying behaviour
- 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

Preventing specific types of bullying behaviour:

Preventing Cyberbullying behaviour

- Scoil Bhríde will proactively address any challenges associated with the use of technology by promoting digital literacy, digital citizenship (webwise/digitown), and fostering safe online environments.

Strategies used to prevent cyberbullying behaviour include the following:

- 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.
- Holding an Internet Safety Day to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour.

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:

- Encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities.

- Challenging gender stereotypes.
- Raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour through SPHE and Stay Safe
- Encourage students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour.

Preventing racist bullying behaviour

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:

- 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.
- Inclusion of lessons that raise awareness of racism.
- Encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities.
- Encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour.
- 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

Scoil Bhríde will focus on gender equality as part of the school's measures to create a supportive and respectful environment.

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.

Supervision

- Appropriate supervision is an important measure to help prevent and address bullying behaviour. Scoil Bhríde take all reasonable measures to ensure the safety of their students and to supervise students when students are attending school or attending school activities. Our policies relating to supervision are listed in the section on Policy and Planning.

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

- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment

- Code of Behaviour
- Play works
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Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

The Class Teacher

- The class teacher will oversee recording of bullying reports for students in their class-this includes using the procedure guidelines to investigate reports of bullying and recording bullying behaviour on the correct form.
- The class teacher will report the incident to the Principal.
- All staff will be vigilant to bullying behaviour.

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

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

General Considerations

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 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 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.

Requests to take no action

A student reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour. 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.

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

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 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 others' views.
- Each student should be supported, as appropriate, following the group meeting.
- It may also be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident.

The definition of bullying provided in Chapter 2 sets out clear criteria to identify bullying behaviour. To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour the relevant teacher should consider the following questions:

- 1. Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or a 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. If the answer to any of these questions is No, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour.

- 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.
- Incidents can occur where behaviour is unacceptable and hurtful but the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies that deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

Where bullying behaviour has occurred:

The following principles must be adhered to when addressing bullying behaviour:

- ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured
- seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- consider the age and ability of 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
- A record should be kept of the engagement with all involved

The record should document:

- The form and type of bullying behaviour, if known (see Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the Bí Cineálta procedures)
- Where and when it took place
- The date of the initial engagement with the students involved and their parents
- The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented
- The record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour
- If the bullying behaviour is child protection concern the matter will be addressed without delay in accordance with Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools

Follow up where bullying 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 be noted.
- Ongoing supervision and support may be needed for the students involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased.
- If the bullying behaviour has not ceased the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents. A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- If it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then consideration should be given to using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the schools' Code of Behaviour. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and school.

Complaint 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.

- 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.

Note:

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 them and their parents to determine what steps can be taken.

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):

The school's programme for support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves a whole school approach. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, no one intervention/support programme works in all situations.

Ways in which the staff in Scoil Bhríde will support pupils who have experienced bullying:

- 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 the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations.
- Identification of counselling facilities available to pupils who need it in a timely manner (subject to available funding)
- Helping bullied pupils to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).

Ways in which the staff of Scoil Bhríde will support bullying pupils:

- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a 'clean sheet'.
- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honourable thing and giving them praise for this.
- Identifying what counselling facilities are available to help those who need it learn other ways of meeting their needs besides violating the right 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.
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth.
- In dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child.
- In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a

'clean sheet' and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.

Staff should be aware that supports are available from the following outside agencies:

- NEPS
- Oide
- Webwise
- National Parents Council
- DCU 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:
(Chairperson of board of management)

Date:

Signed:
(Principal)

Date: