

A little kindness goes a long way

Bí Cineálta
Be Kind



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Be Kind



You have the right to be:

- Safe in school.
- Free from all forms of bullying.
- Treated with respect.

Choose Kindness

- Use kind words.
- Include others.
- Tell somebody if you see or experience bullying.

We do NOT accept bullying in our school. Bullying is:

- Harmful It hurts someone.
- Targeted It is aimed at a particular person.
- Intentional It is done on purpose.
- Repeated It is done over time.

If you see or experience bullying:

Tell a Trusted Adult
E.g. Tutor, Year Head, Teacher

- The report will be taken seriously.
- It will be investigated and appropriate action taken.
- Counselling and support will be available for all involved.



St. Mary's Secondary School
Holy Faith, Glasnevin
Dublin 11
60770P

Bí Cineálta Policy
2025

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Mission Statement

St Mary's follows the Holy Faith philosophy of creating an inclusive school community whose central purpose is the religious, moral, intellectual, human, social and physical-recreational education of the student. The education programme of the school is directed to the growth of the whole person. It aims to form integrated and self-reliant Christian people who are eager to build a better world.

Introduction

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.

The Board of Management of St. Mary's Secondary School has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

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

This policy is also guided by a range of relevant legislation which includes the following:

- The Education Welfare Act 2006 provides that *the board of management of a recognised school shall, after consultation with the principal of, the teachers teaching at, the parents of students registered at, and the educational welfare officer assigned functions in relation to, that school, prepare, in accordance with subsection (2), a code of behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school*. The Code of Behaviour Guidelines for Schools requires schools to have an anti-bullying policy as part of the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Schools have an obligation under the Equal Status Acts 2000–2018 to prevent harassment (including sexual harassment) on the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, and membership of the Traveller community.
- The Children First Act 2015 places a statutory obligation on schools to ensure, as far as practicable, *that each child attending the school is safe from harm while attending school or otherwise participating in school activities*.
- The Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020 also known as Coco's Law provides *that a person who distributes, publishes or threatens to distribute or publish an intimate image of another person (a) without that other person's consent, and (b) with intent to cause harm to, or being reckless as to whether or not harm is caused to, the other person, is guilty of an offence*.

This policy applies to all students at the following times:

- During the school day including breaktimes
- While in school uniform
- During school-based activities
- During school activities off site
- While engaged in behaviour of a bullying nature that impacts on student's participation in school.

The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

- Class Teacher
- Tutors
- Year Heads
- Deputy Principals

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 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.

As a Catholic school, we are committed to respecting the dignity of every individual. Every person has a right to flourish and a part to play in the school community. We recognise that our school is unified through diversity.

Rights and Responsibilities

When it comes to bullying, each member of our school community has both rights and responsibilities.

Students have the right:

- To a safe, inclusive, formative school environment that is free of unkindness and bullying
- To not be bullied
- To report if bullied
- To report if that student feels that another is / others are being bullied
- To be listened to in a sensitive and discreet manner
- To expect a response
- To know about and have access to a clear, defined procedure for dealing with bullying

Students have the responsibility:

- to treat others with respect and to be a positive influence on the school community

- to act pro-actively when the rights of others are being challenged.
- to report any concerns to a trusted adult

Responsibilities of Bystanders/Witnesses of alleged bullying behaviour:

It is the responsibility of everyone in our school community to treat each other with respect, empathy and care. No-one should suffer in silence and equally should not allow other people in our school to suffer either. Students are encouraged to approach a member of staff if they are being bullied or if they are aware that another student is being targeted.

If a student experiences unkindness or bullying, they should:

- Not retaliate against or engage with the person carrying out the bullying. Report it.
- Remove themselves from a dangerous situation e.g. a fight. Report it.
- In the event of cyber- bullying, students must block the number of the person who has engaged in bullying behaviour
- Tell a trusted member of staff e.g. teacher, tutor, year head, guidance counsellor, Principal/ Deputy Principal etc

If a student witnesses bullying, they should:

- Not ignore the bullying behaviour
- Remove themselves from a dangerous situation e.g. a fight
- Not join in or engage with the bullying behaviour
- Tell a trusted member of staff

Students should be assured that:

- The report will be taken seriously.
- It will be investigated and appropriate action taken.
- Counselling and support will be available.
-

Section A: Development of our Bí Cineálta Policy

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

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.

