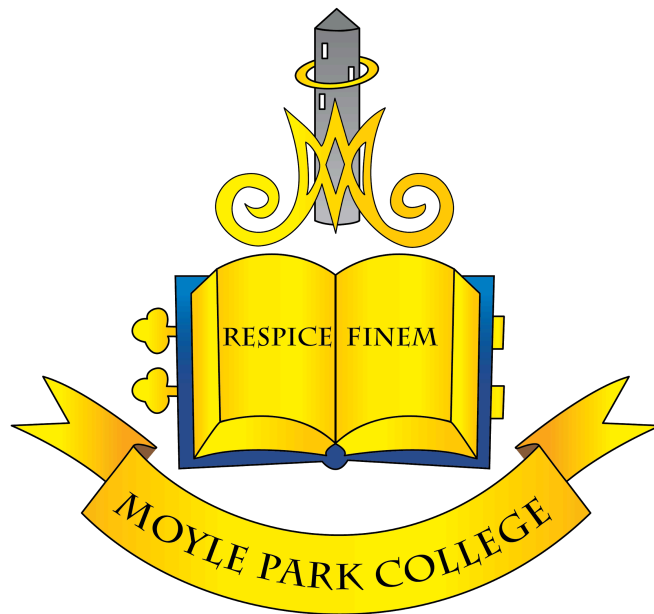


Moyle Park College



Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

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1. Introduction

The Board of Management of Moyle Park College 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.

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.

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

Bullying behaviour, by its very nature, undermines and dilutes the quality of education. Research shows that bullying can have short and long-term effects on the physical and mental well-being of students, on engagement with school, on self-confidence and on the ability to pursue ambitions and interests. School based bullying can be positively and firmly addressed through a range of school-based measures and strategies through which all members of the school community are enabled to act effectively in dealing with this behaviour.

While it is recognised that home and societal factors play a substantial role both in the cause and in the prevention of bullying, the role of the school in preventative work is also crucial and should not be underestimated. Parents/Guardians and students have a particularly important role and responsibility in helping the College to prevent and address school-based bullying behaviour and to deal with any negative impact within the College of bullying that occurs elsewhere.

Bullying behaviour in Moyle Park College is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

2. Moyle Park College Mission Statement

Our mission is informed by St. Marcellin Champagnat's approach to young people. Young people are basically good. Understand what makes young people act as they do. Challenge others to take a positive view of young people. Have a particular care for those least favoured by life. The relationship between an adult and a young person is that between big brother/sister and little brother/sister. Unfailing kindness and patience work with the young. Be close to young people, challenge them with gentleness and respect. Express your sense of humour. Working with young people is a call of the Gospel. Bringing up young people is both a civic and a spiritual activity.

Moyle Park College is a Catholic voluntary secondary school for boys established in Clondalkin by the Marist Brothers in 1957. Our motto - '**Respice Finem**' - conveys the school's philosophy of setting objectives and ideals and working towards them.

The management and staff of Moyle Park College, in cooperation with parents/guardians are committed to the provision of a broadly based education. We are dedicated to achieving a balance between the academic, social, cultural and spiritual components of education within the tradition established by St. Marcellin Champagnat, founder of the Marist Brothers.

A strong caring ethos permeates daily life in the college. We offer a wide range of subjects together with a range of extra-curricular and co-curricular activities.

3. Rationale

The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of students and is therefore fully committed to the following principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour.

We will foster a positive school culture and climate which:

- is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
- encourages students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment;
- promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
- promotes effective leadership;
- promotes a school-wide approach;
- a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
- implements education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that build empathy, respect and resilience in students; explicitly addresses the issues of cyber-bullying including in particular, homophobic and trans-phobic bullying;
- promotes effective supervision and monitoring of students;
- encourages the provision of supports for staff;
- fosters consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies);

- Ensures that there is on-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

3.1 Definition

Bullying is 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.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging do not fall within this definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

However, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where it can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the above definition of bullying:

- Deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- Cyber bullying and identity based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Travelling community and bullying those with disabilities or additional educational needs.

Bullying behaviour can be considered criminal behaviour under certain circumstances and legal consequences can apply. The age of criminal responsibility in Ireland is 12 years.

3.2 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 | 19th March 2025 | Online Questionnaire |
| | 3rd April 2025 | Staff training - half day |
| Students | 19th March 2025 | Online Questionnaire |
| Parents | 19th March 2025 | Online Questionnaire |
| Board of Management | | |
| Wider school community as appropriate | | |
| Date policy was approved: | | |
| Date policy was last reviewed: | | |

3.2 How bullying behaviour occurs

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. While students can often engage in “mess fights” they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.

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 bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. 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. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance; for example, size or clothes worn or gender identity. It can also refer to a student’s accent, distinctive voice characteristics, academic ability, race or ethnic origin.

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. Common forms include control: "Do this or I won't be your friend anymore"; a group of students ganging up against one student; nonverbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a student; giving a student the "silent treatment"; and the deliberate manipulation of friendship groups to make someone unpopular.

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, email, apps, digital gaming sites, gaming consoles, chat rooms 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
- excluding or 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 images.

The **Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020** (also known as *Coco’s Law*) criminalises the non-consensual sharing of intimate images and also criminalises threatening to share these images.

Hate Crime is any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person to, in whole or in part, be motivated by hostility or prejudice, based on actual or perceived age, disability, race, colour, nationality, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or gender.

3.4 Where bullying behaviour can occur

Bullying behaviour can happen anywhere, online or offline and at any time, but there are certain places and times where bullying behaviour can be more likely to occur. These can include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

Inside School

School physical environments can have a significant influence on social relationships among students and can impact on the ability of school staff to effectively prevent and address bullying. Well designed school environments play a vital role in preventing bullying behaviour and promoting inclusion, positive relationships, and a safe and supportive learning environment.

School yard: Bullying behaviour can take place in the school yard. School grounds with hidden or obscure parts may provide an environment where bullying behaviour is more likely to occur. Many common school yard games present opportunities for bullying behaviour because of their physical nature. Continuing provocation may lead to a physical fight and in some cases the student experiencing bullying behaviour may appear to be the aggressor as they give vent to their frustration.

In the classroom: Bullying behaviour can take place in class. It may occur subtly through glances, looks, sniggers or may take the more overt form of physical intimidation or deliberate isolation. Bullying behaviour may also occur between class periods when the students or the teacher moves.

Other areas: Bullying behaviour can take place in other areas such as toilets, corridors, cloakrooms, locker areas, changing rooms, showers, gym, canteen and assembly hall.

Outside School

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.

Coming to and from school: Bullying behaviour can occur in the area immediately outside the school, the local shops and the wider local area. Bullying behaviour can take place at the bus stop or on the journey to and from school whether the students are walking, cycling or on school buses.

Bullying behaviour can also take place in organised clubs and groups outside of school such as sports clubs.

Online bullying (cyberbullying) behaviour, along with all other types of bullying behaviour, can cause significant harm and can have a lasting impact on students who experience this behaviour. Access to technology means that online bullying behaviour can happen anytime, and the student's home is no longer a safe place. The nature of these technologies means that digital content can be shared and seen by a very wide audience almost instantly and the content is almost impossible to delete permanently.

3.5 Types of bullying behaviour

There are many different types of bullying behaviour. These can include the following which is not an exhaustive list:

- **disablist bullying behaviour:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of a perceived or actual disability or additional need
- **exceptionally able bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their high academic ability or outstanding talents
- **gender identity bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual gender identity
- **homophobic/transphobic (LGBTQ+) bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their perceived or actual membership of the LGBTQ+ community
- **physical appearance bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their physical appearance. Students who “look different” can be mocked or criticised about the shape, size or appearance of their body
- **racist bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a student because of their race or ethnic origin which includes membership of the Traveller or Roma community. Racism is defined in the *National Action Plan Against Racism* as “a form of domination which manifests through those power dynamics present in structural and institutional arrangements, practices, policies and cultural norms, which have the effect of excluding or discriminating against individuals or groups, based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin”

