



Mayfield Community School

Bí Cineálta Policy

To Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Mayfield Community 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.

Rationale

The vision of the Department of Education is to create an education system where every child and young person feels valued and is actively supported to reach their full potential. At Mayfield Community School, we show our commitment to this vision by fostering a school environment that enhances and nurtures student wellbeing, belonging, and self-worth.

The *Bí Cineálta* Anti-Bullying Guidelines¹ are a central part of our approach to building a culture of inclusion, empathy, and respect. These guidelines help us work together to ensure that bullying behaviour has no place in our school community. We strive to create a space where individual differences are acknowledged, valued, and celebrated; where every student feels safe, accepted, and empowered to be themselves.

Bullying behaviour can severely impact a student's engagement with learning, sense of agency, confidence, and overall wellbeing. The board of management acknowledges that bullying behaviour is a violation of a child's fundamental rights as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. These rights include freedom of expression, thought, association, privacy, protection from harm, access to education, and the right to enjoy their own culture, language, and religion.

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.

¹ <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/policy-information/b%c3%ad-cine%c3%a1ta-procedures-to-prevent-and-address-bullying-behaviour-for-primary-and-post-primary-schools/>

Relationship of this Policy to the School Ethos

Mayfield Community School is committed to quality education. It seeks to enrich students' lives and empower them to meet life's challenges. This mission is pursued in a caring atmosphere grounded in mutual respect, positive relationships, and high standards of conduct.

By embedding the principles of the *Bi Cineálta* Guidelines into our daily practices and culture, Mayfield Community School takes a whole-school approach to promote positive behaviour and prevent bullying behaviour. In doing so, we uphold our responsibility to protect students' rights and ensure that their experience of school is one that supports growth, inclusion, and wellbeing.

Mayfield Community School is dedicated to creating a supportive and secure environment where teaching and learning can thrive. The *Bi Cineálta* Anti-Bullying Guidelines support this vision by guiding the whole-school approach to fostering positive behaviour and ensuring a shared understanding of respectful interaction among all stakeholders.

The core values and principles of our joint patronage, Biship of Cork & Ross, and CETB², are at the heart of Mayfield Community School's ethos and are reflected in all school policies, procedures, and practices.

Relevant Legislation

These procedures are underpinned by a range of legislation which includes the following:

1. The Education Welfare Act 2000³ provides that the board of management of a recognised school shall, after consultation with the principal of, the teachers teaching at, the parents⁴ of students registered at, and the educational welfare officer assigned functions in relation to, that school, prepare, in accordance with subsection (2), a code of behaviour in respect of the students registered at the school.
2. The Code of Behaviour Guidelines for Schools⁵ requires schools to have an anti-bullying policy as part of the school's Code of Behaviour.
3. The Equal Status Acts 2000–2018⁶ obliges schools to prevent harassment (including sexual harassment) on the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, and membership of the Traveller community.
4. The Children First Act 2015⁷ places a statutory obligation on schools to ensure, as far as practicable, that each child attending the school is safe from harm while attending school or otherwise participating in school activities.
5. The Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020⁸ (Coco's Law) provides that a person who distributes, publishes or threatens to distribute or publish an intimate image of another person (a) without that other person's consent, and (b) with intent to cause harm to, or being reckless as to whether or not harm is caused to, the other person, is guilty of an offence.

³ [The Education Welfare Act 2000](#)

⁴ The term *parent(s)* refers to any person legally responsible for a child's care, including foster parents, legal guardians, adoptive parents or others acting *in loco parentis*, as defined by the Education Act 1998.

⁵ [Developing a Code of Behaviour for Schools](#)

⁶ [The Equal Status Acts 2000-2018.](#)

⁷ [Children First Act 2015](#)

⁸ [Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020](#)

Definition of bullying behaviour

Bullying behaviour 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.

Bullying behaviour may be motivated by individual factors (such as seeking control, revenge, or status) or by broader social issues, such as racism, sexism, ableism, or homophobia. These societal factors often shape the attitudes, norms, and power dynamics that influence bullying behaviour in school environments.

The three core elements that must be present for behaviour to be considered bullying behaviour are:

1. Targeted Behaviour

Bullying behaviour is intentional and unwanted behaviour aimed at causing harm. The person engaging in the behaviour is aware—or should reasonably be aware—that their actions are hurtful. Harm may be:

- Physical: injury, threats, or damage to property.
- Social: exclusion, isolation, or rejection by peers.
- Emotional: anxiety, low self-esteem, or depression.

Importantly, bullying behaviour is not accidental. It involves a conscious choice to hurt, exclude, or intimidate another person.

2. Repeated Behaviour

Bullying behaviour typically involves a pattern of behaviour that occurs over time. This repeated nature distinguishes it from isolated incidents. While a single offline incident may not be considered bullying behaviour, it still needs to be addressed under the school's Code of Behaviour.

However, in an online setting, a single act—such as posting a hurtful image or message—can qualify as bullying behaviour if it is likely to be widely shared or seen repeatedly, thus creating an ongoing harmful impact.

3. Imbalance of Power

Where instances of bullying behaviour occur, the person experiencing the behaviour feels unable to defend themselves due to a real or perceived imbalance of power. This power imbalance may come from:

- Physical strength, size, age, or group dominance.
- Social status, popularity, or access to private information.
- Differences in race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability, or family circumstances.
- Online dynamics, such as anonymity or technical skill, which make it harder for the targeted person to respond or remove harmful content.

This imbalance of power makes the person experiencing the bullying behaviour feel vulnerable, helpless, and unable to stop the behaviour on their own.

Not all negative or hurtful behaviour between students is bullying behaviour. Behaviour that does not contain all three elements of targeted, repeated, and having a power imbalance is not defined as bullying behaviour, though it may still be serious and require a response.

Examples of Behaviour That Is Not Bullying behaviour:

- One-off incidents of hurtful behaviour or conflict, unless they are part of a wider pattern.
- Arguments, disagreements, or falling out among friends, especially when both parties are equally involved, and no one is deliberately trying to hurt the other.
- Social rejection or refusal to be friends, unless it involves repeated, targeted exclusion or manipulation.
- Unintentional harm caused by students who are unaware that their behaviour is hurtful.
- Behaviour from students with additional educational needs, including those with social or communication challenges, which may be an automatic or stress-related response, not deliberate or planned.

In cases where harm is caused but the behaviour is not bullying behaviour, the school will still address it under its Code of Behaviour. All students have a right to feel safe, supported, and respected, regardless of the label applied to the behaviour.

Some forms of bullying behaviour may be considered criminal, especially when they involve violence, harassment, hate speech, or the sharing of intimate images. In Ireland, the age of criminal responsibility is 12. Under Coco's Law (2020), it is a criminal offence to share intimate images without consent or to threaten to do so. Bullying behaviour involving violence, threats, discrimination, or sexual harassment may also be criminal acts. In such cases, An Garda Síochána is the appropriate authority to investigate.

Under Section 10 of the *Children First Act 2015*, schools must ensure, as far as practicable, that children are safe from harm during school activities. Registered teachers are Mandated Persons and must report serious harm to Tusla and assist if needed. All school staff must report reasonable concerns to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP), who may consult or refer to Tusla. Serious or repeated bullying behaviour that causes significant harm may require a child protection report. The DLP will seek advice from Tusla's social work team in instances where it is unclear whether the bullying behaviour requires a child protection report.

Forms⁹ and types of Bullying Behaviour

1. Direct Bullying Behaviour

a) Physical bullying behaviour:

- Pushing, punching, kicking, tripping, poking.
- Severe physical assault.
- "Mess fights" masking real harassment.
- Damage or interference with personal property (e.g. clothes, phone, school materials).

b) Verbal bullying behaviour:

- Repeated name-calling to insult or humiliate.
- Often targets appearance, voice, academic ability, gender identity, ethnicity, etc.

c) Written bullying behaviour:

- Insulting messages or drawings shared publicly.
- Notes passed to mock or target a student.

d) Extortion:

⁹ Bullying behaviour can take many forms, which occur separately or together. The forms listed are not exhaustive.

- Demands made through threats or force to gain items or control.
- 2. Indirect Bullying Behaviour
 - a) Exclusion:
 - Intentional isolation or ignoring of a student by peers.
 - b) Relational bullying behaviour:
 - Social rejection and manipulation (e.g. "Do this or I won't be your friend").
 - Group exclusion, gossip, rumours, silent treatment, manipulation of friend groups.
- 3. Online Bullying Behaviour (Cyberbullying Behaviour)
 - a) Carried out via texts, messaging apps, social media, gaming platforms, email, etc.
 - b) Can include:
 - Nasty or threatening messages/images.
 - Sharing private info without consent.
 - Fake profiles used to humiliate.
 - Exclusion from online groups or games.
 - c) A single harmful post can count as bullying behaviour due to its potential reach and repetition.
 - d) May involve sexual exploitation, sextortion, or non-consensual image sharing (a criminal offence).
 - e) Often linked to offline interactions.
 - f) Can occur anytime due to digital access.

