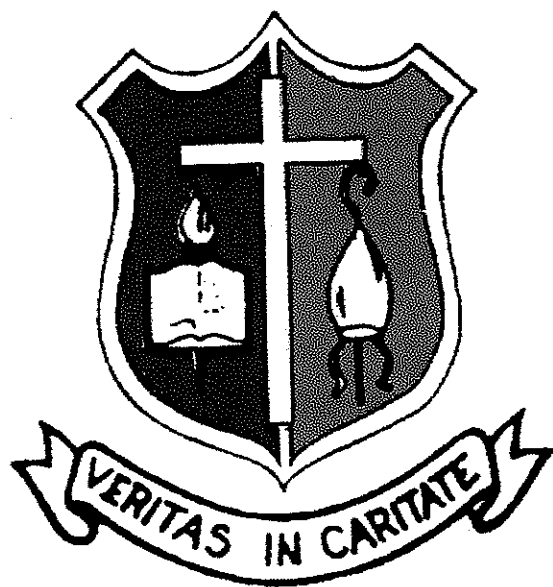


St Munchin's College



Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address
Bullying Behaviour

Introduction

The Board of Management of St. Munchin's 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 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, membership of the Traveller community.

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures in place in St. Munchin's College to:

- develop a positive school culture and climate
- ensure the effective treatment of reported cases of bullying.

Scope

This policy applies to staff, students and any other member of the school community.

Related policies and documents

- Acceptable Usage Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Dignity in the Workplace Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Relationships and Sexual Education Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Health and Safety Statement
- Critical Incident Policy
- SPHE Policy
- Whole School Guidance Plan
- Attendance Policy
- Admissions Policy and Admissions Notice
- Induction for New Staff and Student Teachers
- Anti-Bullying Policy (In relation to adult members of the school community)

- Harassment and Sexual Harassment Policy (In relation to adult members of the school community)
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Wellbeing Policy

Principles of Best Practice

The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of students.

The Board of Management is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behavior:

- a) A positive school culture and climate which:
 - Is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity
 - Encourages students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment
 - Promotes respectful relationships across the school community.
- b) Effective leadership
- c) A school-wide approach
- d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact
- e) Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that build empathy, respect and resilience in students and explicitly address the issues of cyberbullying and identity-based bullying including homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- f) Effective supervision and monitoring of students
- g) Supports for staff
- h) Consistent recording, investigating and following up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies) and
- i) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying policy.

Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School

In St. Munchin's College we aim to develop the full potential of every student in a learning environment where fairness, understanding, success and discipline is pursued. This policy is reflective of St. Munchin's College mission statement which is *'to provide a Christian environment where all persons are valued and assisted to reach their full potential.'* The school seeks to promote the wellbeing of all members of the school community in a respectful, safe and caring environment which values the dignity of each individual.

Goals/Objectives

- a) To create a school ethos which encourages all to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in confidence.
- b) To affirm the right of all within the school to live a life free from bullying.
- c) To raise awareness of bullying as an unacceptable form of behaviour with school management, teachers, students, parents/guardians.
- d) To create a school ethos that acknowledges, accommodates and respects a diversity of persons in the school community.
- e) To ensure that the school's *Social, Personal and Health Education Programme* raises awareness of the factors associated with bullying behaviour as well as developing appropriate knowledge, skills and behaviours.
- f) To take practical actions to prevent incidents of bullying behaviour e.g. to ensure comprehensive supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
- g) To develop and put into effect procedures for reporting and recording incidents of bullying

behaviour.

- h) To develop procedures for addressing and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- i) To develop a programme of support for those affected by and involved in bullying behaviour. Particular reference will be made to the restorative approach.
- j) To work with, and through, the various local agencies in countering all forms of bullying and anti-social behaviour.
- k) To recognise and acknowledge the role of parents/guardians in equipping their daughter with a range of life skills.

Definition of Bullying

In accordance with Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying and Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools bullying is defined as follows:

Bullying is targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society.

The core elements of the definition are further described below:

Targeted behaviour

Bullying is deliberate, unwanted behaviour that causes harm to others, and where the student displaying bullying behaviour knows that their behaviour is or will be perceived as harmful by the child or young person experiencing the behaviour.

Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. The harm can be physical (for example, personal injury, damage to or loss of property), social (for example, withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion) and/or emotional (for example, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety) and can have a serious and long-term negative impact on the student experiencing the 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 still be addressed under the school's Code of Behaviour.

Repeated behaviour

Bullying takes the form of a systematic pattern of behaviour which is repeated over time. Single offline incidents of intentional negative behaviour involving an imbalance of power are not considered bullying but must still be addressed under the school's Code of Behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, posting a single harmful message/image/video online, which is highly likely to be reposted or shared with others can therefore be seen as bullying behaviour.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

Imbalance of power

In incidents of bullying of this nature, the student experiencing the bullying behaviour finds it hard to defend themselves as a result of the abuse of a real or perceived imbalance of power. This imbalance of power may manifest itself through differences in size, strength, age, ability, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, race, ethnic origin including membership of the Traveller and/or Roma communities, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, experience of the care system, disability or the receipt of special education. In incidents of online (or cyber) bullying, the imbalance of power may relate to online anonymity, technical proficiency and possession of information/images/video, and/or the inability of the targeted student to remove offensive online material or escape the bullying.