- **poverty bullying:** behaviour that intends to humiliate a student because of a lack of resources
- **religious identity bullying:** behaviour that intends to harm a student because of their religion or religious identity
- **sexist bullying:** behaviour that intends to harm a student based on their sex, perpetuating stereotypes that a student or a group of students are inferior because of their sex
- **sexual harassment:** any form of unwanted verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on sex which affects the dignity of the student

3.6 Impact of experiencing bullying behaviour

When students experience bullying behaviour, it can have a severe and profound impact on them in both the short and long term. Students may develop feelings of stress, insecurity, humiliation and anxiety and therefore become more vulnerable. Experiencing bullying behaviour can have a detrimental effect on their experience of education and education outcomes. The student's self confidence may be damaged with a resulting lowering of their self esteem which can continue into adulthood. While they may not talk about what is happening to them, their suffering can be indicated through changes in mood and behaviour. Extreme cases of bullying behaviour may contribute to mental health difficulties.

Online or cyberbullying can be a hidden form of bullying behaviour. It can often go unnoticed as much online activity is not subject to adult supervision and the student who displays the behaviour can be offered a degree of anonymity that could protect them from being detected. It can also involve a wider audience and can be difficult to have offensive comments or material removed.

Signs of when a student may be experiencing bullying behaviour

Signs that may indicate that a student is experiencing bullying behaviour include but are not limited to the following:

- anxiety about travelling to and from school; for example, physical illnesses; for example anxiety or distress; for example, requesting parents to drive or collect them, changing travel routes, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school
- not wanting to go to school, refusal to attend
- a change in how the student performs in school, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school
- pattern of physical illnesses for example; headaches, stomach aches
- unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour which may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or after school holidays
- visible signs of anxiety or distress for example; stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting

- spontaneous out of character comments about either students or teachers
- possessions missing or damaged
- increased requests for money or stealing money
- unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing
- reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling them

The above signs do not necessarily mean that a student is experiencing bullying behaviour. However, if these signs occur over a period of time or if a number occur together, it may be an indication that the student is experiencing bullying behaviour.

3.7 Students who may be more at risk of experiencing bullying behaviour

It is important to note that bullying behaviour can be experienced by anyone. Bullying behaviour can be directed at individuals for no obvious reason, or it can be more overt based on a student's identity or societal issues.

Some students with additional educational needs may have difficulties recognising bullying behaviour has occurred. Some students with complex needs may lack awareness of social dynamics leading them to trust others implicitly. Consequently, these students may be more at risk of experiencing bullying behaviour.

Schools should consider the composition of their student population when identifying who may be more at risk of experiencing bullying behaviour so that preventative strategies can be tailored to support students at risk. At-risk groups can include:

- students who have additional learning needs
- students with disabilities
- students from an ethnic minority background and migrant students
- students who are members of the Traveller and Roma communities
- students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+)
- students who practise or display a religious faith
- students experiencing homelessness
- students experiencing health or mental health issues

3.8 Impact of witnessing bullying behaviour

Students who witness bullying behaviour can also be impacted in a similar way to those who experience bullying behaviour. These students may be afraid to tell someone because of a fear of reprisals for telling or a fear of making the situation worse.

Students who witness bullying behaviour may feel guilt or anxiety for not helping the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour. For example, they can feel vulnerable particularly in the case of racist or identity based bullying behaviour if they share the same race or identity as the student who is experiencing the behaviour.

3.9 Impact of engaging in bullying behaviour

There can also be a negative impact on those who engage in bullying behaviour. Those who engage in bullying behaviour can display aggression, antisocial behaviour and lower academic achievement. Students who display bullying behaviour often fail to recognise the impact of their actions and may lack empathy. They may avoid responsibility and deny or minimise their actions when confronted.

Long term, these students may find it hard to form long term relationships and they may express feelings of isolation and depression.

The lived experience of some students may cause students to engage in bullying behaviour. Some students who engage in bullying behaviour have learned attitudes and behaviours which can undermine their ability to integrate themselves into their peer group. They may suffer from low self esteem or insecurity and may have been bullied themselves. Students may also display or engage in bullying behaviour out of ignorance or because they are uncomfortable with another student's perceived difference.

