Muchgrange NS

Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management of **Muchgrange 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.

> *Cineáltas: 'Action Plan on Bullying is rooted in the four key principles of **prevention, support,***
>
> ***oversight and community**. Cineáltas provides a collective vision and clear roadmap for how*
>
> *the whole education community and society can work together to prevent and address*
>
> *bullying in our schools.'*

Catholic education places a strong emphasis on the values of acceptance, respect and the importance of reaching out to the most vulnerable and marginalised. Catholic schools, in line with their ethos, are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual where no human person is to be diminished or devalued, regardless of difference. Catholic schools recognise that it is important to take steps to prevent all types of bullying behaviour.

We confirm that we will take all 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.

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.

Additional Policies that have informed the development of this policy include:

- Muchgrange - Anti Bullying Policy 2024

- Muchgrange - Code of Behaviour.
- 2015 Children First Act
- 2017 - Child Protection Procedures - primary - Revised 2023
- GDPR (2018)
- Harassment, Harmful Communications and related Offences Act /Coco's Law 2020
- Report on the Implementation of Anti Bullying Measures
- Cinealtas Action plan 2022
- Perspectives on Bullying Behaviour 2023
- Bí Cineálta Procedures 2024
- Dignity at Work Policy 2023

Definition of Bullying Behaviour

Muchgrange NS adopts the definition of bullying behaviour as outlined in the Bí Cineálta: Action Plan on Bullying and Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2024:

2.1 Definition of bullying behaviour as outlined in *Cineáltas: Action Plan on 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.

This definition encompasses a wide range of behaviours, including:

Types of Bullying:

- **Physical Bullying**: Includes acts such as pushing, shoving, hitting, kicking, and damaging property.

- **Verbal Bullying**: Involves name-calling, insults, threats, and teasing.

- **Relational Bullying**: Characterised by spreading rumours, social exclusion, and manipulating friendships.

- **Cyberbullying**: Includes sending hurtful messages, sharing embarrassing photos or videos online, creating fake profiles, and online exclusion.

- **This list is not exhaustive**.

Development

Muchgrange NS - a rural co - educational primary school of 97 pupils ranging in ages from 4-12, with a staff (including teachers, SNAs, and a secretary), is deeply committed to providing a safe and inclusive learning environment. The school firmly believes that bullying behaviour is unacceptable and is dedicated to preventing and addressing all forms of bullying to safeguard the well-being, academic performance, and social development of each student. Recognising that bullying contradicts the values of respect and dignity inherent in their Catholic ethos, Muchgrange NS strives to create a school community where every child feels cherished and supported.

How Muchgrange NS Engaged with the School Community/ Stakeholders

All members of our school community were provided with the opportunity to input into the development /review of this policy. The school is committed to a collaborative approach and have engaged with the following stakeholders in the development of this policy.

Consultation with the Student Council: The role of student Council in providing feedback on anti-bullying initiatives and the policy itself was valued. A 'Child Friendly,' version will be developed by students for display within the school.

Surveys and Feedback: The Student Council will conduct surveys at the beginning and end of the school year 2024/25 and these will be used to develop and monitor the effectiveness of the policy.

Parent Consultation: Parents were consulted through the Parents Association meetings and their feedback was used to help develop this policy.

Collaboration with Staff: Teachers, SNAs, and the school secretary were engaged in discussions and their perspectives were included.

	DATE CONSULTED	METHOD OF CONSULTATION
SCHOOL STAFF	11/9/2024 19/02/25	Staff meeting organised to discuss the timeline for the implementation of the new policy and the school's obligations. Staff issued with draft copy of the policy to consult and make amendments. Policy planning day – Staff given time to discuss the policy and make amendments.
STUDENTS	11/09/24 20/02/25 – 20/06/25	Student Council meeting held to discuss the new policy. Class teachers to workshop elements of the policy to the children and a student version adapted and displayed within the school.
PARENTS	11/09/24 -	Parents council issued with a with draft copy of the policy to consult and given the opportunity to suggest amendments. Attention drawn to our Child Friendly Version – and initiatives in school during Anti-Bullying Week and Friendship Week.

