



## **Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour**

The Board of Management of St Nicholas of Myra 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.

### **Definition of bullying**

Bullying is defined in *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying* and *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* as targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society. The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the *Bí Cineálta* procedures.

Each school is required to develop and implement a *Bí Cineálta* policy that sets out how the school community prevents and addresses bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

## Section A: Development/review of our Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour

All members of our school community were provided with the opportunity to input into the development/review of this policy.

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	28 <sup>th</sup> February, 5 <sup>th</sup> March 2025	Staff meeting
Students	April, May, June 2025	Student Council engagement
Parents	June 2025	Survey
Board of Management	September 2025	Meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	September 2025	
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):

- model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times
- explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school
- catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention
- consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN
- give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent

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- have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines
- explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media
- follow-up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules
- actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school
- highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas
- all staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour
- ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision
- support the establishment and work of student councils
- a student-friendly version of this policy will be on display in all classrooms
- the school SPHE plan will be taught at all class levels
- the Stay Safe programme, including anti-bullying lessons, will be followed in all classes
- a worry box will be present in all classes
- the FUSE anti-bullying lessons will be taught at the relevant classes
- we will encourage a “telling” environment where students feel comfortable talking about their concerns about bullying behaviour
- the concept of “a trusted adult” will be developed so that students can be supported and encouraged to report if they or another student is experiencing bullying behaviour
- relationships between all members of the school community will be based upon respect, care, integrity, and trust.
- A “Buddy bench” is available in the yard for any child who might be feeling alone or left out

### **Online bullying behaviour:**

- formal lessons on cyberbullying, digital citizenship, online safety, and respectful online communication to take place for each class
- there is a Mobile Phone policy in place for the school
- Safer Internet Day and its associated activities is an important part of our school calendar
- an Acceptable Use Policy to be drawn up and implemented in the school
- conduct workshops for students, parents, and staff on recognizing and preventing online bullying.

### **Homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour:**

- teach lessons on LGBTQ+ history, rights, and contributions into the curriculum.
- celebrate diversity through events and activities that promote understanding and acceptance.

### **Racist bullying behaviour:**

- lessons on different cultures, histories, and contributions will be taught throughout the school
- cultural celebrations and events will be organised to promote understanding and respect.
- we will endeavour to ensure diverse representation in school materials and

activities.

**Sexist bullying behaviour:**

- lessons on gender equality, stereotypes, and the impact of sexism will be taught
- positive role models of all genders in various fields will be highlighted.
- demonstrate equality to both boys and girls by celebrating the achievements of both equally
- equal opportunity is provided for all in our school
- parents will be encouraged to support equality and gender neutrality within our school
- any comments of a sexist nature will be flagged as soon as they arise in order to ensure that they are addressed and dealt with in a timely fashion

**Sexual harassment bullying behaviour:**

- Teach students about boundaries and respectful relationships.
- Establish clear reporting mechanisms for students to report sexual harassment.
- Ensure immediate and appropriate responses to reports of sexual harassment.

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):

- An audit of the school buildings and grounds will be conducted each year as part of the review of this policy in order to identify any areas where bullying may be more likely to occur
- Out of bounds areas are communicated to the pupils at the beginning of each school year
- Only one pupil of each gender per class may visit the bathrooms at a time, including break times
- A selection of activities are available at break times in order to accommodate a range of preferences and interests
- Appropriate levels of adult supervision will be in place for break times, visits from outside speakers/coaches etc, class or school trips
- SNAs will supervise relevant children at break times
- On Fridays, a teacher at the junior end will be available for any child from the senior end who gets injured during break time



### Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

**Each class teacher**

### Approach

The primary aim in addressing reports of bullying behaviour should be to stop the bullying behaviour and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the students involved, rather than to apportion blame.

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):**

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour the following questions should be asked:

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 will be engaged with individually at first
- thereafter, all students involved will be met as a group
- at the group meeting, each student will 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 will 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 will be kept of the engagement with all involved (See Appendix A)
- this record will 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 involved and their parents
- the record will 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 will 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 will 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 will also be recorded
- any engagement with external services/supports will 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 will review the strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents. A timeframe will be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased



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- 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 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 will 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):

**For Students Who Experience Bullying:**

1. Individual Support Plans:

The class teacher will:

- schedule meetings with a trusted teacher or adult to discuss the student's feelings and progress.
  - help the student set personal goals for building confidence and coping with bullying.
  - provide resources such as books, websites, and activities that promote resilience and self-esteem.
2. Buddy Systems: potential strategies include:
- pairing the student with an older peer and who can offer guidance and friendship, or another peer in the class
  - encouraging participation in group activities where the student can build positive relationships.
  - regularly checking in with both the student and their buddy to ensure the relationship is beneficial.

**For students who witness bullying:**

Potential strategies include:

1. Empathy training:
- teach lessons on empathy and the impact of bullying on victims.
  - facilitate discussion groups where students can express their feelings and learn from each other.
2. Clear reporting channels:
- implement a worry box system in each class for anonymous reporting.
  - encourage an open-door policy where students feel comfortable approaching staff with concerns.
  - regularly remind students of the reporting procedures through posters and announcements.

**For students who display bullying behaviour:**

Potential strategies include:

1. Behavioural Contracts:
- involve the student in setting behaviour goals and outlining consequences for not meeting them.
  - hold regular meetings to review the student's progress and adjust the contract as needed.
  - use positive reinforcement to encourage desired behaviours and acknowledge improvements.
  - engage the student in activities that promote positive behaviour and personal growth.





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: Brian Jones Date: 22/9/2025  
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: Raini Kennedy Date: 22-9-25  
(Principal)