4. Policy Implementation

4.1 The staff with responsibility for addressing bullying behaviour are as follows:

- The Subject Teacher
- The Supervising Teacher
- The Form Tutor
- The Year Head
- The Guidance Counsellor
- The Deputy Principal
- The Principal

The level of involvement of any of the above will depend on the nature of the incident(s) under investigation.

This list is not exhaustive and may include all other staff such as SNA's, Caretakers, Cleaners, Ancillary staff, part-time staff and any external speakers or visitors to the school.

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/guardians of those involved

All incidents of bullying behaviour that is reported will be recorded using the Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour (Appendix C) and submitted to the Principal. This report will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with students and parents/guardians. The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will also 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*.

4.2 The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyberbullying, homophobic bullying and trans-phobic bullying) that will be used by Moyle Park College are as follows:

It should be noted that key elements of a positive school culture and climate are outlined in **Appendix A** and some practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate are also set out in **Appendix B**.

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

Moyle Park College makes it clear to all members of the school community that bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Everyone in the school community has a duty to model appropriate behaviour and to bring to the attention of the relevant teacher, Form Tutor, Year Head, Deputy Principal, Principal or any relevant adult any incident of bullying, including cyber-bullying, that they are aware of.

- There is a focus on fostering and enhancing the self-esteem of all students through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Students are provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions with all members of our school community.
- Posters and notices highlighting the need for the inclusion of all students, irrespective of ethnic origin, sexual orientation or religious backgrounds, are placed in prominent locations in the college.
- A whole school campaign to create an awareness of the anti-bullying policy is conducted annually. This includes presentations to students, staff, parents and the Board of Management. It is incorporated into the school journal and is highlighted and discussed with students during ‘Drop Everything & Teach’ sessions.
- The SPHE curriculum makes specific provisions for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships. The Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme in SPHE classes, which is implemented across all year groups, provides opportunities to explore and discuss areas such as human sexuality and relationships and it has particular relevance to identity-based bullying. The CSPE and RE programmes also highlight for students the negative impact of bullying behaviour on victims and bullying is studied as part of several units, including human dignity, human rights and the rights of children.
- It is recognised that there is potential within the teaching of all subjects and within extracurricular activities to foster an attitude of respect for all, promote the value of diversity, address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- In Digital Media Literacy lessons, prevention and awareness measures are also dealt with through educating students about appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while online and how to report any instances of cyber-bullying.
- In combating bullying, Moyle Park College will take particular account of the needs of pupils with disabilities or Additional Educational Needs (AENs). This will involve improving inclusion, focusing on developing social skills, paying particular attention to student induction and cultivating a school culture that respects everyone and values helping one another.
- Transition Year Big Brother Mentoring Programme -TY students plan and co-deliver mentoring sessions with first year students throughout the year and develop positive relationships with the younger students which may encourage them to speak about any incidents of bullying that affect them or others.
- There is a voluntary staff and student mentoring programme in place for sixth year students where they get the opportunity to link in with a teacher and get advice and encouragement on one’s overall approach to and organisation of studies for the Leaving Certificate. These informal conversations may also allow students to open up around any issues that may be affecting them and resources are available on a shared drive to support teachers in these areas.

- ‘Fuse’ - DCU Anti-Bullying Programme is used across all year groups from 1st to 3rd year and a number of teachers have taken part in CPD sessions with the facilitators of this programme. This programme also incorporates talks and seminars online for parents/guardians.
- The ‘Stand Up Week’ awareness campaign is held every year in Moyle Park College with specific reference to the causes and effects of bullying, the issues of identity-based bullying and in particular homophobic and trans-phobic bullying. Different activities and events are organised by the ‘Stand Up’ committee to include all members of the school community. such as a solidarity wall with students contributing artwork, new LGBT library books purchased for the school library and staff colour days. Resources are shared on a Shared Drive using the Google Platform and all teachers are encouraged to add to and use the resources as appropriate.
- A Wellbeing Week for staff and students is held annually. An anti-bullying campaign is integrated into Wellbeing Week for students.
- The School Completion Programme is also involved in providing support and resources to students who may be struggling and engage in workshops with students around the area of wellbeing and positive mental health.
- Students are actively encouraged to tell if they are being bullied or if they know of any bullying taking place and parents/guardians, visitors or members of the wider community should feel welcome to report any concerns regarding bullying behaviour to any member of school staff.
- The effective supervision of students during breaks will endeavour to keep pupils away from secluded areas of the building and campus.