Bullying behaviour can take many forms, targeting students based on various personal characteristics. These include disablist bullying behaviour, bullying behaviour towards exceptionally able students, gender identity and LGBTQ+ bullying behaviour, appearance-based bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, bullying behaviour related to poverty, religious identity, and sexist bullying behaviour. It also includes sexual harassment which is any unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature that undermines a student's dignity.

Bullying behaviour can occur anywhere, online or offline and at any time, though certain places and times make it more likely. Within schools, bullying behaviour can happen in classrooms, yards, corridors, toilets, and other less supervised areas, especially where visibility is limited. It may also occur subtly during class or between periods. Outside of school, bullying behaviour can happen during the journey to and from school or in community spaces like shops or clubs. Online bullying can take place at any time, even at home, and can have widespread and lasting effects due to the rapid and far-reaching nature of digital content sharing.

Impact of Bullying Behaviour

Being bullied can cause significant emotional distress, lower self-confidence, and impact a person's overall well-being and ability to learn. It may lead to anxiety, changes in behaviour, and a lack of engagement in school or social activities. Online bullying behaviour can be especially harmful due to its reach, permanence, and lack of adult supervision. Some people may be more vulnerable to bullying behaviour because of personal traits, background, or life circumstances, such as having additional needs, belonging to a minority group, or facing social or health challenges. Those who witness bullying behaviour can also be affected, often feeling anxious, guilty, or afraid to speak up, especially if they identify with the person being targeted. People who engage in bullying behaviour may have difficulty

understanding the impact of their actions, lack empathy, or struggle with their own emotional or social challenges, and their behaviour may reflect previous experiences or discomfort with difference.

Policy Statement

Mayfield Community School is committed to fostering a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment where all members of the school community feel a strong sense of belonging, support, and value. The Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice¹⁰, asserts that every student deserves to learn and grow in a school where bullying behaviour is not tolerated and where diversity, empathy, and kindness are celebrated.

Our anti-bullying approach is built on four foundational pillars: Culture and Environment, Curriculum (Teaching and Learning), Policy and Planning, and Relationships and Partnerships.

Culture and Environment

- We strive to create a positive school culture that promotes respect, inclusion, and integrity.
- We recognise that a healthy environment where students and staff feel safe, connected, and supported is essential to preventing bullying behaviour.
- We cultivate a telling environment that encourages students to speak up about bullying behaviour without fear of retaliation, judgement, or disbelief.
- All staff are committed to being trusted adults whom students can turn to when they experience or witness bullying. Staff respond quickly, appropriately, and supportively to any concerns raised.
- Physical school spaces are designed and supervised with safety in mind, using clear sight lines, good lighting, and visible staff presence to minimise opportunities for bullying behaviour.
- The school leadership team actively models and promotes high expectations for positive behaviour, while every staff member takes responsibility for upholding our anti-bullying ethos.
- Students are empowered to be active role models, promoting inclusion, standing up for others, and contributing to a supportive peer culture.
- Parents and guardians are recognised as essential partners in building a school culture that values kindness, accountability, and respect.

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

- We embed anti-bullying education and values throughout the curriculum to build students' empathy, resilience, and understanding of diversity.
- Students explore healthy relationships, emotional literacy, and personal responsibility through SPHE and RSE.
- Subjects such as CSPE and History, offer space for critical reflection on justice, equality, and human rights.
- Learning is collaborative, inclusive, and structured to encourage positive peer interaction and shared responsibility.
- Curricular and extracurricular programmes provide opportunities for students to develop confidence, connection, and leadership.
- We use high-quality, inclusive resources including those promoting Traveller culture, LGBTQ+ inclusion, and anti-racism to reflect the diversity of our school and wider society.

¹⁰ [wellbeing-policy-statement-and-framework-for-practice-2018–2023.pdf](#)

Policy and Planning

- Our school's Bí Cineálta policy places the wellbeing of students at the heart of our planning and practice. This policy works in harmony with our Code of Behaviour, Acceptable Use Policy, Supervision Procedures, and Inclusion Policy to provide a consistent framework for addressing bullying behaviour.
- All incidents of alleged bullying behaviour are taken seriously and responded to in line with the procedures outlined in this policy.
- Students are involved in the creation and review of anti-bullying policies to enhance understanding and relevance.
- Ongoing professional learning is encouraged for all staff to ensure up-to-date and evidence-based practice.
- Our school monitors, reviews, and evaluates policy implementation regularly to ensure its effectiveness.

Relationships and Partnerships

- We understand that strong relationships are central to preventing bullying behaviour and promoting wellbeing.
- Our school builds positive partnerships with students, staff, parents, and the wider community.
- We support student participation through initiatives such as student councils, peer mentoring, and leadership opportunities.
- We provide age-appropriate awareness programmes that address identity-based bullying behaviour, cyberbullying behaviour, and issues such as racism, sexism, and homophobia.
- Workshops, assemblies, and themed days help to foster empathy, understanding, and respectful communication.
- We create opportunities for parents to engage meaningfully with the school, especially those who may face barriers to participation due to language, cultural, or social factors.

