

Appendix A

School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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The Board of Management of **North Monastery Coeducational Secondary 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

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	27 th January 2025 22 nd May 2025	Staff meetings and staff questionnaire
Students	30 th April to 1 st May 2025	Student questionnaire
Parents	29 th April to 2 nd May 2025	Parent questionnaire
Board of Management	3 rd June to 5 th June 2025	Informed by supplying a copy and asked to comment and discuss
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	Miscellaneous between January and May 2025	Informed by supplying a copy and asked to comment
Date policy was approved: 5 th June 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: Policy last reviewed 26-11-24.		

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 school has a responsibility to

- develop an Anti-Bullying Policy in consultation with stakeholders
- outline what is unacceptable behaviour in terms of bullying
- explain the process involved in responding to incidents of bullying
- follow up complaints of bullying
- educate and inform students on strategies that promote positive responses to student welfare
- implement the Anti- Bullying Policy in conjunction with the School Code of Behaviour once an incident of bullying is reported.

To enhance matters in this regard the school operates in a manner that includes but is not limited to the following

- Is a JIGSAW school and highlights aspects of mental health and how bullying behaviour can influence mental health negatively.

- Uses curricular supports in SPHE and RSE to enhance wellbeing as far as possible. These aid with the outlining of the negative aspects of bullying including cyber and identity bullying.
- Encourages the use of collegiality in all subject classes to aid with inclusivity for all.
- Provides counselling for those affected by any bullying behaviour and to aid with self-esteem.
- Has a yellow flag to educate about diversity and the policy of the school to welcome all.
- Has a digital policy committee to aid with the education of all about cyberbullying.
- Has a clear link between the Anti-Bullying policy and the general Code of Behaviour which is strong on all aspects of bullying and that all students sign.
- Has posters displayed to educate about the inappropriate nature and effects of bullying behaviour.
- Has engaged with the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark.
- Has an Amber flag to highlight aspects that influence mental health generally.
- Provides an induction programme for those transitioning from Primary to Post-Primary.
- Provides a mentor/buddy system for incoming 1st years to aid with reporting.
- Works closely with the School Completion Programme on Campus to alleviate absenteeism which may be related to unreported bullying incidents.
- Incorporates the identification of vulnerable students to aid school retention as part of the DEIS plan. Vulnerable students will need supports for a variety of reasons which may include bullying.
- Identifies our school as one that uses Restorative Practices (RP) where staff training has been provided to aid with reconciliation between students when necessary, in as far as reasonably practicable.
- Uses a year head system for year groups, class tutor system for each class and has a Student Support Team (SST) meeting on a weekly basis to highlight and discuss all student issues including bullying.

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):

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.

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.

- Students are monitored and supervised appropriately in yards and corridors generally
- A 'telling environment' is encouraged by teachers generally including year heads
- A QR Code system is available to aid with a telling environment
- Appropriate education on the problems associated with bullying is prominent, further encouraging the telling culture
- A mentor/buddy system is available to all incoming 1st years
- Promoting Yellow Flag culture

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Deputy Principal (in the absence of the Deputy Principal, the Principal will assume the responsibility)

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

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):

Students who may find themselves the target of bullying behaviour are free to approach any member of staff for advice, support and direction.

Students can be assured that their case will be treated with sensitivity.

The principles of natural justice will apply where a student finds himself the subject of an accusation. The School Management Authority will specify the nature of the complaint and allow the student concerned an opportunity to respond in full before a decision is made on the substantive issue and a penalty.

Once a complaint is made to a member of staff the following steps will be taken:

- (1) The staff member will take details of the alleged incident from the student.
- (2) The contact staff member will meet with the Deputy Principal (DP) (who is the relevant teacher) re the incident. In the absence of the DP the Principal will assume this role. The DP will arrange meeting with the relevant Year Head and member of staff.
- (3) The alleged perpetrator and the victim will be spoken to separately by the Year Head and the Deputy Principal. If it is established that an incident did occur then the following procedures will apply.
- (4) The Deputy Principal will inform the Principal that an incident has occurred.
- (5) The Principal will meet with the Deputy Principal and the Year Head to discuss all matters pertaining to the case.
- (6) The Principal, Deputy Principal and Year Head will meet with the student and parent/guardian of the perpetrator before a sanction is applied.
- (7) The parents of the students involved will be informed of the incident at the earliest opportunity by the Deputy Principal and the steps the school management propose to take to resolve the matter.
- (8) These procedures are underpinned by the School Code of Behaviour.
- (9) In the event of a First Year Student informing a mentor that he is being bullied, the mentor shall inform the Induction Coordinator who will begin the process at (1).

It should be noted that the process can be stopped at any time if the allegations in the opinion of the relevant teacher cannot be substantiated. The parents of the complainant will be informed that a complaint was made and investigated.

Written notes, as appropriate, using GDPR guidelines will be kept by the relevant teacher, generally and specifically

a) in cases where he/she 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; and

1 A consistent and clear approach to dealing with bullying when it occurs is essential to effective practice. This policy provides guidance and direction for the school Community in relation to the need to use established intervention strategies and ensuring consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour.

2 A pupil or parent may bring or report a bullying concern to any teacher in the school. Individual teachers must take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy.

3 The member of teaching staff who has responsibility for investigating and dealing with bullying is referred to as the "relevant teacher". At post-primary level, the school will determine, having regard to its own circumstances, which members of teaching staff have this responsibility.

4 The school's anti-bullying policy must clearly indicate the relevant teachers in its school. It is not necessary to specify the relevant teacher(s) by name in the policy so long as it is made sufficiently clear to all which teachers in the school have this responsibility.

The aid of National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) may be sought in certain circumstances.

Persistent cases of bullying may be referred to the HSE/TUSLA and/or the Gardaí.

Relevant Teacher for this policy is the **Deputy Principal** – In the absence of the Deputy Principal, the Principal takes the responsibility.

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):

(1) School Guidance Counsellors will have a key role to play in advising the school of the type and duration of supportive interventions required for both victim and perpetrator. It should be noted at this stage that the perpetrator must avail of counselling support.

(2) Both victim and perpetrator will be monitored for a period following the incident. The duration of the monitoring period will be decided by management in consultation with School Guidance Counsellors. If the bullying does not cease, then further sanctions will be considered up to and including expulsion.

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.

Signed: *Finn E Munkit*
(Chairperson of board of management)

Date: 5-6-25

Signed: *JBoyle*

Date: 5-6-25

(Principal)