



Bí Cineálta Policy

MARIST COLLEGE ATHLONE

Introductory Statement

At Marist College, our mission is to foster a school community rooted in respect, inclusion, and empathy, where every individual feels safe, valued, and supported. In line with our ethos as a Catholic secondary school inspired by the values of St. Marcellin Champagnat, we are committed to promoting positive relationships and a culture of kindness.

The Board of Management of Marist College 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.

This policy was developed in consultation with students, staff, and parents/guardians, and will be regularly reviewed to ensure it continues to meet the needs of our school community.

As a Catholic school, we are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual. No human person is to be diminished or devalued, and all have an indispensable part to play in the school community, regardless of difference.

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

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	March 10 th 2025	Staff surveys & questionnaires
	April 4 th 2025	Half day School Closure for training day and to get staff input and feedback.
Students	March 4 th 2025	Student surveys to all students
	March 12 th & April 9 th 2025	Student Council Meetings
Parents	May 19 th 2025	Parents Surveys, sent to all parents
	May 22 nd 2025	Parents Association Meeting
Board of Management	10 th February 2025	Discussion at Board meetings outlining new procedures
	24 th June 2025	Meeting & Ratification
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers		
Date policy was approved: 24 th of June 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: N/A		

Definition of bullying

Core 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.

Alleged incidents of bullying are however often complex and must be considered on a case-by-case basis. 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 engrained 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 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 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 student to remove offensive online material or escape the bullying.

Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour

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. If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying. These behaviours, while not defined as bullying can be distressing. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

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 students 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 student 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 1989, 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

Types of bullying behaviour

There are many different types of bullying behaviour. These can include the following which is not an exhaustive list:

- **Disablist bullying behaviour:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of a perceived or actual disability or additional need
- **Exceptionally able bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their high academic ability or outstanding talents
- **Gender identity bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual gender identity
- **Homophobic/transphobic (LGBTQ+) bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual membership of the LGBTQ+ community
- **Physical appearance bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their physical appearance. Students who “look different” can be mocked or criticised about the shape, size or appearance of their body
- **Racist bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their race or ethnic origin which includes membership of the Traveller or Roma community. Racism is defined in the National Action Plan Against Racism¹³ as “a form of domination which manifests through those power dynamics present in structural and institutional arrangements, practices, policies and cultural norms, which have the effect of excluding or discriminating against individuals or groups, based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin”
- **Poverty bullying:** behaviour and language that intends to humiliate a student because of a lack of resources
- **Religious identity bullying:** behaviour and language that intends to harm a student because of their religion or religious identity
- **Sexist bullying:** behaviour and language that intends to harm a student based on their sex, perpetuating stereotypes that a student or a group of students are inferior because of their sex
- **Sexual harassment:** any form of unwanted verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on sex which affects the dignity of the student.

How bullying behaviour occurs

Bullying behaviour can take many forms, which can occur separately or together. These can include the following, which is not an exhaustive list: The list of examples below is non-exhaustive.

	Direct bullying behaviour	
Direct bullying behaviour	Physical bullying behaviour	Physical bullying behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping students.
		It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While students can often engage in “mess fights” they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.
Direct bullying behaviour	Verbal bullying behaviour	Continual name-calling directed at a student which hurts, insults or humiliates the student should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour.
		Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance; for example, size or clothes worn or gender identity.
		It can also refer to a student’s accent, distinctive voice characteristics, academic ability, race or ethnic origin.
		Deliberate spreading of rumours behaviour
Direct bullying behaviour	Written bullying	Written bullying behaviour includes writing insulting remarks about a student in public places, passing around notes about or drawings of a student.
		Offensive graffiti
Direct bullying behaviour	Extortion	Bullying behaviour can involve extortion. Extortion is where something is obtained through force or threats.

	Personal property	<p>Personal property can be a focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, schoolbooks and other learning material or interference with a student's locker or bicycle.</p>
		<p>The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor.</p>
		<p>Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.</p>
	Indirect bullying behaviour	
Indirect bullying behaviour	Exclusion	<p>Exclusion bullying behaviour occurs where a student is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded or ignored by a student or group of students</p>
	Relational	<p>Relational bullying behaviour occurs when a student's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. Common forms include control: "Do this or I won't be your friend anymore"; a group of students ganging up against one student; nonverbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a student; giving a student the "silent treatment"; and the deliberate manipulation of friendship groups to make someone unpopular.</p>

Online Bullying behaviour

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, email, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chatrooms and other online technologies.