What can bullying look like?

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 may include pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking, and tripping students, regardless of initial intention. It may also take the form of severe physical assault.
- Personal property can be a focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, schoolbooks and other learning material or interference with a student's locker or property. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

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 to deliberately cause hurt or distress.

Relational

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

Online bullying behaviour:

Online bullying behaviour (cyberbullying) is carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text or direct messaging/instant messaging, social media platforms, e-mail, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chatrooms and other online technologies.

This form of bullying behaviour can include:

- sending or sharing nasty, insulting, offensive, and/or intimidating messages or images via text messages, emails, direct messages or other websites or apps
- posting information considered to be personal, private and sensitive without consent
- making and/or participating in fake profiles on a social network to impersonate and/or humiliate other students
- disrupting access to a student on purpose from online chat groups, access to accounts or from an online game

Even though a message may be posted online just once by a student it can be considered bullying behaviour as it may be seen by a wide audience where it is intended to be shared or has a likelihood of being shared multiple times and is thus repeated.

As online bullying uses technology to carry out bullying behaviour and does not require face-to-face contact, it can occur at any time. Many types of bullying behaviour can be facilitated through online bullying. In many cases online bullying can relate to an "offline" experience with someone known to the student.

This type of bullying may involve forms of sexual exploitation including but not limited to, sextortion and the non-consensual sharing of intimate or sexual images. The sharing or threatened sharing of images without consent is a criminal offence.

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of students. Our school promotes qualities of respect, empathy, social responsibility, tolerance, inclusivity and understanding among all its members, both in school and out of school. The school is therefore fully committed to fostering 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 unwanted behaviour in a non-threatening environment.²⁰
- promotes respectful relationships across the school community.

Our whole-school approach to preventing bullying behaviour can be broken down into the following categories:

Culture and environment

The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.

- Each class takes place in an atmosphere of respect and teachers are aware of maintaining vigilance for any sign of a change to this respectful atmosphere.
- The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, mutual respect, self-discipline, responsibility and courtesy within the school community.
- Students are made aware of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour during their induction programme in first year and through programmes such as SPHE and Wellbeing and via the school's tutor system.
- Supervision is conducted by all staff in a vigilant and professional manner.
- Counselling services are available.
- Our staff actively promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance, inclusivity and understanding among all its members, both in school and out of school.
- Opportunities are provided to staff for professional learning in relation to antibullying.
- Staff endeavour to take the Restorative Practice approach. Restorative practice training and approach is encouraged, following whole-staff CPD. A core group of staff, currently 25 staff members, is engaged in further training facilitated by Connect RP.

- Students are offered regular opportunities to work collaboratively with their peers as a means of fostering connection and empathy.
- All classroom doors are fitted with a clear pane of glass ensuring that no classroom is inaccessible to a supervising teacher at break or lunchtime.
- Artwork and signage promoting inclusivity and kindness are displayed throughout the school building.
- An opportunity for sharing worries or issues is nurtured through the tutor system. Students are made aware during assemblies of the 'trusted adults' that can be approached in the event of a bullying incident.
- Introduction of Yondr pouches to enable students to learn and interact in a phone-free environment.

Curriculum

- Students are made aware of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour through programmes such as SPHE and Wellbeing.
- RSE, at whole school level and its component to the SPHE course, allows students to consider healthy relationships and to develop an understanding of different sexualities and identities.
- As part of the national SPHE curriculum, we target issues related to identity-based bullying.
- Digital literacy classes teach students about online behaviour and digital citizenship.

Policy and Planning

The following policies support the Bí Cineálta Policy:

- Mission Statement
- Acceptable Use
- Child Protection
- Code of Behaviour
- Health and Wellbeing
- Mobile Phone
- RSE
- SEN

