



## ***Bí Cineálta Policy***

1. The Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire Coolcotts 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 of Scoil Mhuire, Coolcotts has adopted the *Bí Cineálta Policy* within the framework of the school's overall Code of Behaviour.
2. 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 difference.

3. 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 pupils who attend our school are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our pupils is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our pupils 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 pupils 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.

4. The Board of Management is fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:
  - A positive school culture and climate which:
    - Is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity.
    - Encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment.
    - Promotes respectful relationships across the school community.
  - Effective leadership by the Board, Principal, In-school Management Team, teachers, SNAs and non-teaching staff to set standards, model best practice and ensure a whole-school approach to preventing and tackling bullying.

- A whole community approach to the problem of bullying comprising school management, teachers, SNAs, non-teaching staff, pupils and Parents/Guardians, with the assistance of the Gardaí and Tusla as appropriate.
- The promotion of a shared understanding among Parents/Guardians, pupils, staff and the wider community of what bullying is and its impact.
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies, including awareness raising measures that:
  - Build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils.
  - Explicitly address the issues of cyber bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils by staff.
- Support for staff, including ongoing professional development and regular review of our *Bí Cineálta* Policy and accompanying procedures.
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour, including use of established intervention strategies.
- Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of our *Bí Cineálta* Policy and practices.

## 5. Core Definition of Bullying

Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature.

Within this policy Scoil Mhuire 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.

There are many different methods of bullying behaviour, including physical, verbal and relational forms, and it can take place online and offline. There are also many different motives for bullying behaviour which can be understood on an individual level (for example, desire for dominance, status, revenge) and/or on a societal level (for example, identity based bullying such as racist, disablist, sexist or LGBTQ+ bullying). Bullying behaviour in schools is often strongly influenced by attitudes, behaviours, norms and power dynamics that are deeply ingrained in our society.

**The core elements of the definition are further described below:**

### **Targeted behaviour**

Bullying is deliberate, unwanted behaviour that causes harm to others, and where the pupil displaying bullying behaviour knows that their behaviour is or will be perceived as harmful by the child or young person experiencing the behaviour. Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. The harm can be physical (for example, personal injury, damage to or loss of property), social (for example, withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion) and/or emotional (for example, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety) and can have a serious and long term negative impact on the pupil experiencing the bullying behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the pupil experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other pupil, this is not bullying but, importantly, must still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour.

### **Repeated behaviour**

Bullying takes the form of a systematic pattern of behaviour which is repeated over time. Single offline incidents of intentional negative behaviour involving an imbalance of power are not considered bullying but must still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour. Posting a single harmful message/image/video online, and which is highly likely to be reposted or shared with others can therefore be seen as bullying behaviour.

### **Imbalance of power**

In incidents of bullying, the pupil experiencing the bullying behaviour finds it hard to defend themselves as a result of the abuse of a real or perceived imbalance of power. This imbalance of power may manifest itself through differences in size, strength, age, ability, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, race, ethnic origin including membership of the Traveller and/or Roma communities, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, experience of the care system, disability or the receipt of special education. In incidents of online (or cyber) bullying, the imbalance of power may relate to online anonymity, technical proficiency and possession of information/images/video, and the inability of the targeted pupil to remove offensive online material or escape the bullying.

### **Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour**

A one off instance of negative behaviour towards another pupil 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.**

Disagreement between pupils, or instances where pupils don't want to be friends or to remain friends, is not considered bullying behaviour unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others including deliberate manipulation of friendship groups.

Some pupils 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 can't control.

Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the pupil experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other pupil, this is not bullying. These behaviours, while not defined as bullying, can be distressing.

### **Criminal behaviour**

Bullying behaviour can be considered criminal behaviour under certain circumstances and legal consequences can apply. The age of criminal responsibility in Ireland is 12 years.

Some online behaviour may be illegal, and pupils need to be aware of the far reaching consequences of posting inappropriate or harmful content online. In cases of intimate imagery, the Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020, also known as Coco's Law, criminalises the non consensual sharing of intimate images and also criminalises threatening to share these images.

If bullying behaviour involves physical violence or threats of violence, it may be considered assault.

