



Muslim National School

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Muslim National 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 targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm.
- The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature and can have lasting effects on the child experiencing the behaviour.
- Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society.
- It is behaviour which is deliberate in nature and is unwanted. It is not accidental or reckless behaviour.

The harm can be:

- Physical (eg: personal injury, damage to or loss of property)
 - Social: (eg: withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion)
 - Emotional: (eg: low self-esteem, depression, anxiety)
- *A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards a 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.*

Behaviour that is not 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 be addressed under the school's code of behaviour.
- 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 cannot control.
- Disagreement between students is not considered bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

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	August 2024	<u>Staff Meeting</u> Staff provided with Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying and Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying in advance of half day staff meeting in June 2025
Students	Friday April 4 th 2025 Lunch Time	<u>Student Council Meeting</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School's Bí Cineálta Policy explained to children in the group – discussed • Suggestions and ideas taken into account when drafting a new child friendly policy • Children to be consulted with every review of policy
Board of Management	Wednesday 15 th April 2025 4pm	<u>Board of Management Meeting</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First draft of our school's Bí Cineálta Policy presented to the Board of Management for inspection, discussion and feedback
Parents	Early May 2025	<u>Aladdin /Website</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bí Cineálta Policy draft shared with parent body for feedback/comments • Attention drawn to relevant resources and initiatives in the school – to be sent out via school website
School Staff	Thursday 5 th June 2025	<u>Staff Training</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff provided with the opportunity to discuss the B.C. Procedures for Preventing and Addressing Bullying • Staff informed of the important points in <i>dealing with</i> and <i>reporting</i> bullying • FUSE – scheme of work shared with staff • Teachers given a laminated version of our <i>child friendly policy</i> and asked to place it at eye level in each classroom after discussing with children • Teachers attention brought to the new Cineáltas notice board in staffroom – all important information to be found there to support staff • Draft 2 of policy to include staff suggestions
Board of Management	June 2025	<u>Board of Management Meeting</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To review policy Draft 2 • Consultation and final ratification
Date this policy was approved	14 th August 2025	
Date this policy was last reviewed	1 st review date June 2026	

SECTION B: PREVENTING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be set out 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)

CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

We strive to:

- Create a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.
- Involve parents as active partners in fostering an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated.
- Support the idea that our school is a *telling* environment.
- Promote the concept of a trusted adult – Stay Safe linkage – who to tell.
- Create safe spaces in our school building and yards – visibility.
- Incorporate artwork and signs to promote our school values – creation of a school charter promoting rights – equality, inclusion and respect.
- Encourage a sense of belonging with ownership over their own space through art and creativity.
- Create 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;
- promotes respectful relationships across the school community

Ways in which we work to achieve these goals are as follows:

- Staff are briefed on the uniform approach we must take to handle all reports of bullying – this is distributed to staff and a copy is displayed on the staffroom notice board for ease of access also.
- Anti-Bullying week activities such as Random acts of Kindness homework, poster making, slogan making, etc
- Child Friendly Anti- Bullying Policy formed with pupil and parent input and is distributed to parents, children and staff to discuss. This policy outlines various ways to tell.
- Parents receive information at times regarding useful information on Anti Bullying.
- Stay Safe and SPHE lessons focusing on positive behaviour form part of curricular content in all classes.
- Students in Student Council to make extra effort to spread kindness around school (behave as role models).
- Cór Cineálta (choir) each Thursday at lunch time to bring those children who need extra given to those who need it via our Nurturing Programme
- Class rules/promises as well as notice board to promote kindness and build responsibility amongst pupils.
- Well-being Wednesday
- Sharing of news in class
- Celebration of special events – ASD, Arabic, Hijab, Down Syndrome Days
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils.
- Wellbeing journals in older classes
- Welcoming garden spaces to enhance wellbeing, designed and created by pupils and parents
- Charity events

CURRICULUM (TEACHING AND LEARNING)

We strive to:

- Provide teaching and promote learning which is collaborative and respectful, fostering inclusion and respect for diversity.
- Display a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact.