		Bí Cineálta policy shared on school website.
BOARD OF MANAGEMENT	11/09/24 Dec 2024- March 2025	Draft cover of policy shared with BOM prior to meeting. Policy discussed during BOM meeting and amendments suggested by the Board. Consultation on final amendments and ratification in Spring Term 2025.
WIDER SCHOOL COMMUNITY	20/02/2025	Policy shared with cleaner, secretary and afterschool's club.
DATE POLICY WAS APPROVED		
DATE POLICY WAS LAST REVIEWED		

Section A: Types of Bullying Behaviour

The school acknowledges that bullying can manifest in various forms both directly and indirectly Bullying behaviour can occur separately or together and can take the form of Physical / Verbal / Cyberbullying/ Social and/or Emotional and Extortion. Types of bullying are listed below and again; this list is not exhaustive.

● Disablist Bullying

● Exceptionally Able Bullying

● Gender Identity Bullying

● Homophobic/Transphobic (LGBTQ+) Bullying

● Physical Appearance Bullying

● Racist Bullying

● Poverty Bullying

● Religious Identity Bullying

● Sexist Bullying

• Sexual Harassment

Our school is committed to addressing all these types of bullying behaviour and will provide support and resources to students who experience or witness any form of bullying.

What is NOT bullying –

1. A one-off incident
2. Disagreement between students/ groups of friends
3. Students with Special Needs (dysregulated)
4. Reckless or accidental behaviour
5. Bad manners or inappropriate Behaviour (refer to school's Code of Behaviour)

(This list is not exhaustive)

Impacts:

Bullying can have a severe impact on children in both long and short term, can cause stress, insecurity and anxiety. It can damage self-confidence and self - esteem, lower mood and in extreme cases can result in mental health difficulties. Cyberbullying can be anonymous, go unnoticed, can have a wider audience and can be difficult to have offensive comments/ material removed.

Where can Bullying occur?

It can happen anywhere: inside or outside school, online, coming to or from school, in organised clubs/ after schools/ on school trips. (*list not exhaustive*) When the bullying occurs outside of school, but has an impact in school, we are required to **support** the students involved.

IDENTIFYING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

- Is it Bullying? How our school will determine if Bullying has occurred.
- Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?
- Has **one** harmful comment been posted online and possibly shared multiple times. If so, we will treat this as targeted repeated (by sharing) bullying.
- Is the behaviour intended to cause harm (physical, emotional and social distress)
- Is the behaviour repeated, Is there a pattern?
- If we can say yes to any of the above, then the behaviour can be defined as bullying.

- If we can answer no, then it is not bullying, and we will address it under our 'Code of Behaviour'.

Section B: Prevention Strategies –

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 the 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.
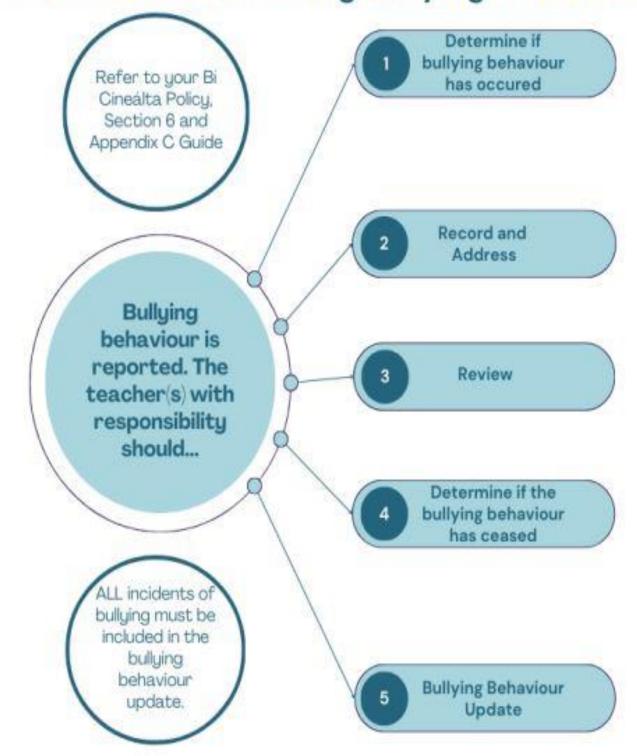
What the class teacher will do:

Teacher(s) *investigates* as per school policy. Record as per Section 6.5. If the behaviour IS NOT bullying, deal with in line with your Code of Behaviour. If the behaviour IS BULLYING, proceed to Step 2. Record as per Bí Cineálta policy and Section 6.5, Bí Cinealta. *Inform* parent(s) of parties involved at an early stage. Complete *agreed* actions, as per your Bí Cineálta policy, monitor and evaluate. No more than 20 school days after initial engagement, review with student(s) and parent(s). If bullying has ceased, continue to monitor. If bullying has not ceased, review strategies, seek external support, if appropriate, and review within the agreed timeframe. Principal must include all bullying behaviour in their update to the board. Principal provides verbal update to the board. Review policy, if needed.

Teachers have several obligations under this strategy, including the following:

1. **Understanding and Implementing Anti-Bullying Policies**: Teachers are required to be fully aware of the school's anti-bullying policy, including the *Bí Cineálta* strategy. They must ensure that the policy is effectively implemented in the classroom and across the school.

2. **Creating a Safe and Supportive Environment**: Teachers are expected to foster a positive classroom environment where bullying is not tolerated. They must promote inclusivity, respect, and kindness among students and provide a safe space for all students.

3. **Recognising and Addressing Bullying Behaviour**: Teachers must be vigilant in identifying signs of bullying, whether physical, verbal, social, or cyberbullying. They are obligated to intervene promptly and report any incidents of bullying according to the school's

procedures. This includes dealing with bullying between students or if a student is bullying a teacher or staff member.

4. **Reporting and Documenting Bullying Incidents**: Teachers are required to document and report any incidents of bullying in line with the school's policy. This may involve writing reports, informing the principal, and following up on any actions taken.

5. **Supporting Victims of Bullying**: Teachers must provide support to students who are victims of bullying, offering a safe space to express their concerns and seeking appropriate assistance from other staff, such as counsellors or school management.

6. **Engaging in Anti-Bullying Training**: Teachers are encouraged to participate in ongoing training and professional development related to anti-bullying strategies. This ensures they are equipped with the knowledge and skills to handle bullying issues effectively.

7. **Promoting Positive Behaviours**: In addition to addressing bullying, teachers must actively promote positive behaviours that prevent bullying, such as respect, empathy, teamwork, and emotional intelligence.

8. **Engaging with Parents and Guardians**: Teachers must communicate with the parents or guardians of both the victim and the perpetrator of bullying. This includes informing them of the situation and working together to resolve the issue.

Bí Cineálta: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

Refer to your Bi Cineálta Policy, Section 6 and Appendix C Guide

Bullying behaviour is reported. The teacher(s) with responsibility should...

1 Determine if bullying behaviour has occured

2 Record and Address

3 Review

4 Determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased

ALL incidents of bullying must be included in the bullying behaviour update.

5 Bullying Behaviour Update

Preventing Bullying Behaviour:

We strive to create a school environment where bullying is unacceptable, and this requires a multi-faceted approach. Our prevention strategies include:

●**Fostering a "Telling" Environment**: We actively work to overcome the barriers that prevent students from reporting bullying, as highlighted in our recent conversation. This includes addressing fears of retaliation, social stigma, and a lack of confidence in adults. We emphasise that reporting bullying is the right thing to do and will be taken seriously.

●**Promoting Open Communication**: We encourage open and honest dialogue about bullying through age-appropriate initiatives, workshops, and classroom discussions. This helps to raise awareness, dispel myths, and empower students to speak out against bullying. Each class will develop a '*Class Charter'* to promote kindness and build responsibility amongst students.

●**Building Empathy and Respect**: We will integrate activities that foster empathy, respect, and inclusivity into our curriculum and school culture. These include collaborative learning projects, peer mentoring programs (e.g buddy reading) and initiatives that celebrate diversity.