If bullying behaviour involves discrimination or hate speech targeting a pupil based on their race, religion, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation or membership of the Traveller community, it may be considered a hate crime under the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 198911, and those engaging in such behaviour may face criminal charges.

If bullying behaviour involves sexual harassment or sexual assault, this may also be considered criminal behaviour.

An Garda Síochána is the appropriate authority to investigate alleged criminal behaviour.

**Bullying Behaviours which Scoil Mhuire has identified as relevant to our context:**

Type of Behaviour	Examples of the Behaviour (not exhaustive)
General Behaviours which Apply to All Types of Bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in Irish equality legislation, e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc.</li> <li>● Physical aggression</li> <li>● Damage to property</li> <li>● Name calling</li> <li>● Slagging</li> <li>● The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures of other materials aimed at intimidating another person</li> <li>● Offensive graffiti</li> <li>● Extortion</li> <li>● Intimidation</li> <li>● Insulting or offensive gestures</li> <li>● The “look”</li> <li>● Invasion of personal space</li> <li>● A combination of any of the types listed</li> </ul>
Online Bullying/ Cyber Bullying	<p><b>Online bullying behaviour:</b>  Online bullying behaviour (cyberbullying) is carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text or direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, e-mail, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chat rooms and other online technologies.</p> <p><b>Even though a message may be posted online just once by a pupil it can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be seen by a wide audience where it is intended to be shared or has a likelihood of being shared multiple times and is thus repeated.</b></p> <p>As online bullying uses technology to carry out bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact it can occur at any time. Many types of bullying behaviour can be facilitated through online bullying. In many cases online bullying can relate to an “offline” experience with someone known to the pupil. This type of bullying may involve forms of sexual exploitation including but not limited to, sextortion and the non consensual sharing of intimate images. The sharing or threatened sharing of images without consent is a criminal offence.</p> <p><b>Online bullying behaviour (cyberbullying) is carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text or direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, e-mail, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chat rooms and other online technologies.</b></p> <p><b>This form of bullying behaviour can include:</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sending or sharing nasty, insulting, offensive, and/or intimidating messages or images via text messages, emails, direct messages or other websites or apps</li> <li>● Posting information considered to be personal, private and sensitive without consent</li> <li>● making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other pupils</li> <li>● excluding or disrupting access to a pupil on purpose from online chat groups, access to accounts or from an online game</li> <li>● Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook, Twitter/X, YouTube, Instagram, SnapChat, TikTok, Whatsapp or on games consoles etc.</li> <li>● Abusive website comments/blogs/pictures</li> <li>● Abusive posts on any form of communication technology</li> <li>● Silent telephone/mobile phone calls</li>   <li>● Denigration: Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation</li> <li>● Harassment: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual</li> <li>● Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name</li> <li>● Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight</li> <li>● Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you can then post online</li> <li>● Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images</li> <li>● Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group</li> <li>● Cyber Stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety</li> </ul>
Identity Based Bullying Behaviours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds in Irish equality legislation, i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community</li> </ul>
Homophobic & Transgender Bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation</li> <li>● Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation</li> <li>● Name calling, e.g. gay, queer, lesbian, using these terms in a derogatory manner</li> <li>● Physical intimidation or attacks</li> <li>● Threats</li> </ul>
Race, Nationality, Ethnic Background & Membership of the Traveller Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or Traveller background</li> <li>● Exclusion on the basis of any of the above</li> </ul>
Relational Bullying	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Malicious gossip</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Isolation and exclusion</li> <li>● Ignoring</li> <li>● Excluding from the group</li> <li>● Taking someone's friends away</li> <li>● "Bitching"</li> <li>● Spreading rumours</li> <li>● Breaking confidence</li> <li>● Talking loudly enough so that the victim can hear</li> <li>● The "look"</li> <li>● Use of terminology such as "nerd" in a derogatory way</li> </ul>
Sexual Bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching</li> <li>● Harassment</li> </ul>
Special Educational Needs & Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Name calling</li> <li>● Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs</li> <li>● Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying</li> <li>● Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues</li> <li>● Mimicking a person's disability</li> <li>● Setting others up for ridicule</li> </ul>

## 6. 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.

**A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when pupils 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 pupils involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, schools should deal with it in accordance with their BÍ Cineálta policy.**

Where the pupil displaying the bullying behaviour is not a pupil in the school, but the pupil who is experiencing the bullying behaviour is a pupil in the school, the school should support the pupil 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 pupil who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the pupils who are displaying bullying behaviour need support. It is important that the pupil who is experiencing bullying behaviour is engaged without delay so that they feel listened to, supported and reassured. School staff should identify the support needed for the pupil who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties and ensure that their needs are met.

