

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

### **Introduction**

Our Lady of Mercy College is a voluntary Catholic secondary school, under the trusteeship of CEIST, which caters for students of all backgrounds and abilities. We aim to provide our students with an education that equips them for life and living in the modern world. We aim to challenge students to share with us the Christian vision of life. We have drawn up a Mission Statement that describes the kind of school we wish to be. We hope that every member of the school community will attempt to live by it and we intend that all of our decisions are informed by it and our school development plans based on it. In this policy the term 'Parent' is taken to include the term 'Guardian'.

### **Mission Statement**

The core values of Our Lady of Mercy College are respect for all and the nurturing of individual potential, academically, spiritually, and culturally, as a member of the school community and in the spirit of Mercy Ethos.

#### **The Mercy Ethos**

Mercy Education is committed to ongoing whole-school development in collaboration and partnership with the Board of Management, Staff, Pupils, Parents and the wider community. Our school was founded by the Sisters of Mercy in 1967 and became part of CEIST in 2007. Our current student population is approximately 406.



CEIST (Catholic Education, an Irish Schools Trust) was established by five Catholic Religious Congregations – Daughters of Charity, Presentation Sisters, Sisters of the Christian Retreat, Sisters of Mercy, and Missionaries of the Sacred Heart – to provide a sustainable moral and legal trustee framework for post-primary Catholic education in Ireland. Rooted in the founding vision of its Congregations, CEIST emphasises the dignity and rights of individuals, empowers the vulnerable, and prepares young people to be agents of social transformation. The Trust is dedicated to fostering inclusive, hospitable, excellent, and compassionate learning environments inspired by Gospel values and the wisdom of its Founders. CEIST promotes collaborative school faith communities, supports staff in their essential roles, and addresses the evolving needs of youth. Engaging in ecumenical dialogue, CEIST values its Catholic identity while working with other Christian traditions and all people of goodwill to advocate for the poor, justice, and environmental stewardship, respecting diversity.

- Promoting spiritual and human development.
- Achieving quality in teaching and learning.
- Showing respect for every person.

- Creating community.
- Being just and responsible.

Inspired by the vision of Catherine McAuley, Our Lady of Mercy College provides the conditions and experiences which will promote the development of the full potential of each person including the spiritual, moral, physical, social, aesthetic, intellectual and vocational development.

We strive to ensure that every member of the school community is held in very high regard and their dignity, worth and individuality is respected. We aim to build a sense of community based on Christian values.

#### Appendix A: School Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Our Lady of Mercy College Beaumont 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.

#### **Definition of Bullying**

*Bí Cineálta: Action Plan on Bullying and Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*

Bullying is defined in *Bí Cineálta: Action Plan on Bullying and Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* (rephrase?) as targeted behaviour, online or offline, that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social, and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society. The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the Bí Cineálta procedures. Each school is required to develop and implement a Bí Cineálta policy that sets out how the school community prevents

and addresses bullying behaviour. Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

### **Section A: Development/Review of Our Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour**

All members of our school community were provided with the opportunity to input into the development/review of this policy. Below are the dates and methods of consultation.

Method of consultation:

Date consulted	20th January 2025
20th January 2025	Staff Information on the Cineáltas Action Plan and Bí Cineálta Procedures issued through staff news.
3rd March	Students focus group/survey
26th February	Parents
4th March	Staff Training Session which included presentation and working groups to review and discuss particular aspects of the Bí Cineálta Procedures Questionnaire issued to all students - completed in supervised sessions Information on the Cinneáltas Action Plan and Bí Cineálta Procedures issued through the school app.
Questionnaire issued with this information Information on the Cinneáltas Action Plan and Bí Cineálta Procedures issued through email. Board of Management 19th March.	Wider school community as appropriate, for example, local shops 20th January 2025 Information on the Cinneáltas Action Plan and Bí Cineálta Procedures issued via email.

Signed: (Chairperson of board of management)

*Gerry Lambe*

Date: 20/08/25

Signed: (Principal)

*Maura Gray*

Date: 20/08/2025

## Section B: Prevention of Bullying Behaviour

All bullying behaviour will be recorded on the staffroom drive under careteam for each year group. This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with students and parents. The agreed actions and support 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.

This section sets out the prevention strategies that will be used by the school. These include strategies specifically aimed at preventing online bullying behaviour, homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour, sexist bullying behaviour, and sexual harassment as appropriate (see Chapter 5 of the Bí Cineálta procedures):

- Raise awareness of bullying as an unacceptable form of behaviour.
- Promote respectful relationships across the school community through modelling by staff and students.
- At Junior Level, the SPHE teachers will use aspects of the SPHE programme to raise awareness of the inappropriateness of bullying behaviour. This will be done in a structured way, with the teachers deciding on a series of classes for each group.
- At Senior Level, the SPHE/RSE programmes will address the topic of bullying and mutual respect, aiming to cover issues such as empathy, assertiveness, coping skills, rights, and responsibilities.

