Scoil Bhríde, Milltown, Newbridge, Co. Kildare.
Princ Principal: Karen O' Connor
Acting Deputy Principal: Clodagh Meally
Phone 045/433230
Charity No: 20205115
Email scoilbhridemilltown@gmail.com
Website: www.scoilbhridemilltown.ie

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Scoil Bhríde Milltown 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. Ireland ratified the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child1 in September 1992. In doing this we committed to promote, protect and fulfil the rights of children. Bullying is a children's rights issue. Bullying interferes with the following rights of the child:

- The right to freedom of expression (Article 13)
- The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 14)
- The right to freedom of association and freedom of peaceful assembly (Article 15)
- The right to privacy (Article 16)
- The right to be protected from all forms of abuse and neglect (Article 19)
- The right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health (Article 24)
- The right to education (Article 28)
- The right to enjoy their own culture, religion or language (Article 30)

We are committed to ensuring that all students who attend Scoil Bhríde Milltown 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 targeted behaviour, online or offline, that causes harm.
- The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature and can have lasting effects on the child experiencing the behaviour.
- 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 :

- ➢ Physical (eg: personal injury, damage to or loss of property)
- ➢ Social: (eg: withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion)
- ➢ Emotional: (eg: 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 an automatic response 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.

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.

Bullying can be Direct or Indirect:

Direct Bullying:

• 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

Indirect Bullying:

• 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, email, 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.

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	January 2025 April 2025 May 2025 June 2025 Sept. 2026	Staff Training Day Staff meeting discussion Staff Survey completed Half day closure for policy development Revised at staff meeting
Students	May 2025 May 2025 June 2025 Sept. 2026	Classroom discussion and mentimeter Student survey completed The Student Council developed a child friendly policy. Start of year classroom discussions.
Parents	April 2025 May 2025 June 2025 Sept. 2026	Informed of Bí Cinealta process in newsletter Parental survey completed Draft policy shared with Parents Association Current policy sent to all the parent bodies for review.
Board of Management	January 2025 April 2025 June 2025 Sept. 26	Attention drawn to the process of Bí Cinealta procedures Approval of half day closure and surveys for completion Draft policy examined and approved for further consultation from parents. Review conducted at board meeting.
Wider school community	May 2025 June 2025 June 2025	Bus escort surveyed Bus driver surveyed Traffic warden surveyed
Date policy was approved: September 2026		
Date policy was last reviewed: September 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):

<u>Culture and Environment:</u> We strive to :

- Create a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.
- Involve parents as active partners in fostering an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated.

• Support the idea that our school is a telling environment.

• Promote the concept of a trusted adult – stay safe linkage – who to tell.

• Create safe spaces in our school building and yards – visibility

• Encourage a sense of belonging with ownership over their own space through art and creativity.

• Create a positive school culture and climate which

- is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
- encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
- promotes respectful relationships across the school community;

Ways in which we work to achieve these goals are as follows:

• Staff are briefed and reminded of the uniform approach we must take to handle all reports of bullying – this is done to staff through staff meetings and staff updates. Each staff member has access to the school's Bí Cineálta policy in hard copy and online.

• Acts of Kindness month, Anti-Bullying week, Wellbeing weeks bring emphasis to this topic each year, as well as Poster making, slogan making, etc • Higher classes volunteer to support younger classes for out of school events and trips. They act as minders at lunchtime also.

• The Child Friendly Anti- Bullying Policy was formed with pupil input and is distributed to parents, children and staff to discuss. This policy outlines various ways to tell.

• Stay safe and SPHE lessons focusing on positive behaviour form part of curricular content in all classes.

• Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils.

• Notice board to promote kindness and build responsibility amongst pupils.

<u>Curriculum (teaching and learning)</u> We strive to :

• Provide teaching and promote learning which is collaborative and respectful, fostering inclusion and respect for diversity.

• Display a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact.

Ways in which we work to achieve this:

• Teach SPHE and RSE content which fosters student's well-being and self confidence as well as promoting personal responsibility for their own behaviours and actions.

• Model respectful behaviour towards colleagues, pupils and visitors in our school environment.

• Curricular and Extra-curricular activities can help to develop a sense of self worth, working together, inclusion and respect.

• Students are given regular opportunities to work in small groups with peers, which can help build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy.

• Acknowledgment of our diverse school population – celebrating diversity and culture in our school through art, displays, photographs, international events.

• Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-

- build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
- explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including,

homophobic and transphobic bullying.

- Supports for staff with opportunities to upskill
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

Policy and planning:

The aim of Scoil Bhríde Milltown's Bi Cinealta policy is:

- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils, parents/guardians.
- To promote a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To ensure appropriate supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
- To develop procedures for noting, investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To implement a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- To work with appropriate agencies in countering all forms of bullying and promoting anti bullying behaviour

The Acceptable Use Policy, Supervision policy, Special Education Policy, Inclusion Policy and Code of Behaviour all support the implementation of the Bi Cinealta policy.

Effective leadership is a key component with Principal, Deputy Principal, DLP, DDLP, and all middle management focused on supporting the implementation of this policy.

Relationships and Partnerships

- Interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as our parents' association, assemblies, Parent Teacher meetings, student council and school teams.
- Age and stage appropriate awareness initiatives that engage the student body in looking at their own behaviour – promoting acts of kindness and friendship, being an active help to others and looking at the causes of and impact of bullying during SPHE lessons.
- Conducting workshops and seminars for students, staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of bullying.
- Encouraging mentoring and setting good examples
- Supporting active participation of students in school life and active participation of parents in school life also.
- Engaging students in actively contributing to the formation of a Child Friendly Anti Bullying Policy to make them active participants in promotion of and discussion of the topic.

