

Marymount NS

Bí Cineálta Policy

to

Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Marymount NS 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.

We confirm that we will take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the bullying or harassment of our students in whatever form and however motivated.

Catholic schools have a distinctive understanding of the human person, recognising that every person is created in God's image and likeness and has inherent dignity as a child of God. This is the basis for ensuring that each person in our school is treated with respect and care, in accordance with the Catholic Schedule.

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

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	7 th March	Staff meeting
Students	24 th March 20 th March	Student Council Survey 2 nd – 6 th Class Survey
Parents	6 th June 2025	Survey
Board of Management	10 th June 2025	Meeting
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	n/a	n/a
Date policy was approved:		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by this school to address all forms of bullying behaviour, in whatever form and however motivated, including online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment.

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 dialogue with parents, thereby building a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, trust and confidence. In continuing to develop prevention strategies, this school will listen to young people and parents, to help establish their particular context and needs. Frequent periods of reflection and engagement by the school, young people and parents, will be used to discern appropriate supports for young people in this school and to help inform future prevention strategies.

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

We have a school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.

We promote the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping and highlighting the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.

We foster and enhance the self-esteem of all pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils are provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.

We encourage staff professional development and hold staff meetings on bullying to ensure that all staff develop an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it through prevention and intervention.

We annually audit professional development needs with a view to assessing staff requirements through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources.

We engage in professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teachers.

We adequately supervise and monitor classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extracurricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff are encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers.

School wide awareness-raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community through KIVA Anti-Bullying Programme and Louth ABC.

The school's Anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parents/guardians are encouraged to read it on our website.

We encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders.

Pupils gain confidence in telling and this confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly

We ensure that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:

Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class

Hand note up with homework

Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf

Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place

Parents are encouraged to contact the class teacher if they feel their child is being bullied.

Our Acceptable Internet Use Policy in the school ensures that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored. Mobile Phones are not allowed at school.

Supports currently being used in the school include HSCL, School Completion Programme, Community Garda Scheme, KiVa Anti-Bullying Programme, Stay Safe, The Incredible Years Programme and Friends for Life.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teachers with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour are as follows:

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Class Teachers
- KiVa Team Members

Preventing Cyber Bullying (Bí Cinealta Guidelines pg 39)

The digital age of consent is the minimum age a user must be before a social media or internet company can collect, process and store their data. In Ireland the digital age of consent is 16.

Most social media platforms and services have a minimum age requirement and for the majority of these services it is 13 years' old. Therefore technically, children under the age of 13 should not have a social media account.

(Bí Cinealta Guidelines, pg 43)

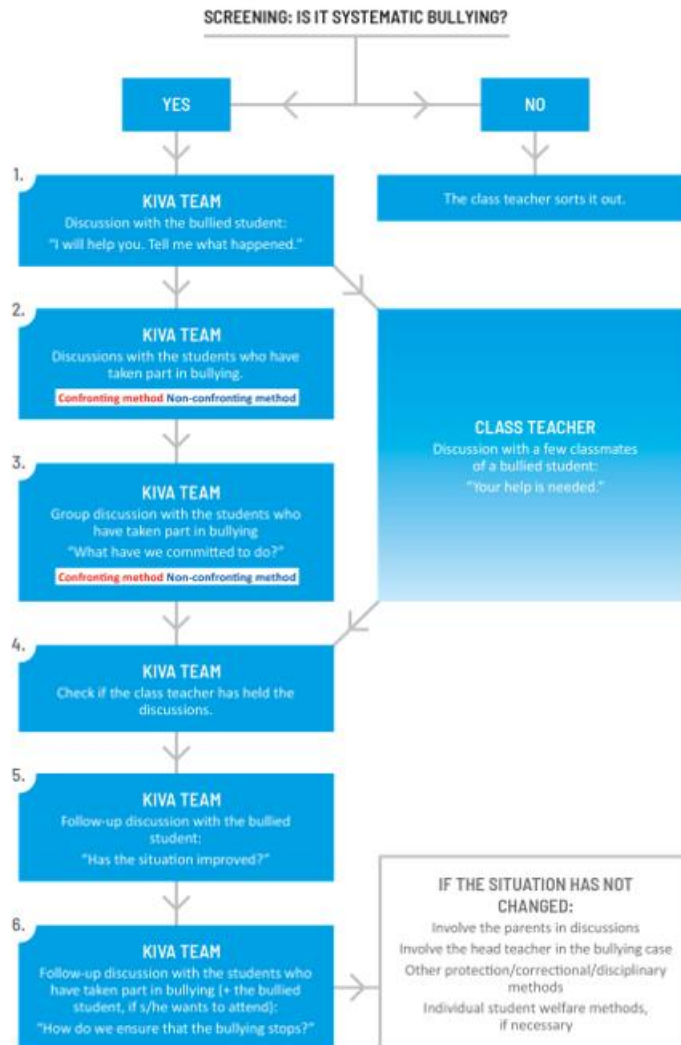
'A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, the school will support the students involved.'

Requests to take no action:

Parents may 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.