The following forms of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- Direct bullying behaviour - This includes the following (the list is not exhaustive):
 - Physical bullying behaviour
 - Verbal/ Non Verbal bullying behaviour
 - Written bullying behaviour
 - Extortion.
- Indirect bullying behaviour. - This includes the following (the list is not exhaustive):
 - Exclusion
 - Relational
- Online bullying behaviour.

Types of Bullying Behaviours

This list of types of bullying behaviours is not an non exhaustive list. Similar behaviours may be considered as bullying behaviours.

Disablist bullying behaviour	Behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of a perceived or actual disability or additional need.
Exceptionally able bullying	Behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their high academic ability or outstanding talents.
Gender identity bullying	Behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual gender identity.
Homophobic/transphobic (LGBTQ+) bullying:	Behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual membership of the LGBTQ+ community.
Physical appearance bullying	Behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their physical appearance. Students who “look different” can be mocked or criticised about the shape, size or appearance of their body.
Racist bullying	Behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their race or ethnic origin which includes membership of the Traveller or Roma community. Racism is defined in the <i>National Action Plan Against Racism</i> ¹³ as “a form of domination which manifests through those power dynamics present in structural and institutional arrangements, practices, policies and cultural norms, which have the effect of excluding or discriminating against individuals or groups, based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin”.
Poverty bullying	Behaviour that intends to humiliate a student because of a lack of resources.
Religious identity bullying	Behaviour that intends to harm a student because of their religion or religious identity.
Sexist bullying	Behaviour that intends to harm a student based on their sex, perpetuating stereotypes that a student or a group of students are inferior because of their sex.
Sexual harassment	Any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on sex which affects the dignity of the student.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Bi Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Examples of Bullying Behaviours

The list of examples below is non exhaustive. Similar behaviours may be considered as bullying behaviours.

General behaviours which apply to all	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc.• Physical aggression• Damage to property• Name calling• Slagging• The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person• Offensive graffiti• Extortion• Intimidation• Insulting or offensive gestures• The "look"• Invasion of personal space• Spreading rumours• Smirking/Sniggering• A combination of any of the types listed.
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<p>Cyber</p>	<p>Denigration: Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation</p> <p>Harassment: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual</p> <p>Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name</p> <p>Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight</p> <p>Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online</p> <p>Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images</p> <p>Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group</p> <p>Cyber stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Silent telephone/mobile phone call • Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls • Abusive text messages • Abusive email • Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube/Instagram or on games consoles • Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures • Abusive posts on any form of communication technology.
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<p>Identity Based Behaviours Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.) In addition, the Equal Status Acts 2000 - 2018 prohibit discrimination in the provision of accommodation services against people who are in receipt of rent supplement, housing assistance, or social welfare payments.</p>	
<p>Homophobic and Transgender</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation • Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation • Name calling e.g. gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner • Physical intimidation or attacks • Threats
<p>Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background • Exclusion on the basis of any of the above.

Relational	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying.</p> <p>Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malicious gossip • Isolation, exclusion and ignoring • Ignoring • Excluding from the group • Taking someone's friends away • Spreading rumours • Breaking confidence • Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear • The "look."
Sexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching • Harassment.
Special Educational Needs and/or Physical Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name calling • Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs • Taking advantage of some students' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying • Taking advantage of some students' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues • Mimicking a person's disability • Setting others up for ridicule.
High Achiever	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name calling • Taunting others because of their abilities • Setting others up for ridicule • Isolation, exclusion and deliberately ignoring.

Effects of Bullying on Individuals

Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical ill health • Damage to personal belongings or loss of property • Physical injury
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of confidence • Loneliness • Low self-esteem • Social isolation • Social anxiety • Fear.

Psychological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generalised anxiety • Anger • Depression (strong predictor of peer victimisation) • Suicidal thoughts or behaviour.
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Possible Indicators That a Student is Being Bullied

Physical indicators

- Unexplained bruising, cuts etc.
- Loss of/ damage to personal property
- Hunger or thirst
- Frequent minor illnesses, headaches, tummy
- Bedwetting
- Loss of appetite
- Obsessive behaviour, physical appearance, weight
- Stammering
- Requests for extra money
- Aggression /Violence.

Emotional/ Psychological Indicators

- Outbursts of anger, temper, irritability at home
- Bullying brother and sisters, parents/guardians
- Well behaved child suddenly troublesome

Signs of depression

- Changes in: mood, appetite, sleep pattern
- Tiredness, neglect of appearance
- Expressions of sadness, worthlessness
- Nightmares, crying at night
- Restless, dangerous, wild, disruptive behaviour
- Cynicism, black mood
- Implied or overt threats of suicide.