Strengthening Digital Citizenship: Recognising the increasing prevalence of cyberbullying, we prioritise digital citizenship education through our SPHE curriculum. We will teach students about responsible online behaviour, the potential consequences of harmful online actions, and the importance of reporting cyberbullying.

Clear and Enforceable Policies: Our school's *Acceptable Use Policy* for technology and the standards outlined in our *Code of Behaviour* set clear expectations for online and offline behaviour, explicitly addressing cyberbullying and other forms of unacceptable conduct.

Safe Physical Spaces: We have designed our school environment to minimise hidden spaces and ensure adequate supervision during breaks and transitions. Our well-maintained grounds and the student-created artwork displayed throughout the school foster a sense of ownership and pride, contributing to a positive school climate. We will ensure supervision notes about ongoing issues are available to all staff and sub teachers on supervision duty.

Relationships and Partnerships / Culture

The following are some of the initiatives we will run in our school to continue to promote healthy relationships and partnerships to maintain a culture of positivity in our school and to prevent bullying behaviour.

Prevention: As part of our effort to create a positive school culture in which all children feel safe, class teachers will provide themed lessons to raise awareness of the impacts of bullying behaviour and steps that can be taken by pupils to combat and prevent bullying.

Intervention: Incidents considered to be of a bullying nature, will be investigated by the class teacher and may be reported to and investigated by the _KIVA team_. Interventions will be put in place to resolve this issue and improve relationships. The principal will become involved if the problem persists and if no improvements in behaviours are seen.

Support: Our School will provide support for children affected by bullying and implement interventions for children involved in bullying behaviour. The teacher/KiVa team will maintain care for the victim over time. This will be done by speaking to the child over a number of weeks after the incident to check on their welfare.

Monitoring: Records of persistent bullying incidents will be kept (Stage 1) and the school will conduct a yearly online survey of students through KIVA to monitor attitudes and worries around the issue. A 'Parents' Guide,' to KiVa has been made available to parents. (Link on the school   website)

2. Fostering a Positive School Culture and Environment:

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.

- Our school will actively promote a culture of kindness, empathy, respect, and inclusivity through assemblies, posters, classroom discussions, and school events.
- Our school leadership team will set clear expectations for behaviour and will model respectful interactions with all members of the school community.
- Our school will provide opportunities for students to develop their social and emotional skills, empathy, and resilience through the SPHE and RSE curricula.
- Our school will create safe physical spaces with good visibility and supervision to minimise opportunities for bullying behaviour.
- The school promotes inclusion and awareness of Additional Needs.
- Our school actively promotes awareness of diversity in our community by taking part in The Peace Proms and Peace Plus programs.

School Initiatives for Well-Being and Community Building:

- **Friendship Week**: Activities aimed at fostering strong, positive peer relationships.
- **Anti-Bullying Week (November)**: Dedicated time for awareness and prevention activities.
- **Student Council Meetings**: Regular forums for student voices and participation in school matters.
- **Buddy Benches**: Spaces promoting inclusion and peer connection.
- **Celebration Assemblies (Every Friday)**: Weekly events to celebrate achievements and build community.
- **Peer Support & Buddy Activities**: Programs encouraging cooperation and mutual support among students.
- **Empathy, Respect, and Resilience Activities**: Including **Circle Time** and **Golden Time** to develop social and emotional skills.
- **Student and Parent Input**: Engaging families in school initiatives and decision-making.
- **Teacher Professional Learning**: Continuous development to support the delivery of well-being and anti-bullying education.

Supervision - All students are supervised during school hours, including break times, lunch periods, and during transitions between classes. Staff members are assigned to various designated supervision zones to ensure that students are monitored effectively. Specific measures include:

- Classroom Supervision: Teachers ensure that students are well supervised within the classroom.
- Playground/Outdoor Supervision: SNAs and teachers are stationed at strategic locations around the playground to monitor student interactions.
- Playground Helpers: Student Council members will play an important role in displaying responsible behaviour and will guide children during transition periods. (yard/assembly)
- Hallways and Common Areas: Teachers, office staff and the principal are present in hallways during high-traffic times to observe student behaviour.
- The school entrance is supervised before and after school.
- Extra supervision is provided on school tours and school outings.