Relationships and Partnerships

- The school promotes a range of activities and celebrations to champion inclusivity and belonging, including Multi-Cultural Week, Friendship Week, Stand Up Week and Mental Health Awareness Week.
- A range of activities are on offer to students at lunchtime in order to encourage friendships and inclusivity. Clubs on offer to students range from sports to Gardening, History, Choir and Art. This diverse range of activities means that students can nurture their individual talents while developing connections within the school community.
- Our school recognises the need to promote cooperation and communication between school and home to consolidate relationships within the school community and to keep parent(s)/guardian(s) informed and where necessary involved in procedures.
- Parent Evenings are organised and the school app is used to ensure regular communication with parent(s)/ guardian(s) on all aspects of life in our school.
- Student Support Groups meet weekly involving Year Heads, Senior Leadership, Guidance Counsellors, Care Team and SEN Team.
- Class Captains and Vice-Captains meet with their Year Heads once a half-term. Areas that are working well and areas for improvement / development are discussed and shared with senior management at different points throughout the school year.
- Amber and Ember student-led teams play a proactive role in building positive relationships and in supporting student wellbeing.
- Student leadership, including our Student Council, Prefects and Mentors, meet regularly with staff.
- Students have active / participatory roles in all (appropriate) policies and procedures in the school.
- Bi-annual student awards acknowledge the contribution that students make to promoting our positive culture.
- All pertinent policies are published in the students' school journal and on the school's website.
- The school participates in Narrative 4 Empathy activities throughout the school year.
- Induction is organised for all year groups at the start of the academic year with a focus on the promotion of constructive relationships.
- Peer mentoring involving prefects and mentors is employed.
- The school specifically considers the needs of AEN students in the development of skills and

strategies to enable all students to interact appropriately.

- Annual Parents' Information Evenings take place at the start of the school year. These outline the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures online safety etc with national groups.

In addition to our strategies to address general bullying behaviours, these prevention strategies include strategies aimed at preventing online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment as appropriate.

Strategies to Prevent Cyber-Bullying

- An Garda Síochana visit the school each year to educate students on the issues of personal security and cyber bullying.
- Digital literacy classes are delivered at Junior Cycle and students are instructed on the issue of cyber safety
- Yondr pouches have been provided for every student so that teaching, learning and social interactions can take place in a phone-free environment. This is supported by the Mobile Phone Policy.
- The importance of cyber safety is integrated into lessons in CSPE, SPHE and Digital Literacy.
- Cyber Safety Week is held every year during which students are reminded at assemblies and during class time of the dangers of cyber bullying.
- Parent(s)/ guardian(s) are encouraged to monitor their child's online activity through Cyber Safety Workshops

Strategies to Prevent Homophobic Bullying

- An inclusive environment is promoted during Stand-Up Week. School wide activities help to raise awareness of the diversity within our school.
- Teachers are encouraged to integrate LGBTQ+ awareness into lessons. Planning for this takes place at Subject Department level. This allows students to see their own experiences and lives reflected and valued in the classroom.
- The school is working towards achieving the Belong To Quality Mark for inclusion.
- Inclusive signage is displayed throughout the school including in many classrooms.

Strategies to Prevent Racist Bullying

- Multi-cultural Week celebrates cultural diversity in the school. Students are encouraged to celebrate and learn about different backgrounds/ foods/ customs/ dress. This can help foster respect and pride in cultural similarities and differences.
- Subject departments are encouraged to incorporate diverse cultures, histories and experiences in their classroom planning and material. This allows students to see their own backgrounds reflected and valued.
- Students are developing a “Welcome Wall” with the word “welcome” written in all the languages and cultures of students / families in the school.

Supervision and Monitoring Procedures

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

- Active corridor supervision takes place before school and during break and lunchtimes.
- Supervision of the toilet areas takes place during break and lunchtimes to ensure the safety of all students in these areas. Staff monitor the toilet areas ensuring that students return to class or outside as soon as possible.
- The use of phones is not permitted during break or lunch time and a Yondr pouch has been supplied to each student to prevent phone usage in the school building.

Staff on supervision are required:

- To actively patrol their designated area for the specified time
- To actively monitor the classrooms, corridor areas and toilets.
- To observe closely, interacting with students encouraging community and inclusiveness and querying those that appear isolated.
- To deal with any issues that may arise in the course of supervision and record if necessary. If a problem persists, the supervisor should inform the relevant Year Head or Class Tutor, or in their absence the Deputy Principal.
- To oversee and check that lunch time clean- up is being carried out. Rooms should be inspected to ensure all is in order for the next class period
- To ensure that students do not eat, drink or run on the corridors. Students should eat either outside or in classrooms.
- To ensure that students do not sit on the windowsills and/or desks.

- In the event of an emergency evacuation, the supervisor should ensure that all students on their floor exit the building via the correct route.

