Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

May 2025

Scoil Uí Mhuirí is a multi- denominational and co-educational post primary school managed under the patronage of Louth/Meath Education and Training Board (LMETB).

The school's mission statement states that:

'In Scoil Uí Mhuirí we are a learning community committed to the development of the whole person within a context which values each of its members.
In Scoil Uí Mhuirí we have a vision that all of our students will develop a love of learning and a keen sense of social responsibility through a positive and happy school experience. We hope they will develop as caring, well-adjusted individuals, who will succeed in life and contribute positively to the wider community.
Our caring and dedicated staff is committed to helping each student achieve his/her potential.'

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 of Scoil Uí Mhuirí has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.
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 Traveler community.

Definition of bullying
The definition of Bullying Behaviour Bullying is 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 core elements of the definition are further described below:

- **Targeted behaviour**

Bullying is deliberate, unwanted behaviour that causes harm to others, and where the student 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 student experiencing the 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 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 student experiencing bullying behaviour may find 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 Traveler 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 student to remove offensive online material or escape the bullying.

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	10/03/25 04/04/25	CPD, Staff meeting, Surveys
Students	11/03/24	Focus group, student surveys Student Council and focus groups from Junior and Senior Cycle were consulted on the student-friendly policy
Parents	25/02/25	Surveys to all parents/guardians
Board of Management	27/05/25	Consultation at BOM meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers		Consultation as deemed necessary
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:

Culture and Environment	Curriculum
ETB ethos	Tutor time
Vision/ mission statement	LCA social education
Sport	Wellbeing classes
Neurodiversity week	L2LP- personal care
Inclusivity	Student council
Promotion of extra curricular activities	Group/pair work
Seachtain na Gaeilge	Cross curricular – themed weeks
Multiculture week	SPHE/CSPE
Student centered methodologies	Mental health awareness
Modelling behaviour/ ownership& respect	Seating plans
New junior/senior cycle	Mixed ability grouping
Teaching & learning	Health and safety procedures
Expectations	Learning intentions
Display of student work	Peer teaching
	Team teaching
	Transition programme
	CPD on Bí Cineálta

Relationships and Partnerships	Policy and Planning
Peer support	Bí Cineálta policy
Mentoring	Uniform policy
Student council	Wellbeing policy
Check and Connect	SPHE policy
Tutor time	Health and safety policy
Group/pair work	Admissions policy
Wellbeing classes	Acceptable use policy
Extra-curricular activities	Uniform policy
Lunchtime clubs	Code of behaviour
Attendance certificates	Child safeguarding
Postcards	Data protection
Amber flag	Behaviour matrix
Merit stickers	Class contracts
Transition week	Risk assessment
Class/ field trips	School website
Themed weeks	Social media
Gaisce	Restorative practice
Green schools	Pastoral care
Cycle against suicide	Guidance class
Enterprise links-Amazon, trade fairs	Mentor programme
Gaeltacht	TY- peer teaching SHE
Newsletter	Belong To CPD
Music band/choir	Staff aware of being mandated person. Child

Awards ceremony Parent / teacher evenings Home school liaison officer School completion programme Links with external services e.g. NEPS, Tulsa, Gardaí Guest speakers	protection procedures training completed yearly and complete Children First eLearning Principal & Deputy principal complete DLP/DDLP training & refreshers

Supervision and Monitoring

In addition to all the practices identified above under Culture and Environment, Curriculum, Planning and Policy and Relationships and Partnerships, Scoil Uí Mhuirí has the following supervision and monitoring policies to prevent and address bullying behaviour:

Corridors, canteen, school grounds and in class - A weekly schedule of student supervision on corridors and canteen and the school grounds is developed to monitor student behaviour and wellbeing. Any causes of concern are dealt with and may be reported to school management.

• All staff are watchful and observe relationships between students in class, note absence patterns and let it be known that high standards of behaviour are always expected

• Survey of Students - Students are surveyed through an online form regularly throughout the year regarding bullying behaviour as part of the school's mentoring sessions.

• Student Support Team – the student support team meet weekly and operate a check and connect system where teachers meet students where concerns may have been brought to their attention.

By implementing these systems, Scoil Uí Mhuirí can create a safer more positive school environment for all students.

Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

<u>   All teachers   </u>

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

Section C: The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour:

Clear Anti-Bullying Policy

- Our Bí Cineálta policy is shared with students, parents, and staff. This ensures that everyone understands the expectations for behavior and the process for reporting and addressing bullying.
- Consistent and fair enforcement of these policies can deter bullying behavior and reassure students that their concerns will be taken seriously.

Support

- Providing support for victims of and/or those displaying bullying behaviours to help them deal with the emotional impact, build resilience and/or underlying factors contributing to behaviours.

Anti-Bullying Awareness

- Teaching the importance of respect, empathy, and inclusivity. These can help prevent bullying by fostering a positive and understanding school environment.

Parental Involvement

- Schools should keep parents of both students informed about the situation, providing guidance on how they can support their children at home. Online workshops or meetings for parents/guardians on how to prevent and deal with bullying may also be shared.

Encouragement of Reporting

- Encouraging students to report bullying incidents, whether they are victims or witnesses, so students feel safe in coming forward.

Increased Supervision in Key Areas

- Supervising common areas where bullying behaviour may occur, like corridors, toilets, canteen can prevent incidents from happening. Teachers and staff can intervene quickly and provide support for those involved.

Positive Reinforcement

- Rewarding positive behaviour, kindness, and respect through recognition or rewards to motivate students to exhibit these qualities. Recognising acts of kindness or cooperation can reduce the temptation to engage in bullying behaviour.

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 support agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented. If 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*.

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: _____   Date: _____
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: _____   Date: _____

 (Principal)

Appendix 1 Template for Alleged bullying behaviour

Name of pupil _____   Class _____

Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in alleged bullying behaviour

_____
_____

Have you mentioned this to any other staff member   Yes [ ]   No [ ]

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

Pupil concerned	
Other pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

Location of incidents   (tick relevant box(es)) *

Playground		Stairwell	
Classroom		Canteen line	
Corridor		Toilets	
Gym		School Bus	
Outside school		Playing field	
Other			

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)-	
Identity based			

Brief Description of what happened. (What, where, when)

Conversation with other student(s)

Is it bullying behaviour?

Yes	
No	

Is it?

Targeted	Repeated	Harmful

Sanction:

Verbal warning	
Restorative approach	
Corrective work	
Reflection session	
Call home	

Student signed: _____   **Teacher** signed: _____

Date: _____   Date: _____

* Yellow form to be given to Year head for filing
*If moving forward as a Bullying incident, complete a **blue form** and **contact home*** (liaise with Year head)

Appendix 2 Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of pupil experiencing bullying behaviour and class group

Name _____ 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	
Other pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

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

Playground		Stairwell	
Classroom		Canteen line	
Corridor		Toilets	
Gym		School Bus	
Outside school		Playing field	
Other			

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

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

6. **Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category**:

Homophobic/ Transphobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Member of traveller community	Gender based	Other(specify)

7. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

8. Details of actions taken/Consultation with Year head

9. Details of contact with Parent/guardian

10. Sanctions given

Signed: _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date: _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal: _____