This form of bullying behaviour can include:

- sending or sharing nasty, insulting, offensive, and/or intimidating messages or images via text messages, emails, direct messages or other websites or apps
- posting information considered to be personal, private and sensitive without consent
- making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other students
- excluding or disrupting access to a student on purpose from online chat groups, access to accounts or from an online game.
- **Denigration:** spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation
- **Harassment:** continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual
- **Impersonation;** Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name
- Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight
- **Cloning:** creating fake profile to entrap someone
- **Trickery:** fooling someone into sharing personal information which is then posted online
- **Outing:** posting or sharing confidential or compromising information
- Photoshopping images with intent to harm or cause disruption to peace of mind
- **Doxing:** publishing personal information online with a view to threaten or harass
- **Cyberstalking:** breaching GDPR guidelines on data,
- e.g. Adding people to groups using their private details without their consent or ongoing harassment and denigration that

<p>Online Bullying behaviour</p>		<p>causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screen shooting replies to messages and posting them online • Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group • Silent telephone/mobile call • Abusive telephone/ mobile calls • Abusive text messages • Abusive email • Abusive communication on social media networks • Abusive website comments • Abusive posts on any form of communication technology <p>Even though a message may be posted online just once by a student 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.</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.</p> <p>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 student. This type of bullying may involve forms of sexual exploitation including but not limited to, sextortion and the non-consensual sharing of intimate images.</p> <p>The sharing or threatened sharing of images without consent is a criminal offence.</p>
<p>Identity based behaviour</p>	<p>Identity based behaviours</p>	<p>Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spreading rumours about a person’s sexual orientation • Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation

Identity based behaviour		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name calling e.g. gay, queer, lesbian-used in a derogatory manner • Physical intimidation or attacks • Threats
	Homophobic and transgender	<p>Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or Traveller background</p> <p>Exclusion on the bases of any of the above</p>
	Race, nationality, ethnic background and the membership of the Traveller community	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying.</p> <p>Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malicious gossip • Isolation and exclusion • Ignoring • Excluding from the group • Spreading rumours • Breaking confidence • Talking loud enough so the victim can hear

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

In developing 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 the 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 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 in dialogue with parents, and thereby build a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, trust and confidence.

In continuing to develop prevention strategies, this school will take as much time as is practicable listening to young persons and parents, to help establish their particular context and needs. Frequent periods of reflection and further engagement, by the school, young persons and parents, will be used to discern appropriate supports for young people in this school and will help inform future prevention strategies. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore 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; and promotes respectful relationships across the school community
- Effective leadership.
- A school-wide approach.
- A shared understanding 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; and explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils.
- Supports for staff.
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies).
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the Bi Cinealta policy.
- Consultation with all partners in the school community on our approach to bullying.
- Various approved programmes which support the prevention of bullying including guest speakers and workshops e.g. Garda Community Officer talk for all Year Groups.
- Organising a Wellbeing Week in the school every year during which anti-bullying lessons will be taught and other activities will raise awareness of bullying.
- Regular confidential questionnaire to be administered to all students once a term.
- Reminders of policy and procedures at assemblies and parent information evenings.
- Opportunities for staff training in this area e.g. Restorative Practice training
- Informing members of the school community about the safe use of the Internet.
- Specific school regulations relating to the use of mobile phones, recording devices and the uploading of material to the Internet.

- Delivery of SPHE, RSE, and TY modular programmes highlighting diversity, tolerance and inclusion. Junior Cycle re specification also covers relevant topics such as diversity. Senior Cycle SPHE/ wellbeing class also highlights diversity, tolerance and inclusion. Tutor and wellbeing classes can also be used to promote positive behaviour
- Student leadership roles are also important for modelling good behaviour and assisting in creating a safe school environment e.g. peer ministry, senior prefects, wellbeing ambassadors and the student council activities on inclusion
- Student assemblies, student journal and year group teams also promote positive behaviour messages
- The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and the monitoring of policies are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible
- Acceptable use policy
- Creative built environment which reinforces key messages on respect, positive behaviour and self-esteem, through visual displays
- age appropriate awareness initiatives that look at the causes and impacts of bullying behaviour including those dealing with navigating friendships, identity-based bullying, racist bullying, homophobic/transphobic bullying, sexism and sexual harassment
- supporting the active participation of students in school life
- supporting the active participation of parents in school life, including those who may find it difficult or daunting to engage with the school due to being unfamiliar with the education system or due to language or cultural barriers
- conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying
- supporting activities that build empathy, respect and resilience
- encouraging peer support such as peer ministry
- promoting acts of kindness - Wellbeing week
- teaching problem solving
- School policies are available on the website www.maristathlone.net

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

The Board of Management confirms that they are satisfied 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.

Supervision

- All staff members are trained to recognise and respond to bullying behavior.
- Non teaching and ancillary staff are encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Teachers monitor and supervise classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities.
- Support offered by prefects to 1st and 2nd Year students, both before school starts in the morning and during lunchtime on rainy days, further contributes to a safe school environment.

- Visitors to the school are supervised at all times and are not left alone with students.

Monitoring

- Incident reporting: The year head investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour with a view to establishing the facts and records the information on an incident report form.
- Incident investigation: all reports of bullying will be investigated promptly and thoroughly. The investigation will include interviews with the student who reported the incident, the student who was allegedly bullied and any witnesses.
- Follow-up: The school will take appropriate action to address the bullying behaviour

By implementing these procedures, Marist College can create a safer and more positive school environment for all students.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

The year head of the victim will act as the main investigator. The year head may also be supported in the investigation by other members of staff, where appropriate. These members of staff may include:

- the teacher the bullying incident was referred to,
- the year head of the alleged perpetrator(s),
- the deputy principal may also be required to assist where necessary.

If a year head is absent at the time of the investigation, another relevant teacher may carry out the investigation.

The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

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
- Staff will remain impartial until full facts are established on both sides.
- inform parents of those involved when it has been established that bullying has occurred

The primary aim for the relevant teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues

and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationship of the parties involved, rather than to apportion blame.

The school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach:

For Telling

Any person who is bullied or who witnesses bullying should report it to any member of staff they are comfortable talking to. Reports of such incidents will be treated in a sensitive and supportive way.

This reporting could take the form of a direct approach to a teacher, by means of the

questionnaire, a note handed up with homework, a phone-call to the school office, or through a third party. Students can also use the chat function on teams to send a message to a teacher about an allegation.

Requests to take no action

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

For Investigating and resolving Incidents:

All reports received will be investigated thoroughly by the members of staff involved at the earliest possible opportunity. The year head will take responsibility for coordinating all interviews. This can be replaced by another teacher if the year head is absent.

Interviewing the victim, bystanders and alleged bully or bullies.

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the 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 us in resolving and issues and restoring, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem- solving approach.
- Incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved. When a student is being interviewed it will be usual for two teachers to be present.

One teacher will conduct the interview while the other teacher will record the responses given. This is to insure the teacher investigating can actively listen to what the student is saying.

- All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Students who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way. Students will be encouraged to provide a written account of the incident; this may be necessary to assist the student to provide a clear record of events. At this point the student will be made aware that confidentiality may be limited and that only those who need to know will be informed.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the year head/relevant teacher should seek answers to what, where, why, when and who. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non- aggressive manner.
- If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved may meet as a group if it is appropriate.
- Each member of a group should be supported through possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.
- A student who has reported bullying by another will not be expected to be brought together with the alleged bully without her permission.
- In cases where it has been determined by the year head/ relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents/guardians of the parties involved may be contacted at an early stage to inform them about the matter and explain the actions being taken (See section on sanctions below). We will give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for our students. This may require a meeting with parent/s/ guardians
- Where the year/head relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to her that she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get to her to see the situation from the perspective of the student being bullied.
- The students involved will receive a serious talk in relation to the events and their role in them. This will also include a warning against retaliation in any form, and an agreement from the offender that this will not occur again, an apology where appropriate may be required.
- It is intended that our school community would use a restorative model of conflict resolution.

Sanctions

Sanctions will vary depending on the gravity of the incident and may include:

- Detention with work to complete may be given in line with the school's code of behaviour
- Suspension, (which may include in-school suspension), where appropriate
- Persistent offenders may be referred to appropriate external agencies.

Follow up and Recording

In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed, the year head/ relevant teacher must, 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 practicable
- Whether the relationship between the parties has been restored as far as practicable.
- Issues will be resolved as far as practicable. If a parent has exhausted the St. Louis anti-bullying procedures the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures. In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children. Parents can also contact the Gardai.