3. **Open Communication and Reporting Procedures:**

DLP/DDLP – Children in the school will be made aware of the role of the DLP and DDLP within the school. Photos of teachers in these roles will be on display in the school entrance hall.

'The designated liaison person is responsible for ensuring that reporting procedures within your organisation are followed, so that child welfare and protection concerns are referred promptly to Tusla.'

The school will establish a **"trusted adult"** system where students can confidentially report concerns about bullying behaviour. This may be the class teacher. In the case that children would rather not speak to their class teacher they can speak to another trusted staff member ie… principal or other support teacher/SNA, KiVa team.

The school will create a *"telling environment",* where students feel safe and supported to report bullying without fear of retaliation or being ignored. **Monthly feedback**/ check ins/heads down, hands up strategy. The student council will feedback via a suggestion box. This will help to monitor how our school is doing in managing bullying behaviour.

Clear reporting procedures will be communicated to students, staff, and parents through the school website, parents and Parent Association meetings.

The school will ensure confidentiality, sensitivity and will take all reports of bullying seriously.

The school in conjunction with our **student council** will develop a student friendly version of the *Bi Cinealta* policy _ see appendix B. The policy will use language that is easy for students to understand, and we will display this where it is easily accessible for all students.

Teachers and parents will be made aware of Anti-Bullying workshops/training, and parenting advice occurring locally. Parents will be made aware of useful information on anti-bullying via the school website.

Parental Involvement:

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 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 recognises the important role parents play in preventing bullying behaviour. We will communicate the **Bí Cineálta** policy to parents and will provide resources and information on bullying prevention strategies and inform them what we will do in addressing bullying behaviour when it has occurred. We will encourage parents to reinforce positive behaviours at

home, maintain a positive attitude to the school and towards school staff and to *communicate* any concerns about bullying to the school in a respectful way.

Engaging Parents: We actively engage parents as partners in preventing bullying. We provide resources and workshops on cyber safety, offer guidance on monitoring children's online activities, and encourage open communication between parents and the school.

4. Curriculum, Teaching and Learning:

The school will utilise the SPHE and RSE curricula to educate students about bullying behaviour, its impact, and strategies for prevention and intervention. Other programmes such as **'Friends for Life,'** will be used where appropriate. Teachers will incorporate lessons on empathy, respect, and conflict resolution into their classroom teaching. The school will promote positive social interactions and peer support through group work, collaborative projects, and extracurricular activities.

Addressing Specific Types of Bullying:

Cyberbullying: The school will teach digital literacy and internet safety topics as part of the SPHE curriculum to teach students about responsible online behaviour, digital citizenship, and online safety. The school has developed and communicated an 'Acceptable Use Policy.' for technology and will address appropriate online behaviour within the Code of Behaviour. We will invite the **Garda Community Team** into school from time to time to deliver talks to the children on internet safety.

- *Digital Learning Plan* – This will include learning about responsible behaviour and digital citizenship. AUP also developed for use of technology within the school.

Homophobic/Transphobic Bullying: The school will create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all students, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. The school will challenge gender stereotypes and homophobic language.

Racist Bullying: The school will celebrate diversity and will foster a school culture where students from all backgrounds feel valued and respected. We will provide support to students for whom English is an additional language and will ensure that learning materials represent diverse perspectives and lived experiences.

Sexist Bullying: The school will promote gender equality and will ensure that all students have equal opportunities to participate in school activities. The school will challenge sexist language and stereotypes and will encourage respectful interactions between all students.

Sexual Harassment: The school will maintain a zero-tolerance policy for sexual harassment. We will educate students about appropriate behaviour and will provide clear reporting procedures for incidents of sexual harassment.