Bullying behaviour, in any form, has no place in our school. Through partnership, open communication, and collective responsibility, we will continue to create a positive environment where kindness is expected, diversity is celebrated, and all students are free to be themselves.

Organisational Responsibilities

The Board of Management is responsible for:

- Ensuring the implementation of the *Bí Cineálta* procedures. This includes:
- Developing, ratifying, and annually reviewing the school's anti-bullying policy in alignment with the *Bí Cineálta* guidelines.
- Ensuring the policy is accessible to all members of the school community, including staff, parents, and students.
- Overseeing the promotion of a positive and inclusive school culture that actively prevents bullying behaviour.

The School Leadership Team takes responsibility for:

- Implementing the anti-bullying policy.
- Establishing a school environment where respect, care, and trust are foundational values.
- Facilitating open communication among staff, students, and parents to collaboratively address bullying behaviour.
- Ensuring that all staff members are informed of their roles in preventing and responding to

incidents of bullying behaviour.

School Staff contribute to a culture that does not tolerate bullying behaviour by:

- Being vigilant and proactive in identifying and addressing bullying behaviour.
- Participating in ongoing professional development related to bullying behaviour prevention and response strategies.
- Supporting students in understanding the importance of kindness and inclusion.

Students play a crucial role in shaping a respectful school environment by:

- Promoting kindness and inclusion within their peer groups.
- Reporting any instances of bullying behaviour to trusted adults.
- Engaging in school initiatives aimed at preventing bullying behaviour.

Parents are encouraged to actively participate in their child's education and well-being by:

- Collaborating with the school to reinforce positive behaviour and respect for others.
- Communicating any concerns regarding bullying behaviour to school staff.
- Supporting school policies and initiatives designed to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

The following roles are designated for reporting, investigating, and supporting bullying behaviour cases:

- All Staff – Responsible for reporting incidents.
- Anti-Bullying Coordinator (Designated to the Year Head for Each Group)– Leads investigations.
- Assistant Principal Team and Deputy Principal – Share responsibility for investigation and support.
- AEN, Guidance, and Student Support Teams provide targeted support to those affected.

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 participate in the development of this policy.

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	26 Februray 2025	Department Surveys: Google Form – collected responses.
Students	26 February 2025	Department Surveys: Google Form – collected responses
Parents	26 February 2025	Department Surveys: Google Forms – collected responses via school social media platforms and text messages to parents with survey links.
Board of Management	03 April 2025	Survey given to BoM by principal. This was a Google Form, time allocated to complete the survey during meeting.
Wider school community	18 March 2025	Community Survey – printed and given to community that works with our school. Example: Sports Complex Example: Newbury House Physical copies of surveys were collected.
Date policy was approved: Tuesday 2 nd September 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: April 2025		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

A positive school culture is central to our prevention strategy. Our current measures include:

- Promoting a positive and inclusive school culture, ensuring students and staff feel safe, respected, and supported.
- Encouraging open communication among students, parents, staff, and school leadership to foster a collaborative approach to the prevention of bullying behaviour.
- Establishing clear standards and expectations through strong leadership that reinforces respectful behaviour.
- Training all school staff to recognise, prevent, and consistently respond to bullying behaviour.
- Empowering students to promote kindness and inclusion among their peers.
- Involving parents as active partners in reinforcing empathy, respect, and anti-bullying values.
- Creating a ‘telling environment’ where students feel safe to report bullying behaviour without fear of retaliation.
- Addressing common barriers to reporting by building trust and offering reassurance about support and confidentiality.
- Implementing a ‘trusted adult’ strategy, where students know they can confide in specific staff members.
- Improving physical spaces by enhancing visibility and supervision.
- Displaying murals, signage, and student artwork to promote school values and a sense

of ownership.

