

## Moyglass NS: Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management 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 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

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 as follows (as detailed in Chapter 2 of the procedures):

- Bullying is targeted behaviour, online or offline, that causes harm.
- The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature and can have lasting effects on the child experiencing the behaviour.
- Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society.

- It is behaviour which is deliberate in nature and is unwanted. It is not accidental or reckless behaviour.

The harm can be :

Physical ( eg: personal injury, damage to or loss of property)

Social: ( eg: withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion)

Emotional: (eg: low self esteem, depression, anxiety)

Important Note:

A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards a student is **not** bullying behaviour. However, a single hurtful message posted 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.

Behaviour that is **not** bullying behaviour:

- If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour, but **unintended** by the other student, this is not bullying, but , importantly, must be addressed under the school's code of behaviour.
- Some students with **special educational needs**, may have social communication difficulties which may make them communicate their needs through behaviours that can hurt themselves or others. It is important to note that these behaviours are not deliberate or planned, but in certain situations, they are an automatic response which they cannot control.
- Disagreement between students is not considered bullying **unless** it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.
- Instances where student's don't want to remain friends.

**Types of Bullying:**

There are many different types of bullying behaviour. These can include directing bullying at someone focused on the following: disability, exceptional ability, gender identity, LGBTQ+ , physical appearance, racism, poverty status, religious identity, sexism and sexual harassment. This is not an exhaustive list.

Bullying can be: Direct

- **Physical:** pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping students. Physical assault. Destruction of personal property.
- **Verbal:** continual name calling which insults, humiliates the student – this may refer to physical appearance, clothes, gender, accent, academic ability, race or ethnic origin.
- **Written:** Writing insulting remarks in public places, passing notes or drawings about the student
- **Extortion:** where something is obtained through force or threats

Bullying can be: Indirect

- **Exclusion:** where a student is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded or ignored by a student or group of students.
- **Relational:** Where a student's attempts to form friendships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined, threats, non-verbal gesturing, malicious gossip, spreading rumours, silent treatment and manipulation of friend groups etc can all form relational bullying for a student.

Bullying can be: Online

- Online bullying behaviour also known as cyber bullying is carried out via text, direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, email, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chatrooms and other online technologies. As previously stated, a one-off instance of single hurtful message/ picture posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour, visible to a wide audience with an ability to be shared multiple times.

This can include:

- Sending or sharing of insulting and offensive or intimidating messages or images via online means as mentioned above.
- Posting information which is personal, private or sensitive without consent.
- Making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other students.
- Exclude/disrupt access to a student on purpose on online chat groups/access to accounts/from an online game.



## 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
<b>School Staff</b>	4/03/25 24/03/25	In school Staff Meeting ISM Meeting
<b>Students</b>	12/03/25	Surveys 3 <sup>rd</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup> Class Focus Groups Junior Infants – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Class
<b>Parents</b>	6/03/25	Online Google Form
<b>Board of Management</b>	10/04/25 24/06/25	Board of Management Meeting Changes made to Section C
<b>Wider School Community</b>	17/06/25	Consultation with bus escorts and drivers
<b>Date Policy was Approved</b>	24/06/25	Board of Management Meeting
<b>Date Policy was Last Reviewed</b>		



## 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.

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.

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, by 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 supports for young people in this school and to help inform future prevention strategies.

### Culture and Environment:

- Create a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable.
- Staff on duty greeting kids by name on the yard
- Encourage a sense of belonging through initiatives like **Buddy Reading, Fun Activities, and Sports and Music Activities**.
- Promote a "telling environment" with clear guidelines on how to seek support.
- Display a **Child Friendly Anti-Bullying Policy** throughout the school and ensure parents, students, and staff understand the procedures for reporting bullying.
- Incorporate artwork and signage promoting school values such as **equality, inclusion, and respect**.
- Create a **piece of student-designed artwork** to be displayed prominently at the front of the school, promoting our values of kindness, respect, and inclusion.
- **Sensory Room** – Creating a calming space to support students' emotional well-being.
- Celebration of pupil achievements

### Education and Prevention:

- Annual awareness campaigns during **Anti-Bullying and Friendship Week** in October.
- In addition to this, each term we will organise **1 or 2 anti-bullying initiatives** to reinforce positive behaviour and ensure the message of kindness and inclusion is consistent throughout the year (This will be updated annually and sent to parents in September)

- Each year, students will read two short books as class that focuses on **helping children understand learning difficulties** to promote empathy and inclusion.
- A focus on kindness through initiatives like **Random Acts of Kindness** and creative activities like poster and slogan creation.
- The **Stay Safe Programme** and SPHE lessons which focus on positive behaviour.
- Each month, one child from each class will receive a **Bí Cineálta Certificate** in recognition of their acts of kindness. This certificate will be presented by the Principal to celebrate and encourage kindness throughout the school.
- **Once per term**, a **social story** focused on kindness and bullying prevention will be read at assembly to promote positive social interactions and empathy among students.