School Related Indicators

- Reluctance to go, wanting to be accompanied
- Returning in bad form
- Changing route
- Avoiding certain days/lessons
- Nervousness in class
- Punctuality problems
- Poor concentration
- Deterioration in school work
- Expressions of hopelessness
- Fewer phone calls, friends calling, invitations
- Reluctance to take part in activities
- Abusive phone calls, texts, social media messages etc.

The Relevant Teacher for Addressing and Dealing with Bullying.

The Relevant Teachers for addressing and dealing with bullying may include any or all of the following:

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Anti Bullying Coordinator and Anti Bullying Team
- Year Heads
- Care Team.

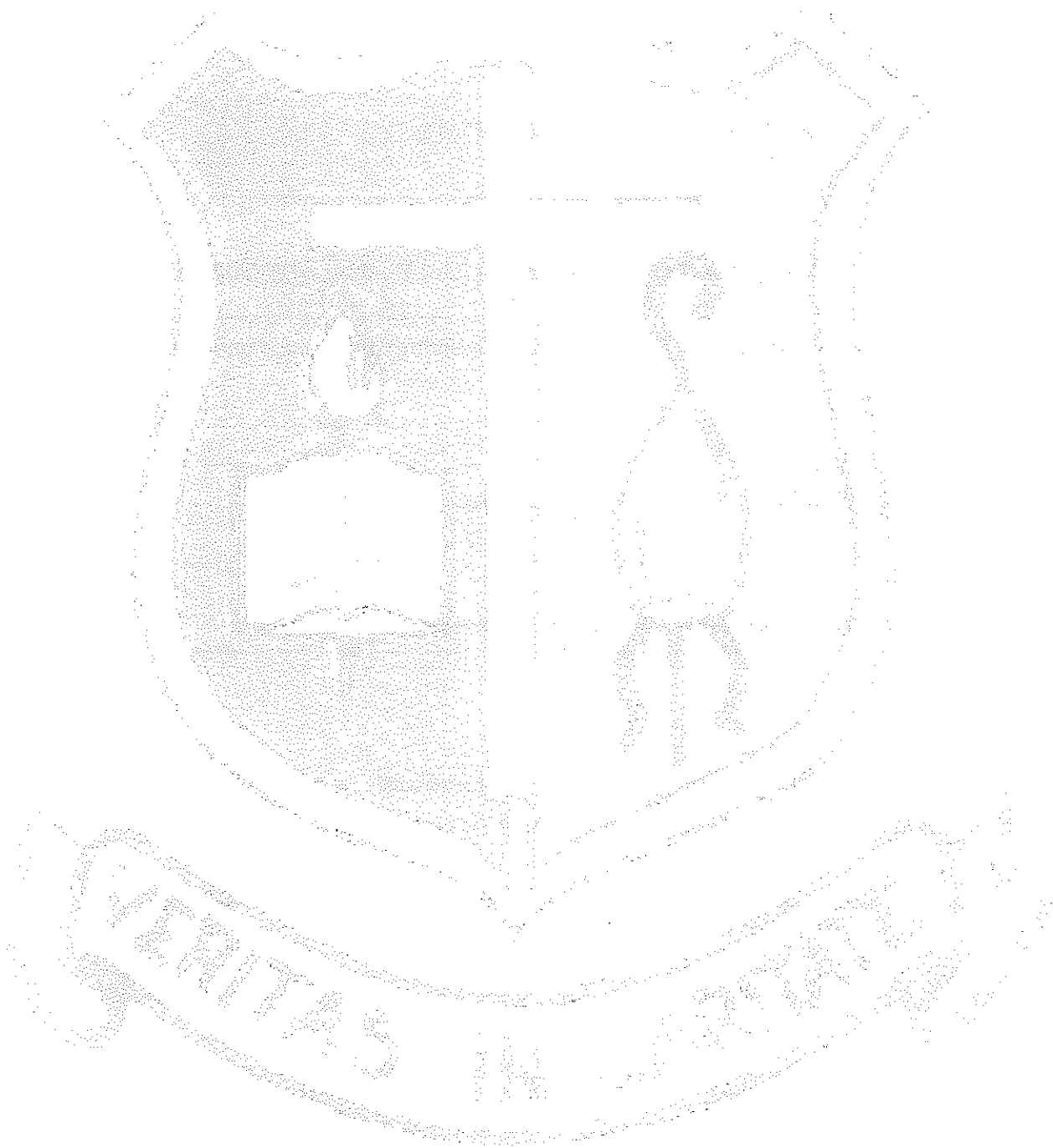
Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

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	13/05/2025	Staff Anti-Bullying Survey Staff Presentation Staff Meeting
Students	12/02/2025	Consulted with students through the Student Representative Council,
Parents	01/04/2025	Parents Association, Parent/Guardian Anti Bullying Survey
Board of Management	03/06/2025	Review new policy draft

Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	N/A	N/A
Date policy was approved:		
Date policy was last reviewed:		



Education and Prevention Strategies

This policy derives from our school's Mission Statement:

St. Munchin's College provides a Christian environment where all persons are valued and assisted to reach their full potential.