## 7. Relevant Teacher for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

The member of the teaching staff who has responsibility for investigating and dealing with bullying is referred to as the relevant teacher. In Scoil Mhuire, the relevant teacher will normally be the class teacher. The relevant teacher in some instances may be the Principal, Deputy Principal, teacher on supervision duty, special education teacher, Nurture Room teacher, Pupil Support Team member or HSCL Coordinator.

## 8. Education and Prevention Strategies

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by Scoil Mhuire 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 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.

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

### Schoolwide Strategies

- The right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school is promoted actively.
- Respectful behaviour is modelled to all members of the school community at all times and diversity is celebrated.
- Scoil Mhuire's RESPECT Code (Positive Discipline Policy), Code of Behaviour, *Bí Cineálta* Policy and Restorative Practice are implemented consistently. School rules are taught explicitly and the unacceptability of bullying behaviour is highlighted regularly through class-based discussions and school assemblies.
- Pupil activity in classrooms, general purpose rooms, circulation areas, school grounds, and during school outings and school-initiated extra-curricular activities are supervised and monitored appropriately by school staff.
- Key respect messages are displayed in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school.
- Pupils are provided with constructive feedback when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent. The display of desired respectful behaviours by pupils are noticed and acknowledged formally.
- The use of discriminatory and derogatory language in school, including homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with special educational needs, is tackled consistently.
- Pupils are encouraged to comply with school policy and rules on mobile phone and internet use. Non-compliance is followed through on.
- Parents/Guardians are made aware of all aspects of bullying, how it impacts on pupils' lives and how incidents should be responded to by them through information sessions and via the *Bí Cineálta* Policy on the school's website.
- Whole-staff and focussed professional development on bullying to ensure that staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it through prevention and intervention measures.
- Involvement of the pupil Council in contributing to a safe school environment, including:
  - Buddy systems

- Pupil support activities
- Development and promotion of an *Bí Cineálta* Code to be displayed in classrooms and circulation areas
- Feedback to school management on the effectiveness of existing anti-bullying measures and the proposal of new measures
- School staff, Parents/Guardians, the Parents' Association and Pupil Council involvement in whole-school awareness raising measures around social media and other potential forms of bullying, including the hosting of an annual Anti-Bullying/Friendship Week.
- Engagement with members of the wider school community who are in regular contact with pupils, such as the following, which is not an exhaustive list:
  - school bus drivers
  - coaches (sports, music etc.)
  - education welfare officers
  - homeschool community liaison officers
  - school completion project workers
  - Traveller and Roma community education workers
  - traffic wardens
  - local businesses that are close to the school

### **Cultivation of a Culture of Telling**

- A culture of telling is encouraged, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders.
- It is made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying, they are behaving responsibly.
- Pupils will know who to tell and how to tell. They may:
  - Approach a teacher directly at an appropriate time.
  - Hand a note up with their homework.
  - Ask a Parent/Guardian or friend to tell on their behalf.
- Staff and Parents/Guardians are encouraged to be vigilant in watching out for signs of bullying and to report any suspicion of bullying they may have to the relevant teacher.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, are investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.

### **Curriculum Implementation**

- Social, Personal & Health Education (SPHE), the Stay Safe Programme and Relationships & Sexuality Education (RSE) will be implemented fully throughout the school.
- Relevant professional development opportunities and resources are provided for teachers to facilitate their implementation of these programmes.
- Pupils are explicitly taught what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Discrete lessons to promote pupils' awareness of and ability to respond to bullying situations are implemented on a schoolwide basis annually.
- Special education teachers reinforce the messages of these lessons with pupils with special educational needs as appropriate.
- Pupils, particularly those in middle and senior classes, are taught explicitly about the appropriate use of social media as part of the school's measures to prevent and raise awareness regarding cyber bullying, including the use of the Webwise Primary Programme.
- The awareness of pupils, particularly those in senior classes, is raised in an age-appropriate way and in a manner that reflects the school's ethos regarding homophobic and transphobic bullying, including through the use of resources such as *Sexual Orientation – Advice for Primary Schools* (PDST) and *All Together Now!* (BeLonG To Youth Services & St Patrick's College, DCU, 2016).

## Other School Policies that Support Our Education and Prevention Strategies

- [W Child Safeguarding Statement 2024-2025.docx](#)
- [W Code of Behaviour Review 2025.docx](#)
- [E Supervision Policy](#)
- [E Scoil Mhuire School Tours\Outings Policy](#)
- [W Internet Acceptable Usage Policy.docx](#)
- [W Smartphone, Smartwatch & Tablet Device Policy.docx](#)
- [W School Attendance Strategy.docx](#)

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

### 9. Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

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

- ensure that the pupil 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 pupil who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- take action in a timely manner
- inform parents/guardians of those involved

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

#### Reporting Bullying Behaviour

- Any pupil or Parent/Guardian may bring a bullying incident to the attention of any staff member in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff, including SNAs, school secretary, caretaker and cleaners will report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the relevant teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- Parents/Guardians and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
- Teachers take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or Parents/Guardians.
- Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- All interviews are conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information.
- When analysing incidents of bullying, the relevant teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why.
- Pupils may be asked for a written account of what happened, as part of any investigation.

- If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved will be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.
- Each member of a group will be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after an interview by the relevant teacher.
- Where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the Parents/Guardians of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to explain the actions being taken by reference to school policy. Parents/Guardians will be given an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school.
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's *Bí Cineálta* Policy and efforts will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- It will be made clear to all involved, each set of pupils and Parents/Guardians, that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her Parents/Guardians and the school.

### **Requests to take no action**

A pupil reporting bullying behaviour may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than "look out" for them. The pupil 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 pupil, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the pupil 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 pupil 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.

### **Follow Up By the Relevant Teacher**

- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher will, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
  - Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased.
  - Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable.
  - Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable.
- Any feedback received from the parties involved, their Parents/Guardians or the school Principal or Deputy Principal.
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved will be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
- In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, the relevant teacher will proceed to Formal Stage 2.

- Where a Parent/Guardian is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the Parents/Guardians will be referred, as appropriate, to the school's Parental Complaints Procedure.
- In the event that a Parent/Guardian has exhausted the Parental Complaints Procedure and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the Parents/Guardians of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

## 10. Procedures for Recording of Bullying Behaviour

Bullying incidents are recorded in an objective and factual manner.

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 pupils 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 *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools June (2024)*.

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

### A. Informal Stage – Bullying is Alleged to Have Occurred

- All staff keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher, which in most instances will be the class teacher.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of alleged bullying are investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Where bullying is alleged to have occurred but cannot be verified, the relevant teacher will complete the ***Bí Cineálta Report – Informal Stage*** on Aladdin (see **Appendix 1**). This is the relevant teacher's written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved.
- The relevant teacher emails the Principal/Deputy Principal notifying them of all incidents being investigated by alerting them that a *Bí Cineálta Report – Informal Stage* has been completed on Aladdin.
- The relevant teacher may contact the Parent/Guardian of the alleged bully informing them of the allegation being made, if deemed appropriate.

### B. Formal Stage 1 – Determination that Bullying has Occurred

- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, he/she will complete the ***Bí Cineálta Report - Formal Stage 1*** (see **Appendix 2**). This is the relevant teacher's written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved.
- The pupil signs ***Pupil Behaviour Promise 1*** (see **Appendix 3**) which is their commitment to treating all pupils fairly, equally and respectfully. The *Pupil Behaviour Promise 1* will be amended by the relevant teacher to include the names of the individual pupils concerned.
- The relevant teacher contacts the pupil's Parent/Guardian to inform them that bullying has occurred and that *Pupil Behaviour Promise 1* is in place.
- The relevant teacher emails the Principal/Deputy Principal notifying them of all incidents being investigated by alerting them to the fact that a *Bí Cineálta Report – Formal Stage 1* has been completed on Aladdin. The relevant teacher provides a copy of the *Pupil Behaviour Promise 1* to the school secretary for scanning to Aladdin.