Section C: Addressing and Recording of Bullying Behaviour-

Where it has been established that Bullying behaviour has occurred:

Staff have received training on how to deal with bullying behaviour when it is reported to them or when they witness bullying behaviour. They will follow all the steps in this policy. A uniform approach will be taken in handling reports of bullying. A copy of these steps will be on display in the staffroom. It is important that staff are fair and consistent in their approach to address bullying behaviour. Both the bully and the student being bullied will need to be supported. The student being bullied will be supported immediately, reassured and their views sought as to how best they would like us to deal with the situation. Parents will be contacted and an initial meeting organised. A record should be kept of the engagement with all parties involved. *Appendix E* The record should include the views of the student and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour.

Immediate Response to Bullying Incidents:

Guidelines for Identifying and Responding to Bullying Behaviour:

When assessing suspected bullying, teachers should consider key factors: *what* occurred, *where* it happened, *when* it took place, and *why* it might have occurred. Ensuring the student feels heard and reassured promptly is essential. The school aims to protect the privacy of all individuals involved and will handle all interactions with sensitivity. When identifying bullying behaviour, it is important for teachers to consider the following -

1. Is the behaviour **targeted** at a specific student or group of students?

2. Is the behaviour **intended** to cause physical, social or emotional harm?

3. Is the behaviour **repeated**?

If a group is implicated, each student should initially be spoken to one-on-one by the class teacher and *if necessary*, the KiVa team. Following this, the group can be brought together, with each participant asked to share their perspective so that everyone understands each other's viewpoint. Support for each student should continue after the group discussion. Encouraging students to write their own account of the incident may be helpful. Finally, it is

important to establish whether the behaviour constitutes bullying. If not, the school's **Code of Behaviour** will be applied.

Age-Appropriate Response: In line with the principles outlined in the Bí Cineálta anti-bullying strategy, our approach to addressing bullying incidents will be tailored to the developmental stages and emotional maturity of the children involved. We recognise that effective intervention must consider the **age and understanding** of the students, ensuring that responses are age-appropriate and foster a supportive learning environment. Whether addressing the experiences of younger children or older students, our aim is to promote understanding, empathy, and constructive resolutions, while providing the necessary support to all parties involved.

- **Initial Assessment:** When a bullying incident is reported, the responding staff member will assess the situation by gathering details from all involved parties (the target, the alleged bully, and witnesses).
- **Implement Steps:**
  - **Talk to the Target:** Provide a safe space for the target to express their feelings and experiences. Offer support and reassurance.
  - **Talk to the Alleged Bully:** Meet with the alleged bully to listen to their side of the story without judgment, focusing on understanding their behaviour.
  - **Talk to Witnesses:** Gather information from any witnesses to gain a comprehensive view of the incident.
  - **Support for the Target:** Offer counselling, peer support, and strategies to help them feel safe and empowered.
  - **Intervention Strategies for the Bully:** Implement appropriate consequences as per school policy, involve them in reflection activities, and possibly provide support or counselling to address their behaviour.
  - **Support for Bystanders:** Educate witnesses on the importance of their role in stopping bullying, encouraging them to support the target and report incidents.
  - **Regular Check-Ins:** Schedule follow-up meetings with the target and the alleged bully to monitor the situation and ensure that the bullying has stopped.
  - **Increased** or repeated SPHE, Friends For Life and/or KiVa lessons in the classroom.
  - **Adjust the Action Plan:** Revise the action plan as needed based on ongoing observations and feedback from those involved.

Parental Notification:

Parents of students involved in bullying incidents will be informed promptly and will be kept updated on the progress of the investigation and intervention process. The school will encourage parents to work collaboratively with the school to address the bullying behaviour. This information will be kept confidential (as per the school's GDPR policy) and will be used to monitor trends, evaluate the effectiveness of prevention and intervention strategies, and inform future policy development. It may be appropriate to add a note to the student support File SSP.

Requests to take no action

If the student requests that no action be taken after reporting a bullying incident, we will be empathetic to this situation, deal with the matter sensitively and speak with the student to work out what steps we can take together to address the matter and how their parents will be informed of the situation if we deem this is important in order to keep them safe.