- The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Middle Leadership Team (MLT) will continually remind students of their rights and responsibilities and their entitlement to an education in a safe environment.
- Students will be encouraged to speak up if bullying occurs, with systems in place for disclosing incidents to trusted adults.
- Senior students(prefects) will mentor first-year students to help alleviate the stresses associated with the transition from primary to secondary school.
- The Year Head will discuss the Bí Cineálta policy with students throughout the year.
- Visiting speakers will address the issues of bullying as appropriate, and an annual Stand-Up Awareness week will raise awareness of identity-based bullying behaviour.
- Parents and other community members will be encouraged to communicate concerns regarding bullying behaviour. Each year the parents association will sponsor an award for each year group as an ambassador of Bí Cineálta.
- Issues of cyberbullying and identity-based bullying will be addressed through the curriculum, assemblies, and visiting speakers where appropriate.
- Inclusion of the student-friendly version of the Bí Cineálta Policy on the school website, and on the school app. The student-friendly policy will also be displayed in poster format throughout the school.

#### Promote a Positive School Culture and Climate

Our Lady of Mercy College Beaumont is welcoming of difference and diversity. The "courtesy, friendliness, and co-operation" guideline will be emphasised regularly by teachers and at Assemblies. The SLT and MLT will facilitate a non-threatening environment for students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour, revisiting the Code of Positive Behaviour and the Bí Cineálta Policy throughout the school year.

The school has a policy of praising positive behaviours, and teachers will use the merit system on VSware to reward students. Classes such as SPHE and CSPE will examine the issue of bullying and different forms it can take. Lunchtime activities will be provided that encourage friendships and build resilience. Engagement in appropriate teacher CPD courses will support school staff in preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

The school's approach to tackling and preventing bullying takes into account the needs of pupils with disabilities or with special educational needs, focusing on improving inclusion and developing social skills. Celebratory initiatives such as Mercy Day, Ceiliuradh CEIST, Culture & Inclusion week, and Wellbeing week will foster a culture celebrating diversity.

### Monitoring and Supervision

The school will implement visible supervision during all corridors and bathroom times. Teachers on supervision duty will monitor:

- Corridor areas
- Social areas
- Classrooms
- Extension area
- Outdoor Areas

Supervisors on duty will ensure students do not cluster in bathroom areas and will check for those who are frequently alone.

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

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

- Year Head
- Deputy Principal
- Principal

When bullying behaviour occurs, the school will:

- Ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour is heard and reassured.

- Seek to ensure the privacy of those involved and conduct all conversations with sensitivity.
- Consider the age and ability of those involved when addressing the situation.
- Listen to the views of the student who is experiencing bullying behaviour about how best to address the issue.
- Take action in a timely manner and inform parents of those involved.

### **Steps for Reporting and Investigation**

1. A student/parent/staff member/unnamed source may report a bullying concern verbally, via email, or through the (Stand-Up to Bullying report Form).
2. The staff member who receives the report completes the Bí Cineálta Appendix C Form for Reporting Bullying Behaviour to notify the Year Head. This form is submitted to Year Head and Senior Management.
3. The Year Head notes receipt of this form of the student(s) and investigates the concerns using the definition of bullying. Students will be interviewed as appropriate.
4. If the incident(s) is deemed bullying:
  - Record all steps in the Bí Cineálta Appendix C Record of Bullying Investigation.
  - Notify parents/guardians of both the target and the perpetrator (as appropriate).
5. If the incident is not determined as bullying, the case is closed, and the matter will be dealt with under the Code of Positive Behaviour.
6. When the investigation is complete, all records are submitted to senior management, and resolution strategies are implemented. The views of students and parents will be recorded in light of the actions taken.

If a parent is not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour is addressed by the school, they should be referred to the school's complaints procedures. If a parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe the school's actions have negatively affected the student.

Support Strategies

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

- Ensuring that the student experiencing bullying behaviour feels listened to and reassured.
- Conducting conversations with sensitivity and considering the age and ability of those involved.
- Listening to the views of parents to determine how best to address the situation.
- Providing access to the school guidance counsellor and encouraging participation in lunchtime club activities to foster engagement.
- Incorporating discussions around bullying into assemblies and relevant classes.
- Using outside agencies to work with affected students as needed, with a focus on rebuilding relationships and trust.

#### Section D: Oversight

The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting, which will include the number of incidents reported since the last meeting, the number of ongoing incidents, and the total number of incidents since the beginning of the school year. The update will not contain personal or identifying information.

This policy is available to our school community on the school's website and in hard copy on request. A student-friendly version of the policy is displayed in the school and made available on our website.

#### Conclusion

This Anti-Bullying Policy reflects Our Lady of Mercy College Beaumont's commitment to creating a safe environment for all students. We will work collaboratively as a school community to uphold the values of respect, dignity, and support.

Signed: (Chairperson of board of management)

*Gerry Lambe*

Date: 20/08/25

Signed: (Principal)



*Maura Gray*

Date: 20/08/2025

## Appendix B

### Student-Friendly Bí Cineálta Policy

# Bi Cineálta

Be Kind

"Kindness is the language  
which the deaf can hear  
and the blind can see."