Ways in which we work to achieve these goals are as follows:

- Teach SPHE and RSE content which fosters students' well-being and self-confidence as well as promoting personal responsibility for their own behaviours and actions – including Stay Safe, Webwise, Walk Tall and FUSE
- Model respectful behaviour towards colleagues, pupils and visitors in our school environment.
- Curricular and extra-curricular activities can help to develop a sense of self-worth, working together, inclusion and respect.
- Students are given regular opportunities to work in small groups with peers, which can help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy.
- Acknowledgment of our diverse school population – celebrating diversity and culture in our school through art, displays, photographs, events.
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that: build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils
- explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying
- Supports for staff.
- During Croke Park planning meetings, address the key competencies in the following document: Primary Curriculum Framework's Key Competencies (with specific emphasis on the Being Well attributes)
- During Croke Park planning meetings, address the key principles in the following document: Indicators of Effective Practice for Primary Schools: Supporting Children with Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Classes
- During Croke Park planning meetings, address improving standards mentioned in the following document: Looking at Our Schools 2022, A Quality Framework for Primary Schools and Special Schools
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies).
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

POLICY AND PLANNING

The aim of Muslim National School's Bí Cineálta Policy is to:

- Develop a clear and consistent anti bullying policy that is informed by all staff members
- Review and update the anti-bullying policy regularly
- Provide opportunity for staff to discuss and learn how to recognise and respond to bullying
- Establish clear procedures for reporting and responding to bullying incidents
- The Acceptable Use Policy was developed in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that access to technology within the school is strictly monitored
- School Policies: The following policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying include: Code of Behaviour, Child Safeguarding Statement, Risk Assessment, Supervision of Pupils, Acceptable Use Policy, Attendance, SPHE, RSE, PE, SEN/Inclusion Policy
- Pupil voice – Frequent engagement with Student Council
- The school's approach to tackling and preventing bullying will take particular account of the needs of pupils with disabilities or with SEN, will join up with other relevant school policies and supports and will endeavour to ensure that all the services that provide for such pupils work together
- Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for pupils with SEN include improving inclusion, focusing on developing social skills, paying attention to key moments such as transitioning from primary to post-primary and cultivating a good school culture which has respect for all and helping one another as central

RELATIONSHIPS AND PARTNERSHIPS

We strive to:

- Support interpersonal connections through a range of formal and informal structures such as our parents' association, our various student committees and groups
- Invite parents to class assemblies with follow up tea & coffee/meet and greet
- Invite guest speakers to speak to staff/students/parents in relation to anti-bullying from an Islamic perspective in line with our ethos
- Encourage peer mentoring – paired reading/debating between class groups etc
- Support active participation of students in school life – Student Council etc
- Support active participation of parents in school life – Parents' Association
- Engage parents and students in actively contributing to the formation of a Child Friendly Anti Bullying Policy to make them active participants in promotion of and discussion of useful ways to identify and reduce bullying behaviour and highlight procedure and how to deal with it if it does occur
- Encourage teachers to focus on anti-bullying and wellbeing for Teacher Professional Learning (TPL)
- Use public library – resources
- Provide information to parents in relation to safe and responsible internet usage and the dangers of cyberbullying
- Put clear protocols in place to encourage parents/guardians to approach the school should they suspect that their child is being bullied

We will create a safe and inclusive environment for all students who attend Muslim National School and work to prevent all types of bullying at our school using a wide variety of resources.

We strive to:

PREVENT CYBERBULLYING BEHAVIOUR

- Explicitly teach the issues of cyberbullying using tailored resources for Muslim National School using the following resources: Walk Tall, Stay Safe, Webwise, Fuse
- Monitor students' use of technology in the classroom and on school grounds
- Work with parents to educate them about the dangers of cyberbullying by facilitating speakers

PREVENT HOMOPHOBIC/TRANSPHOBIC BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

- Create a safe and inclusive environment for all students
- Educate students about the importance of respecting all people
- Encourage empathy building activities

PREVENT SEXIST BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

- Teach students about the importance of gender equality
- Celebrate diversity at school and acknowledge the contributions of all students

PREVENT SEXUAL HARRASSMENT

- Create a safe environment for all students
- Educate students about the importance of respecting all people
- Encourage empathy building activities