Determining if bullying behaviour has ceased

- The teacher must engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to determine whether the bullying behaviour has ceased and to review progress following the initial intervention.
- This may involve a discussion on the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the students involved.
- If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students and parents and agree to meet again over an agreed timeframe until the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- Where it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then this will be dealt with under the school's Code of Behaviour.

Recording Bullying Behaviour

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents is done in an objective and factual manner. Our procedures for noting and reporting bullying are as follows:

- Informal pre-determination that bullying has occurred
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the year head/relevant teacher, all information arising from this investigation will be communicated to the relevant year head or deputy principal (in the year heads absence) and a written record of this information will be stored in a secure folder on the year head team. This information will include details of the incident, the action taken, and any discussions involved regarding same to assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- The relevant year head/teacher must inform the principal of all reports being investigated and determined as bullying at year head meetings.
- Incidents will be recorded on the bullying report form and stored in the year head team with office 365.
- If it is established by the year head that bullying has occurred and is continuing after 20 school days, the year head will record this on the bullying record form. The principal and deputy principal should be made aware if this situation occurs.
- Due consideration will be given to who has access to these records and how long they will be retained.

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

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

In school supports which are provided for pupils affected by bullying and designed to raise their self-esteem to develop friendships, social skills and build resilience include the following:

- The person investigating will keep in contact with the victim to offer support and to ensure that there is no retaliation.
- Student care team who may identify students who may require targeted intervention.
- NCSE National Council for Special Education
- Reinforcement of messages around cyber safety and digital citizenship to parents and students through talks, expert guest speakers, workshops
- Class teacher/ year head, guidance counsellor
- Peer ministers
- Wellbeing ambassadors
- Wellbeing week/ day/ activities
- Tutor class
- Individual bonding days
- School based counselling will be offered to both parties.
- Bystanders will be encouraged to discuss incidents with their year head or class teacher.
- Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

Referral of serious cases to Tusla

Section 10 of the Children First Act, 2015 places a statutory obligation on schools, as a "provider of a relevant service" to ensure, as far as practicable, that each child attending the school is safe from harm while attending school or otherwise participating in school activities.

Teachers registered with the Teaching Council are Mandated Persons under the Children First Act. They have a legal obligation under the Act to report harm of children that meets or is above a defined threshold to Tusla, and also to assist Tusla if requested, in assessing a concern which is the subject of a mandated report.

If the concern does not reach the threshold for mandated reporting, but a teacher feels that it is a reasonable concern about the welfare or protection of a child, a report should be made to Tusla under the Children First National Guidance. The Children First National Guidance applies to everyone. All school staff and volunteers must report reasonable concerns to Tusla.

The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (Revised 2023) provide that all school staff should report reasonable concerns to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) who may take advice and/or report the concerns to Tusla. If the staff member is a registered teacher and the concern is at or above the threshold of harm at which a mandated report must be made the concern shall be submitted as a mandated report to Tusla jointly by the DLP and the registered teacher.

The Children First Act defines harm as assault, illtreatment, neglect or sexual abuse and covers single

and multiple instances. The threshold of harm is reached where the mandated person believes that a child's health, development or welfare have been, or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected.

The Children First National Guidance document 2017 is the national, overarching guidance with regard to child safeguarding. The Guidance provides that in cases of serious instances of bullying.

where the behaviour is regarded as possibly abusive, a referral may need to be made to Tusla or An Garda Síochána as appropriate.

Generally, bullying behaviour can be addressed without the involvement of Tusla. However, bullying behaviour may become a child protection concern when it results in significant physical or emotional harm, or where it becomes a persistent and severe problem and measures taken to address it are not effective. In determining when bullying behaviour should be reported to Tusla the following factors should be considered:

- the impact on the child
- protective/appropriate action taken by the parents
- protective/appropriate action taken by the school
- engagement of child/family with support services such as NEPS If there is doubt about whether bullying behaviour is a child protection concern schools should contact Tusla's social work department for advice.

