



## Scoil Maelruain Junior

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[www.scoilmaelruainjunior.org](http://www.scoilmaelruainjunior.org)



|                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Date                                | May 2025  |
| Initial Draft                       | May 2025  |
| Ratified by the Board of Management | June 16th 2025,   |
| Patron Approved                     | November 11th 2025 to include addendum added by Patron body |
| Reviewed by the Board of Management |   |


**This is a working continuous document**

## Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

### Rationale:

The Board of Management of Scoil Maelruain Junior has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

Scoil Maelruain Junior is a Catholic Junior National School (

 Appendix 5 - Bí Cineálta Catholic School's Ethos ) providing education for children from Junior Infants to 2nd Class.

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.

This policy acknowledges that, due to their developmental stage, younger children may not always recognise when certain behaviours constitute bullying. It is the responsibility of both staff and parents to guide and support children in understanding and addressing bullying behaviour. We also recognise the importance of supporting both the child who is experiencing bullying behaviour and the child who is engaging in such 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.

**Definition of Bullying Behaviour**

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**

|              |                   |                           |
|--------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
|              | Date Consulted    | Method of Consultation    |
| School staff | 4th February 2025 | Staff Meeting discussions |
|              | 11th March 2025   | Staff Meeting discussions |
|              | 13th March 2025   | Staff Survey              |

|                                |                         |   |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Students                       | Feb - April 2025        | Student Council   |
|                                | March 2025              | Pupil Survey<br>Lessons led by class teacher and Student Council<br>Pupil Survey (original survey re-taken after 2 lessons) |
|                                | April 2025              | Student Poster competition for Student Policy and 'Feeling Safe in School)  |
| Parent Consultation            | 27th February 2025      | Parent Survey   |
|                                | 5th March 2025          | Parent Focus Group  |
| Board of Management            | BoM meetings Oct - June | Bí Cineálta discussed and BoM updated on process  |
| Date Policy was approved:      |                         |   |
| Date Policy was last reviewed: |                         |   |

## Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour:

The staff of Scoil Maelruain Junior are committed to preventing bullying behaviour, while recognising that, due to their developmental stage, younger children may not always be aware that certain behaviours constitute bullying. It is the joint responsibility of staff and parents to guide and support children in understanding and addressing such 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.

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.

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 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.

## **Whole School Strategies:**

### **SPHE and Wellbeing Curriculum**

Scoil Maelruain has an up-to-date SPHE and Wellbeing Policy and delivers the SPHE curriculum over a two-year cycle using the *Walk Tall*, *Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE)*, and *Stay Safe* programmes. Special Education Teachers (SETs) also support children with social and emotional needs, using a range of materials tailored to each child's individual requirements. Bullying behaviour is explicitly addressed in these programmes, and children are given the opportunity to understand and discuss what it entails. Through this approach, the school fosters an environment where children understand what bullying is, feel confident in speaking to a trusted adult if they are being bullied, and are reassured that they will be listened to and supported throughout the process to ensure they feel safe at school.

### **Wellbeing Week**

Scoil Maelruain Junior hosts a dedicated Wellbeing Week each year during the second term. This week promotes the wellbeing of pupils, staff, and parents. A programme of activities is provided for pupils, delivered by classroom teachers, Special Education Teachers (SETs), and outside agencies, to actively engage children in their own wellbeing. The Assistant Principal with responsibility for SPHE and Wellbeing organises the programme and collaborates with the Parents' Association to create opportunities for parental involvement through home-school links, parent talks, and workshops.

### **Celebrating Diversity**

We encourage our pupils to celebrate the diversity within our school community. This is fostered through activities such as Wellbeing Week (including Celebrating Diversity Day), storytelling, SPHE lessons, and the implementation of a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approach throughout the school.

### **Assembly**

Assemblies with the Principal are held at least once a month, with children attending in their class groupings. The primary aim of these assemblies is to promote positive behaviour and support student wellbeing. Each assembly is based on a specific theme, ranging from revisiting our 'Golden Rules' to reinforcing positive classroom practices and procedures. Classes are invited to share a poem, rhyme, or song as a way to celebrate their learning and achievements.

### **Group Strategies**

From time to time, certain classes or groups of children may experience challenges in maintaining positive behaviour towards others. In such cases, we implement targeted, intensive interventions over a number of weeks to support the group. These interventions may include:

- Dividing the class into smaller groups, with the class teacher and SET (Special Education Team) delivering targeted SPHE lessons.
- Small group SPHE sessions focused on specific behavioural and wellbeing goals.
- Individualised interventions led by the class teacher or SET to support specific behavioural or emotional needs.

All interventions are designed to promote positive behaviour, strengthen peer relationships, and build resilience among students.

