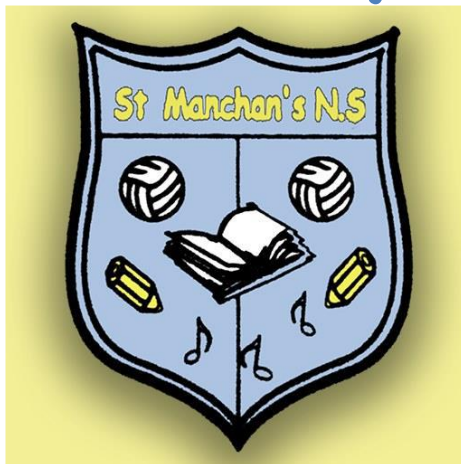


Bí Cineálta Policy



St. Manchan's National School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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

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

The board of management acknowledges that bullying behaviour interferes with the rights of the child as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We all, as a school community, have a responsibility to work together to prevent and address bullying behaviour and to deal with the negative impact of bullying behaviour.

We are committed to ensuring that all students who attend our school are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our students is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our students and we are fully committed to preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

We confirm that we will, in accordance with our obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the harassment of students or staff on any of the nine grounds specified: gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

We confirm that we will take all steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent all bullying or harassment of our students in whatever form and however motivated.

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 everybody 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 everybody has a 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.

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.

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 | Jan - April 2025 | Meetings |
| Students | May 2025 | Focus groups |
| Parents | 20 th to 31 st January 2025 | Questionnaire |
| Board of Management | Jan – June 2025 | Emails and meetings |
| Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers | | |
| Date policy was approved: 02/07/2025 | | |
| Date policy was last reviewed: 02/07/2025 | | |
| | | |

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by this school to address all forms of bullying behaviour, in whatever form and however motivated, including online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour and sexual harassment.

Culture and Environment

- In developing the 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 our 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 our board of management and staff meetings.
- St. Manchan's National School promotes a positive and inclusive environment where all pupils and staff can experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported.
- Diversity is celebrated in St. Manchan's National School.
- Relationships between all members of the school community are based on respect, care, integrity and trust.
- Positive self-esteem is fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences, by acknowledging good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success.
- The Catholic Ethos of the school encourages positive attitudes to inclusivity and equality. This permeates all aspects of the school day and throughout the teaching of the curriculum.
- Insofar as is reasonably practicable school activities will be supervised and monitored at all times, with particular emphasis on those occasions when situations of bullying behavior are more likely to occur, such as play time and dismissal time.
- St. Manchan's NS promotes a "telling environment". Pupils who witness bullying behavior will be supported and encouraged to report the behavior to a trusted adult in the school.
- The relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with bullying behaviour is the Class teacher and the Principal.
- Teachers respond sensitively to pupils who disclose incidents of bullying behavior.
- Parents contribute to and support the school's policy on bullying behaviour by encouraging positive behaviour both at home and at school, by being vigilant for signs and symptoms that their child is experiencing bullied or is taking part in bullying behavior against others, by communicating concerns to the school.
- Members of the BOM are familiar with the school's policy on bullying behaviour and promote it on a repeated basis among staff, parents and pupils through the roles of the Board Members in the school, by reviewing the policy with input from all stakeholders in the School Community, by example and by promoting and improving communication and supporting the Principal in ensuring the Policy is adhered to.

- We highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.

Curriculum

- The SPHE curriculum, including the Walk Tall and Stay Safe programme, is used throughout the school.
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Pupils are helped to develop empathy by discussing feelings and by trying to put themselves in the place of others.
- Regular opportunities will be provided for pupils to work in small groups in order to develop a sense of connection, belonging and empathy among pupils.
- Cyber-Bullying requires access to technology. Pupils are supervised at all times when working with technology in the school. Pupils, who of necessity must bring their phones to school are required to hand them up to the teacher for safe keeping during the school day.
- St. Manchan's N.S. avails of the Schools Broadband Programme which provides content filtering as an integrated part of the service. This ensures that inappropriate websites and content are not accessible from within the school.
- Transition programmes are used from class to class and to secondary school.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed regularly with the pupils.
- St. Manchan's National School will emphasise and reinforce the view that bullying behaviour is unacceptable by;
 - Using school assemblies to remind pupils of the school's anti bullying policy
 - Using both the formal and informal curriculum to emphasise that bullying is unacceptable... visual arts activities, posters, drama, role play, SPHE, cooperative games...
 - Devising a child friendly anti-bullying charter for display in classrooms and other prominent locations.

Policy and Planning

- The Wellbeing of our School Community is at the heart of all school policies and plans. The Code of Behaviour, Acceptable Use Policy, Supervision Policy, Special Education Teaching policy and Child Safety Statement support implementation of this policy.
- All disclosed incidents of bullying behavior are investigated
- Student participation is sought in the development of this and other school policies.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.

Relationships and Partnerships

- The dignity and the wellbeing of the individual person is of paramount concern in our Christian response. St. Manchan's NS 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 further 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.
- St. Manchan's N.S supports the active participation of pupils in school life. Our student voice is represented by our student council.
- St. Manchan's N.S supports the active participation of parents in school life.
- We provide activities that build empathy, respect and resilience between classes such as paired reading, buddy Maths trails etc.
- We provide a monthly newsletter for our school community celebrating all that has taken place in school.
- St. Manchan's N.S collaborates with other local primary and post primary schools in activities such as school tours, Safe routes to school, sporting blitz days.

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

- Insofar as is reasonably practicable school activities will be supervised and monitored at all times, with particular emphasis on those occasions when situations of bullying behavior are more likely to occur, such as play time and dismissal time.
- All staff actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- School staff encourage pupils to help them to identify bullying behavior "hot spots" and "hot times" for bullying behaviour in the school.
- Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
- Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/schoolyard or moving classrooms.
- Webwise lessons are completed with each class to aid prevention of online Bullying behavior and promote good digital citizenship.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

The class teacher and the Principal

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:

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred

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.

To determine whether the behaviour reported is bullying behaviour you should 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 behavior and the behaviour should 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 teachers should 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

- parents are an integral part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with schools, in addressing bullying behaviour. Where bullying behavior 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 behavior

- it is important to listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- a record should be kept of the engagement with all involved
this record should document the form and type of bullying behaviour, if known (see Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the Bí Cineálta procedures), 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 where bullying behaviour has occurred

- the teacher must engage with the students involved and their parents again no more than 20 school days after the initial engagement
- important factors to consider as part of this engagement are the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behavior and the relationship between the students involved
- the teacher 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 the school consideration should 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 :

All pupils who have been involved in bullying behaviour will be supported in the first instance by the class teacher. If required, opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self esteem and self worth will be organised. Further interventions where appropriate will be put in place on a case by case basis.

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

- The school recognises that pupils who have been bullied may need counselling and/or 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.
- A programme of support for those pupils involved in bullying behaviour will also be part of the school's intervention process. Pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an on-going basis. For those with low self-esteem, opportunities will be developed to increase feelings of self-worth. In this regard, the school recognises that pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.
- Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour should be encouraged to discuss them with teachers.

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: Fr. Nigel Charles
(Chairperson of board of management)

Date: 2/07/2025_____

Signed: Maeve Heslin
(Principal)

Date: 2/07/2025_____