

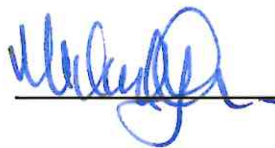
**OUR LADY OF MERCY SECONDARY SCHOOL,  
WATERFORD.**



**BÍ CINEALTA POLICY TO PREVENT  
AND ADDRESS BULLYING  
BEHAVIOUR**

Ratified by the Board of Management, 27<sup>th</sup> April, 2026

Signed:

  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date: 27/4/26.

Chairperson, Board of Management



# **BÍ CINEALTA POLICY TO PREVENT AND ADDRESS BULLYING BEHAVIOUR**

## **ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

**In accordance with the requirements of the Education (welfare) Act 2000 and Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools, the board of Management of Our Lady of Mercy has adopted the following Policy in conjunction with and within the framework of the schools overall Code of Behaviour.**

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:** Mick Walsh  
(Chairperson of board of management)

**Signed:** Mary Meade  
(Principal)

# School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

## Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

This policy fully complies with the requirements of *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2024*.

The board of management acknowledges that bullying behaviour interferes with the rights of the child as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We all, as a school community, have a responsibility to work together to prevent and address bullying behaviour and to deal with the negative impact of bullying behaviour.

We are committed to ensuring that all students who attend our school are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our students is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our students and we are fully committed to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

We confirm that we will, in accordance with our obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the harassment of students or staff on any of the nine grounds specified: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

### **Definition of bullying**

Bullying is defined in Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying and Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools as *“targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society.”*

The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

Each school is required to develop and implement a Bí Cineálta policy that sets out how the school community prevents and addresses bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour

that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

**Section A: Development/review of our Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour**

**All members of our school community were provided with the opportunity to input into the development/review of this policy.**

	<b>Date consulted</b>	<b>Method of consultation</b>
<b>School Staff</b>	3 April 2025	Staff Meeting
<b>Students</b>	20 January 2025	Student Council meeting Consulted all students through a survey.
<b>Parents</b>	6 February 2025	Parents Council Meeting
	6 February 2025	Surveyed all parents
<b>Board of Management</b>	11 February 2025	Student Council presented the student friendly Bí Cineálta policy to the BOM
<b>Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers</b>		
<b>Date policy was approved:</b>		
<b>Date policy was last reviewed:</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):

## **Culture and Environment**

### **Open Communication**

- Maintain ongoing dialogue among all stakeholders, including students, parents, staff, and leadership.

### **2. Clear Standards and Expectations**

- Senior leaders set expectations through:
  - Whole-school assemblies.
  - Parent evenings.
  - Regular interactions with students and staff.

### **3. Consistent Approach to Bullying Behavior**

- Staff and leadership maintain a unified and consistent response to bullying incidents.

### **4. Student Advocacy**

- Students actively promote kindness, respect, and inclusion in their daily interactions.

### **5. Parental Support**

- Engage parents as partners in fostering respect and empathy through:
  - Parent evenings and workshops.
  - Communication on reinforcing anti-bullying values at home.

### **6. Creating Safe Physical Spaces**

- Design and supervision of key areas such as bathrooms, stairwells, and schoolyards to ensure clear visibility and safety.

### **7. Visible Values and Messaging**

- Use posters, student-created artwork, and displays in corridors and classrooms to reinforce anti-bullying messages and promote inclusion.

## Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

### 1. Fostering Inclusion and Respect for Diversity

- Curricular subjects provide opportunities for students to explore inclusion and respect for diversity.
- Both curricular and extracurricular programmes are designed to build students' sense of self-worth and belonging.

### 2. Empowering Students through SPHE

- The updated **Social, Personal, and Health Education (SPHE)** curriculum:

-Empowers students to build, nurture, and maintain respectful and healthy relationships with themselves and others.

Includes a **Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)** strand, which:

- Provides space for students to explore relationships and human sexuality.
- Encourages an understanding of diversity, helping reduce gender-based and identity-based bullying, sexism, and sexual harassment.

### 3. Exploring Diversity through Religious Education

- **Religious Education (RE)** specifications from the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) allow students to consider diversity and inclusion.
- **Patron's Curricula** promotes respect and understanding of different beliefs, perspectives, and ways of life.

### 4. Diversity and Inclusion in Civic Education

- **Civic, Social, and Political Education (CSPE)** emphasises the interdependence of people in local, national, and international communities.

### 5. Understanding Bias through History and Politics

- Subjects like **History and Politics and Society (Senior Cycle)** enable students to:
  - Examine racism, colonialism, and their legacies.
  - Understand the root causes of bias and prejudice by analysing historical and contemporary examples of racial discrimination.

### 6. Incorporating Traveller/Minority Groups Culture

Resources are available to support the integration of Traveller/Minority groups culture across all areas of the curriculum, fostering respect for their unique contributions and heritage eg Think Languages week, Multi-cultural events, opening ASD special class etc.

## **Policy and Planning**

### **Central Focus on Wellbeing**

- The wellbeing of the school community must be at the core of all school policies and plans.
- **Bí Cineálta Policy:**
  - Schools are required to develop and implement a **Bí Cineálta** policy to prevent and address bullying behavior.
  - A student-friendly version of the policy should also be created to ensure accessibility and understanding among students.

### **2. Supportive Policies**

- Several existing policies complement and support the implementation of the **Bí Cineálta** policy, including:
  - **Acceptable Use Policy:** Governs appropriate technology usage.
  - **Supervision Policy:** Ensures student safety and oversight.
  - **Whole School Inclusion (SEN) Policy:** Supports inclusion and diverse learning needs.
  - **Code of Behaviour:** Establishes standards for respectful conduct.

### **3. Student Participation**

- Actively involving students in the development and implementation of school policies:
  - Increases awareness of policies.
  - Promotes a sense of ownership and ensures effective execution.

### **4. Professional Learning for Staff**

- Engaging school staff in professional learning programme equips them to:
  - Effectively prevent and address bullying behaviour.
  - Promote inclusion and diversity within the school community.
- Sharing best practices and experiences among staff fosters a culture of continuous improvement.

### **5. Training Opportunities**

- A variety of training programmes are available to support staff in:
  - Promoting inclusion and diversity.
  - Addressing bullying and creating a positive school culture.

By placing wellbeing at the center of policy-making and planning, and by integrating supportive policies, student involvement, and staff training, schools can create a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for all.

### **Relationships and Partnerships**

Strong interpersonal connections are a vital part of effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. These interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures and activities such as;

#### **Student Council**

➤ We have an opt in and nominated student council which ensures those students who are most interested in developing the student voice in the school feel supported and can connect and engage with our school community.

#### **School Clubs**

➤ We aim to develop and enhance the number of school clubs and extra-curricular clubs in the school to ensure that all students can feel a connection and belonging in our school.

#### **Parents Association**

➤ Our parents' associations plays an active role in the development of our school. The main focus of their regular meetings is how we can make our school a better, more positive place for all students.

#### **Student Care Team**

➤ We have a variety of student support teams in the school. The student care team may include Deputy Principal, Year Head, HSCL, members of the Guidance and SEN Departments. They meet on a weekly basis to discuss school wide issues and support across each year group with the School Principal.

➤ We have a peer mentoring structure for example our Meitheal programme.

➤ Our SEN team of dedicated teachers provides support to students.

#### **Awareness Initiatives**

- Everyone participates in Friendship/Anti-bullying Week, which takes place on an annual basis and covers many topics throughout the week and leading up to and proceeding it.

### **Preventing cyberbullying behaviour**

- > Technology and social media have provided many positive opportunities for entertainment, social engagement and education. Technology is a part of life that can impact even the youngest members of society. However, the increase in the use of technology has led to students becoming increasingly vulnerable to cyberbullying or unacceptable online behaviour.
- > In **Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School** strategies to prevent cyberbullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive List:
- > We proactively address these challenges by promoting digital literacy, digital citizenship, and fostering safe online environments through our Junior cycle ICT classes, through assemblies, SPHE and visiting speakers.
- > Some of the Assembly topics and visiting speakers include ▪ respectful and kind relationships online.
- > We have developed and communicated to students and parents our Acceptable Use Policy for technology.
- > Appropriate online behaviour is referenced as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour.
- > We promote online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online.
- > We hold an Internet safety day to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour.
- > We also hold Friendship/Anti Bullying week.
- > Mobile Phones are not allowed in school unless being used under the supervision of a teacher in the classroom for teaching and learning purposes.

### **Preventing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour**

- > All students, including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students, have a right to feel safe and supported at school.

- **In Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School** strategies to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list;
- We maintain an inclusive physical environment such as display of relevant posters and flags in classrooms and around the school.
- Encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and LGBTI awareness, and Stand Up to bullying activities challenging gender-stereotypes.
- Conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying including homophobic bullying behaviour.
- Encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour.

### **Preventing racist bullying behavior**

**Schools have become much more culturally diverse over the last number of decades. Students attending schools come from many different cultures and backgrounds. Students from diverse backgrounds may face discrimination and prejudice and may be subject to racist bullying behaviour.**

In Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School strategies to prevent racist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- We foster a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students “see themselves” in the school environment.
- We have the cultural diversity of the school visible and on display in photos and on social media.
- We encourage peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities.
- We encourage bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour.
- We provide support to school staff to respond to the needs of students for whom English is an additional language and for communicating with their parents.
- We provide support to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma students, and to encourage communication with their parents.

### **Preventing sexist bullying behavior**

**At Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School, we are committed to fostering a respectful and inclusive environment. Our strategies to prevent sexist bullying include, but are not limited to:**

- **Modeling Respectful Behavior:** All staff members lead by example, treating every student equally and with respect.
- **Promoting Equal Opportunities:** We ensure that all students have equal access to school activities, regardless of their sex.
- **Celebrating Diversity:** Our school embraces diversity and actively recognises the contributions and achievements of all students.
- **Raising Awareness:** Through campaigns, workshops, and presentations, we promote gender equality and mutual respect during Friendship/Anti-Bullying Week and at other times throughout the year.
- **Engaging Parents:** We encourage families to uphold and reinforce the values of respect and equality at home.

By implementing these measures, we aim to create a safe and empowering environment for all our students.

### **Preventing sexual harassment**

Preventing sexual harassment requires an approach that focuses on education, awareness and clear enforceable policies. We make it clear that there is a zero tolerance approach to sexual harassment. Sexual harassment should never be dismissed as teasing or banter.

In Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School strategies to prevent sexual harassment include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- We use the updated SPHE specifications to teach students about healthy relationships and how to treat each other with respect and kindness.
- We promote positive role models within the school community.
- We challenge gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment.

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):

## Initiatives and Practices in Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School

### Supervision and Monitoring

- GPA, Yard, Corridors, and Classrooms:
  - Weekly schedules are in place to monitor student behaviour and well-being.
  - Staff maintain vigilance in observing relationships and behaviour patterns, emphasising high standards of behaviour.

### Engaging Parents

- Informing parents about available supports such as NPCPP and Webwise via the evolving school website.
- Encouraging parents to report bullying concerns early to the Tutor, Year Head, Deputy Principal, or Principal during information evenings and meetings.

### Promoting Awareness and Inclusion

- LGBTI Awareness Initiatives:
  - Activities like the Stand Up to Bullying campaigns foster inclusivity.
- FUSE Anti-Bullying Programme:
  - Delivered to 1st and 2nd years by SPHE teachers to educate and build resilience.

### Restorative Practices

- The school is introducing and integrating restorative language and practices to resolve conflicts and promote understanding.

### Encouraging Reporting of Concerns

Students are informed about how and whom to tell if they experience or witness bullying, including:

- Direct approach to a teacher or trusted staff member (e.g., after class or at an appropriate time).
- Speaking with their Tutor, Year Head, Guidance Counsellor, or any comfortable staff member.
- Writing a note and handing it in with their work.
- Making a phone call to the school or a trusted teacher.
- Asking a parent, guardian, or friend to report on their behalf.
- Using a dedicated email address (currently on a pilot basis).

### Empowering

### Bystanders:

Bystanders are encouraged to understand their role in reporting bullying incidents and the importance of speaking up.

### Periodic Review and Best Practices

- Initiatives are periodically reviewed to ensure alignment with current best practices and available resources.

## **Addressing Bullying Behaviour**

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

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 Code of Behaviour, the Anti-Bullying Policy and the principles of the Anti-Bullying Charter will inform and guide the disciplinary and pastoral response to incidents of bullying.

The aim for the relevant teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

In investigating and dealing with alleged bullying incidents, the teacher will exercise her/his professional judgement to determine whether the alleged incident of bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.

Parents and students are required to cooperate with any investigation and assist us in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.

In cases of alleged bullying:

- Each case of alleged bullying behaviour should be considered by the teacher, Tutor or Year Head.
- Informal investigations are used to elicit the facts of the incident. In this way it is hoped that students will gain confidence in reporting incidents, and the instilling of such confidence is regarded as vitally important.
- Professional judgment is used to determine if the incident is a case of bullying behaviour.
- In the case of more complex incidents consultation with the year head team and senior management may be necessary to decide if the incident is a case of bullying behaviour.

In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred:

- The reported incident of bullying will be recorded by the teacher on the Bullying Behaviour Record available on the school's management information system.
- The teacher will refer the bullying report to the relevant Year Head.
- All such bullying incidents will be investigated by the Year Head with assistance, if necessary, from another teacher or member of the senior management team.
- The victim(s) and perpetrator(s) will be interviewed separately.

- The interview will be conducted in a fair and non-judgemental manner eg the student may be offered the opportunity to have a member of staff present to advocate on their behalf.
- Factual notes of the investigation/interview will be recorded.
- Any student (for example victim, perpetrator, witnesses, onlookers) may be requested to give a written account of a bullying incident.
- The victim will be assured that she is entitled to a school environment that is free from bullying and will be encouraged to report any further incidents if they should occur.
- Where bullying behaviour is determined, the perpetrator(s) will be informed that their behaviour is unacceptable and in breach of the code of behaviour/school rules.
- The parents/guardians of the perpetrator must be informed and/or invited to a meeting in the school.
- The parents/guardians of the victim must be informed and/or invited to a meeting in the school and where it is deemed necessary, may be offered further help from the school and/or outside agencies.

Following investigation and consideration, sanctions may be imposed in line with the school's code of behaviour up to and including suspension.

- In-school support/strategies will be made available to both the victim(s) and the perpetrator(s); counselling and remediation may be recommended if deemed appropriate.
- Post intervention monitoring of the relevant parties will occur.

**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):**

**Students who experience Bullying or Witness Bullying**

Initially pastoral care support measures will be carried out e.g. a tutor or year head may attempt to mediate between the alleged perpetrator and the victim.

If necessary, students who have been bullied or have engaged in bullying behaviour may be advised to make an appointment with the school guidance counsellor, or, if they prefer, with a counsellor outside the school.

- In-school supports (eg counselling, remediation) where appropriate
- Referrals to outside agencies where deemed appropriate
- Post intervention monitoring

- Periodic *review* of initiatives
- Promoting self-esteem and self-confidence through curricular and cocurricular activities

### **Students who display bullying Behaviour**

1. They will be warned to stop immediately and may be required to sign an undertaking to stop all such behaviour in the future. They will be offered counselling and/or remediation if appropriate.
2. Parents/guardians may be informed if a bullying incident occurs and will be informed if bullying behaviour continues after a warning has been issued.
3. In addition to a verbal warning, a student who bullies another student may be liable to sanctions, which include
  - \* A written warning
  - \* Detention
  - \* Suspension

The school may seek advice from NEPS (the National Educational Psychologist Service) and/or TUSLA.

4. In very serious cases, a student who engages in bullying may be excluded (expelled) from the school. The school in certain circumstances may also seek the support and advice of TUSLA, EWO, NEPS, NCSE, second level school support services, HSE and any other agency deemed appropriate to support the school in dealing with incidents of bullying.

Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others. The Year Head in conjunction with the (relevant) Student Support Team will work closely with the student in this regard.

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.