- Ensuring strong supervision, especially during break, lunch and before/after school and in less visible areas, to deter bullying behaviour. There are designated areas for student socialisation and eating.
- Integrating anti-bullying education into the curriculum using SPHE, RSE, CSPE, and other subjects to teach empathy, respect, and diversity.
- The FUSE programme is run for junior years as part of the SPHE programme. The programme aims to build capacity in schools to tackle bullying behaviour and online safety issues and to empower children and adolescents to understand their own behaviour, be able to recognise bullying behaviour and online safety risks and be confident in how to report and seek support when they need it.
- Targeted support will be provided to students, identified as potentially vulnerable, to ensure prevention, identification and resolution of bullying behaviours.
- Universal support will be provided to all students by using supportive teams in class to ensure inclusion. Teamwork skills will be taught, and students will practice and implement them while in these classwork teams. Students will be empowered to use their voice in small teams initially and to grow confidence to use their voice in larger group settings. (Teamwork: A Cooperative Learning Approach will be used).
- The Anti-Bullying Core Team will complete research-informed training to:
 - Use the data to diagnose classroom relationship dynamics, identify hidden bullying behaviour, understand the relationship dynamics that can lead to hidden bullying behaviour and how to intervene to prevent it.
 - Conduct empathic confidential conversations (welfare checks) with identified vulnerable students. Empathic interviewing creates a trusting relationship between the student and the adult.
 - Link with the teaching team, SPHE team, and class tutors to create a powerful united approach.
 - The Core Team will regularly meet with the Student Support Team to liaise on the best way to use their knowledge to guide the whole school community on the prevention of bullying behaviour.

The strategies above which are aimed at developing a psychologically safe school for all, based on an ethos of cooperation, respect and inclusion for all, where no types of bullying behaviours can take root. Further measures include:

- Developing and enforcing anti-bullying policies, including a student-friendly Bí Cineálta policy collaboratively with school partners.
- Providing professional development opportunities for staff to improve skills in inclusion, diversity, and bullying behaviour prevention.
- Strengthening partnerships through the student council, the parent association, and

the student support teams (Care Team).

- All students will be provided will equal opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity or ability.
- The SPHE curriculum will be implemented fully to promote kindness, respect and appropriate behaviour.
- Encouraging peer mentoring and support systems, promoting student-led kindness and inclusion.
- Fostering a sense of belonging through extracurricular activities and creative expression.
- Sociograms will be completed by classes once per term to monitor any students who are at risk of becoming marginalised.
- Conducting workshops and awareness events for students, staff, and parents on bullying behaviour prevention.
 - Whole school community will be involved in “Internet Safety Day”, raising awareness for students on appropriate online behaviour and parents on internet safety
 - Cultural diversity is visually and actively celebrated in our school with permanent artwork representative of all cultures and communities attending our school, International Food Day and workshops given by speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds.
 - All members of staff will model respectful behaviour and treat all students equally regardless of their sex. Positive role models will be promoted in our school.
 - Our school will mark “Stand Up” Week to reflect on the personal and social dimensions of sexual orientation and gender identity, in keeping with our school ethos.

Preventing Cyberbullying Behaviour

- Students are taught responsible online behaviour and digital citizenship through SPHE and ICT curricula. This forum is used to raise awareness about the digital age of consent (16 years in Ireland).
- Respectful and kind relationships online are regularly discussed with students in Wellbeing class.
- The Acceptable Use policy for technology and social media is communicated clearly to students.
- The Web-Wise Cyber Bullying Programme is implemented as part of the school Wellbeing programme.
- Online behaviour is included in the school's Code of Behaviour.
- HSCL works in partnership with parents to raise awareness of their children's use of technology, smartphones, and gaming consoles. and ensure parents understand the minimum age requirements for social media platforms (13 years). This includes hosting online safety events for parents to guide them in overseeing children's online activities.

Preventing Homophobic/Transphobic Bullying Behaviour

- Mayfield Community School maintains an inclusive physical environment.
- Peer support, including peer mentoring and empathy-building activities are encouraged.
- Gender stereotypes are challenged in school discussions as part of the SPHE curriculum.
- Workshops and seminars are conducted during Stand-Up Week to raise awareness about homophobic bullying behaviours.

- A “telling” culture is encouraged to enable students to speak up when witnessing homophobic behaviour.

Preventing Racist Bullying Behaviour

- Our school fosters a school culture that celebrates diversity and ensures students to “see themselves” in the school environment. Cultural diversity is visible through displays around the school.
- Peer support, including peer mentoring and empathy-building activities are encouraged.
- A “telling” culture is encouraged to enable students to speak up when witnessing racist behaviour.
- Provide support for staff to assist students with English as an additional language and communicate with their parents.
- Support staff in helping students from ethnic minorities.
- Workshops and seminars which focus on ethnic diversity, history, and social inclusion, e.g. Think Languages, and Culture Week.
- Speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds to the school are invited to speak at events.
- Library materials and textbooks reflect diverse national, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.

Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour

- Staff model respectful behaviour and treat students equally, regardless of sex.
- All students are provided with equal opportunities to engage in school activities, irrespective of sex.
- Diversity is celebrated at school, acknowledging the contributions of all students.
- The Whole School Wellbeing Week spotlights initiatives that highlight the importance of respect and equality.
- SPHE classes challenge gender stereotypes and promote gender equality
- Parents are encouraged to reinforce respect and gender equality values at home.