In line with our Mission Statement St. Munchin's College always strives to ensure that all people within the school feel cared for and safe, whilst also giving expression to the school's culture of fairness and respect. The school, in its provision of curricular, extra-curricular and pastoral care programmes, provides prevention and awareness-raising measures across all aspects of bullying, and supports strategies to engage students in addressing problems when they arise. We work towards building empathy, respect and resilience in students. Since 2013 we have invested much time, effort, training and resources into ensuring that our anti bullying policy meets the needs of our students and ensures to help and support students who are victims of bullying while also providing help and support to perpetrators. The students and parents are well informed throughout the year in relation to the methods by which they can report bullying behaviour. This is the key. From surveys undertaken many years ago we deduced that in our school context, and all boys secondary school, we would need to ensure that the victim of bullying would be offered various different ways to report their issue and this would then be investigated and dealt with.

We are very proactive in the school in relation to raising awareness of bullying and also in relation to encouraging students who are being bullied to tell. We have, over the years, adopted a very unique anti bullying policy. It is referred to as the "No Blame" policy. As mentioned, through our research, which incidentally, commenced thirteen years ago, we found that the biggest deterrent to tackling bullying, was creating a space for the person who was being bullied to tell someone about their suffering. Therefore, our anti bullying policy had to and does make it easier for the victim to tell, without the worry, stress and anxiety that the perpetrator (bully) may seek retribution.

Our policy encompasses two aspects as outlined below:

There are 2 strands to our anti bullying policy

Strand 1-Education

The students are taught explicitly about what bullying is and what does not constitute bullying

- Simple acronym to remind students **HARD**
- Hurtful, Aggressive, Repeated and Deliberate
- 1st years particularly need education coming from different primary schools and homes with varying levels of behavioural tolerance.
- We teach the students (1st session took place yesterday with our information talk) about the **different types of bullying** verbal, nonverbal, physical, extortion and cyber bullying all of these phrases are fully unpacked for the students and specific examples are provided.
- We have an **Anti -Bullying week** dedicated to raising awareness of anti- bullying procedures. During that week, age and stage appropriate resources are used to teach the students about the different aspects of bullying.
- We speak not only to students about bullying behaviour but to you as parents too. Such talks take place at the Parent Information Evening and also in our communication through the school app.

St. Munchin's College Anti Bullying Policy is available for all parents and students to read on our web page. It is essential that parents and students familiarize themselves with this very important policy. The following is a fact sheet on bullying behaviour. Please read through the fact sheet with your parents. Once both you and your parents have read through the information, sign it (parents and students signature required), **then return it to your tutor.** If at any stage throughout the year you feel that you are being bullied or a student in your class is making you feel uncomfortable, you must speak immediately to an adult that you trust

in the school. **Bullying behaviour is anti social behaviour and is unacceptable. You must always report incidents of bullying, remember that your teachers are here to help you.**

Anyone can be bullied- it is a lot more common than people think and can happen at school, at home, on the sporting field, at work or online. If you are being bullied, it is important to remember that you are not to blame, and that there are steps you can take to stop it. Bullying is a serious matter and no one should have to put up with it.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

“Bullying is repeated aggression, verbal, physical or psychological, conducted by an individual or group against others” (Department of Education and Science Guidelines on Countering Bullying in Primary and Post Primary Schools, September 2013.)

Since 2013 all schools have an obligation to possess and enact an Anti- Bullying Policy. This is a directive from the Department of Education and Science and is now the law. Bullying is no longer behaviour that is ignored or explained away by statements such as “boys will be boys” or indeed by claiming that aggressive behaviour was “only a bit of horseplay”. All students come from differing homes with different rules around what behaviours are acceptable and unacceptable. In a school population of over 670 students all students are expected to comply with our Code of Behaviour and our Anti Bullying Policy.

BULLYING BEHAVIOUR INCLUDES:

- Hurtful words or gestures
- “Pantsing”-pulling down another students trousers/shorts
- Repeated name calling
- Exclusion or isolation of a person by another person or group of people
- Physical aggression
- Threats
- Mimicry (“taking off the way in which a person walks or talks”)
- Interference with another student’s property
- Cyber bullying (texting, twitter, face book or any other forum of social media)
- One off serious threatening words, gestures or actions may also be considered bullying
- Bullying by its nature often depends on observers or “bystanders”, who sometimes passively participate and facilitate bullying behaviour. Such persons will also be held accountable for their action or inaction.

H= Hurtful

A=Aggression

R=Repeated

D=Deliberate

WHEN ISN'T IT BULLYING?

Bullying usually is not a one off incident (but can be in the event of an attack on another person). For example a friend being in a bad mood one day, and not being very nice to you and then apologising later is not bullying. If this behaviour is repeated then it is bullying.

