



Mary Mother of Hope Junior NS

School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Mary, Mother of Hope Junior National School has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour between children in our school.

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 on any of the nine grounds specified: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

Catholic schools have a distinctive understanding of the human person, recognising that every person is created in God's image and likeness and has inherent dignity as a child of God. This is the basis for ensuring that each person in our school is treated with respect and care, in accordance with the Catholic Schedule.

As a Catholic school, we are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual. No human person is to be devalued, and all have an indispensable part to play in the school community, regardless of difference.

Definition of bullying

Bullying is defined in ***Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying*** and ***Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*** as:

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

The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures: [bi-cinealta-procedures-to-prevent-and-address-bullying-behaviour-for-primary-and-post-.pdf](#)

Each school is required to develop and implement a Bí Cineálta policy that sets out how the school community prevents and addresses bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour: [mmh_jns_new_code_of_behaviour.pdf](#)

Bullying behaviour can take many forms, which can occur separately or together. These can include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

Direct bullying behaviour:

Physical bullying behaviour:

Physical bullying behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping students. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. Personal property can be a focus of attention for bullying behaviour.

Verbal Bullying behaviour:

Continual name-calling directed at a student which hurts, insults or humiliates the student should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour.

Written bullying behaviour:

Written bullying behaviour includes writing insulting remarks about a student in public places, passing around notes about or drawings of a student.

Extortion

Bullying behaviour can involve extortion. Extortion is where something is obtained through force or threats.

Indirect bullying behaviour:

Exclusion

Exclusion bullying behaviour occurs where a student is deliberately and repeatedly isolated, excluded or ignored by a student or group of students.

Relational

Relational bullying behaviour occurs when a student's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined.

Posting a single harmful message/image/video online, and which is highly likely to be reposted or shared with others can be seen as bullying behaviour.

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



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	8/5/2025	Review of existing Anti-Bullying Policy. Followed by Staff Survey.
Students	31/3/2025 - 1/5/2025	Pupils completed student questionnaire on iPads with the support of post-holder.
Parents	9/4/2025 – 2/5/2025	Parent questionnaire completed independently by members of parent body.
Board of Management	June 2025	Webinar
Wider school community (Bus drivers, bus escort)	8/5/2025	Review of existing Anti-Bullying Policy. Followed by Staff Survey.
Date policy was Approved	June 10 th 2025	Meeting of the Board of Management
Date policy was last reviewed	Anti Bullying Policy September 2024	Meeting of the Board of Management

Preventing Bullying Behaviour

In developing preventative strategies which this school will use to prevent all forms of bullying behaviour, we come from the context of our Catholic ethos where inclusivity permeates the school in a real way.

This school takes positive steps to ensure that the culture of the school is one which welcomes a respectful dialogue and encounter with diversity and difference, by ensuring that prevention and inclusivity strategies are given priority and discussed regularly at board of management and staff meetings.

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

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

Culture & Environment:

Mary Mother of Hope Junior NS aspires to have a positive and inclusive school culture and environment essential to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

Our school culture:

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

Relationships in Mary Mother of Hope JNS between all members of the school community are based on respect, care, integrity and trust.

Open communication between the patron, board of management, school staff, pupils and their parents helps to foster a collaborative approach and shared responsibilities in relation to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

The school leadership team influences the school culture and sets the standards and expectations for the school community when preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

Each member of school staff has a responsibility to develop and maintain a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable and to take a consistent approach to addressing bullying behaviour.

In our school:

- We promote understanding of what is and what is not bullying behaviour with all members of the school community
- We have consistent approaches to recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies);
- We undertake on-going evaluation of the effectiveness of our Bí Cinéalta policy.
- Support and CPD is provided for staff as required

Our school community is committed to providing each child with

- A Telling Environment
- Trusted Adults
- Safe Physical Spaces - in the school building and outside
- High levels of supervision

Curriculum (Teaching & Learning):

Mary Mother of Hope JNS prides itself on delivering a teaching and learning experience for pupils which is collaborative and respectful, helping to build a sense of connection, belonging and empathy among students.