### **Supervision and Monitoring:**

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

- Effective supervision during school activities, on yard, and in corridors.
- Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, SNAs, and caretakers are encouraged to report any incidences of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them.
- Staff are particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are **considered at risk** of bullying/being bullied. A list of these pupils is kept in the principal's office and teachers/substitute teachers are informed.
- All disclosed incidents of bullying are **investigated thoroughly** and consistently by following the correct procedure as outlined to staff and recorded on recording template.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Refer to appropriate online behaviour when using devices and in SPHE lessons.

### **Policy and Planning**

- Code of Behaviour
- Supervision Policy
- Student Council

### **Relationships & Partnerships**

- **Parents' Association** – Working collaboratively with parents to support school initiatives and promote inclusion.
- **Board of Management** – Providing oversight and ensuring a safe, respectful school environment.
- **Links to Local Clubs** – Connecting with local sports clubs – Killenaule GAA & Moyglass FC and groups to foster community ties.
- **Information Events for Parents** – Providing valuable resources and workshops to support parents in understanding and addressing bullying behaviour.



- **Shoe Box Appeal** – Promoting kindness and generosity through charitable giving.
- **Annual Summer Party** – An enjoyable evening held during June where parents, children and members of the local community gather for an evening of fun activities



## **Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour**

### **Investigating and Addressing Bullying Behaviour**

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

- The **class teacher along with the Principal** 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 on Aladdin.
- The **Principal** will follow up after twenty days to investigate if bullying has ceased.
- **All staff** will be vigilant to bullying behaviour.
- The **Principal** will inform the Board of Management of incidences of bullying.
- The **Principal** is available to provide up-to-date information and support if needed to assist the class teacher in addressing concerns.

If an event happens outside of school, the school will support the child using the following strategies:

- Class teacher, SET, or SNA under direction of the relevant teacher as appropriate, will support the child, allowing them time to speak
- Parents may be made aware

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 at an early stage



## **Steps to Determine if Bullying Behaviour has Occurred:**

The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up, and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

In investigating and dealing with bullying the teacher(s) will exercise his/her/their judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type if it has and how best the situation might be resolved. To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour, the following questions will be considered?

- Is the behaviour **targeted** at a specific student or group of students?
- Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional **harm**?
- Is the behaviour **repeated**?

If the answer to any of the questions above is **NO**, the behaviour is not bullying behaviour and will be dealt with using the Code of Behaviour.

Non-teaching staff such as the secretary, SNAs and the GAA coach are encouraged to report any incidences of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them, to the Class Teacher or the teacher on supervision duty.

If the answer to **all** three questions above is **YES**, then the behaviour is addressed using the following procedures

## **Investigation Process:**

The relevant teacher(s) must keep appropriate written records using the Record of Bullying Behaviour Template which will assist their efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved. The relevant teacher(s) must add the record of the bullying incident to the hardback that is associated with each class.

The teacher dealing with the report will first interview the victim(s) and discuss the feelings experienced because of the bullying behaviour. The teacher may also ask the victim and other students to create a written account of what has taken place.

Initial investigations of bullying will be done in class where possible, but some incidents may be best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.

When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the Relevant Teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, who, when, and why in a calm and non-aggressive manner.

If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first and/or asked to write a written account of what has transpired. Thereafter, all those involved may be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about the other's statements.



Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures they may face from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher.

### **Addressing the Behaviour:**

Where the Relevant Teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to them how they are in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy. Efforts should be made to help them see the perspective of the pupil being bullied.

The Relevant Teacher does not apportion blame but should make an effort to encourage the student to understand the harm caused and to seek a promise that the bullying will stop.

Parents are made aware if their child has engaged in bullying behaviour.

The school will give parents an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school.

### **Follow-up Procedures:**

Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may be arranged separately with a view to bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.

Depending on the seriousness of the bullying, the pupil may face disciplinary procedures in school.

Repeated incidents of bullying behaviour will result in the imposition of sanctions. Such sanctions will be proportionate to the seriousness of the bullying behaviour.

It must be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, their parents, and the school.

### **Handling Escalations:**

Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent must be referred to the school's **Complaints Procedure**.

In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their rights to make a complaint to the **Ombudsman for Children**.

### **Ongoing Support for Victims:**

The school will use some of the following approaches to support those who experience, witness, and display bullying behaviour. The school's programme of 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.

### **Supporting Bullied Pupils:**

- 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 the speedy resolution of bullying situations.
- Making adequate counselling facilities available to pupils who need it in a timely manner (subject to available funding & availability of counsellors).
- 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 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.
- Making adequate counselling facilities 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 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.

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.
- 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.
- Any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant.

This update will not contain personal or identifying information.

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)

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Principal)

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_