HOW BULLYING AFFECTS PEOPLE?

Bullying can have a serious impact on how some one feels about him-self. People who are bullied often feel that they are alone and think there is nothing they can do to change the situation. Ongoing bullying is of great concern. It lowers a person’s self- esteem and often leads to feelings of sadness, depression, anger and confusion. **If you are being bullied remind yourself that it’s not your fault and that there is something that you can do to stop it. The best place to start is to talk to people you trust, parents, friends and teachers.** If you are not comfortable approaching a teacher then tell your parents and they can contact the school. If you report a bullying incident and it is repeated then you must report again. Keep reporting until the bullying stops!

WHY DO PEOPLE BULLY OTHERS?

No human being is born a bully. We learn bullying behaviour and characteristics as we go through life. We may learn bullying behaviour in the home, on the pitch or in school. **Either way it is up to us as the responsible adults around our children, to teach them about bullying behaviour and to prevent it as best we can.** If bullies have learned to be bullies then they can also learn to change their bullying behaviour. Bullying can be carried out by an individual person or by a group of people. Anyone can be a bully, including

a friend, brother, sister or another family member. A bully can also be an older person, or someone in a position of power such as a teacher, a coach or a manager. **Often bullies have low self-esteem and may even have been bullied themselves in the past. They may use bullying as a way of making themselves feel more powerful. People who bully can be motivated by jealousy and some do not understand the hurt that their behaviour causes.**

WHAT DO I DO IF I AM BEING BULLIED?

You must tell someone that you trust and you must ensure that a person in authority (Tutor, Year Head, School Counsellor, Chaplain, Deputy Principal and Principal) is informed about the bullying. If you are leaving school on a daily basis feeling upset or down because of something someone has said to you or done to you- **STOP**. Report this to your Parents, Tutor, Year Head, School Counsellor, Chaplain, Deputy Principal or Principal. It is our job to help you. To seek help is a sign of courage and strength.

Key Points to Remember:

Everyone in St. Munchin's College has the right to live, work, study, and play in an environment free from bullying, harassment, discrimination and violence. No one deserves or asks to be bullied. We pride ourselves in this College on that fact that we are such a tight knit community. We do not bully people in our own community or indeed in any community. St. Munchin's College students stick together and help each other. Reporting bullying or asking for help does not mean that you are giving in to the bully. It means that you are older now and know that what the bully is doing is wrong and you want to stop that behaviour. Reporting a bullying incident is about looking after yourself and making sure that you feel happier and more comfortable.

I have read the above fact sheet with my son and feel that both he and I are fully aware of what bullying behaviour involves. Please submit this signed form to your tutor at tutor time this week. Your tutor will have a designated box in their tutor to receive all signed forms.

Parents Signature: _____ Date: _____

Students Signature: _____ Date: _____

Dear Parent,

If you would like clarification on any of the aforementioned information or have any questions relating to the issue of bullying, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Fitzgerald, Ms. Shiels, Ms. D. Collins (Anti Bullying Co Ordinator)

Yours Sincerely,

Mr. S. Fitzgerald () Ms. L. Shiels ()

Ms. D. Collins ()

Strand 2-Information Gathering

In order to make it easier for the victim to tell we carry our regular class surveys. This is something that happens throughout the school in all year groups from 1st to 6th year. Teachers meet a class for 40 minutes and then the class move on. Therefore we often see very little in terms of bullying behaviours. The students however are together all day. They see and hear everything so they are the best resource that we have to report bullying and they do (once that culture of telling is fostered). In older year groups the culture of anti-bullying has become so progressed in our school, that it is not unusual for students to approach the a teacher or an adult that they are comfortable with in our school and state that they are concerned that a particular student is getting hard time. In addition, parents will ring the school and report any concerns that they may have. They

may have overheard a conversation going home in the car and are, as a result, willing to give us information that will serve to help a child who is suffering.

Any information that we ever receive regarding bullying behaviour whether from a child a child or a parent, is always treated with the strictest of confidence.

First Promise

If a child is found to be bullying and has been named on a survey several times as being a perpetrator they will then be interviewed by a member of the anti-bullying team. There are set questions that the student is asked. The student is made aware of the negative impact that his behaviour is having, and subsequently signs a promise stating that he will never carry out bullying behaviour again on that child or any other child in the school (at this point, only the student and the anti bullying team member carrying out the interview are aware that this student is being interviewed). Parents of the student, year heads, tutors, deputy principal or principal are not made aware, as this would make it a discipline issue and our aim is to stop the bullying and give the perpetrator an opportunity to change his ways. 98% of the time we never interview that student again. The bullying stops and the student displaying bullying characteristics is also stopped in his tracks. The severity of the bullying is always a factor that is taken into consideration and every situation dealt with is case specific. If a student is violent towards another student then that is assault and will be dealt with under our Code of Behaviour.