If parents request that no action be taken, they will then be informed at the beginning of this initial meeting that we, as a school, may still decide to deal with this bullying behaviour if we deem it necessary on the grounds of child protection or in severe cases. Parents who request that no action be taken by the school will be required to put this request in writing to the school or assisted to do so where there are literacy or language barriers.

If Bullying becomes a Child Protection Concern / Criminal Behaviour

If we are determining that the bullying behaviour should be reported to Tusla, the following factors will be taken into consideration:

- Impact on the student
- Protective action by the parent
- Protective appropriate action by the school
- Involvement of NEPS
- Engagement of the student / family with support services.

When actions become a Criminal Behaviour.

The age of criminal responsibility in Ireland is **12 years**. If the behaviour involves physical violence or threats of violence, it may be considered assault. If the bullying behaviour involves discrimination or hate speech, it may be considered a hate crime and if the bullying behaviour

involves sexual assault or harassment, the school will refer this and any incident of physical assault / hate speech to An Garda Siochána who will deal with it according to the law.

Investigation and Intervention, Documentation and Record-Keeping:

When a case of bullying has been established, the class teacher will conduct a thorough investigation, gathering information from all parties involved. The school will prioritise stopping the bullying behaviour and restoring, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved. The recording template will be completed initially by the class teacher who will investigate the incident, recording the facts of the incident, including the form of bullying, the type of bullying, the parties involved, the dates and times of incidents, the date of initial engagement, the views of students / parents, the date of the review with the students/ parents to   determine   if   bullying   behaviour   has   ceased.

Determining if Bullying behaviour has ceased/ Follow up

The teacher will engage with the students and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial meeting to review progress following the agreed interventions. Ongoing supervision and support may still be required for both parties. 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. We will inform the student and their parents that relationships may never be restored. Where the bullying behaviour continues, the school will invoke their schools Code of Behaviour policy to deal with this behaviour. If sanctions are required, this will be a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school. Under GDPR these sanctions will not be shared.

Complaints.

If a parent is dissatisfied with how a bullying incident has been addressed or handled by the school, they can refer to our *school's complaints procedure*. (See Website)

Section D: Board of Management Oversight / Evaluation and Review.

The principal will present an anonymised oversight report on bullying behaviour (incidents that met the threshold for bullying) to the Board of Management at every board meeting, including the number of incidents reported since the last board meeting, the number of incidents that

are currently ongoing, the number of incidents that have occurred since the beginning of the school year, the types of bullying observed. A verbal report will also be provided, outlining any trends and patterns observed, strategies used to address bullying, and the need for any policy revisions.

Annual Review of the Bí Cineálta Policy:

The school's Bí Cineálta policy will be reviewed annually, or more frequently if deemed necessary by the Board of Management.

The review process will involve consultation with the school community, including school staff, students, through the student council, parents, through the Parents Association, other relevant stakeholders. Input from all stakeholders plays an important role in strengthening the commitment to maintaining a safe and supportive environment for every student. This collective effort not only enhances the effectiveness of the policy but also reinforces the message that preventing bullying is a shared priority for the whole school community.

Communication and Transparency:

The school will communicate the outcomes of the annual review to the school community, including any changes made to the policy. The Bí Cineálta policy and student-friendly version will be published on the school website and will be made readily available to all members of the community.

- **School Website:** Both the full policy and the student-friendly version are posted on our website. The student policy will be displayed in the school for the children to see.

Supports:

1. Gov.ie

- **Details**: This platform provides comprehensive resources for primary and post-primary schools, including guidance for parents. It includes legislative information, frameworks for fostering positive school climates, and practical tools for addressing bullying.

2. National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)

- **Services**: NEPS offers psychological assessments, consultations, and guidance to schools. It helps develop whole-school policies and strategies, provides crisis support, and assists with tailored interventions for students displaying or experiencing bullying behaviour.

3. Oide

- **Details**: Oide supports professional teacher development and provides resources focused on enhancing teachers' ability to manage and prevent bullying. It offers practical training modules and advice for classroom management and student well-being.

4. Tacklebullying.ie

- **Details**: This is an anti-bullying website designed for students, teachers, and parents, providing resources, advice, and tools to help identify and address bullying effectively.