The digital age of consent is the minimum age a user must be before a social media or internet company can collect, process and store their data. In Ireland the digital age of consent is 16.

For the purposes of data collection, students between the ages of 13 and 16 years old must have parental permission to sign up to social media services where companies use the legal basis of consent to collect, process and store users’ data. Most social media platforms and services have a minimum age requirement and for the majority of these services it is 13 years’ old. Therefore technically, children under the age of 13 should not have a social media account.

It is important for their child’s safety, that parents are aware of their children’s use of technology including smartphones and gaming consoles.

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

While recognising that no one intervention works in all situations the relevant teacher or teachers may use any or all of the following procedures:

- The primary aim for the relevant teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame);
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the 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 of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. In this way students will gain confidence in ‘telling’. The confidence factor is of vital importance. It will be made clear to all students that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly;
- Non-teaching staff such as SNA’s, secretaries, caretakers and cleaners are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;
- The initial investigation will focus on establishing basic relevant facts such as what, where, when, who, and why. A written report will be recorded using the Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour (Appendix C).
- Other students may be interviewed where necessary to arrive at the truth. All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all students concerned. If a group is involved, each member may be interviewed individually at first and thereafter, all those involved may be met as a group.
- All concerned will be asked to provide written statements during the investigation.
- Parents/Guardians of both the alleged victim and perpetrator will be contacted and made aware of the situation. They will be encouraged to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
- If it is established that a student has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to them how they are in breach of the school’s anti-bullying policy and attempts will be made to get him to understand the feelings of the victim and the impact the bullying behaviour has had on them.
- Where required, a meeting of all relevant staff will be convened to discuss how best to support the victim and to deal with the allegation of bullying.
- It will be made clear to everyone involved (each set of pupils and parents/guardians) that any decision to impose a sanction will be a private matter between the student involved and their parents/guardians – in very serious instances of bullying the matter may be referred to the Board of Management under the suspension and expulsion policy.
- When the appropriate time has been arrived at an attempt will be made to bring both parties together with a view to restoring good relations.
- Where deemed appropriate the “no blame” approach or other such strategies may be adopted by the relevant teacher.
- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of their 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; and
- Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents/guardians or the Principal/Deputy Principals.
- Where a parent/guardian is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents/guardians will be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event of a parent/guardian having exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parents/guardians of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

4.4 Procedures for recording bullying behaviour

All records must be maintained in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations.

- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred as per school policy, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records using the recording template in Appendix C, which will assist their efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- Parents/guardians of the parties involved will be informed at an early stage.
- The situation will be monitored and evaluated once the agreed actions are completed.
- There will be a review with the student(s) and parent(s)/guardian(s) within a timeframe of no more than 20 days after the initial engagement.
- If the bullying has ceased, the situation will continue to be monitored.
- If the bullying has not ceased there will be a review of strategies and external support may be sought from outside agencies, if appropriate, within the agreed timeframe.
- Where a Student Support File exists for a student involved, a copy of the record will be placed on the student's support file to assist in providing a consistent and holistic response to support the wellbeing of the student.
- The designated forms for recording incidents of bullying will be filed by the Principal who will make a verbal report on bullying related matters to the Board of Management.

4.5 When bullying behaviour becomes a child protection concern

Section 10 of the Children First Act, 2015 places a statutory obligation on schools, as a "provider of a relevant service" 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.

Teachers registered with the Teaching Council are Mandated Persons under the Children First Act. They have a legal obligation under the Act to report harm of children that meets or is above a defined threshold to Tusla, and also to assist Tusla if requested, in assessing a concern which is the subject of a mandated report. If the concern does not reach the threshold for mandated reporting, but a teacher feels that it is a reasonable concern about the welfare or protection of a child, a report

should be made to Tusla under the Children First National Guidance. The Children First National Guidance applies to everyone. All school staff and volunteers must report reasonable concerns to Tusla.

The *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (Revised 2023)* provide that all school staff should report reasonable concerns to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) who may take advice and/or report the concerns to Tusla. If the staff member is a registered teacher and the concern is at or above the threshold of harm at which a mandated report must be made the concern shall be submitted as a mandated report to Tusla jointly by the DLP and the registered teacher.

The Children First Act defines harm as assault, ill treatment, neglect or sexual abuse and covers single and multiple instances.

The threshold of harm is reached where the mandated person believes that a child's health, development or welfare have been, or are being seriously affected, or are likely to be seriously affected.

The Children First National Guidance document 2017 is the national, overarching guidance with regard to child safeguarding. The Guidance provides that in cases of serious instances of bullying where the behaviour is regarded as possibly abusive, a referral may need to be made to Tusla or An Garda Síochána as appropriate.

Generally, bullying behaviour can be addressed without the involvement of Tusla. However, bullying behaviour may become a child protection concern when it results in significant physical or emotional harm, or where it becomes a persistent and severe problem and measures taken to address it are not effective.

In determining when bullying behaviour should be reported to Tusla the following factors should be considered:

- the impact on the child
- protective/appropriate action taken by the parents
- protective/appropriate action taken by the school
- engagement of child/family with support services such as NEPS

If there is doubt about whether bullying behaviour is a child protection concern schools should contact Tusla's social work department for advice. This will enable the social worker to explore the situation with school staff and provide advice on the best course of action.

4.6 Moyle Park College's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

- A victim of bullying behaviour will be supported through the school's Pastoral Care Team and Core Care Team structures where all support up to and including counselling may be offered.
- A victim of bullying behaviour will also be offered 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.
- Staff will monitor the situation to ensure that as far as possible no further incidents of bullying take place.
- Victims will be reassured that staff are open to offering on-going support if so required.
- An attempt will be made, provided the victim is open to such an approach, to improve the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator.
- Those who engage in bullying behaviour will also be supported through the various school support structures.
- Moyle Park College strives to create an inclusive culture where all students feel supported and valued and where peer support is nurtured through our Pastoral Care Team. Students are encouraged to report incidents of bullying behaviour in a safe, secure environment.

5. Supervision and Monitoring of Students

The Board of Management will endeavour to ensure that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with any bullying behaviour.

It is the responsibility of school management in conjunction with staff and students to develop a system under which good supervisory and monitoring measures are in place both to prevent and deal with bullying behaviour. Good supervision and monitoring systems also facilitate early interventions. The identification of "hot-spots" and "hot-times" can be very beneficial in preventing and dealing with bullying in school. All pupils and in particular senior pupils can be seen as a resource to assist in countering bullying. The Student Council and Marist Leaders can also be very important in this regard. Non-teaching staff should also contribute and be part of the process to counter bullying behaviour in Moyle Park College.

6. Supports for staff

The Board of Management will direct/ensure that members of school staff have sufficient familiarity with the school's BÍ Cineálta policy to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy when required. Support for staff should be appropriate to the individual's role and should enable staff to recognise bullying, implement effective strategies for preventing bullying and where appropriate, intervene effectively in bullying cases.

The Board of Management will also make appropriate arrangements to ensure that temporary and substitute staff have sufficient awareness of the school's Code of Behaviour and its Bí Cineálta policy

7. Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management confirms that the college will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of students or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender, including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Travelling community. This is also in accordance with our Dignity in the Workplace Policy.

8. Oversight

8.1 Bullying behaviour update to Board of Management

At each meeting of the Board of Management the Principal will present an update on the number of incidents of bullying behaviour and the measures taken to prevent and address bullying behaviour (Appendix E).

The purpose of the update is to inform discussion at board level on the effectiveness of the measures that the school is taking to prevent and address bullying behaviour and the effectiveness of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy.

The update will include the following:

- the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting
- the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that are currently ongoing
- the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the beginning of the school year

Where incidents of bullying behaviour have been reported since the last meeting, the update will include a verbal report which should include the following information where relevant:

- the trends and patterns identified such as the form of bullying behaviour, type of bullying behaviour if known, location of bullying behaviour, when it occurred
- the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour
- any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour
- if any serious incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred which have had a serious adverse impact on a student
- if a parent/guardian has informed the school that a student has left the school because of reported bullying behaviour
- if any additional support is needed from the Board of Management
- if the school's Bí Cineálta policy requires urgent review in advance of the annual review

This update will not include any personal information or information that could identify the students involved.

8.2 Review of the school's Bí Cineálta policy

Moyle Park College's Bí Cineálta policy will be reviewed each calendar year or as soon as practicable where the Board of Management determines that a review is warranted.

The template contained in Appendix D will be completed to confirm that all aspects of the annual review are completed.

The school community will be given notice that the annual review has taken place and the form included at Appendix F can be used for this purpose.

This confirmation will be published on the school website once the annual review has taken place.

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 was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management on theand the date for the next review is **August/September 2026.**

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on our website and provided to the Parents Council. It is available to the Marist Trustees and the Department of Education & Skills, if requested.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Code of Behaviour, Dignity at Work Policy, Social Media Policy, Acceptable Use Policy, Critical Incident Policy and all other relevant policies.

School Contact Details

Principal: Ms Niamh Cahalane
Address: Moyle Park College, Clondalkin, Dublin 22, D22V072
Phone: 01 4574837
Email: info@moyleparkcollege.com
Website: www.moyleparkcollege.ie
Roll Number: 60121B

Appendix A: Key Elements of a positive school culture and climate

- The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.
- The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.
- The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline, and responsibility among all its members.
- The school prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members.
- The school has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of its functioning.
- The school has the capacity to change in response to pupils' needs.
- The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupils' attitudes and values.
- The school takes particular care of "at risk" pupils and uses its monitoring systems to facilitate early intervention where necessary and it responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.
- The school recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents/guardians informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis.
- The school recognises the role of parents/guardians in equipping the pupil with a range of life-skills.
- The school recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.
- The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.
- The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school.
- Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community.

(Page 23, DES, 2013)

Appendix B: Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these meetings.
- Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- 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.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use. Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents/guardians and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure that there is adequate playground/schoolyard/outdoor supervision.
- School staff can get pupils to help them identify bullying "hot spots" and "hot times" for bullying in the school.
 - Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, 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/school yard or moving classrooms.
- Support the establishment and work of student councils.

(Page 42, DES, 2013)

Appendix C : Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---------------|--|
| Name of student being bullied: | | | |
| Name: | | Class: | |

| | | | |
|---|--|---------------|--|
| Name(s) of student(s) engaged in bullying behaviour: | | | |
| Name: | | Class: | |
| Name: | | Class: | |

| | |
|--|--|
| Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern: <i>(If a student then please include class)</i> | |
| Name: | |
| Name: | |

| | | | |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Form of Bullying Behaviour - tick the relevant box(es): | | | |
| Physical Aggression | <input type="checkbox"/> | Cyber-bullying | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Damage to Property | <input type="checkbox"/> | Intimidation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Isolation/Exclusion | <input type="checkbox"/> | Extortion | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Verbal (Name Calling) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Written | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Relational Bullying (e.g malicious gossip) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other <i>(please specify)</i> | |

| | | | |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Type of Bullying Behaviour - tick the relevant box(es): | | | |
| Homophobic/Transphobic (LGBTQ+) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Physical Appearance | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Disablist | <input type="checkbox"/> | Religious Identity | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Exceptionally Able | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sexual Harassment | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Racist | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other <i>(please specify)</i> | |
| Gender Identity | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