### C. Formal Stage 2 – Determination that Bullying Behaviour has Not Been Adequately and Appropriately Addressed Within 20 Days or in the Case of a Once-off Offensive or Hurtful Public Message, Image or Statement on a Social Network Site or Public Forum

- In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred, the relevant teacher will complete the ***Bí Cineálta Report – Formal Stage 2*** on Aladdin (see **Appendix 4**).
- **Also, cases of placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour Formal Stage 2 and the relevant teacher will complete *Bí Cineálta Report Formal Stage 2* on Aladdin.**
- The pupil signs ***Pupil Behaviour Promise 2*** (see **Appendix 5**) which is their commitment to treating all pupils fairly, equally and respectfully. The *Pupil Behaviour Promise 2* will be amended by the relevant teacher to include the names of the individual pupils concerned. The pupil's Parent/Guardian and the Principal will countersign *Pupil Behaviour Promise 2*.
- All confirmed instances of bullying behaviour must be reported immediately to Principal/Deputy Principal via email alerting them that a *Bí Cineálta Report – Formal Stage 2* has been completed on Aladdin.
- The relevant teacher provides a copy of the *Pupil Behaviour Promise 2* to the school secretary for scanning to Aladdin.

The Principal formally reports all *Bullying Report* cases to the Board of Management at each of its meetings and provides confirmation that all such cases are being dealt with in accordance with our *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools June (2024)*.

### **11. Intervention Strategies to Address Bullying**

The following intervention strategies are used in Scoil Mhuire to address a bullying incident when it occurs:

- Teacher interviews with all pupils.
- Negotiation of agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress on an informal basis or through a more structured mediation process.
- Working with the Parent/Guardian to support school interventions.
- No Blame Approach.
- Circle Time.
- Restorative Practice interviews and conferencing.
- Implementation of pupil questionnaires.

The intervention strategy selected will be dependent upon the nature of the bullying incident being addressed.

Scoil Mhuire is also committed to exploring other intervention strategies, including those suggested in Ken Rigby's *Bullying Interventions in Schools: Six Major Approaches*:

- The Traditional Disciplinary Approach.
- Strengthening the Victim.
- Mediation.
- Restorative Practice.
- The Support Group Method.
- The Method of Shared Concern.

Restorative Practice is an established intervention strategy in Scoil Mhuire.

## 12. Programme of Support for Working with Pupils Affected by Bullying

In-school support and opportunities will be provided for pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills, and to build resilience. Scoil Mhuire's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying draws on the following:

- SPHE lessons, Stay Safe Programme and RSE Programme.
- Incredible Years Programme and the FRIENDS Programmes (National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)).
- Anti-Bullying/Friendship Week.
- Buddy systems.
- In-school counselling and psychotherapy for individual pupils.
- Whole-class interventions, e.g. Roots of Empathy.
- Social skills groups.
- Nurture Room.
- Pupil Support Team.
- *Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties* (NEPS).
- *Wellbeing in Primary Schools: Guidelines for Mental Health Promotion* (Department of Education & Skills and Department of Health).
- Liaison with NEPS for advice and support.

## 13. Referral of Serious Cases to Tusla and/or An Garda Síochána

It is the practice of Scoil Mhuire that serious instances of bullying, where the behaviour is regarded as being possibly abusive, are referred to Tusla and/or An Garda Síochána. This practice is in line with *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)*, *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2017)* and Scoil Mhuire's Child Safeguarding Statement.

## 14. Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

## 15. 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.

16. This policy and its implementation was reviewed by the Board of Management on 28 April 2025. 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.

17. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the Patron if requested.

Development/review of our Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	28th March 2025	½ Day Closure
Pupils	10th April 2025	Survey
Parents	26th June 2025	Survey
Board of Management	28th April 2025 7th May 2025 30th June 2025	Board Meeting Board Meeting Board Meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers		

Breda Meagher  
Chairperson of Board of Management  
30 June 2025

Karina McKiernan  
Principal/Secretary to Board of Management  
30 June 2025

**Appendix 1 *Bí Cineálta* Report – Informal Stage**

**TO BE COMPLETED AT THE INFORMAL STAGE - BULLYING IS ALLEGED TO HAVE OCCURRED**

1. Name of pupil being bullied, **allegedly**: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in **alleged** bullying behaviour:

--

3. Source of **alleged** bullying concern/report – tick relevant box(es)

Pupil concerned		Teacher	
Other pupil		Other staff member	
Parent/Guardian		Other (specify)	

4. Location of **alleged** incidents – tick relevant box(es)

Yard		Toilets	
Pitch		Corridor	
Playground		Online	
Classroom		Other (specify)	

5. Name of person(s) who reported the **alleged** bullying concern

--

6. Type of **alleged** Bullying Behaviour – tick relevant box(es)

Physical aggression		Cyber bullying	
Damage to property		Intimidation	
Isolation/exclusion		Malicious gossip	
Name calling		Other (specify)	

7. Where **alleged** behaviour is identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category

Homophobic	Disability/SEN	Racist	Membership of Traveller Community	Other (Specify)

8. Brief description of **alleged** bullying behaviour and its impact

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**ACTION CHECKLIST**

9. Name of Relevant Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Has the Principal/Deputy Principal been informed via email?  Yes  No

11. Who else needs to be advised?  
\_\_\_\_\_

12. Has parental contact been made?  Yes  No

**MEETING WITH CHILDREN INVOLVED**

13. Date of Meeting: \_\_\_\_\_ Venue: \_\_\_\_\_

14. Names of those present  
\_\_\_\_\_

15. List of actions taken

**Appendix 2 *Bí Cineálta* Report – Formal Stage 1**

**TO BE COMPLETED AT FORMAL STAGE 1 – DETERMINATION THAT BULLYING HAS OCCURRED**

1. Name of pupil being bullied: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour:

--

3. Source of bullying concern/report – tick relevant box(es)

Pupil concerned		Teacher	
Other pupil		Other staff member	
Parent/Guardian		Other (specify)	

4. Location of incidents – tick relevant box(es)

Yard		Toilets	
Pitch		Corridor	
Playground		Online	
Classroom		Other (specify)	

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

--

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour – tick relevant box(es)

Physical aggression		Cyber bullying	
Damage to property		Intimidation	
Isolation/exclusion		Malicious gossip	
Name calling		Other (specify)	

7. Where behaviour is identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category

Homophobic	Disability/SEN	Racist	Membership of Traveller Community	Other (Specify)

8. Brief description of bullying behaviour and its impact

--

**ACTION CHECKLIST**

9. Name of Relevant Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Has the Principal/Deputy Principal been informed via email?  Yes  No

11. Who else needs to be advised?  
\_\_\_\_\_

12. Has parental contact been made?  Yes  No

**MEETING WITH CHILDREN INVOLVED**

13. Date of Meeting: \_\_\_\_\_ Venue: \_\_\_\_\_

14. Names of those present  
\_\_\_\_\_

15. List of actions taken

16. Does this require a Bullying Report – Formal Stage 2?  Yes  No

17. If not, please specify reason



## PUPIL BEHAVIOUR PROMISE 1

Scoil Mhuire is an inclusive school that welcomes difference and diversity. As a school, we promote respectful relationships across the school community.

I, (insert pupil's name), promise to treat all pupils, including (insert name(s) of pupil(s) who were bullied), fairly, equally and respectfully.

---

Signature of Pupil

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Signature of Relevant Teacher

**TO BE COMPLETED AT FORMAL STAGE 2:**

**DETERMINATION THAT BULLYING BEHAVIOUR HAS NOT BEEN ADEQUATELY AND APPROPRIATELY ADDRESSED WITHIN 20 DAYS**

**OR**

**IN THE CASE OF A ONCE-OFF OFFENSIVE OR HURTFUL PUBLIC MESSAGE, IMAGE OR STATEMENT ON A SOCIAL NETWORK SITE OR PUBLIC FORUM**

1. **Name of pupil being bullied:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Class:** \_\_\_\_\_