Curriculum delivery across the subjects provides students with opportunities to foster inclusion and respect for diversity. Students are provided with opportunities to develop a sense of self-worth through both curricular and extracurricular programmes.

The Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) including Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) and Stay Safe curricula at primary level aim to foster students' wellbeing, self-confidence and sense of belonging and to develop students' sense of personal responsibility for their own behaviour and actions. Students' social and emotional learning skills can be improved through the SPHE curriculum. Our education and prevention strategies including awareness raising measures aim to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils and to explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying.

SPHE is timetabled in our school for 2 x ½ hrs per week. The lessons are timetabled as follows:

Junior Infants	Senior Infants	1st Class	2nd Class	Other Resources
Substance Misuse (Walk Tall)	Substance Misuse (Walk Tall)	Substance Misuse (Walk Tall)	Substance Misuse (Walk Tall)	Listed below are other supplementary programmes which you may also choose to do with your class in addition to the compulsory programmes as outlined in our SPHE policy. Time given to these supplementary programmes must come from further discretionary time or from other curricular areas.
R.S.E	RSE	R.S.E	RSE	
Stay Safe	Stay Safe	Stay Safe	Stay Safe	
You Can Do It	You Can Do It	You Can Do It!	You Can Do It!	
Internet Safety	Internet Safety	Internet Safety	Internet Safety	
			IY Problem Solving	Senior Infants: Mighty Mouth
		Fun Friends	Transition Programme	1 st class: Seatbelt Sheriff
(2x 30 mins per week)	(2x 30 mins per week)	(2x 30 mins per week)	(2x 30 mins per week)	2 nd class: High Glow Silver
				RSA Safe cross code

Under the **Stay Safe** programme the topic of bullying is dealt with. It provides an integrated, developmentally staged, and comprehensive approach to teaching children personal safety skills. The **You Can Do It** Programme is taught at all levels; **Fun Friends** is covered in 1st Class and the **Problem Solving** skills of the **Incredible Years** programme are taught at 2nd Class if the need arises in a given year.

In our school we also hold a **Friendship & Wellbeing Week**. During this week children get the opportunity to pair up with other classes in the junior and senior schools with the aim of creating new friendships. They also spend time discussing the topic of bullying, the different types, it's effects and how to deal with it. It is taught through a range of media e.g., poetry, art, music, drama etc. There are special resources in our school e.g. friendship packs, Dino Might posters and storybooks to use during this week.

Our annual **Intercultural Week** aims for children to develop a sense of pride in their culture, language and heritage and for children and adults to develop understanding and appreciation of our diverse school community.

Children are taught age-appropriate rules in relation to safety when using the internet at home and at school during **Internet Safety Week** each year.

Relationships & Partnerships

In Mary Mother of Hope JNS we value strong interpersonal connections which are seen as a vital part of effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. These interpersonal connections are supported through a range of formal and informal structures such as promoting strong connections between Class Teacher, SNA and individual pupils, having a member of the SET team linked to each class, Yard Buddy programme, regular assemblies, regular changes to seating arrangements in class, varied yard options, senior school links, after-school clubs, Parent Association, parent meetings and events links with local GAA and Soccer Clubs and partnerships with local schools on occasion. We aim to capture the voice of all members of our school community including pupils when making decisions.