The school has the following supervision and monitoring policies in place to prevent and address bullying behaviour:

Preventing Cyber Bullying, Homophobic/Transphobic bullying, Racist bullying, Preventing sexual harassment.

In addition to above mentioned strategies, the school has the following in place to prevent and address bullying:

- Staff at all times endeavour to encourage pupils to show respect for each other.
- Implementation of the SPHE curriculum.
- Positive self-esteem is fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences, by acknowledging good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success.
- Digital Media lessons and guest speakers include learning about responsible online behaviour. AUP also developed for technology in our school.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed regularly with the pupils.
- Staff are particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of bullying/ being bullied.
- All disclosed alleged incidents of bullying are investigated thoroughly and consistently by following the correct procedure as outlined to staff and recorded on Aladdin using the template for this.
- School wide awareness raising on all aspects of bullying, supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extracurricular activities.
- Foster a culture where diversity is celebrated and students "see themselves" in the school environment.
- Involvement of pupils in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Acts of Kindness Month/anti-bullying week/Wellbeing Week, and other activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Refer to appropriate online behaviour when using devices and in SPHE lessons.
- Promote online safety events or material for parents
- The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school e.g. www.tacklebullying.ie, www.antibullyingcentre.ie>fuse, www.webwise.ie
- Challenge gender- stereotypes – equal participation of all. Equal recognition.
- Raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour and encourage students to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour.
- Modelling of respectful behaviour by staff of all irrespective of sex.
- Ensuring all students have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of sex.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

The class teacher will oversee recording of bullying reports and confirmed bullying instances for students in their class – this includes using the procedure guidelines to investigate reports of bullying and recording of bullying behavior on the correct form on Aladdin.

When a report of alleged bullying is made, the report will be logged on the Aladdin file of the alleged victim. No other child's details will be recorded until the investigation has been carried out and a determination has been made. The parents of the accused student/students will be contacted/informed prior to any investigation taking place.

If it is found that bullying behavior has not taken place but there has been a breach of the school's code of discipline, the matter will be dealt with and recorded in line with current code of discipline procedures.

If it is found that bullying behavior has taken place, Appendix A will be completed and attached to the Aladdin file of each of the children involved.

- The teacher/DLP will follow up after twenty 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.
- Deputy principal /SENCO/DDLP will assist the teacher and staff members in addressing incidents of bullying
- Assistant Principal 2/Anti- Bullying Policy co-ordinator is available to provide up to date information and supports if needed to assist class teacher in addressing concern

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:

Scoil Bhríde Milltown will work in partnership with our patron, board of management, staff, students and their parents to develop and implement our Bí Cineálta policy. The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved, rather than to apportion blame. The school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach. Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardians) understand this approach from the outset.

In accordance with the Bí Cineálta procedures the school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when students are not under the care or responsibility of the school. However, where this bullying behaviour has an impact in school, schools are required to support the students involved. Where the bullying behaviour continues in school, schools should deal with it in accordance with their Bí Cineálta policy.

It is important that the following principles are adhered to when addressing bullying behaviour:

- ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured
- seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- consider the age and ability of those involved
- listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- take action in a timely manner
- inform parents of those involved

Identifying if Bullying Behaviour has Occurred:

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour we will consider the following questions:

1. Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?
2. Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?
3. Is the behaviour repeated?

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

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

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

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

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the school will consider what, where, when and why?

- if a group of students is involved, each student should be engaged with individually at first
- thereafter, all students involved should be met as a group
- at the group meeting, each student should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's views
- each student should be supported as appropriate, following the group meeting
- it may be helpful to ask the students involved to write down their account of the incident(s)

Where Bullying Behaviour has Occurred;

- Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the students involved must be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to consult with them on the actions to be taken to address the behaviour
- a record will be kept of the engagement with all involved including the views of the child experiencing the bullying behaviour
- this record will document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known, where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students involved and their parents
- the record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behavior

Follow up to where Bullying Behaviour has Occurred:

- The teacher/Principal must engage with the students involved and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement
- Factors considered as part of this engagement 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
- The teacher/Principal should document the review with students and their parents to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and their parents in relation to this
- the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased should also be recorded
- any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted
- ongoing supervision and support may be needed for the students involved even where bullying behaviour has ceased
- if the bullying behaviour has not ceased the teacher should review the strategies used in consultation with the students involved and their parents. A timeframe should be agreed for further engagement until the bullying behaviour has ceased
- If it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display the behaviour, then consideration will be given to using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school
- if a parent(s) is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools. They should be referred to the school's complaints procedures
- if a parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, they 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 school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour:

The Scoil Bhríde Milltown's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves a whole school approach. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, no one intervention/support programme works in all situations.

- Supporting Bullied pupils:

- Fostering respect for bullied pupils and all pupils,

- Fostering greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through annual awareness-raising programmes,
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations,
- Making adequate counselling facilities available to pupils who need it in a timely manner (subject to available funding)
- Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).

- **Supporting Bullying pupils:**

- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a 'clean sheet,'
- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honorable thing and giving them praise for this,
- Making adequate counseling facilities available to help those who need it learn other ways of meeting their needs besides violating the rights of others,
- Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school),
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth,
- In dealing with negative behavior in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child,
- In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a 'clean sheet' and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.

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: Gavin O' Connor Date: 23/9/26

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: Karen O Connor Date: 23/9/26

(Principal)

Appendix 1 Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

_____

_____

_____

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))*

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))*

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

Physical Aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Other (specify)	

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. **Details of actions taken**

Signed _____ (Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____