



Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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The Board of Management of St Marys College, Ballysadare 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	14 th March 2025	Staff Training Day
Students	15 th May 2025	Student Council
Parents	26/4/25	Online
Board of Management	23/6/25	BOM Meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers		
Date policy was approved: 23/6/25		
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):

The areas to be considered when developing measures to prevent bullying behaviour:

1. Culture and Environment-

- A welcoming school community.
- Bullying surveys conducted with all students with follow up interviews.
- Care team meeting fortnightly.
- HYLS school liaison officer meeting with students every Tuesday.
- Creating safe physical spaces for students during break and lunch.
- Teacher supervision is dispersed throughout the school in order to monitor students in all areas.

2. Curriculum-

- Teaching and learning that is collaborative and respectful is promoted.
- Students have regular opportunities to work in small groups with their peers, which can help build sense of connection, belonging and empathy among students.



- Curricular subjects offered to students provide opportunities to foster inclusion and respect for diversity.
- We provide opportunities for students to develop a sense of self-worth through both curricular and extracurricular programmes.
- The SPHE curriculum is delivered at Junior Cycle level which aims to help students to feel empowered to create, nurture and maintain respectful and healthy relationships with themselves and others.

3. Policy and Planning-

- Bí Cineálta policy to be implemented to address and prevent bullying behaviour.
- Schools policies which support the prevention of bullying are as follows; Acceptable Use Policy, Special Education teaching policy and Code of Behaviour can all support implementation of a school's Bí Cineálta policy.

4. Relationships and Partnerships-

- The school has a number of initiatives to support and strengthen relationships and partnerships within the school community; lunch time clubs- Girls Tea and Talk & Music Group, sports teams and peer mentoring programmes.
- Students are encouraged to participate in whole school events such as liturgical celebrations, choir, assemblies and school concerts/show.

5. Preventing Cyber Bullying Behaviour-

- Implementing SPHE curriculum.
- Digital Media Literacy class.
- Acceptable Usage Policy for technology.
- Reference to online behaviour in Code of Behaviour.
- Active no mobile phone policy.

6. Preventing Homophobic/transphobic behaviour-

- This is implemented through delivery of SPHE curriculum, encouraging peer support, peer mentoring and empathy building activities.

7. Preventing Racist Bullying Behaviour-

- Diversity is celebrated during culture day.
- Flags displayed in main hallway displaying the diversity of our school.
- Encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities.
- Encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour.
- Providing supports to school staff to respond to the needs of students for whom English is an additional language and for communicating with their parents.

8. Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour-

- Ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex.
- Ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex.

9. Preventing Sexual Harassment-

- Using the updated SPHE specifications at post primary level to teach students about healthy relationships and how to treat each other with respect and kindness.
- Promoting positive role models within the school community, challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to 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):

- Creation of safe physical spaces is an important measure to prevent bullying behavior. Spaces in the school have been created in which students can be monitored and supervised by staff.
- Appropriate supervision is in place to help prevent and address bullying behavior. At both break and lunch times teachers are placed in the following areas- ASD/Boys Toilet Area, GP/Lunchroom Area, Courts.
- Cameras in operation at all times.
- Location of classrooms.
- Staff supervision in toilet areas.
- Lunch time clubs taking place throughout the week.
- Positioning of lockers on corridors.
- Class teachers have designated seating arrangement in classes.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Wellbeing Coordinator & Senior Management

When bullying behaviour occurs, St Marys College will:

- Ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour is heard and reassured.
- All parties are spoken to on an individual basis.
- 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.
- Record and file information bullying behaviour/incident.

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):

Reporting Bullying Incidents

Bullying incidents can be reported through:

1. Direct Communication: Speaking with a trusted adult in the school.
2. Reporting through our survey system in October and March.
3. Reports are discussed through our CARE team, tutor and mentor system

Procedure	Staff Member	Recommended Actions as Per Code of Behaviour & Cinealtas Guidelines
Wellbeing co-ordinator conducts surveys.	Wellbeing co-ordinator	Student Interviews or Questionnaires
Mentors, tutors, teachers, support staff, report incidents to Middle or Senior management.	Tutors	Restorative Practice
Wellbeing co-ordinator investigates reported incidents and takes an action.	Mentors	Verbal Discussions
Co-ordinator brings report to CARE team and any further action is agreed and implemented	Senior Management	Phone calls to parents/ Guardians
	CARE team	Promise Contract **
		Annual Report to BOM & DES
		See Appendix D

All reported incidents are treated seriously, recorded, investigated and dealt with by relevant teachers/ Deputy Principal/ Principal. These incidents are discussed at CARE team meetings.

1. Parents/guardians are informed by the Principal/ Deputy Principal of an incident of bullying once it has been established that bullying has occurred and the facts are available.
2. Reports are investigated through surveys, interviews and by examining available materials. Investigations occur outside the classroom situation to avoid public humiliation of the students concerned and in order to get both sides of the story.
3. It is made clear to students that when they report incidents of bullying, they are not telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
4. It is made clear to students reporting incidents of bullying that their anonymity is protected, as far as possible.
5. Non- teaching staff members are encouraged to report any incident of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them to the tutor, Wellbeing co-



ordinator, Deputy- Principal or Principal.

6. Teachers are advised to take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach to any report of bullying behaviour. They are advised to make a written report and forward to nominated person.
7. Teachers may approach other students who may not be the reporting student in order to ascertain the facts of the incident.
8. Students may be expected to answer questions such as what happened, when did the incident happen, where did it happen and who was involved.
9. If a group of students is involved in the bullying behaviour, each member will be interviewed individually.
10. If it is confirmed that a student has been the victim of bullying behaviour, support will be provided to enable them to deal with the situation. This support will be dependent on the needs of the student, the resources of the school and the links with outside agencies.
11. If it is discovered that a student has engaged in bullying behaviour, appropriate sanctions will apply as described in the Code of Behaviour. Restorative practice is prioritised.
12. Follow up meetings will occur with the students. Reconciliation will be advised and should occur. This process will be followed under the supervision of a teacher/ tutors, wellbeing co-ordinator, Deputy-Principal/ Principal.

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):

Procedures-

Wellbeing co-ordinator conducts surveys.

Mentors, tutors, teachers, support staff, report incidents to Middle or Senior management.

Wellbeing co-ordinator investigates reported incidents and takes an action.

Co-ordinator brings report to CARE team and any further action is agreed and implemented

Recommended Actions as Per Code of Behaviour & Bí Cineálta Guidelines-

- Student Interviews or Questionnaires
- Restorative Practice
- Verbal Discussions
- Phone calls to parents/ Guardians
- Promise Contract



Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools

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.


Chairperson of the Board of Management


Secretary to the Board of Management

23/6/25