Preventing Sexual Harassment

- Healthy relationships, consent and respect is specifically taught through the RSE module of the SPHE curriculum.
- Positive role models are promoted within the school community.
- Gender stereotypes that contribute to sexual harassment are challenged within the school.
- A zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment, ensuring it is never dismissed as teasing or banter, is explicitly outlined in the Code of Behaviour.

Responding to requests for no action on bullying behaviour reports

- Students may ask staff not to act beyond keeping an eye on the situation, often due to fear of retaliation or being identified.
- Staff will respond with empathy and sensitivity, working with the student to decide on appropriate steps and how to involve parents.
- The student's safety is our priority and must be ensured throughout the process.
- Parents may also request no action be taken and must submit this request in writing or receive support to do so if needed.
- While we acknowledge such requests, we may still take appropriate action if circumstances require it to protect student wellbeing.

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

1. The school ensures the safety of students by taking all reasonable steps to supervise them during school hours and while attending school activities. This includes maintaining supervision during break times, before/after school and using organised activities that accommodate a variety of student preferences and interests.
2. The school enhances supervision by improving visibility in areas where bullying behaviour is more likely to occur, such as hallways, staircases, and the schoolyard.
3. The school creates safe physical spaces where students can feel protected. This includes maintaining areas that are well-lit and visible to staff and taking action to prevent students from congregating in hidden or unsupervised spaces.
4. In addition to physical supervision, the school monitors and addresses online bullying behaviours by promoting digital citizenship through SPHE and ICT. The school also hosts online safety events and encourages parents to oversee their children's online activities.
5. The school has a trusted adult system established, where students are encouraged to report bullying behaviour to a trusted staff member. This ensures that incidents of bullying behaviour are addressed promptly and effectively. Measures include:
 - Assistant Principal team (directed to the year head) appointed as the Wellbeing and Anti-Bullying Coordinator.
 - Student Reporting – Reporting Processes in the journal
 - Staff reporting – Documents to send to YH.
 - “Drop everything and learn about Bullying Behaviour” classes are conducted each term.
 - Trusted Adult, Pastoral Care system, Check & Connect & Programmes are implemented throughout the school.
6. Through regular communication between the school leadership, staff, students, and parents, the school fosters a collaborative approach to preventing bullying behaviour. This ensures all members of the school community share responsibility in monitoring and addressing bullying behaviour.
7. The school provides opportunities for parents to participate in events like internet safety days and promotes safe technology usage to help them monitor their child's online activity and reduce the risk of cyberbullying behaviour.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

Designated Year Heads, supported by all members of the Middle Leadership and the Senior Leadership Teams. When bullying behaviours occur, 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 bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- act 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:

Bullying behaviour 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.

Preliminary Assessment

On receipt of an alleged bullying behaviour report through the reporting process, the anti-bullying coordinator will examine the behaviour through the lens of the definition of bullying behaviour to identify if bullying behaviour has occurred by asking 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 over time?

If the answer is "Yes" to all questions, the behaviour is considered bullying behaviour and will be addressed using the Bí Cineálta Procedures.

If any of the answers is "No", the behaviour is not considered bullying behaviour and will be managed as inappropriate behaviour under the Code of Behaviour.

Cyber-bullying behaviour

A single incident (e.g., hurtful social media message) may still be considered bullying behaviour due to its repeated impact, such as being shared multiple times.

Bullying Behaviour involving groups

The following outlines the approach which will be used for alleged bullying behaviours involving a group.

- Each student will be engaged individually.
- After the individual discussions, a group meeting with all involved students will be held to clarify their perspectives on the incident.
- Students will be required to provide written accounts of the incident; assistance will be provided if needed.

Investigation Process

Parental Notification and Investigating

Once bullying behaviour is confirmed it is addressed comprehensively by following the steps below:

1. The parents of the students involved will be contacted early to inform them regarding the incident that has occurred and to consult on actions to address the bullying behaviour.
2. The views of the student(s) who is/are experiencing bullying behaviour will be sought to determine the most suitable actions.
3. The staff member responsible for investigating (e.g., Assistant Principal, or Deputy Principal) investigates the allegation promptly and with sensitivity to privacy and the age/ability of those involved.

