

# Monaghan Collegiate School

## Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Monaghan Collegiate School 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

The following is the definition of bullying as defined in *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying* and *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* :

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.

### Targeted Behaviour

Bullying is deliberate and unwanted behavior that causes harm to others. Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. The harm can be physical, social or emotional.

### Repeated Behaviour

Bullying is characterized by a repeated pattern of harmful behavior over time. A single intentional negative act offline, even if it involves an imbalance of power is not considered bullying. In contrast a single harmful message, image or video posted online can qualify as bullying if it is likely to be reshared or circulated widely.

### Imbalance of Power

In incidents of bullying, the student experiencing the bullying behaviour finds it hard to

defend themselves due to a real or perceived imbalance of power. This may manifest itself through difference in size, strength, age, disability, economic status, religion, race, ethnic origin, sexual orientation etc.

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

A one off instance of negative behaviour towards another 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.

Disagreement between students, or instances where students 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 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 can't control. Bullying is not accidental or reckless 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	15 <sup>th</sup> January 2025	Bi Cinealta half-day closure. Presentation, discussion, group work and feedback.
Students	March 2025	Survey sent to all students via Google forms.
Parents	January-February 2025	Survey sent to parents via Google forms.
Board of Management	May 2025	Policy discussed at BoM meeting after consultation with members of Education sub-committee.
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	May 2025	Consultation with bus drivers. Assurance given that we will deal with any issues they bring to us.
Date policy was approved: 27 <sup>th</sup> May 2025		

Date policy was last reviewed:
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## **Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour**

Monaghan Collegiate School is fully committed to maintaining a positive school culture so as to work proactively to prevent bullying behaviour.

The following principles underpin this commitment:

- We make it clear to all members of the extended school community that bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated
- We promote relationships based on mutual respect, care and trust across the school community. Empathy, kindness and respect are modelled in all relationships within the extended school community
- Our school is welcoming, supportive and inclusive, and we encourage students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour
- Teaching and learning in this school is based on respectful and collaborative relationships in the classrooms
- Opportunities to foster inclusion, respect for diversity and develop a sense of self-worth are availed of across the curricula
- Updated SPHE specifications aim to empower students to create, nurture and maintain healthy relationships with themselves and others
- The wellbeing of the school community is central to all policy, planning and decision making
- Policies such as SEN and the Code of Behaviour will support this policy in preventing bullying behavior.

### **Strategies to prevent Online Bullying Behaviour**

This list is not exhaustive

- We promote online safety, responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship through assemblies, SPHE lessons and visiting speakers when available
- Teachers have regular conversations with students about respectful and kind relationships online as part of the expected behaviour in the Code of Behaviour

### **Strategies to prevent Homophobic/Transphobic Bullying**

This list is not exhaustive

- All students, regardless of sexual orientation have a right to feel safe, valued and supported in school.

- We celebrate diversity at school and acknowledge the contributions of all students
- We encourage all students to speak to a trusted adult when they experience or witness bullying behaviour
- We promote inclusion through fostering the values of respect, tolerance, compassion, kindness

### **Strategies to prevent Racist Bullying**

This list is not exhaustive

- Monaghan Collegiate is a culturally diverse school and we are proud to welcome international students from many countries each year
- We foster a school culture where cultural diversity is celebrated and each year we host International Celebration Day in March
- We encourage all students to report their experience or witnessing of racist bullying
- We provide staff with resources to support students learning English as an additional language and to communicate effectively with parents through the use of translation and interpreters as appropriate
- We aim to showcase the cultural diversity of the school through photos and social media content

### **Strategies to prevent Sexist Bullying**

This list is not exhaustive

- As a mixed school we place a strong focus on gender equality as part of our measures to create a supportive and respectful environment
- We ensure that all staff model respectful behavior and treat all students equally, regardless of gender
- We provide equal opportunities for all students to participate in school activities, regardless of gender
- We celebrate diversity at school and acknowledge the contributions of all students

### **Strategies to prevent sexual harassment**

This list is not exhaustive

- At Monaghan Collegiate School there is a zero- tolerance approach to sexual harassment and it is never dismissed as teasing or banter
- We use the updated SPHE specifications to teach students about healthy relationships and respectful behaviour
- We challenge harmful gender stereotypes that contribute to sexual harassment

### **Supervision**

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

- Supervision is provided before school from 8.30, at break and lunch times and as students depart on the buses after school
- Students are assigned designated home rooms for socialising and eating.
- There are organised lunchtime activities in games, sports and training as well as a wellbeing walking track.