- Mark Twain



#BEKIND

"No matter what happens  
in life, be good to people.  
Being good to people is a  
wonderful legacy to leave  
behind."

- Taylor Swift

Appendix C - Record of investigation into Bullying behaviour conducted by Yearhead/Teacher

Name of Student being bullied	
Name(s) of students involved in bullying incidents	
Year Group of Students	
The form and type of bullying behaviour	
Where and when it took place	
Name of Year Head	
Date investigation commenced	
Date of the initial engagement with the students involved	
<p>Brief Description of bullying and the impact (please provide as much detail as possible including dates)</p> <p>(Who, What, When, Where, Why)</p>	

<p>Has Bullying Behaviour occurred?</p>	<p>Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students?</p> <p>Yes No (Please circle as appropriate)</p> <p>Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?</p> <p>Yes No (Please circle as appropriate)</p> <p>Is the behaviour repeated?</p> <p>Yes No (Please circle as appropriate)</p> <p>If the answer to each of the questions above is Yes, then the behaviour is bullying behaviour and the behaviour should be addressed using the Bí Cineálta Procedures.</p> <p>If the answer to any of these questions is No, then the behaviour is not bullying behaviour.</p> <p>Note: One off incidents may be considered bullying in certain circumstances. A single hurtful message posted on social media can be considered bullying behaviour as it has a high likelihood of being shared multiple times and thus becomes a repeated behaviour.</p>
<p>If bullying behaviour has taken place the remainder of this document should be completed and submitted to the Principal and Deputy Principal. A copy should also be uploaded to the Files area of the Care Team on the Staff Drive. The submission of the form should be recorded</p>	<p>If bullying behaviour has not taken place, the remainder of this form does not need to be completed. The Year head should record that the investigation has been completed, and bullying behaviour has not occurred as well as other relevant information. The Year Head should submit this document to the Deputy Principal or Principal. A copy should also be uploaded the Files area of the Care Team on the Staff Drive,</p>
<p>Details of contact made with both sets of parents. (Date/Method/Reply)</p>	<p>Parents are an important part of the school community and play an important role, in partnership with schools, in addressing bullying behaviour. Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the students involved must be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to consult with them on the actions to be taken to address the behaviour</p>

<p>Details of the views of the students and their parents regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour</p>	<p>A student reporting bullying behavior may ask that a member of staff does nothing about the behaviour other than "look out" for them. The student may not want to be identified as having told someone about the bullying behaviour. They may feel that telling someone might make things more difficult for them. Where this occurs, it is important that the member of staff shows empathy to the student, deals with the matter sensitively and speaks with the student to work out together what steps can be taken to address the matter and how their parents will be informed of the situation. It is important that the student who has experienced bullying behaviour feels safe.</p> <p>Parents may also make schools aware of bullying behaviour that has occurred and specifically request that the school take no action. <b>Parents should put this request in writing to the school or be facilitated to do so where there are literacy, digital literacy or language barriers.</b> However, while acknowledging the parent's request, schools may decide that, based on the circumstances, it is appropriate to address the bullying behaviour.</p>
<p>Details of action taken: (Sanctions Recommended/Applied Strategies employed)</p>	

Contact with outside agencies if appropriate	
Date of Check in after 20 days	
<p>The effectiveness of the strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and the relationship between the students involved.</p> <p>The view of the students</p> <p>The views of the parents</p>	
<p>Has the bullying behaviour ceased?</p> <p>The view of the students</p> <p>The views of the parents</p>	
Date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased.	
Further Comment/ Recommendation	
<p>Signed:</p> <p>Date:</p>	

If parents are not satisfied with how the bullying behaviour has been addressed by the school in accordance with the Bi Cinealta Procedures to prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools they should be referred to the school's complaints procedures. If a parent is dissatisfied with how a complaint has been handled, they may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children if they believe that the school's actions have had a negative effect on the student.

## Appendix D Guide to Providing Bullying Behaviour Update

Guide to providing Bullying Behaviour Update for board of management meeting Our Lady of Mercy College Beaumont

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:

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	
Have any serious incidents of bullying behaviour occurred which have had a serious adverse impact on a student	
Has a parent has informed the school that a student has left the school because of reported bullying behaviour	
Any additional support needed from the board of management	
Does the school's Bí Cineálta policy requires urgent review in advance of the annual review	

## Appendix E Review of the Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual (calendar) review of the school's Bí Cineálta policy and its implementation in consultation with the school community. As part of the review, this document must be completed.

### 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 Bi Cineálta Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools? Insert date when the Bi Cineálta policy was last adopted by the school. 20/08 /2025

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

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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 this 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 F Notification regarding the board of management's annual review of the school's Bí Cineálta Policy

The Board of Management of Our Lady of Mercy 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 20th August 2025.

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)

*Gerry Lambe*

Date: 20/08/25

Signed: (Principal)

*Maura Gray*

Date: 20/08/2025

Date Review: August 2026