Recording and Monitoring

A report documenting each of the following will be compiled:

- a. The type and form of bullying behaviour.
- b. Where and when the bullying behaviour took place.
- c. The intervention measures taken are recorded using the appropriate documentation tools.
- d. The date of initial engagement with students and parents.
- e. The views of the students and parents on the actions to take

Intervention and Follow-Up

1. Following the investigation, appropriate intervention strategies are implemented. This may include conflict resolution meetings, restorative practices, or support plans for both the victim and the student displaying bullying behaviour.
2. A follow-up meeting is scheduled (no later than 20 school days after the initial engagement) to review whether the bullying behaviour has ceased and to adjust the intervention strategy if needed.
3. The effectiveness of the strategies implemented is assessed and reviewed.
4. The relationship between the students involved is assessed.
5. The outcomes of the review to whether the bullying behaviour has ceased and include feedback from the students and parents are documented.
6. Supervision and support for the students involved may continue after the review.

If the Bullying Behaviour Continues

1. The anti-bullying coordinator will reassess the interventions with input from students and parents and set a timeframe for further engagement.
2. Strategies outlined in the Code of Behaviour, which may include disciplinary sanctions, will be implemented.

Complaints Process

- A parent who is dissatisfied with how bullying behaviour has been addressed will be referred to the school's complaints procedures.
- If a parent remains dissatisfied, they may approach the Ombudsman for Children.

Ongoing Oversight and Review

At each Board of Management Meeting, the principal provides an update on:

- The number of reported incidents since the last meeting.

- The number of ongoing incidents.
- The total number of incidents since the start of the school year.

If incidents have been reported since the last meeting the principal provides a verbal report covering:

- Identified trends/patterns (e.g., form, type, location, timing of bullying behaviour).
- Strategies used to address the incidents.
- Wider school strategies to prevent bullying behaviour.
- Any serious incidents with significant student impact.
- If any student left the school due to bullying behaviour.
- If additional support is needed from the board.
- If the Bí Cineálta Policy needs an urgent review.

Important Notes:

- No personal or identifying information will be shared at the BoM.
- The BoM minutes will document:
 - The number of new, ongoing, and total incidents.
 - Confirmation that the verbal report was considered.
 - Any decision to urgently review the Bí Cineálta Policy.

The school will use the following approaches to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour.

Mayfield Community School will use the following services to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviours. These supports protect students, educate staff and families, and foster safe, inclusive school environments.

National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)

- Offers both direct and indirect psychological support to schools and students.
- Assists with developing social, emotional, and relationship repair skills.
- Provides consultation and advice on best practices to prevent and respond to bullying behaviour.
- Delivers training in resilience, executive functioning, and social skills development.

Oide

- Provides professional learning and training for teachers and school leaders.
- Encourages reflective practices and lifelong-learning focused on student wellbeing.
- Supports school-wide implementation of anti-bullying procedures and wellbeing initiatives.

Webwise (Online Safety and Cyberbullying Prevention)

- Develops educational resources and awareness campaigns on digital citizenship.
- Provides training and guidance on online safety to teachers, students, and parents.
- Works with youth panels to create peer-relevant resources on topics like cyberbullying behaviour.

National Parents Council (NPC)

- Offers courses/workshops for parents on addressing/preventing bullying behaviour.
- Empowers parents to be active partners in their children's education.
- Focuses on achieving better outcomes through parent-school collaboration.

DCU Anti-Bullying Centre (FUSE Programme)

- Provides research-informed modules to promote positive school culture.

- Fosters whole-school engagement in bullying behaviour prevention and intervention.
- Recognised internationally for leadership in bullying behaviour and online safety research.

Tusla (Child Protection and Welfare Service)

- Provides clear referral pathways for incidents requiring intervention beyond the school.
- Offers support and advice when bullying behaviour is a child protection concern.
- Mayfield Community School will contact Tusla directly in serious cases involving child welfare.

Supporting Those Who Experience Bullying Behaviour

Immediate Wellbeing and Counselling Support

- Wellbeing classes help students to develop resilience and understand healthy coping strategies.
- The year group pastoral care structure of Year-Head, Assistant Year-Head and Tutor.
- Specialised established programmes such as the Friends for Life Programme.
- Referral to the Student Support Teams (Faoi Bláth or Care Team).
- Referral to the Guidance Department counselling service.
- Referral to outside agencies.

Clear Reporting Procedures and Safe Disclosure:

- Reporting mechanisms are well communicated so that students feel safe to report incidents without fear of retaliation.
- Reinforce a “telling” culture where students are encouraged to speak up.

Individual Support Plans

- Tailored support plans for students affected by bullying behaviour, including follow-up meetings and ongoing monitoring to ensure that any negative impact is mitigated.

Supporting Those Who Witness Bullying Behaviour

Empowering Bystanders

- Staff and students are trained to recognise and report bullying behaviour, emphasising that bystanders play a crucial role in stopping bullying behaviour.