2. **Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour:**

--

3. **Source of bullying concern/report** – tick relevant box(es)

Pupil concerned	<input type="checkbox"/>	Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other staff member	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent/Guardian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. **Location of incidents** – tick relevant box(es)

Yard	<input type="checkbox"/>	Toilets	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pitch	<input type="checkbox"/>	Corridor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Playground	<input type="checkbox"/>	Online	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. **Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern**

--

6. **Type of Bullying Behaviour** – tick relevant box(es)

Physical aggression	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cyber bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Damage to property	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intimidation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Isolation/exclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Malicious gossip	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name calling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. **Where behaviour is identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category**

Homophobic	Disability/SEN	Racist	Membership of Traveller Community	Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. **Brief description of bullying behaviour and its impact**

--

**ACTION CHECKLIST**

9. Name of Relevant Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Has the Principal/Deputy Principal been informed via email?  Yes  No

11. Who else needs to be advised?  
\_\_\_\_\_

12. Has parental contact been made?  Yes  No

**MEETING WITH CHILDREN INVOLVED**

13. Date of Meeting: \_\_\_\_\_ Venue: \_\_\_\_\_

14. Names of those present  
\_\_\_\_\_

15. List of actions taken

16. Date Bullying Report – Formal Stage 2 uploaded to Aladdin on (insert date):  
\_\_\_\_\_

17. Name of Teacher who compiled this Bullying Report – Formal Stage 2:  
\_\_\_\_\_

18. Date Bullying Report – Formal Stage 2 was notified to Principal/Deputy Principal  
\_\_\_\_\_



**PUPIL BEHAVIOUR PROMISE 2**

Scoil Mhuire is an inclusive school that welcomes difference and diversity. As a school, we promote respectful relationships across the school community.

I, **(insert pupil's name)**, accept that since signing Behaviour Promise 1 I have not fulfilled the commitment I made. Delete this sentence in instances of cyber bullying where Behaviour Promise 1 has not been completed.

I now promise to treat all pupils, including **(insert name(s) of pupil(s) who were bullied)**, fairly, equally and respectfully.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Pupil

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Relevant Teacher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Principal

## Appendix 6

### Review of the Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual (calendar) review of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and its implementation in consultation with the school community. As part of the review, this document must be completed.

### Bí Cineálta Policy Review

When did the Board formally adopt its Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour in accordance with the *Bí Cineálta Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*? Insert date when the Bí Cineálta policy was last adopted by the school.

\_\_\_/\_\_\_/20\_\_\_

Where in the school is the pupil friendly Bí Cineálta policy displayed?

What date did the Board publish the Bí Cineálta policy and the pupil friendly policy on the school website? \_\_\_/\_\_\_/20\_\_\_

How has the pupil friendly policy been communicated to pupils?

How has the Bí Cineálta policy and pupil friendly policy been communicated to parents

Have all school staff been made aware of the, school's Bí Cineálta policy and the *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post- Primary Schools*?

Does the Bí Cineálta policy document the strategies that the school uses to prevent bullying behaviour?

Has the Board received and minuted the Bullying Behaviour

Update presented by the principal at every ordinary board meeting over the last calendar year?

Has the Board discussed how the school is addressing all reports of bullying behaviour?

Is the Board satisfied that all incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed in accordance with the school's Bí Cineálta Policy?

Have the prevention strategies in the Bí Cineálta policy been implemented?

Has the Board discussed the effectiveness of the strategies used to prevent bullying behaviour?

How have (a) parents, (b) pupils and (c) school staff been consulted with as part of the review of the Bí Cineálta Policy?

Outline any aspects of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and/or its implementation that have been identified as requiring further improvement as part of this review:

Where areas for improvement have been identified, outline how these will be addressed and whether an action plan with timeframes has been developed?

Does the pupil friendly policy need to be updated as a result of this review and if so why?

Does the school refer parents to the complaints procedures if they have a complaint about how the school has addressed bullying behaviour?

Has a parent informed the school that a pupil has left the school due to reported bullying behaviour?

Has the Office of the Ombudsman for Children initiated or completed an investigation into how the school has addressed an incident of bullying behaviour?

Appendix 7

**Children's Summary - to add. Currently the Student Council is preparing it.**