Second Promise

If, having spoken to the student (perpetrator) the student's name comes up again as bullying, then the student is again interviewed to clarify the facts and again he will sign a second promise. This time his parents will co-sign the 2nd promise and are, at this point, made aware of the first promise. We have very few students who move onto a 2nd promise. The students who is identified as perpetrating bullying behaviour towards another students will receive help and support through counselling and meetings with our chaplain. Our belief is such that all children are born as babies. They learn bullying behaviour and so they can unlearn such behaviours. This is hugely important to us as a school, in terms of our commitment to preparing our boys for life beyond St. Munchin's College. Wherever there is a gathering of people there is a potential for bullying behaviour to take place. We must ensure that we have taught our boys how to deal with such behaviour in a responsible way i.e. reporting.

Support for Working with Students Affected by Bullying

- The following in-school supports and opportunities will be made available to the students affected by bullying. These supports are designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience:
 1. Pastoral care system
 2. Peer mentoring system
 3. Class Teacher/Tutor/ Year Head system
 4. Care team
 5. Check and Connect
 6. NBSS related modules
 7. Bluebox
- If students require counselling or further support, the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the student affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.

Breaking of 2nd Promise

Should the student break a second promise they now move away from the anti-bullying policy and their behaviour is dealt with through our Code of Behaviour.

Anti-Bullying

Very often some of our 1st years come to us from primary school with bullying traits and behaviours. Once we speak to the students it is obvious that they assume that what they are doing is acceptable. These students now have to learn new behaviour patterns. We are consistently vigilant regarding bullying behaviour and have a team of 8 teachers that work daily on surveys, interviews and raising awareness. We are so fortunate to have a team of teachers (who are timetabled twice a week and the rest of the time give up their free classes) who care so much for our boys welfare that they are willing to give up their free time to ensure that all of our boys feel safe and comfortable in school. It is therefore, hugely important that parents too speak to their son's around the topic of bullying and encourage their boys to report negative/inappropriate behaviour.

For too long boys in particular were told to "man-up" and "toughen up". That is not the message that your son will hear in this College. To report bullying is a sign of strength. We are not interested in punishing any student we simply want the bullying to stop- NOW. When a student reports a bullying incident it shows that he is taking responsible action- which is a life skill. Your son will eventually go on to College and the workplace and bullying occurs there too, so he needs to be able to recognise it and deal with- not hide it away and "bottle it up". Boys by their nature do not talk so if we want to preserve their mental and physical health we need to encourage them to talk.

We will continue to do our work here but need the support of parents too, so as to ensure that our anti-bullying message is explicitly taught to our boys.

Attached are copies of all surveys, promises etc that we use with the students as part of our Anti Bullying campaign and investigations.

Extreme instances of bullying behaviour will, in accordance with the *Children First* and the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, be referred to TUSLA and/or Gardaí as appropriate.

Parents and students are provided with the following Fact Sheet on Bullying as part of our information sharing initiative

Complaint process

If a parent/ guardian is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with these procedures, they will be referred to the school's complaints procedure. Additional Information relating to schools' complaint procedures are available at the following link:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/parental-complaints/>

In the event that a student and/or parent/ guardian is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, a student and/or parent/ guardian may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions have had a negative effect on the student.

The Office of the Ombudsman for Children can be contacted at ococomplaint@oco.ie.

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/ guardians. 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 School*.

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.

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

School Wide Approaches:

- Strategies/Initiatives aimed at raising awareness of bullying as an unacceptable behaviour are on-going throughout the school year. These include an anti-bullying themed week once a year to promote awareness and increase vigilance. This involves poster campaigns, the display of anti-bullying charters and posters throughout the school, and the provision of anti-bullying resources such as books and videos.
- The *Bi Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour* is published on the school website.
- The *Bi Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour* is promoted at various occasions e.g. parents'/guardians' nights, first year enrolment, open nights and other forums and platforms.
- The school promotes a positive sense of self-worth among its students. through the provision of an inclusive and diverse curriculum, varied and extensive co-curricular and extra-curricular programmes in addition to positive affirmation initiatives such as Awards ceremonies, Academic cards, the Post Card Home Initiative for positive behaviour, Pay it Forward Initiative, Soundeffects, Attendance initiatives, LCA celebrations etc.
- The Student Council helps to heighten an awareness of bullying behaviour and create a positive atmosphere within the school community. The SRC is encouraged to report concerns to teachers, Year Heads, Deputy Principals or Principal.
- The Student Representative Council (SRC) was involved in the development and promotion of the policy. A student-friendly version of the Bí Cineálta policy, which was devised by the SRC, is displayed where students and the school community can see it. The student-friendly policy uses language that is easy for students and parents/guardians to understand.
- The student body is regularly consulted, by way of informal discussion and anonymous survey, to determine the extent, if any, and nature of any bullying behaviour within the school through class surveys as aforementioned.
- The diligent and proportionate implementation of the Code of Behaviour aims to minimise opportunities for bullying. See Code of Behaviour Policy
- The Board of Management ensures annually that appropriate and robust supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible. The supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities is of the utmost importance. Non-teaching and ancillary staff are also encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to the relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- The development and regular review of the school's *Acceptable Use Policy and Mobile Phone policy* aims to minimise opportunities for bullying. These policies clearly outline the necessary steps taken to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the students' use of mobile phones. See Acceptable Use Policy Mobile Phone Policy.
- The implementation of a well-structured and comprehensive Wellbeing Programme presents students with regular opportunities to discuss aspects of bullying, develop an understanding of the effects that bullying behaviour can have on those involved and explore appropriate ways of behaving towards one another. This crucial message is also reinforced informally across the entire curriculum.
- Students who experience or witness bullying behaviour are encouraged and supported to report the behaviour to a trusted adult. Senior Management, Year Heads, Class Teachers, Subject Teachers and

SNAs support this strategy by letting students know that they can talk to them. The trusted adult reassures the student that they have done the right thing by reporting the behaviour. This information then goes directly to our Anti Bullying Coordinator who will then engage the Anti Bullying Team.

- Students are encouraged to treat everyone with respect. Teachers and staff demonstrate integrity and show respect for every person in the school environment, thus acting as positive role models for all member of the school community. Restorative practice is used in the school by teachers, Year Heads and Senior Management, as a positive approach to conflict resolution.
- St. Munchin's College is a school with almost 700 students. Our students come from across a range of abilities and social backgrounds. As such, we have always had students with a range of disabilities and special educational needs. We minimise the likelihood of bullying for such students by striving to create an inclusive environment, focusing on developing social skills, paying attention to key moments such as transitioning from primary to post primary and Junior to Senior Cycle as well as cultivating a positive school culture which values respect for all in addition to supporting and helping one another.
- The self-esteem of all our students is fostered and enhanced through both co-curricular and extracurricular activities. Students are provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.

Supervision & Monitoring by Staff

- *Break and Lunchtime Supervision:* Teachers are assigned to key areas such as hallways, the canteen, schoolyards and common areas to maximise oversight. They are encouraged to remain vigilant and responsive to issues as they arise.
- *Clear and Open Visibility:* Classrooms and corridors are designed with unobstructed windows to facilitate easy monitoring of student interactions. Teachers maintain a strong presence during transitions between classes to ensure ongoing oversight.
- *Toilet Area Supervision:* Teachers on supervision are encouraged to monitor bathrooms to prevent bullying or inappropriate behaviour in these less visible areas.
- *School Events and Outings:* All recommended pupil-teacher ratios are adhered to during trips and tours, ensuring student safety. Staff are assigned supervisory roles. The Code of Behaviour applies to all school events and extracurricular activities and is supported by existing extracurricular procedures.
- *Teacher Presence:* Teachers are encouraged to actively supervise corridors and classrooms, especially during key times when students may be more vulnerable to bullying behaviour. Areas where bullying could/may occur within the school, as identified by students and teachers, have extra monitoring in place.

Safe physical spaces

- *Safe physical environment:* The school ensures the clear visibility of students in the classroom i.e. clear windows and a glass panel on all doors. Additionally, we ensure that appropriate lightening exists in all areas of the school, that corridors are kept clear and accessible and that the school grounds are well maintained. In a large section of the school, a one way system is being operated. Students must follow this one way system at all times to avoid unnecessary congestion and prevent any opportunities for bullying behaviour to occur.
- *Visuals and displays:* Posters and student artwork are displayed to promote inclusion, respect and diversity.
- An Anti Bullying Wall was created by the Anti Bullying Team. Here anti bullying information is posted and any artwork that is created during by first and second years during anti bullying week is displayed for all to see.

Implementation of the Curriculum:

- The implementation of the Wellbeing Programme further enhances the existing school culture of respect and responsibility. Students with a heightened sense of wellbeing are more inclined to identify, challenge and report bullying behaviours.
- The CSPE programme for Junior Cycle provides students with a deeper understanding of the world they live and the importance of their role as active citizens. The CSPE curriculum encourages students to develop positive attitudes towards and an understanding of other cultures.
- The SPHE programme for Junior Cycle encourages students to develop the ability to care and respect themselves and others, enable them to make informed decisions and choices and to respect human diversity. Through SPHE students develop their skills of communication, co-operation and conflict resolution in addition to acquiring the knowledge necessary to create and maintain supportive and positive relationships.
- Students in Junior Cycle learn about Relationship Sexual Education (RSE) in their SPHE class. Senior Cycle students receive RSE classes in their Religion class where there is an emphasis based on building and sustaining positive relationships.
- The process of teaching and learning across the entire curriculum presents informal opportunities to discuss aspects of bullying, and to explore appropriate ways of behaving towards one another.
- The school is aware of the increasing incidences of cyber bullying. Our strategies in this regard focus on educating students on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while on-line and also on developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying. We do this through our own curricular provision, and by inviting guest speakers to the school to address these issues with our students. Additionally, first year students receive training in the safe use of social media. LCA students also learn about online safety as part of their English and Communications coursework. Online resources dealing with the various forms of bullying, facilitated by Webwise, are also utilised regularly in SPHE classes and shared with parents via our school app.
- Through the process of teaching and learning across the curriculum a culture of reporting, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders is emphasised. In that way students gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It is made clear to all students that when they report incidents of bullying, they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.

Co-Curricular and Extracurricular:

- Student involvement is central to ensuring the creation of a safe school environment e.g. ensuring that our students are aware the means by which they can make a report.
- The development of extensive co-curricular and extra-curricular activities also ensures the development of respect for diversity and difference e.g.
 - After school Fun Clubs (Culture, Chess)
 - Awards Ceremonies
 - Check and Connect
 - Debating Club
 - Green School's Committee
 - Afre School Study
 - Junior Cycle Wellbeing programme
 - LCA Celebrations
 - Merit System
 - Sports –Rugby, Basketball, Hurling
 - Student Induction
 - Stand Up Awareness week
 - Student Representative Council
 - John Paul 2 Awards

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 and or unacceptable online behaviour.

St. Munchin's College is committed to addressing the challenges posed by technology. The school promotes digital literacy, digital citizenship, and fostering safe online environments.

Strategies to prevent cyberbullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- > St. Munchin's College has ensured that the SPHE curriculum is implemented in full in the school.
- > All first year students are introduced to the safe and ethical use of the internet as part of their Wellbeing Programme. Students learn about online safety and digital media literacy. They also take part in discussions around their use of school accounts, the *Acceptable Use Policy*, *Code of Behaviour* and the *Bi Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour*.
- > The Digital Media Literacy curriculum teaches First Year students about responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship.
- > Teachers, Year Heads and Senior Management have regular conversations with students about developing respectful and kind relationships online.
- > The school has developed an Acceptable Usage Policy for technology. This policy is available to all staff, students and parents/guardians through the school office, school website and in the school journal.
- > The schools Code of Behaviour addresses appropriate online behaviours.
- > A presentation on cyberbullying is given periodically to parents/guardians, who are the primary educators of their son's, and responsible for overseeing their son's activities online
- > Webwise resources are shared regularly with parents/guardians

Preventing homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour

All students including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students, have the right to feel safe and supported at school. Strategies to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- > The school maintains an inclusive physical environment by displaying relevant LGBTQ+ posters and material that promotes LGBTQ+ inclusion.
- > The SPHE programme for all year groups, deals explicitly with the issue of identity-based bullying and in particular homophobic and transphobic bullying. The words gay and lesbian, or words with similar meaning, must never be used as terms of offence, even in jest. This curriculum highlights the ways in which students can support their peers and develops student empathy.
- > A safe space is created for students to report all types of bullying. Students are encouraged to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour.
- > Belong To resources are used with students in classes
- > Workshops are provided for school staff and parents/guardians to raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour.
- > Year Heads take an active role in addressing bullying at assemblies assemblies. They aim to raise awareness, promote a positive school culture, and reinforce the school's anti-bullying procedures/policies.

Preventing racist bullying behaviour

St. Munchin's College has become much more culturally diverse over the last number of years/decades. Students attending the school come from many different cultures and backgrounds. Students from diverse backgrounds may be vulnerable to experiencing discrimination and prejudice and may be subject to racist bullying behaviour.

Strategies to prevent racist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- > Annually we celebrate World Languages Day in the school. At this event our school's cultural diversity is celebrated by all students in our school community. Students whose first language is not English, are given an opportunity to speak to the whole school population in their native tongue over the intercom.
- > Regularly teachers raise awareness of racism through the teaching of the curriculum in their classrooms. In particular SPHE, CSPE and Religion teachers focus and raise awareness of racism through their specified syllabus.
- > The school acknowledges, respects and supports the religious beliefs of our students of other faiths. Religious feasts and festivals of other faiths are publicly acknowledged within the school community.
- > The school encourages a culture of reporting all incidents of racist bullying, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders.
- > Presentations and the school website are accessible to parents/guardians in multiple languages, ensuring inclusivity. The school is committed to accommodating diverse backgrounds and cultures.

Preventing sexual harassment

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

- > Staff members model respectful behaviour
- > The school has a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual harassment
- > The school encourages a culture of reporting all incidences of sexual harassment

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: Anthony Muller Date: 19/11/25 (Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: [Signature] Date: _____ (Principal)

Appendix 1:

Bullying Interview Form

Appendix 2

Student Behaviour Form

Appendix 3

Regular Class Survey

Appendix 4

Student Friendly Format Poster

Appendix 5
Comprehensive List of Student supports in St. Munchin's College



"BÍ CINEÁLTA"

Together we make our school a kinder place."

◀◀◀ **REJECT,**
REACT,
REPORT ▶▶▶



"Bí Cineálta" — one kind word can change someone's day.

If you see unkindness,
REJECT it, **REACT** with care, and **REPORT** it to your One Good Adult.