### **Online Bullying Behaviour:**

As part of our two-year SPHE instruction cycle, all classes receive lessons on safe and responsible online engagement. We use resources from Webwise, Stay Safe, Walk Tall, and other trusted programmes to promote positive online behaviour and provide guidance on preventing and addressing online bullying. Scoil Maelruain Junior has an

[22/23 Acceptable Usage Policy for Digital Learning and Smart Devices](#) which outlines the appropriate use of technology for educational purposes and prohibits students from using personal smart devices in school.

### **Homophobic, transphobic, racist, sexist bullying behaviours, bullying directed at children with additional needs and sexual harassment:**

As the children in our cohort are very young, incidents of bullying related to specific categories of difference are uncommon. However, we proactively teach our students to celebrate diversity, as outlined in the preventative strategies detailed above.

### **Supervision**

The school has a supervision policy and working alone policy in place to ensure the safety of students in our care. [2023/24 Supervision Policy](#) The school also has a provision for supervising children while on tour [School Tours Policy](#) Students have identified the toilet and yard areas as times when they may feel unsafe or vulnerable to bullying. These concerns are addressed through our supervision policies, and preventative strategies.

## **Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour**

Scoil Maelruain Junior recognises that the students in our care are in the early stages of developing relationships and social understanding, and their interactions will reflect this stage of development. When investigating whether bullying behaviour has occurred, it is important to consider whether the child understands that their actions meet the definition of bullying, that is, behaviour that is repeated, targeted, and intentional. Children in this age group may not fully grasp the concept of intentionality when being unkind to others, and our investigations must take this developmental stage into account.

Teachers and staff members will investigate allegations of bullying behavior that occur within the current academic year. Allegations from previous academic years will not be reinvestigated; however, a pattern of behavior over time may be considered when addressing the current situation.

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

### **Approach to Identifying if Bullying Behaviour has Occurred**

The primary aim in addressing reports of bullying behaviour is to stop the behaviour and, as far as practicable, to restore the relationships between the students involved, rather than to assign blame. When a report of bullying is brought to the attention of a staff member, it must be referred to the classroom teacher for investigation. The classroom teacher must inform the principal of the investigation, both to determine whether bullying behaviour has occurred and to seek advice or support if needed. During the investigation, the teacher should keep the following three questions in mind:

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?


The use of [Appendix 1: Identifying if Bullying Behaviour has Occurred](#) will be used to investigate bullying behaviour. If the answer to all of the questions above is 'yes' then bullying behaviours have been identified. If the answer is 'no' to any of the above questions then bullying behaviours have not been identified and the [2024/25 Code of Behaviour Policy Redraft.docx](#) will apply.

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.


Please note that bullying behaviour that occurs outside of school can not be dealt with by schools, including incidents that occur to and from school. However the school will support children who have experienced this type of bullying.

### **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 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 should be kept of the engagement with all involved
- [Appendix 1: Identifying if Bullying Behaviour has Occurred](#)

- 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
-  Appendix 2: Questions to support identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred
- 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 behaviour

## **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 behaviour 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 Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post Primary Schools
- 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  2024/25 Code of Behaviour Policy Redraft.docx . 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

## **Section D: Oversight**

The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour known as 'Anti-Bullying Oversight Report' 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

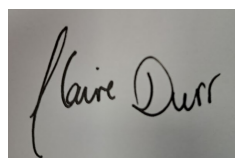
relating to trends and patterns identified, strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant. This update does not contain personal or identifying information. See Chapter 7 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

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.

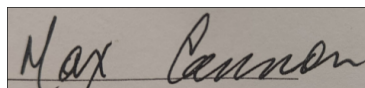
This policy and its implementation will be reviewed, following input from our school community, each calendar year or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this policy refers.

## Section E: Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually using [Appendix 3: Bí Cineálta Annual Policy Review Document](#)



Claire Durr  
Principal



Max Cannon  
Chairperson

## Appendices:

[Appendix 1: Identifying if Bullying Behaviour has Occurred](#)

[Appendix 2: Questions to support identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred](#)

[Appendix 3: Bí Cineálta Annual Policy Review Document](#)

Appendix 4: Student Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy

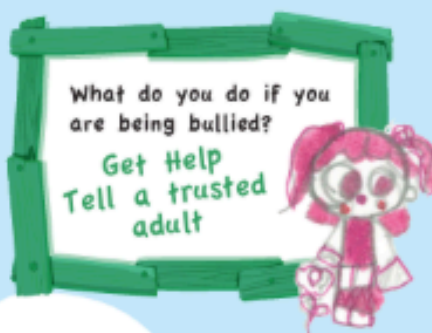




# WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE BEING BULLIED



Mia McGraham Murray Bi Cinealta





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## **Appendix 5**

### **Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour**

#### **Catholic School Ethos**

The Board of Management of Scoil Maelruain Junior has adopted the following policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

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