Policy & Planning

Policy and planning: The wellbeing of the school community is at the heart of school policies and plans. A range of other policies support implementation of a school's Bí Cineálta policy including:

- AUP - clear guidelines regarding the use of the internet and social media at school are laid out in our acceptable use policy
- Children are not permitted to have Mobile Phones and other electronic devices in school.
- Parents are invited to sign up to our Smartphone Free Voluntary Code
- Supervision/Yard Procedures
- Special Education Teaching policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Wellbeing Framework
- Homework
- SPHE Policy
- Child Protection
- Substance Misuse
- RSE Guidelines
- Healthy Eating
- Intercultural policy
- Religion policy

Staff CPD is facilitated and/or provided as required through NCSE, NEPS, Education Centres, DE and private providers

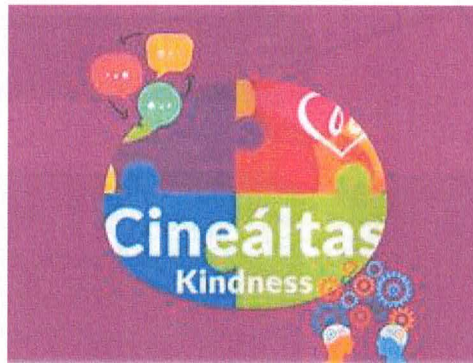
Policies and procedures in all areas are reviewed annually or more often if required

Supervision/Monitoring

Mary, Mother of Hope JNS have a robust and consistent supervision policy.

- Two teachers generally supervise each yard
- A variety of activities are offered to children on yard
- Quieter spaces are made available to children as required
- One teacher supervises two classes during teacher breaks and children are encouraged to remain seated at these times
- One teacher accompanies each class to and from yard and on the stairs
- Teachers are expected to never leave classes unattended
- SNAs do not have general supervision responsibilities
- Morning supervision is provided from 8.40 and Class Teachers stay with children until they are collected in the afternoon
- Children are only allowed to walk home independently in 2nd Class with the written permission of their parents
- Members of the SET team are available to welcome children each morning to ensure a smooth transition to school
- SNAs are available to check in with the children in their care as they arrive to their lines from 8.40 each morning to ensure a smooth transition to school
- Children arriving late are required to enter through reception
- All doors are closed at 8.50 and remain closed throughout the day unless being used to enter and exit under adult supervision

- We provide a 1:12 Teacher: Pupil ratio on outings
- If asked to go on a message in the school building the children go in pairs and for very short periods
- Supervision procedures are reviewed annually or more frequently if required



Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Relevant Class Teacher, Principal Ms Moran and/or Deputy Principal Mrs Cullen.

SET or SNAs may have role in addressing the concern and supporting children due to the close relationships between classes and members of the SET and SNA teams.

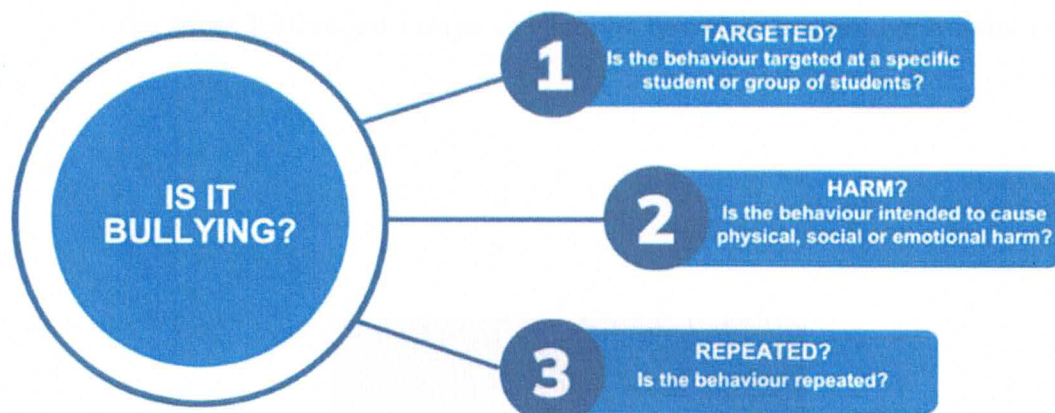
When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the teacher will consider the following with the children involved, sensitively and in an age-appropriate manner:

- What?
- Where?
- When?
- Why?

What is not bullying behaviour?

- A once off instance of negative behaviour
- Disagreement between students
- Instances where students don't want to remain friends
- Non-deliberate behaviours of students with special educational needs

Answering the three questions below can further help in determining if bullying behaviour has occurred.



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

If the answer to any of the 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 bullying behaviour is identified, the school will adhere to the following principles when addressing the behaviour:

- 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
- Complete all necessary recording in line with Bí Cinéalta guidelines.

A calm, unemotional problem-solving approach will be taken, with the aim of resolving any issues and restoring as far as is practicable the relationship between the parties involved, rather than to apportion blame.

Teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.

All reports including anonymous reports will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher

NTS, SNAs and SET are encouraged to report any bullying behaviour witnessed or mentioned to them to the relevant teacher

Parents & pupils are required to cooperate fully with any investigation and to assist the school in resolving issues restoring as far as is practicable the relationship between the parties as quickly as possible.

Incidents are best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved

Interviews are conducted with sensitivity and with due regard for the age and rights of the pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved may be asked to provide information in the same way

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 calmly, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.

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 they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.

It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s)

In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils.

Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.

It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.

Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together later if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect.

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 can't control.

Requests to take no action

Where this occurs, it is important that the member of staff shows empathy to the student, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the student to work out together what steps can be taken to address the matter and how their parents will be informed of the situation. It is important that the student who has experienced bullying behaviour feels safe.

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

Determine if Bullying Behaviour has ceased

In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:

- Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable.
- Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable.
- Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal.

Recording the bullying behaviour

The record will document the form and type of bullying behaviour (Sections 2.5 and 2.7 of Bí Cinéalta guidelines: [bi-cinealta-procedures-to-prevent-and-address-bullying-behaviour-for-primary-and-post-pdf](#)).

If known, the where and when it took place will be included as well as the date of the initial engagement with the students and parents

The record should include the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour. It 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. It is important to document the date of each of these engagements and the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased. Any engagement with external services/supports should also be noted.

These records should be retained in accordance with the school's record keeping policy and in line with data protection regulations.

Where a Student Support File exists for a student, schools are encouraged to place a copy of the record on the student's support file. This will assist the school's student support team, where they exist, in providing a consistent and holistic response to support the wellbeing of the

students involved. Where a Student Support Plan exists, the plan should be updated to incorporate response strategies and associated supports.

Complaint

If a parent is not satisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school, in accordance with these procedures, they should be referred to the school's complaints procedure: [parental complaints procedure updated dec 2023.pdf](#)

Additional Information relating to schools' complaint procedures are available at the following link: <https://www.gov.ie/en/policyinformation/parentalcomplaints/>

If a student and/or parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, a student and/or parent 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.

Supports

- NEPS
- Webwise
- National Parents Council NPC
- DCU Anti Bullying Centre
- TUSLA will be contacted in cases where it is considered the bullying behaviour is a Child Protection concern

Supporting those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour - see Chapter 6 of the *Bí Cineálta* procedures: [bi-cinealta-procedures-to-prevent-and-address-bullying-behaviour-for-primary-and-post-.pdf](#)

A programme of support for pupils who have been bullied will be put in place when bullying has occurred. Such pupils will need opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed. Some may also need counselling or therapies outside of school.

A programme of support for those pupils involved in bullying behaviour will also be made available if it is established that bullying has occurred. Pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those with low self-esteem, opportunities will be developed to increase feelings of self-worth. It is, therefore, important that the learning strategies applied within the school allow for the enhancement of the pupil's self-worth. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling or therapies outside of school to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour will be encouraged to discuss them with teachers.

The Fund Friends programme may be delivered to a targeted group.

The support of NEPS will be sought where there are serious concerns.

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: Audrey Madden

Audrey Madden (Chairperson of BOM)

Signed: Alma Moran

Alma Moran (Principal)

Date: 22/09/2026