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 meaningful 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. Inclusivity strategies and bullying prevention are at the heart of every school process and procedure.

The dignity and the wellbeing of the individual person is of paramount concern in our whole-school response. This school will listen closely to, and in dialogue with parent(s)/ guardian(s), and thereby build a relationship of mutual understanding, respect, trust and confidence.

In continuing to develop prevention strategies, this school will take as much time as is practicable listening to young persons and parent(s)/ guardian(s), to help establish their particular context and needs. Formal and informal collaboration with staff, students and parent(s)/guardian(s) helps to inform prevention strategies and foster appropriate supports.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying are as follows:

Investigation Procedures

- Staff will take a calm, unemotional, problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour reported by students, staff or parent(s)/ guardian(s).
- The person to whom the incident has been reported should refer to the relevant Year Head where appropriate.
- A full investigation will take place by the Year Head and/ or one of the Deputy Principals.
- The investigator will be different to the decision maker.

- These incidents will be investigated in private, away from the classroom.
- The teacher will speak separately to the students involved, in an attempt to get all sides of the story. If a group of students are involved each member will be interviewed individually and may be asked to give a written account of what happened.
- All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and confidentiality.
- All interviews will be documented.
- Senior Management will be informed.
- The Deputy Principal / Year Head will contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) of those involved.
- The Student Support Team may act as support.
- Written records of all incidents must be kept.
- Reporters and those involved will be kept informed of the progress of the investigation
- In the event that a parent/guardian reports an incident of bullying to the school but requests that no action be taken, the parent/guardian will be asked to submit this request in writing. The school may use its own discretion in investigating this incident of bullying if it is deemed appropriate.

Within the principles of natural justice and fair procedures, and in line with the school's Code of Behaviour, the Principal decides whether the behaviour meets the threshold of bullying. If bullying is deemed to have occurred:

- The relevant staff member must complete the bullying form below at Appendix 1 and submit to Senior Management.
- The school will be guided by restorative practice principles in dealing with situations where bullying has occurred.
- **If the Principal has deemed that the incident may meet the threshold for bullying,** then parent(s)/guardian(s) will be called to the school for a meeting. The student and parent(s) / guardian(s) will be given an opportunity to respond before the decision is made.
- If it is concluded that a student has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to them how the student is in breach of our Code of Behaviour and the student will be asked to try to see the situation from alternative perspectives. The student will be instructed to cease this unacceptable behaviour immediately.
- **The Principal will decide on sanctions** as per the school's Code of Behaviour.
- All students involved will be offered pastoral support during and after the process.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) of both parties involved will be informed of the situation and the actions taken by the school will be explained to them. They will be asked to reinforce or support the actions taken by the school.

The continuation / re-occurrence of bullying behaviour will be seen in the context of the initial bullying incidences and also the school's attempts at addressing the behaviour and the instructions / interventions to resolve it.

Conclusion of the Intervention:

- Our aim is to bring about a change in behaviour, so bullying does not re-occur. The wellbeing of our students is of paramount importance to us.
- At the completion of the school-based intervention, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be asked to indicate that the school has intervened in the situation.
- The Guidance Counsellor/Year head will meet with the students after a period of time to ensure that bullying has ceased.
- The Counsellor may meet with individuals to provide support for students affected by bullying.
- In the case of cyberbullying that may happen in the school, if the person responsible for the content is known, the student will be asked to remove it and their parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed. If it continues it will be reported to the social networking site. A record of the cyberbullying will be kept as evidence and may ultimately be reported to the Gardaí.
- Further incidents between the same students will be dealt with by the Principal and may result in suspension, or in exceptional circumstances, expulsion.
- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s) / guardian(s) will be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures. In the event that a parent / guardian has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Section 4: 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. A copy has been made available to the Parents’ Association.

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. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents’ Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department

Signed: _____ Date: _____ (Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____ Date: _____ (Principal)

Policy Ratified	17 th December 2025
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Appendix 1: Reporting Form



Student name:	Date of incident: Date of investigation: Date closed:
Other students involved	
Outline of incident <i>-Reported by</i> <i>-Location of incident</i> <i>-Type of bullying behaviour</i>	
Main findings of investigation:	
Outcome of investigation:	
Parental involvement:	
Actions taken:	

Signed: _____

Date: _____