## Oversight

### Periodic Summary Reports to the Board of Management

The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting. (Appendix D)

This update will include

- the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting
- the number of ongoing incidents
- 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 bullying behaviour.
  - any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant.
- if any serious incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred which have had a serious adverse impact on a student.
  - if a parent has informed the school that a student has left the school because of reported bullying behaviour.
  - if any additional support is needed from the board of management.
  - if the school's Bí Cineálta policy requires urgent review in advance of the annual review.

This update does not contain personal or identifying information.

### **Annual Review of the Bí Cineálta Policy**

The Board of Management must undertake an annual (calendar) review (Appendix E) or as soon as practicable where the board of management determines that a review is warranted of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and its implementation in consultation with the school community.

The review will be completed with input from the school community which includes the board of management, staff, students and their parents and members of the wider school community (as appropriate).

The school will engage with the student council and the parents association to obtain their views on the content and effectiveness of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy.

The school community will be given notice that the annual review has taken place and the form included at Appendix F will be used for this purpose. This confirmation will be published on the school website once the annual review has taken place.



## **Appendix B**

### **Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred**

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour the Year Head should consider the following questions:

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 the answer to each of the questions above is Yes, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour and the behaviour should be addressed using the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

**Note:** One-off incidents may be considered bullying in certain circumstances. A single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and thus becomes a repeated behaviour.

If the answer to any of these questions is No, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour.

Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's **Code of Behaviour**

## Anti-Bullying

## Student Behaviour Promise

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

I know that all of my fellow students are different from each other and from me in many ways, (e.g. hair colour, skin colour, what we wear, height, weight, size, accent, religion, nationality, whether we are gay or straight, where we live or have lived, what we like to do, whether we are loud or quiet, how good we are at learning, how well we study, how good we are at sports, whether we like music etc. etc). I would not like to be treated unfairly and made to feel bad by any of my fellow-students because of any of these differences or just because they did not like me. I know that I have a right to be different from other students and that this does not give anyone the right to treat me unfairly or to be mean to me. I know that I am entitled to fair, equal, respectful treatment in school because of the school's Code of Behaviour and outside of school too.

I also know that all other students are entitled to be treated fairly, equally and respectfully. It is wrong to treat anyone any other way. I therefore promise that in future I will treat all my fellow-students fairly, equally and respectfully despite our differences and whether I like them or not.

In particular: (Handwrite below "I will always treat (Name) fairly and respectfully")

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**Signed:** Student: \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

**Teacher:** \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX D

### **Bullying Behaviour Update for board of management meeting of DD/MM/YYYY**

Having reviewed the details of the incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the previous board of management meeting, the following information is provided:

Total number of new incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the last board of management meeting	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour currently ongoing.	
Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the beginning of this school year.	

Where incidents of bullying behaviour have been reported since the last meeting, the update included a verbal report which includes the following information where relevant:

- the trends and patterns identified such as the form of bullying behaviour, type of bullying behaviour if known, location of bullying behaviour, when it occurred
- the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour
- any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour
- if any serious incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred which have had a serious adverse impact on a student
- if a parent has informed the school that a student has left the school because of reported bullying behaviour
- if any additional support is needed from the board of management
- if the school's Bí Cineálta policy requires urgent review in advance of the annual review

This update did not include any personal information or information that could identify the students involved.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

(Principal)

**APPENDIX E**  
**REVIEW OF THE BÍ CINEÁLTA POLICY**

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual (calendar) review of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and its implementation in consultation with the school community. As part of the review, this document must be completed

**Bí Cineálta Policy Review**

1. When did the Board formally adopt its Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools? Insert date when the Bí Cineálta policy was last adopted by the school. *Date: 27/04/2026.*

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

*At front and back entrance to the school.*

3. What date did the Board publish the Bí Cineálta policy and the student friendly policy on the school website? *14/05/2026.*

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

*Student Council members visited all classes to inform them of the policy and encouraged all to read it.*

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

*At Parent Council meeting and on the school website*

6. Have all school staff been made aware of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools?

**Yes**

No

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

**Yes**

No

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

**Yes**

No

9. Has the Board discussed how the school is addressing all reports of bullying behaviour.

• **Yes**

• No

10. Is the Board satisfied that all incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed in accordance with the school's Bí Cineálta policy.