- Adult mentoring initiatives such as “Check & Connect” enable witnesses to identify who to approach when they observe bullying behaviour.

Awareness and Educational Sessions

- Wellbeing class, Year Group/Whole School Assemblies or Drop Everything and Learn about ... classes are used to reinforce a school culture that values empathy and proactive intervention.
- Regular workshops or “Drop everything and learn” sessions are organised to educate and provide a forum for both staff and students to discuss the impact of bullying behaviour and appropriate ways to respond.

Supporting Those Who Display Bullying Behaviour

Restorative and Conflict Resolution Approaches

- Implement restorative practices and conflict resolution meetings to help students understand the impact of their actions.
- Skills such as empathy, emotional regulation, respectful communication and conflict resolution will be taught.
- The consequences applied to those who display bullying behaviour will be in line with the school’s Code of Behaviour. Consequences will be consistent and transparent, so the student understands that the outcome is fair.

Individual Behavioural Support

- A behaviour support plan will be co-created with the student to help them understand that the behaviour is unacceptable.
- Counselling and/or participation in the Behaviour for Learning programme may be offered as appropriate.
- Student behaviour will be monitored over time and improvements will be rewarded with positive reinforcement.
- The student will be encouraged to become involved in group activities, peer mentoring, or leadership roles to build self-worth through positive means.

Teacher Professional Development and classroom practices

- Teachers engage in CPD (e.g. through Oide or NEPS) on behaviour management, wellbeing, and anti-bullying strategies to build skills and stay up to date. This includes sharing best practices and reviewing successful interventions from within the school community.
- SPHE and classroom activities are used to promote empathy, self-regulation, and respectful communication.

Integration into School Policy and Planning

- Mayfield’s Bí Cineálta anti-bullying policy aligns with the school’s ethos, mission, and overall code of behaviour. It is clearly connected to and consistent with other school policies such as:
 - Code of Behaviour
 - Child Safeguarding Statement
 - SPHE and Wellbeing policies
 - Acceptable Use Policy (AUP)
- The Bí Cineálta Policy is woven through the school improvement planning process in Mayfield Community School.
- The Board of Management reviews the policy each year, ensuring it reflects updated procedures and school needs.
- Teachers and staff are supported through Continuing Professional Development to implement the policy effectively.
- Policy implementation actively involves student voice and parent engagement as part of school planning.

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 are 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.

This policy is available to our school community on the school's website, through the VShare App 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: Mary Shields _____

Date: 21/09/2026

(Chairperson of board of management)

Signed: Hugh Coughlan _____

Date: 21/09/2026

(Principal)

MCS Bí Cineálta!

We want everyone at our school to feel safe and happy.

If you think that you are being bullied or someone else is being bullied, you need to tell a teacher or another adult that you trust. They will know what to do to help.

Get help!

Tell someone!

If a student tells a staff member that they think they are being bullied, we will:

- > talk with the student
- > ask the student what they want to happen
- > work out a plan together
- > talk to their parents
- > talk to the other student(s) involved
- > talk with the other student's parents

tell someone if you think that you are being bullied or someone else is being bullied.

Our school has a Bí Cineálta policy to try to stop bullying behaviour.

look at this policy every year to see what is working well or what could work better.

We will ask you what you think.



Bullying behaviour is when someone keeps being mean or hurtful to others on purpose over and over again.

When it happens a lot. Not just once.



Appendix B Alleged Bullying Incident Student Statement Form

Mayfield Community School Bullying Incident Report Form

1. Reporter Information

Your Name:

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Your Role: (Please tick the appropriate response)

☐ Staff ☐ Parent/Guardian ☐ Student ☐ Community Member

2. Incident Details

Date and time of Incident:

Date:	Time:
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Location of Incident:

☐ A Corridor ☐ B Corridor ☐ C Corridor ☐ Classroom (number)
☐ Bathroom ☐ Cafeteria ☐ School Grounds ☐ Online

Other:

3. Individuals Involved

Name and class of person experiencing bullying:

Name:	Class:
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Names (if known) of those engaging in bullying behaviour:

Name:	Class:
Name:	Class:

Names of any witnesses:

4. Description of the Incident:

5. Is it a repeated behaviour? Give details:

6. Details of contact with guardian:

6. Type of Bullying (Tick all that apply)

- ☐ Physical (e.g., hitting, pushing)
- ☐ Verbal (e.g., name-calling, insults, threats)
- ☐ Social (e.g., exclusion, spreading rumours)
- ☐ Cyberbullying (e.g., messages, social media)
- ☐ Other (please specify):

Reporter Signature:

Year Head Signature:

