



Midleton CBS Secondary School

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Midleton CBS 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 Ethics and Behaviour.

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

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

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	7-10 April 7th May	Online Survey In-person Workshop
Students	7-10 April	Online Survey in Tutor Time
Parents	11-28 April 12 May	Online Survey PAC Meeting
Board of Management	20 May 2025	In person meeting
Date policy was approved: 20th May 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: 20th May 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 (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

Culture and Environment

As a school we strive to foster an environment and culture where every student feels safe and valued for who they are.

Our mission statement states: *"Our school aspires to being a caring Christian centre of learning, where the promotion of an inclusive culture, values of respect for self and others, honest endeavour and efforts to achieve full potential are nurtured."*

We acknowledge the endeavours and achievements of our students through our social media accounts, school app, notice boards, photographs, newspaper articles, assemblies, and school awards. We aim to highlight a diverse range of activities and achievements in these places.

Throughout the year awareness weeks are organised which highlight and help promote the positive culture in the school. Weeks include Wellbeing Week, LGBT+, Dyslexia Awareness, Seachtain na Gaeilge, etc.

We continue to foster a telling environment where students can feel safe to tell someone if they are being bullied or have witnessed bullying. Where students feel safe and supported to tell someone.

A trusted adult: our school operates a tutor system when students meet their tutors each day, building a relationship and fostering an environment where students have an adult in their corner, supporting and lifting them up.

Our school sits on a large campus. The buildings were designed with large lines of sight in mind where staff have good vision of their area of supervision. Staff are encouraged to actively supervise their area of responsibility ensuring they are visible and approachable to students. Blind spots have cameras that are visible which act as a deterrent to poor behaviour in those areas.

Physical space – our students have access to a large canteen, and two other designated eating areas. They have access to an astroturf and pitch during lunchtime to play and socialise.

We Respect, We Care, We are Responsible – each classroom and throughout the corridor's posters highlighting these values are on display in English and Irish.

Student groups are assigned specific toilets helping to make all students feel safe.

Homeroom – Our school has 3 classes for students with Autism. These classes are called 'Homeroom'. Students attached to Homeroom integrate into mainstream for their main classes and receive additional support in Homeroom. Students are aware that some students have additional needs and receive additional support.

Safe Space - The Hub accessible to students who need it.

There is a club or activity for everyone in the school - Art, Chess, Film, Sport, Lego, etc.

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

We offer a broad range of subjects to suit the needs of a diverse range of students. At Junior Cycle students can choose from eight subjects including Visual Arts, Graphics, Music, Business, Applied Technology, Wood Technology, French, and German.

All students study SPHE where students are empowered to create, nurture and maintain respectful and healthy relationships with themselves and others. The RSE strand of the specification also provides space for student to examine and consider relationships and human sexuality which can foster an understanding of diversity which may help to reduce gender and identity-based bullying as well as sexism and sexual harassment.

All Junior Cycle students study the Religious Education* subject as laid out by the NCCA which looks at multiple faiths fostering an environment of diversity and inclusion. Senior cycle students follow a Religious Education programme designed by the school which discusses issues of the day in a safe and supportive environment.

In CSPE there is a focus on the interdependence of people in communities.

In Geography students study Globalisation. The world is getting smaller, and we are interconnected. We look at the advantages and disadvantages of globalisation. At Leaving Cert level students study migration detail as part of Human Geography. The advantages and disadvantages of migration to host countries are studied. Students study the European Union's Immigration policies, the European Migrant crisis and issues that can arise from migration.

In Politics and Society and History historical and contemporary examples of racial

discrimination and colonial legacies, students can develop an understanding of the root causes of bias and prejudice.

Tutorial time -at various stages throughout the year a themed week is delivered through Tutorial time, allowing all students to receive the same message.

Life Skills - all first years participate in a Life Skills class which includes modules around cooking, ICT, art, minding myself, etc.

The FUSE anti-bullying programme is delivered to students in 1st and 2nd year.

Effective seating plans mix or separate some students as appropriate.

Group work allows students of different social groups to mix.

The Hub – This is a room organised by the SEN dept which offers students a space that is generally quieter, students can hang-out here during break times. This space is also used by students who have movement breaks.

Relationships and Partnerships

Student Council - democratically chosen with a representative from each class.

Class tutors - stay with the same class for their time in the school where possible, fostering a positive relationship.

Parents Advisory Council

Coffee morning for 1st year parents

Restorative practice - provided by trained staff

Parental contact – Contact with parents/guardians is a very important part of school life. Outside of the parent teacher meetings, we as a school are in contact with parents through our App, our Newsletter which 62% of parents say they read. We also celebrate student achievement through our social media channels where 66% of parents follow us. Parents also receive communication through the student journal, or phone calls. Parents can receive communication through post, this is mostly for official sanctions or where a student has done something positive, and the parents will receive a postcard outlining the details. We also hold information nights for parents/students about upcoming subject choices, CAO, trips, etc. Some info nights are by invited guests on topics such as anxiety, consent, and transition to post-primary.