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

### **Responsibility**

All reports of bullying behavior should be reported to Mrs Cowan and Mr Dugdale who will have responsibility for dealing with all cases.

The entire school community has a responsibility to prevent and address bullying behaviour. All members of staff, all students and all parents are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behavior witnessed by them or mentioned to them.

### **Approach**

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

The following steps will be taken by the school to determine if bullying behavior has occurred:

Bullying is defined 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.

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying, the following questions will be considered:

1. Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?
2. Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?
3. Is the behaviour repeated?

If the answer to each of the questions above is Yes, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour and the behaviour should be addressed using the Bí Cineálta Procedures

Note: One off incidents may be considered bullying in certain circumstances. A single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and thus becomes a repeated behaviour.

If the answer to any of these questions is No, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred, teachers should consider what, where, when and why?

The following approaches will be taken to address the bullying behavior:

When addressing bullying behaviour the school will:

- ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour is heard and reassured
- ensure that each student is engaged with individually at first if a group of students is involved
- ensure that each student is supported appropriately
- 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 decide how best to address the situation
- take action in a timely manner
- inform parents of those involved
- document and keep a record of all engagement with the students involved
- requests to take no action should be put in writing by parents and/or student and in some cases the school may decide that no action is an inappropriate response

Schools are not expected to address bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, if this bullying behaviour, including cyber bullying behaviour, continues into the school environment, schools are required to address the bullying behaviour. Bullying behaviour, including cyber bullying behaviour, which has occurred outside of school can often continue in school.

Where a school is made aware of cyberbullying behaviour that has occurred while a student was not under the care or responsibility of the school, the school is required to support the student. This can be done through listening, showing empathy, reassuring the student, and asking the student to let the school know if the bullying behaviour occurs in school.

Where a student engages in cyberbullying behaviour when in school, the school must address the bullying behaviour. Where a student experiences cyber bullying behaviour in school, the school must address the bullying behaviour.

In the case of cyber-bullying, although the hurtful message may have been sent outside of school hours, the student may view the message while in school. Where this happens, the school must address the bullying behaviour.

If bullying behaviour occurs when students are on a school trip and are therefore under the care and responsibility of the school, the school must address the bullying behaviour.

The following steps will be taken to review progress in cases of bullying

- the teacher will re-engage with the students involved and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement

- important factors to consider as part of this engagement are the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the students involved
- the teacher should document the review with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased
- the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased should also be recorded
- any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted
- ongoing supervision and support may be needed for the students involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased
- if the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents. A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased
- if it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then consideration should be given to using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school
- if a parent(s) is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed, they should be referred to the school's complaints procedure

The following approaches will be used to support those who experience, witness and display bullying:

- The Year Head will engage with the student and monitor how the student is coping
- Students will be encouraged to discuss issues relating to bullying with parents and teachers and specifically in SPHE lessons
- Pastoral support is available to any student who needs it from a trusted adult, guidance counsellor, Year Head etc.

All bullying behaviour that is reported 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 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: -----Date:-----  
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: -----Date:-----  
(Principal)



**ALLEGED BULLYING INCIDENT STUDENT STATEMENT FORM**

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **STUDENT:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DETAILS:** Include time, place, names of alleged perpetrators, names of bystanders.

Detail here both sides of the event

[illegible]

## Bullying Incident Report Form

Name and class of student being bullied:

Name(s) and class(es) of students allegedly engaged in bullying behaviour:

Bullying concern reported by:

Location of bullying incidents:

Type of bullying behaviour (tick as relevant):

Physical	Gender-identity bullying	
Verbal	Extortion	
Damage to personal property	Written bullying	
Exculsion/isolation	Relational bullying	
Cyber-bullying	Other	
Intimidation		

Brief description of bullying behaviour:

Impact of bullying behaviour:

Details of action taken:

Date:  
Signed:

20 Day review due by:

Review details:

