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Registered Charity Number (RCN): 20201529

School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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The Board of Management of SN Colmcill Naofa, Moone has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

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

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

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

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

We confirm that we will take all steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent all 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 everybody 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 everybody has a part to play in the school community, regardless of difference

Definition of bullying

Bullying is defined in *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying* and *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* as targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society. It is behaviour which is deliberate in nature and is unwanted. It is not accidental or reckless behaviour.

The harm can be :

1. Physical (e.g. personal injury, damage to or loss of property)
2. Social (e.g. withdrawl, loneliness, exclusion)
3. Emotional (e.g. low self esteem, depression, anxiety)

• A one-off instance of negative behaviour towards a student is not bullying behaviour. However a single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be visible to a wide audience and has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and so becomes a repeated behaviour.

Behaviour that is not bullying behaviour:

- If the repeated harm is real for the student experiencing the behaviour, but unintended by the other student, this is not bullying, but, importantly must be addressed under the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Some students with special educational needs, may have social communication difficulties which may make them communicate their needs through behaviours that can hurt themselves or others. It is important to note that these behaviours are not deliberate or planned, but in certain situations, they are automatic responses which they cannot control.
- Disagreement between students is not considered bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.

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.

Types of Bullying:

There are many different types of bullying behaviour. These can include directing bullying at someone focused on the following: disability, exceptional ability, gender identity, LGBTQ+, physical appearance, racism, poverty status, religious identity, sexism and sexual harassment. This is not an exhaustive list.

Bullying can be: **Direct**
• Physical: pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping students. Physical assault. Destruction of Personal Property.
• Verbal: continual name calling which insults, humiliates the student... this may refer to physical appearance, size, clothes, gender, accent, academic ability, race or ethnic origin.
• Written: Writing insulting remarks in public places, passing notes or drawings about the student.
• Extortion: where something is obtained through force or threats.

Bullying can be: **Indirect**
• Exclusion: where a student is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded or ignored by a student or group of students.
• Relational: Where a student's attempts to form friendships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined, threats, non-verbal gesturing, malicious gossip, spreading rumours, silent treatment and manipulation of friend groups etc. can all form relational bullying for a student.

Online Bullying Behaviour
Cyber bullying is carried out via text, direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, e-mail, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chatrooms and other online technologies.
This can include:
• Sending or sharing of insulting and offensive or intimidating messages or images via online means as mentioned above.
• Posting information which is personal, private or sensitive without consent.
• Making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other students.

• Exclude/disrupt access to a student on purpose on online chat groups/access to accounts/from an online game.

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

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	October 2024 November 2024 January 2025 March 2025	Staff informed about the introduction of the new Bí Cineálta Procedures for schools Mr. Flynn and Ms. Ruane attended Bí Cineálta training Staff surveys completed Half day in service training for staff members. First draft of policy is drawn up.
Students	Termly January 2025 April/May 2025	Anti-bullying Survey carried out Students were given a questionnaire to seek their input in developing a new Bí Cineálta policy. Pupils are asked to make suggestions for the student's version of the Bí Cineálta Policy
Parents	January 2025	Survey distributed to parents to seek their input and feedback in relation to the Bí Cineálta policy.
Board of Management	June 2025	Review new policy draft leading to consultation and final ratification after amendments where necessary
Wider school community	May 2025	Input was sought form other members of staff including secretary, cleaner and caretaker.
Date policy was approved: June 9th 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: June 9th 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. 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 our school in a real way.

Prevention Strategies

1. **General Prevention**
   - Create a welcoming and kind school environment where all students feel safe and respected.
   - Teach students about kindness, how bullying hurts others, and how to be good friends.
   - Make it easy for students to report bullying, and ensure they know their concerns will be taken seriously.
   - Promote positive behaviour
   - Involvement of the students in contributing to a safe environment
   - Offer help and support to students
   - Follow the lessons covered in the Stay Safe, SPHE and RSE programmes
   - Use fun, positive activities to encourage students to work together and solve problems peacefully.
   - Development and promotion of this Bí Cinéalta policy.
   - Hold an Anti-bullying week and termly bullying surveys
   - Addressing Bullying at School Assembly
2. **Online Bullying (Cyberbullying)**
   - Teach students how to use the internet safely and kindly, and explain the impact of online bullying.
   - Hold classes or assemblies to discuss online safety and responsible use of technology.
   - Encourage students to talk to adults if they see or experience any online bullying.
   - The school has an Acceptable Use Policy for devices.
   - Children are not allowed to bring mobile phones to school.
3. **Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying**
   - Teach students that everyone is different, and that we should respect all types of families and friendships.
   - Celebrate diversity in the classroom and make sure every child feels accepted and included.
   - Make it clear that hurtful language about gender and relationships won't be tolerated.
4. **Racist Bullying**
   - Help children learn about different cultures and celebrate the diversity in our school.
   - Encourage students to learn about and respect each other's backgrounds.
   - Address racist behaviour immediately, and explain why it's important to treat everyone equally.
5. **Sexist Bullying**
   - Teach students that girls and boys are equal and deserve the same respect and opportunities.
   - Challenge any ideas that suggest certain activities are only for boys or girls.
   - Encourage students to stand up for each other and speak out against hurtful language or actions.
6. **Sexual Harassment**
   - Explain to students what respectful behaviour looks like and how to treat everyone kindly.
   - Teach them about personal boundaries and the importance of asking for permission.
   - Ensure students know that if they feel uncomfortable, they should always tell an adult they trust.
7. **Whole-School Strategies**
   - Ensure that all staff are trained to spot and stop bullying, and to support students who may be affected.
   - Work with parents to raise awareness about bullying and how to prevent it together.
   - Encourage older students to help and support younger ones in positive ways.

- Regularly check how well our bullying prevention strategies are working and make improvements where needed.

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 our board of management and staff meetings.

The dignity and the wellbeing of the individual person is of paramount concern in our Christian response. This school will listen closely to and dialogue with parents, thereby building a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, trust and confidence.

In continuing to develop prevention strategies, this school will listen to young people and parents, to help establish their particular context and needs. Frequent periods of reflection and further engagement by the school, young people and parents, will be used to discern appropriate supports for young people in this school and to help inform future prevention strategies.

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):
To ensure a safe and supportive environment for all students, the school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place: 1. **Supervision during School Hours:** Staff members are assigned specific areas for supervision during break times, ensuring all students are monitored closely. This includes playgrounds, corridors, and classrooms. Teachers are trained to spot signs of bullying and intervene promptly. 2. **Classroom Monitoring:** Teachers regularly observe classroom interactions to foster positive behaviour and prevent bullying. Group activities and seating arrangements are designed to promote inclusion and discourage any form of exclusion. 3. **Anti-Bullying Monitoring:** The school tracks any incidents of bullying and takes immediate action to address them. This includes regular reviews of reported incidents, meetings with involved students, and follow-up support to ensure the behaviour does not continue. 4. **Anti-Bullying Training for Staff:** All staff receive training on recognising signs of bullying and how to effectively intervene. This training ensures that staff are equipped to respond quickly and appropriately to any bullying incidents. 5. **Clear Reporting Procedures:** Any pupil or parents)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant class teacher. Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher. Pupils should know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.: Direct approach to members of staff at an appropriate time, for example after class, at breaks. Hand note up with homework. Tell a parent or guardian. Get a parents)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on their behalf. Administer a confidential survey once a term to all pupils. Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place. 6. **Regular Monitoring of School Climate:** The school regularly surveys students and staff to monitor the overall school climate and assess the effectiveness of anti-bullying strategies. Feedback from these surveys is used to improve policies and practices. By maintaining high standards of supervision and monitoring, the school aims to create a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for all students, where bullying behaviour is swiftly addressed and prevented.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

• The class teacher will oversee recording of bullying reports for students in their class- this includes using the procedures guidelines to investigate reports of bullying and recording bullying behaviour on Databiz.

• The Principal will follow up after 20 days to investigate if bullying has ceased.

• All staff will be vigilant to bullying behaviour.

• The Principal will inform Board of Management of incidences of bullying.

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):

Steps to Determine, Address, and Review Bullying Behaviour

To ensure that bullying is effectively managed and addressed, the school follows the steps outlined below to determine if bullying has occurred, the approaches to take in addressing it, and how progress is reviewed:

1. **Identifying Bullying Behaviour:**
   - **Reporting:** Students, parents, and staff are encouraged to report any concerns about bullying behaviour. Reports can be made verbally to a trusted teacher or staff member.
   - **Investigation:** Once a report is made, the school will immediately begin investigating the situation. The relevant staff member will meet with the students involved, as well as any witnesses, to gather information and clarify the details of the incident.
   - **Assessment:** The school will assess whether the behaviour meets the definition of bullying as outlined in the Bí Cineálta Policy. This includes looking for repeated negative behaviour that intentionally hurts or excludes another student.
2. **Addressing the Bullying Behaviour:**
   - **Immediate Action:** If bullying is confirmed, immediate steps will be taken to stop the behaviour. This may involve separating the students involved, providing support to the victim, and taking appropriate disciplinary action against the student responsible for the bullying.
   - **Support for Victim:** The school will offer support to the student who has been bullied. Their well-being will be closely monitored to ensure they feel safe and supported.
   - **Support for the Student Who Bullied:** The student who engaged in bullying behaviour will be provided with guidance to understand the harm they have caused and the importance of changing their behaviour. This may involve meetings with the student, their parents, and relevant staff to discuss appropriate interventions.
   - **Mediation and Restorative Practices:** Where appropriate, the school may arrange a restorative meeting between the students involved, facilitated by a staff member, to help them understand the impact of the bullying and work towards resolving the issue together.
3. **Reviewing Progress:**
   - **Follow-Up:** The school will follow up with all parties involved to assess whether the bullying behaviour has stopped and if the victim feels safe. Additional support may be provided to both the student who was bullied and the student who exhibited bullying behaviour.
   - **Monitoring:** Teachers and staff will continue to monitor the situation through informal check-ins with the students, observing their interactions, and reviewing any further reports or concerns.
   - **Review and Feedback:** Regular reviews of the case will take place, with updates shared with the parents of the students involved. The school will also seek feedback from the students to ensure that the solution is effective and that the bullying has been addressed.
   - Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's Complaints Procedures.
   - In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's Complaints Procedure and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.
4. **Prevention and Education:**
   - **Ongoing Education:** The school will continue to educate students about bullying, empathy, respect, and conflict resolution through lessons, assemblies, and workshops. This helps to prevent further incidents by fostering a culture of understanding and inclusivity.
   - **Policy Review:** The school will periodically review its Bí Cineálta policy to ensure it is effective and up-to-date, using the feedback and findings from incidents to improve practices and prevent future occurrences of bullying.

By following these steps, the school aims to ensure that any incidents of bullying are addressed swiftly and effectively, with a focus on support, education, and prevention.

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):

Approaches to Support Those Who Experience, Witness, and Display Bullying Behaviour

The school will use the following approaches to support students who experience, witness, or display bullying behaviour:

1. **Support for Students Who Experience Bullying:**
   - **Listening and Validation:** The school will ensure that students who experience bullying feel heard and understood. They will be provided with a safe and supportive environment to talk about their experiences.
   - **Emotional Support:** Students who are affected by bullying will receive emotional support from trusted staff members, such as teachers or the principal, who will work closely with them to help them process their feelings.
   - **Ongoing Monitoring:** Regular check-ins with the affected student will be conducted to ensure they feel safe and supported, and to monitor their emotional well-being.
   - **Inclusion Activities:** The school will encourage and provide opportunities for the student to engage in activities that foster inclusion, helping them build friendships, self-esteem and confidence.
   - **Counselling:** Subject to available funding, counselling may be provided if deemed necessary.
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2. **Support for Students Who Witness Bullying:**
   - **Encouraging Reporting:** The school will provide a safe space and encourage students to report bullying they witness, emphasizing that they can play an important role in stopping bullying.
   - **Empathy and Education:** Students who witness bullying will receive education on how to support their peers in a positive way and be empowered to intervene safely if they feel comfortable doing so.
   - **Peer Support:** Those who witness bullying will be encouraged to be good role models and allies, helping to create a school culture where bullying is not tolerated.
3. **Support for Students Who Display Bullying Behaviour:**
   - **Understanding the Impact:** Students who engage in bullying behaviour will be made aware of the harm their actions cause. Staff will work with these students to help them understand the consequences of their behaviour on others.
   - **Restorative Practices:** The school will use restorative approaches where appropriate, allowing the student who displayed bullying behaviour to reflect on their actions, take responsibility, and make amends.
   - **Behavioural Support:** Students who exhibit bullying behaviour may be referred to relevant staff (e.g., principal, year head, or a designated teacher) for additional guidance and support in managing their behaviour and developing more positive social interactions.
   - **Parental Involvement:** Parents of students who display bullying behaviour will be informed, and the school will work closely with them to create a plan for positive behavioural change.
4. **Whole-School Approach:**
   - **Promoting a Positive School Culture:** The school will foster an environment of kindness, respect, and inclusion through regular lessons, assemblies, and activities that promote understanding and empathy.
   - **Training for Staff:** All staff will receive training to ensure they can effectively support students affected by bullying, whether they are victims, witnesses, or those displaying bullying behaviour.
   - **Follow-Up and Continuous Support:** After bullying incidents have been addressed, the school will continue to provide ongoing support and monitor the situation to ensure long-term positive outcomes for all involved.

By using these approaches, the school aims to provide a balanced, supportive response to bullying that not only addresses the immediate issue but also helps to foster a long-term culture of respect, empathy, and inclusion.

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: 17/11/25
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____ Date: 17/11/25
(Principal)