5. Webwise

- **Details**: Specialises in online safety resources to address cyberbullying. Key resources include:
  - **AUP Generator**: Helps schools create an Acceptable Use Policy for online behaviour.
  - **HTML Heroes**: Interactive resources aimed at 3rd and 4th classes.
  - **BeKindOnline Initiative**: A campaign encouraging positive and respectful online interactions.
  - **All Together Now**: LGBTQ+ inclusion resources for 5th and 6th class students, supporting diversity and respectful communication.

6. PDST Restorative Practice Training

- **Details**: The Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) provides training on restorative practices that help schools build a culture of respect and conflict resolution, which can mitigate bullying.

7. CDI Tallaght Restorative Practices

- **Details**: Offers training and resources focused on fostering positive relationships within schools and communities. It supports staff in managing conflicts through restorative approaches.

8. National Parents Council (NPC)

- **Details**: Represents parents and provides a range of supports including guidance on educational policies and issues like bullying. Their resources empower parents to engage constructively with schools.

9. Dublin City University (DCU) Anti-Bullying Centre

- **Link**: DCU FUSE Programme
- **Details**: Conducts research and provides training and educational resources. The FUSE programme is specifically designed for 4th, 5th, and 6th class students and focuses on understanding and countering bullying through awareness and peer-led initiatives.

10. Tusla

- **Details**: As the Child and Family Agency, Tusla addresses cases where bullying may raise child protection concerns. It provides support and services that help schools respond appropriately to these situations.

These resources and supports provide a foundation for schools to create safe and inclusive learning environments, offering both preventive and responsive measures to combat bullying and promote well-being.

In Conclusion:

Muchgrange NS is dedicated to creating a school environment where all students and staff feel safe, respected, and valued. The school believes that by working collaboratively as a school community and implementing this comprehensive *Bí Cineálta* policy, we can effectively prevent and address bullying behaviour and ensure that all students have a positive and enriching educational experience. This policy will be made available on our website and on display in the school. It will be updated annually at our first board meeting or as soon as practicably possible thereafter.

Policy Adopted: _____

Policy Review Date (Annually): _____

Signatures

_____

Principal

_____

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Date _____

Appendices

Appendix A

Section A: Development/review of our Bi 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		
Students		
Parents		
Board of management		
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers		
Date policy was approved:		
Date policy was last reviewed:		

Appendix B

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by the school. These include strategies specifically aimed at preventing online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The teacher(s) with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour is (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

> 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):

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):

Appendix D

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)

Child Friendly Policy: Developed with input from the Student Council and to be displayed in School:

Bí
Cineálta
Scoil Naomh Mhuire
we want **everyone** at **our** school to feel safe and happy

Bullying is targeted, harmful behaviour. It can be harmful words, actions or excluding behaviour. It can be online or in person

If you feel you are being bullied or you have seen behaviour that may be bullying you should:
Tell an adult in school that you trust. This does not have to be your class teacher. It can be any teacher, SNA or our secretary...a staff member that you feel comfortable talking to.

Don't be a bystander, it's always important to tell.

BE KIND

Our school has a Bí Cineálta policy to help deal with any bullying situations in our school and make our school bullying free.

This policy will be reviewed each year.

what will happen next?
The school will use our Bí Cineálta policy to decide if a situation is bullying.
If bullying has occurred staff will:
Talk to the student who has been bullied
Talk to the other student(s) involved
Make a plan
Talk to parents
monitor the situation to make sure bullying has stopped

Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. To complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.

	Yes /No
Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	

Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed _____   Date _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____   Date _____

Principal

Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy

To: _____

The Board of Management of _____ wishes to inform you that:

      o   The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of _____ [date].

      o   This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in **Appendix 4** of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.*

Signed _____   Date _____Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____   Date _____ Principal

Online   form   for   patron   –
https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=9suV6pIrgUqC2YoBv_FvcWk0sIvm8FpDt3-
TRFkmiGZUQk1ORVE5VFdUSk1IRVVHQktaUlY2WUgwSi4u