• Yes

• No

11. Have the prevention strategies in the Bí Cineálta policy been implemented?

• Yes

• No

12. Has the Board discussed the effectiveness of the strategies used to prevent bullying behaviour?

• Yes

• No

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

*Consulted at Parents Council meetings, Student Council meetings, staff meetings and information and documents were shared and feedback sought.*

14. Outline any aspects of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and/or its implementation that have been identified as requiring further improvement as part of this review:

- *Include the new Bi Cineálta/Anti-bullying policy with documentation for students enrolling in the school*
- *Ask SPHE teachers to include the Student Friendly policy when teaching about bullying and to encourage students to report bullying concerns*

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

- *Update documentation in September 2026 to be given to students enrolling in the school*
- *Inform SPHE teachers that they need to include the Student Friendly policy in lessons about bullying and let students know how they can report concerns from September 2026.*

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

*Students are happy with their student friendly policy.*

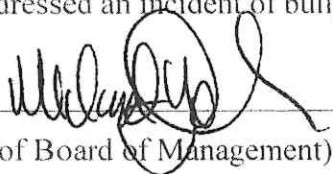
17. Does the school refer parents to the complaints procedures if they have a complaint about how the school has addressed bullying behaviour? *Yes*

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

*No*

19. Has the Office of the Ombudsman for Children initiated or completed an investigation into how the school has addressed an incident of bullying behaviour? *No*

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_



(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_



(Principal)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*27/4/26*

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*27/4/26*

Date of next review: \_\_\_\_\_

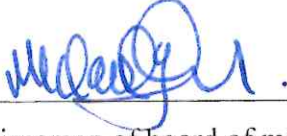
*April 2027*

## Appendix F

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

The Board of Management of Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School confirms that the board of management's annual review of the school's **Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour** and its implementation was completed at the board of management meeting of 27/4/26.

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

Signed:  Date: 27/4/26  
(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed:  Date: 27/4/26  
(Principal)

Bullying behaviour can be considered criminal behaviour under certain circumstances and legal consequences can apply. The age of criminal responsibility in Ireland is 12 years. Some online behaviour may be illegal, and students need to be aware of the far-reaching consequences of posting inappropriate or harmful content online. In cases of intimate imagery, the Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020, also known as Coco's Law, criminalises the non-consensual sharing of intimate images and also criminalises threatening to share these images.

If bullying behaviour involves physical violence or threats of violence, it may be considered assault.

If bullying behaviour involves discrimination or hate speech targeting a student based on their race, religion, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation or membership of the Traveller community, it may be considered a hate crime under the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act 1989, and those engaging in such behaviour may face criminal charges.

If bullying behaviour involves sexual harassment or sexual assault, this may also be considered criminal behaviour.

An Garda Síochána is the appropriate authority to investigate alleged criminal behaviour.

## Q Types of Bullying X



### Physical Bullying

Intentionally injuring another person by striking, pinching, pushing, kicking, or damaging their property.

### Verbal Bullying

The use of abusive language or name calling, including remarks that are racist and homophobic.

### Psychological Bullying

Intimidation or humiliation that negatively affects one's mental health and wellbeing.

### Cyberbullying

Repeatedly sending hurtful messages through social media, gaming platforms or chat rooms.

## Bí Cineálta

◆ We want everyone at our school to feel safe and happy.

◆ If you think you're being bullied or someone else is being bullied, you need to tell a teacher or another adult that you trust. They will know what to do to help.

**IF A STUDENT TELLS A STAFF MEMBER THAT THEY THINK THEY ARE BEING BULLIED WE WILL:**

- Talk with the student
- Ask the student what they want to do about it
- Work out a plan together
- Talk to the other student involved
- Have a serious talk with the other students parents
- **IN SEVERE CASES THE GUARDS WILL BE INFORMED**

## OUR SCHOOL JOURNAL HAS A DETAILED PAGE ON CYBERBULLYING



STOP  
BLOCK  
AND  
TELL

