



Magh Ene College Bí Cineálta

Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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The Board of Management of Magh Ene College has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

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

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

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

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

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.

A Bí Cineálta policy 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	04/04/2025 02/05/2025	Whole Staff Meeting Verbal and written feedback Staff Questionnaire
Students	28/04/2025	Tutor class discussions Student Questionnaire Student Council feedback
Parents	27/3/2025	Parent Questionnaire
Board of Management	13/05/2025	Discussion and feedback
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	04/04/2025	Ancillary staff inclusion in whole staff discussions and feedback. Circulation of information to the wider school community through local newspaper
Date policy was approved: 07/10/2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: 07/10/2025		

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.

Culture and Environment

- Magh Ene College fosters a positive and inclusive school culture and environment, essential to prevent and address bullying behaviour. The school environment is a space where students and school staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported.
- Relationships between all members of the school community are based on respect, care, integrity and trust, using a whole school restorative approach. Open communication between the patron, board of management, school staff, students and their parents help to foster a collaborative approach and shared responsibilities in relation to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.
- The school leadership team influences the school culture and set the standards and expectations for the school community when preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

- Each member of our school staff has a responsibility to develop and maintain a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and to take a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.
- Students can shape the school culture by promoting kindness and inclusion within their peer group and maintain a positive and supportive school environment for all, inclusive of difference and diversity.
- Displays and posters in the school environment are reflective of the inclusivity and diversity which we promote.
- Parents, as active partners in their child's education, can help foster an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated through promoting empathy and respect.

A Telling Environment

- It is important that the school community supports a "**safe and telling**" environment.
- Students should feel comfortable to talk about concerns regarding bullying behaviour.
- Ensuring that students know who to tell and how to tell:
 1. Direct approach to a teacher.
 2. Ask a parent(s)/guardian(s) to tell on your behalf.
 3. Ask a friend/peer to tell on your behalf.
 4. Year Heads/Tutors/Career Guidance Counsellor
 5. Use the "Speakout Box"
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying behaviour is taking place.

A Trusted Adult

- Students who witness bullying behaviour should be supported and encouraged to report the behaviour to a trusted adult, a teacher or non teaching member of staff in the school so that the behaviour can be addressed. Students who witness bullying behaviour on social media have an important role in helping to address the behaviour by reporting the witnessed behaviour to a trusted adult.
- The trusted adult should reassure the student that they have done the right thing by reporting the behaviour. The trusted adult should, without delay, inform the member of staff who has responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour.
- This may be the principal, deputy principal, year head, guidance counsellor or a member of the student support team.
- The trusted adult should continue to support the student, as appropriate, while the behaviour is being addressed by the relevant member of staff.

Creating Safe Physical Spaces School

- The creation of safe physical spaces supports psychological safety and is an important measure to prevent bullying behaviour.
- For example the murals, artwork and signage helps promote our school's values such as equality, diversity, inclusion and respect.

Supervision

- Appropriate supervision is an important measure to help prevent and address bullying behaviour.
- Staff are visible on all corridors and all outdoor areas during supervision at breaktimes. Our school offers a mix of organised supervised activities during break times accommodating for a wide range of student interests.

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

- We promote Teaching and learning that is collaborative and respectful. Students have regular opportunities to work in small groups with their peers, which can help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy among students. This is achieved in all subject areas including SPHE, CSPE, RE, History and PE.

Policy and Planning

- The wellbeing of the school community and Bí Cineálta is at the heart of our school policies and plans.
- Our other policies such as the school's Acceptable Use policy, Supervision policy, Code of Behaviour can support the implementation of our school's Bi Cinealta policy.

Relationships and Partnerships

- Positive relationships and partnerships are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as student councils, school clubs, parents' associations and student support teams:
 - > age appropriate awareness initiatives that look at the causes and impacts of bullying behaviour including those dealing with navigating friendships, identity based bullying, racist bullying, homophobic/transphobic / biphobic bullying, sexism and sexual harassment.
 - > supporting the active participation of students in school life.
 - > supporting the active participation of parents in school life, including those who may find it difficult or daunting to engage with the school due to being unfamiliar with the education system or due to language or cultural barriers.
 - > conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying.
 - > supporting activities that build empathy, respect and resilience.
 - > encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring.
 - > promoting acts of kindness.
 - > teaching problem solving.
 - > hosting debates.
 - > peer mentoring systems.
 - > tutor / year head system.
 - > guidance counsellor.

Preventing Cyberbullying Behaviour

- Schools should proactively address these challenges by promoting digital literacy, digital citizenship, and fostering safe online environments. Strategies to prevent cyberbullying behaviour include the following:
 - > implementing the SPHE curriculum.
 - > implementing the Digital Media Literacy curriculum which teaches students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship.
 - > having regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online.
 - > developing and communicating an acceptable use policy for technology.
 - > referring to appropriate online behaviour as part of the standards of behaviour in the Code of Behaviour.
 - > promoting or hosting online safety events for parents who are responsible for overseeing their children's activities online.
 - > holding an Internet safety day to reinforce awareness around appropriate online behaviour.

Preventing Homophobic/Transphobic / Biphobic Bullying Behaviour

- All students, including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students, have a right to feel safe and supported at school. Strategies to prevent homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying behaviour include the following:
 - > maintaining an inclusive physical environment such as by displaying relevant posters.
 - > encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities.
 - > challenging gender stereotypes.
 - > conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour.
 - > encouraging students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour.
 - > working to achieve the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark

Preventing Racist Bullying Behaviour

- Strategies to prevent racist bullying behaviour include the following:
 - > fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where students “see themselves” in their school environment.
 - > having the cultural diversity of the school visible and on display.
 - > conducting workshops and seminars for students, school staff and parents to raise awareness of racism.
 - > encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities.
 - > encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour.
 - > providing supports to school staff to respond to the needs of students for whom English is an additional language and for communicating with their parents.
 - > providing supports to school staff to support students from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma students, and to encourage communication with their parents.
 - > inviting speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds.
 - > ensuring that library reading material and textbooks represent appropriate lived experiences of students and adults from different national, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour

- Strategies to prevent sexist bullying behaviour include the following:
 - > ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally irrespective of their sex.
 - > ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex.
 - > celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contributions of all students.
 - > organising awareness campaigns, workshops and presentations on gender equality and respect.
 - > encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home.

Preventing Sexual Harassment

- Strategies to prevent sexual harassment include the following:
 - > using the updated SPHE specifications to teach students about healthy relationships and how to treat each other with respect and kindness.
 - > promoting positive role models within the school community.
 - > challenging 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:

The school implements a comprehensive set of supervision and monitoring policies to prevent and address bullying behaviour, in accordance with the *Bí Cineálta* procedures. These include:

- **Active Supervision:** Staff are assigned specific supervision duties during break times, in classrooms, corridors, and school grounds to ensure consistent presence and visibility.
- **Classroom Management:** Teachers maintain clear behavioural expectations and foster inclusive, respectful classroom environments.
- **Student Engagement:** The school promotes student voice through regular feedback and encourages peer support systems such as buddy schemes and student-led initiatives.
- **Use of Digital Technology:** The school monitors the use of digital devices in line with its Acceptable Use Policy to detect and prevent cyberbullying.
- **Incident Recording and Follow-Up:** Any reported or observed bullying behaviour is documented, investigated, and followed up using structured recording templates and response procedures.
- **Staff Training:** Training is provided to staff to enhance awareness, early identification, and effective intervention in bullying cases.
- **Whole-School Culture:** A positive, inclusive school culture is fostered through wellbeing programmes, social and emotional learning, and anti-bullying campaigns.

These measures are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure their effectiveness in creating a safe and supportive environment for all students.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Year Heads

Guidance Counsellor

Deputy Principal

Principal

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:

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred:

- When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the teacher should consider the following: **what, where, when and why?**
- If a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first.
- Thereafter, all students involved should be met as a group.
- At the group meeting, each student should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views.
- Each student should be supported, as appropriate, following the group meeting. It may also be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident.

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour we 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.
 - If the answer to any of these questions is **No**, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour.
 - Incidents can occur where behaviour is unacceptable and hurtful but the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies that deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's **Code of Behaviour**.

Where bullying behaviour has occurred:

- 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, schools are required to support the students involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, schools should deal with it in accordance with their Bí Cineálta policy.
- It is important for school staff to be fair and consistent in their approach to address bullying behaviour.
- Both the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the student who is displaying bullying behaviour need support.
- It is important that the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour is engaged with without delay so that they feel listened to, supported and reassured.

- School staff should identify the supports needed for the student who is displaying bullying behaviour to better manage relational difficulties and ensure that their needs are met.

The following principles must be adhered to when addressing bullying behaviour:

- > ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to 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

- Magh Ene College uses restorative practices to address bullying behaviour.
- Parents may also make schools aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action. Parents should put this request in writing to the school or be facilitated to do so where there are literacy, digital literacy or language barriers. However, while acknowledging the parent's request, schools may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.

Determining if bullying behaviour has ceased:

- Students and parents involved should be engaged with no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress following the initial intervention.
- Even though the bullying behaviour may have ceased, ongoing supervision and support may be required for both the student who has experienced the bullying behaviour as well as the student who has displayed the behaviour. It can take time for relationships to settle and for supports to take effect. In some cases, relationships may never be restored to how they were before the bullying behaviour occurred.
- If the bullying behaviour has not ceased, the school should review the strategies used in consultation with the students and parents and agree to meet again over an agreed time frame until the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- Where it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school should consider using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school.

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

The school will adopt a proactive, supportive, and restorative approach to address bullying, in line with Bí Cineálta procedures. The following strategies will be implemented:

1. Support for those who experience bullying:

- Provide a safe and trusted environment where the student feels heard and supported.
- Ensure prompt intervention and regular follow-up to monitor well-being.
- Offer access to counselling or other support services if needed.
- Empower the student through strategies that build confidence and resilience.

2. Support for those who witness bullying:

- Encourage reporting by reinforcing a culture of kindness, empathy, and responsibility.
- Provide guidance on how to safely intervene or seek help.
- Offer reassurance and support to bystanders who may be distressed.
- Involve them in peer-support or mentoring programmes, where appropriate.

3. Support for those who display bullying behaviour:

- Engage in a restorative process that encourages accountability and empathy.
- Provide opportunities for the student to reflect on their behaviour and its impact.
- Work collaboratively with parents/guardians and relevant staff to address underlying issues.
- Offer behaviour support plans, social skills training, or counselling where appropriate.

All responses will aim to prevent further incidents, rebuild relationships, and promote a positive school culture rooted in respect and kindness.

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:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. This policy is available to our school community on the school's website and in hard copy on request.
4. 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.
5. 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: John Campbell
(Chairperson of board of management)

Date: 4.10.2025

Signed: P. A. Tife
(Principal)

Date: 7/10/2025