| Location of Bullying Behaviour - tick the relevant box(es) | | | |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| School yard/playing field | <input type="checkbox"/> | Toilets | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Classroom | <input type="checkbox"/> | Canteen | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Corridors/Locker areas | <input type="checkbox"/> | Changing rooms | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Outside school | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other <i>(please specify)</i> | |

| Details of when the bullying behaviour occurred (if known): |
|--|
| |

| Date of initial engagement with student(s) and parent(s)/guardians(s) |
|--|
| |

| Actions taken in consultation with student(s) and parent(s)/guardian(s): |
|---|
| |

| Date of Review with student and parent/guardian to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased <i>(must be within 20 days of initial engagement)</i> : |
|--|
| |

| Engagement with external services/supports (if any): |
|---|
| |

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| Signed: | Date: |
| <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |

Date Submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal:

Appendix D: Bí Cineálta Policy Review

1. When did the Board formally adopt its Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour in accordance with the *Bí Cineálta Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*?

_____/_____/20

2. Where in the school is the student friendly Bí Cineálta policy displayed?

3. What date did the Board publish the Bí Cineálta policy and the student friendly policy on the school website? ____/____/20

4. How has the student friendly policy been communicated to students?

5. How has the Bí Cineálta policy and student friendly policy been communicated to parents

6. Have all school staff been made aware of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and the *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post- Primary Schools*?

- Yes
 No

7. Does the Bí Cineálta policy document the strategies that the school uses to prevent bullying behaviour?

- Yes
 No

8. Has the Board received and minuted the Bullying Behaviour Update presented by the Principal at every ordinary board meeting over the last calendar year?

- Yes
 No

9. Has the Board discussed how the school is addressing all reports of bullying behaviour?

- Yes
 No

10. Is the Board satisfied that all incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed in accordance with the school's Bí Cineálta Policy?

- Yes
 No

11. Have the prevention strategies in the Bí Cineálta policy been implemented?

- Yes
 No

12. Has the Board discussed the effectiveness of the strategies used to prevent bullying behaviour?

- Yes
 No

13. How have (a) parents, (b) students and (c) school staff been consulted with as part of the review of the Bí Cineálta Policy?

14. Outline any aspects of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and/or its implementation that have been identified as requiring further improvement as part of this review:

15. Where areas for improvement have been identified, outline how these will be addressed and whether an action plan with timeframes has been developed?

16. Does the student friendly policy need to be updated as a result of his review and if so why?

17. Does the school refer parents to the complaints procedures if they have a complaint about how the school has addressed bullying behaviour?

- Yes
 No

18. Has a parent informed the school that a student has left the school due to reported bullying behaviour?

- Yes
 No

19. Has the Office of the Ombudsman for Children initiated or completed an investigation into how the school has addressed an incident of bullying behaviour?

- Yes
 No

Appendix E

Guide to Providing Bullying Behaviour Update

Guide to providing Bullying Behaviour Update for Board of Management meeting of ____ / ____ /20 ____

Having reviewed the details of the incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the previous Board of Management meeting, the principal must provide the following information at each ordinary meeting of the Board of Management:

| | |
|--|--|
| Total number of new incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the last Board of Management meeting | |
| Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour currently ongoing. | |
| Total number of incidents of bullying behaviour reported since the beginning of this school year. | |

Where incidents of bullying behaviour have been reported since the last meeting, the update must include a verbal report which should include the following information where relevant:

- the trends and patterns identified such as the form of bullying behaviour, type of bullying behaviour if known, location of bullying behaviour, when it occurred etc.
- the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour
- any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour
- if any serious incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred which have had a serious adverse impact on a student
- if a parent has informed the school that a student has left the school because of reported bullying behaviour
- if any additional support is needed from the Board of Management
- if the school's Bí Cineálta policy requires urgent review in advance of the annual review

This update should not include any personal information or information that could identify the students involved.

Appendix F

Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management of Moyle Park College confirms that the Board of Management's annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour and its implementation was completed at the Board of Management meeting of ____/____/20____

This review was conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Education's *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed: _____

(Chairperson of Board of management)

Date: ____/____/20____

Signed: _____

(Principal)

Date: ____/____/20____

Date of next review: _____