PREVENT RACIST BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

- Teach students about the history and impact of racism
- Promote diversity and inclusion in the classroom
- Ensure that library material is representative of people from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds

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)

Supervision

- Staff supervision – All staff should be informed about and able to recognise bullying behaviour. Staff should be present and visible in the yard and other used common areas during break times.
- Student supervision – Class teachers should supervise students during class time and break times. They should be aware of what is happening in their classrooms and on the yard.
- Visitor supervision – Visitors to the school should be supervised at all times. They should not be left alone with students

Monitoring

- Incident reporting – The class teacher investigates all incidences of suspected bullying behaviour with a view to establishing the facts and record in notebook/other without using names and eventually on hard copy of M.N.S. Bullying Report template to be locked away securely in Nazrin's office
- Incident investigation – All reports of bullying should be investigated promptly and thoroughly. The investigation should include interviews with the student who reported the incident, the student who was allegedly bullied and any witnesses.
- Follow-up – The school should take appropriate action to follow up the bullying behaviour (see next section on addressing bullying behaviour) *** 20 DAY RULE***

SECTION C: ADDRESSING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

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

Class Teachers, In-School Management Team

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 (taking particular care with **Infants** and SEN children)
- 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):

Determine –

- Class teacher(s) investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour with a view to establishing the facts and managing behaviour
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the class teacher (s) will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- Class teacher(s) should consider the following: Who? What? Where? When?

Address –

- Class teacher(s) will be fair and consistent in their approach when addressing bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
- Interviews will be conducted outside the classroom in a fair and consistent way. If a group has been involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first and, thereafter, as a group when each child will be asked for his/her account of what happened. It may be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident.
- The following principles **MUST** be adhered to when addressing bullying behaviour:
 - Ensure that the student experiencing the bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured
 - 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
- Non-teaching staff such as special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, secretaries etc are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them, to a class teacher

- School staff should know what to do when bullying behaviour is reported to them
- A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school (eg buses coming to Muslim National School). However, where this bullying behaviour has an *impact in school*, schools are required to *support the students involved*. Where bullying behaviour CONTINUES in school, schools *should deal in accordance with the Bí Cineálta policy*
- Both the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour need support
- Parents are an integral part of the school community and play an important role in partnership with schools, in addressing bullying behaviour
- The primary aim of the class teacher(s) investigating bullying is to resolve issues and to restore relationships. Ongoing supervision and support may be required for both the student who has experienced the bullying behaviour as well as the student who has displayed the bullying behaviour. In some cases, relationships may never be restored to how they were before.
- The parents/guardians of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school will give parents/guardians an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the support provided to the pupils
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents/guardians) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter (under GDPR) between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents/guardians and the school
- When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved, the teacher(s) will complete a **report**, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information – **all staff to use M.N.S. template**
- This report should be **kept confidential and securely locked away** in Nazrin's office
- Staff at M.N.S. will include written reflection sheets filled in by students during the investigation should be kept with the above mentioned report and locked away securely in Nazrin's office

Review –

- The class teacher **MUST** engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 days after the initial discussion to review progress following the initial intervention
- If the bullying behaviour has not ceased the class teacher(s) 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 the school 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)/guardian(s) is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary School, they should be referred to the school's complaints procedures

- If a parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe the school's actions to have had a negative effect on the student

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):

- Manage the bullying behaviour
- Promote a school culture where pupils feel safe, respected and valued
- Raise awareness of the appropriate programmes and teacher training
- Help pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills
- Make it clear that adopting the strategies is a positive step towards creating a more respectful and inclusive school environment
- EAL explicit teaching of language to help expression and communication of issues
- In dealing with challenging behaviour, encourage teachers and parents to focus on positive reinforcement
- Pay careful attention to seating plans in classrooms
- Liaise with Arabic teachers
- Provide children with opportunity to join group of kind children in Cór Cineálta
- Strictly adhering to Code of Behaviour
- Strict supervision
- Choosing relevant children to lead prayer
- Encourage use of the new outdoor spaces provided by Parents Association and pupils
- Engage students in Circle Time & 'Connections' workshop
- Consider a Quiet Play area at yard time
- Playground games painted on ground/Friendship Bench
- Consider students for assessment to access Nurture Room

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.