Parents

The National Parents Council provides anti-bullying training for parents and their website can be accessed at the following <https://www.npc.ie/>

The department published a Bí Cineálta Resources Guide for parents which is available here <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/74cc1-resources-for-parents/>

Complaint process

If a parent is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, they may consider using the schools complaint procedure by contacting the school office for information on this procedure. Additional Information relating to schools' complaint procedures are available at the following link: <https://www.gov.ie/en/policyinformation/parentalcomplaints/>

In the event that a student and/or parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, a student and/or parent may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions have had a negative effect on the student. The Office of the Ombudsman for Children can be contacted at ococomplaint@oco.ie.

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*.

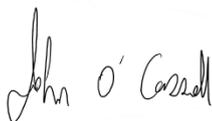
Section D: Oversight

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.

Signed:



(Chairperson of board of management)

Date: 24/06/2025

Signed:



(Principal)

Date: 24/06/2025

Review of a school's Bí Cineálta policy

A school's Bí Cineálta policy must be reviewed each calendar year or as soon as practicable where the board of management determines that a review is warranted. The review should be completed with input from the school community which includes the board of management, staff, students and their parents and members of the wider school community (as appropriate). Schools should engage with their student council (where one exists) and their parents association (where one exists) to obtain their views on the content and effectiveness of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy. The template contained in Appendix E must be completed to confirm that all aspects of the annual review are completed. Aside from the annual review, it is good practice for schools to seek feedback on the implementation of their Bí Cineálta policy on a regular basis. Open discussions with school staff, students and parents around approaches taken to prevent and address bullying behaviour can help support effective implementation. Where bullying behaviour has had a serious adverse impact on a student, schools must review the measures that they took to prevent and address bullying behaviour, with a view to identifying lessons that could be learned, so as to prevent a similar situation arising in the future. This may require an update to the school's Bí Cineálta policy. The school community must be given notice that the annual review has taken place and the form included at Appendix F can be used for this purpose. This confirmation should be published on the school website once the annual review has taken place.

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

1. 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. 24 / 06 / 20 25

2. Where in the school is the student-friendly Bí Cineálta policy displayed?

3. What date did the Board publish the Bí Cineálta policy and the student-friendly policy on the school website? 24 / 06 / 20 25

Numerous
Locations
around the
School

4. How has the student-friendly policy been communicated to students?

School App, Website, SPHE classes, Assemblies

5. How has the Bí Cineálta policy and student-friendly policy been communicated to parents

School App and Website

6. 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*?

Yes No

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

Yes

8. Has the Board received and minuted the Bullying Behaviour Update presented by the principal at every ordinary board meeting over the last calendar year?

Yes No

9. Has the Board discussed how the school is addressing all reports of bullying behaviour. Yes No

10. Is the Board satisfied that all incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed in accordance with the school's Bí Cineálta Policy? Yes No

11. Have the prevention strategies in the Bí Cineálta policy been implemented? Yes No

12. Has the Board discussed the effectiveness of the strategies used to prevent bullying behaviour? Yes No

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

Focus groups and Surveys.

14. 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:

This will take place at the Review meeting in June 2026

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

First Year of Policy implement. will be addressed at the Review stage in June 2026.

16. Does the student-friendly policy need to be updated as a result of this review and if so why?

N/A at this time.

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

Yes No

18. Has a parent informed the school that a student has left the school due to reported bullying behaviour?

Yes No

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

Yes No

Signed:



(Chairperson of board of management)

Date: 24/06/2025

Signed:



(Principal)

Date: 24/06/2025

Date of Next Review: June 2026

Notification regarding the board of management's annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management of Marist College confirms that the board of management's annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour and its implementation was completed at the board of management meeting of 24th of June 2025.

This review was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Education's Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Signed:



(Chairperson of board of management)

Date: 24/06/2025

Signed:



(Principal)

Date: 24/06/2025

Annual reporting of bullying behaviour

To effectively prevent and address bullying behaviour it is important that information on the prevalence of bullying behaviour and effective strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour is available at a national level. As part of the implementation of Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying the Department is progressing the development of a national database to facilitate data on bullying behaviour being collated in an anonymised manner with a view to informing an annual national report on bullying behaviour in schools. This information will not identify individual schools or students. 51Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and PostPrimary Schools This information is important to inform continuing professional learning, programmes to prevent and address bullying behaviour, further research in the area, awareness raising campaigns and the development and review of national policy such as Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying and the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice. Schools will be required to submit anonymised data on incidents of bullying behaviour. Schools will receive notification of the process for data submission once the system has been developed and the process is launched.