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:

SUMMARY: HANDLING OF THE BULLYING CASES



- Parents of all pupils involved will be informed at Step 2 of the KiVa process.
- The following KiVa forms will be used:
 - Form 1 - Screening
 - Form 2 – Discussions with the Bullied Pupil
 - Form 3 – Individual Discussions with the Pupils Involved in Bullying Behaviour
 - Form 4 - Group Discussions with the Pupils Involved in Bullying Behaviour
 - Form 5 – Follow Up Discussions
 - Form 6 – Parental Involvement

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):

Those who Experience:

We foster and enhance the self-esteem of all pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils are provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions. Parents are contacted and encouraged to support their child through the process.

Class Teacher checks in regularly with whole class.

Class teacher/ KiVa Team member checking in 1:1 with individuals that require extra support.

Those Who Witness:

We encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders.

Pupils gain confidence in telling and this confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly

We ensure that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:

Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class

Hand note up with homework

Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf

Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place

Those who Display Bullying Behaviour:

Children are given the opportunity to discuss their behaviour through the KiVa process with a restorative practice approach. Oral reflections and discussions on how their behaviour impacts others are all covered. Parents are contacted and encouraged to support their child through the process. Children may be referred to a Nurture Group/ external services should the need require and where available.

Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and PostPrimary 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: _____ Date: _____ (Chairperson of board of management)
Signed: _____ Date: _____ (Principal)

FORM 1: Screening

To be filled out by the adult who is the first to know about the hurtful behaviour.

IS THIS BULLYING?

Hurtful behaviour was reported on 20

The person who has been contacted first was

The person who reported hurtful behaviour was

- the pupil targeted by hurtful behaviour
- a peer of the targeted pupil, name.....
- pupil's parent or guardian, name.....
- a teacher, name.....
- someone else, name.....

The pupil who was targeted:..... Class:.....

What has happened? Provide concrete examples of behaviours that were perceived hurtful.

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How many times hurtful behaviour has occurred?.....

When was the last time it occurred?.....

For how long has the situation been going on?.....

Pupils who have taken part in the hurtful behaviour:.....

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On the basis of the information acquired this is

- a conflict or a fight between children
- a case of hurt feelings due to misunderstandings
- a single case of an aggressive or a hurtful act
- continuous bullying → to be directed to the KiVa team.

Also, the cases, which are not directed to the KiVa team, require intervention! In these cases schools' established procedure takes place. For example, the class teacher tackles the situation discussing with the pupils involved, or the dispute is solved by mediation, or a sanction is given. In some cases, it will be necessary to be very assertive about the hurtful behaviour of the pupil.

FORM 2: Discussions with the bullied pupil

Bullied pupil: Class:

When was the KiVa team informed about the bullying case? On 20 (date)

Names of the KiVa Team members tackling this case:

.....

Date 20

What type of bullying has occurred?

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.....

How many times has bullying occurred? Select the best answer.

once or twice three times or more

When was the last time that bullying occurred?

For how long has the bullying been going on?
 for a week or two for a month
 for 2 to 6 months for 6 to 12 months for years

The pupils who have actively taken part in the bullying:

..... Class:
..... Class:
..... Class:
..... Class:

Name:

Name:

Name: Name:

The pupils who have not taken part in the bullying or who have been friendly towards the targeted pupil. (The aim is to find pupils for the class teacher to talk with and come up with some ideas to support and encourage the bullied pupil).

..... Class:
..... Class:
..... Class:
..... Class:

Name:

Name:

Name:

Name:

Further information:

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.....
.....

The class teacher has been informed about this discussion on.....20 (date)

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.....

Parents or guardians have been contacted on.....20 (date)

FORM 3: Individual discussions with the pupils involved in the bullying

The discussions are to be held with all the pupils (individually) during the same lesson.

Date 20

Pupil: Class:

Matters noted or agreed on during the discussion:

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Pupil: Class:

Matters noted or agreed on during the discussion:

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Pupil: Class:

Matters noted or agreed on during the discussion:

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Pupil: Class:

Matters noted or agreed on during the discussion:

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FORM 5: Follow up discussions

CHECK WHETHER THE CLASS TEACHER HAS MET WITH A FEW CLASSMATES OF THE BULLIED PUPIL

The class teacher has met with classmates on 20_____ (date)

FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION WITH THE BULLIED PUPIL

Date.....20.....

According to the bullied pupil, the bullying

- has stopped
- decreased
- remained the same
- increased

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FOLLOW-UP GROUP DISCUSSION WITH THE PUPILS INVOLVED IN THE BULLYING

Date.....20.....

Is the bullied pupil present at the discussion? (This is not required, but is possible if s/he wants to).

- no
- yes

Notes:

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Possible further measures:

FORM 6

KiVa Form 6 Parental Involvement

Child's Name: _____

Parent's Name: _____

Parents or Guardians have been contacted on _____

Parental Feedback on Actions to be taken:

Child Displaying Bullying Behaviour or Child Experiencing Bullying Behaviour – please circle

Review to take place on: _____

Parental Feedback Following Review:

Child Displaying Bullying Behaviour or Child Experiencing Bullying Behaviour – please circle

KiVa Team Member Signature: _____

Date: _____