A wide variety of Extra and co-curricular activities are available for students of all interests to participate in. Activities offered include sport: Hurling, Football, Soccer, Rugby, Orienteering, Athletics, Golf. Non-sport activities: School Show, Chess, debating, games club, film club, Young Scientist, Green Schools, Gaisce, Lego Builders, Choiste na Gaeilge, Art club, etc.

These activities provide students an opportunity to belong and be part of a group outside of their normal friend group or class where they can meet and socialise with other individuals who share a similar interest.

1st and 4th Year Paired reading allows junior students an opportunity to get to know a more senior student and vice versa

Relationships with SNAs - Check and Connect

SNAs meet all 1st years to 'organise their lockers' however it gives them a chance to meet all 1st years and makes it easier when they call students out throughout the year as all students are called out at some stage.

Graduation ceremony – Each May a graduation ceremony is held for the 6th year graduating class where their time in CBS is remembered and celebrated. Students are central to the planning of the event.

PPU – The school has an active Past Pupils Union which supports the activities of the school through the school awards which is held each year, recognising the work of students and through funding. The PPU is the jersey sponsor for all teams in the school.

BFL – The school has allocated some of its hours to the Behaviour for Learning programme which helps students develop empathy, respect, and communication skills, reducing the likelihood of bullying. Personalized Behaviour Plans help students who struggle with aggression or social interaction, preventing bullying before it escalates. Check and Connect.

Senior Students organise and run a lunchtime soccer tournament for 1st years.

Our Annual Student-Staff soccer match is a highlight of the year and is watched by the whole school.

** See Religious Education Policy for exemptions to this.*

strategies specifically aimed at

Preventing online bullying behaviour.

ICT and Life Skills classes in 1st and 4th year

Student and parent/guardian talks on consent

Preventing homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour.

LGBT+ Awareness week

Staff training and display of staff certs.

LGBT Flag flown outside the school and shared on social media.

Preventing racist bullying behaviour.

Give Racism the red card - wear red day

Zero tolerance approach on remarks or comments

use of inclusive examples of people - not just white people.

Sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment

CSPE, SPHE, and RSE Curricula

Student and parent talks on consent, sexual harassment and sexual bullying

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):

Policy and Planning

Bí Cinealta Policy
Code of Ethics and Behaviour (Code of Discipline)
Mission Statement and Values
ICT and Acceptable Use Policies
“We Respect, We Care, We are Responsible” posters
Social Media Policy
Child Safeguarding Statement
Risk Assessments
Health and Safety Policy
Behaviour for Learning
Parents Advisory Council
Student Council
Primary School Visits - to facilitate peer group mixing or separation
Inclusion/SEN Policy
Tutor System
Whole School Guidance Plan
BOM Reporting Procedures
SSE
1st Year Induction

Duty rosters ensure supervision of all school areas during breaks and lunch.
Staff actively supervise and act as visible trusted adults.
Use of CCTV monitoring in key blind spot areas.
Structured access to quiet areas like The Hub to support student wellbeing.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Pastoral Care Team with the support of year heads and class tutors as appropriate. Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

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):

- Any student or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- All reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

Steps to Determine if Bullying Behaviour Occurred

- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner;
- Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- Gathering facts: meeting individually with students involved.
- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher; It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s)
- Assess the behaviour against the definition (targeted, repeated, imbalance of power).
- Maintain sensitivity and discretion

Approaches to Address Bullying Behaviour

- Take action in a timely manner
- Restorative practices where appropriate.
- Behaviour support plans for students engaging in bullying.
- Monitoring and progress report cards
- Involving parents/guardians early in the process.
- Developing a clear action plan for resolution.
- Tutor & Year head check-ins
- Behaviour for Learning
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school should give parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the students;
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a student has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him how he is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.

Review Progress

- Monitoring and reviewing progress at regular intervals.
- The teacher will engage with the students/parents no more than 20 school days after the initial conversation to review progress following the initial intervention.

- Important factors to consider as part of the review are the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the students involved.
- 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.
- Where it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then the school will consider using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Ethics and Behaviour. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student (who displayed bullying behaviour), their parents and the school; and not the student/parents of the student who experienced bullying.
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Pupils/

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):

Experience

- Listen and reassure
- Take them seriously
- Make them aware that bullying is not a reflection on them
- Be sensitive and reassure privacy and discretion
- Check in with them regularly
- Ensure seating plans are updated if required
- Refer to Guidance Dept. or outside agencies if necessary
- Encourage engagement with extra-curricular activities
- Develop in consultation a plan to repair the relationship

Witness

- Listen and reassure
- Take them seriously
- Be sensitive and reassure privacy and discretion
- Check in with them regularly
- Thank them for coming forward
- Schedule a guidance appointment if necessary

Display Bullying Behaviour

- Education on bullying and its effects on others
- Monitor and support regularly
- Parental involvement
- Encourage engagement with extra-curricular activities
- Encourage reflection
- Behaviour for Learning
- Guidance Department referral if appropriate
- Develop in consultation a plan to repair the relationship

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: 20th May 2025

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed:  _____

Date: 20th May 2025

(Principal)