



Malahide Community School

Bí Cineálta Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management of Malahide 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*.

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

Bullying is defined in *Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying* and *Bí Cineálta: Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* as targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society. The detailed definition is provided in Chapter 2 of the *Bí Cineálta* procedures.

Section A: Development/review of our Bí Cineálta policy to prevent and address bullying behaviour

All members of our school community were provided with the opportunity to input into the development/review of this policy.

	Date consulted	Method of consultation
School Staff	3 rd March 2025	Full staff professional learning experience (PLE) & stakeholders (Half Day)
	8th April 2025	Staff Survey
Students	April / May 2025	Student Council Consultation Assemblies
	9th April 2025	Student Survey
Parents	3 rd March 2025	Parent representation at PLE
	9th April 2025	Parent Survey
	Ongoing Messages	School App
	9th April 2025	Incoming 1 st Year Information Night
Board of Management	2 nd April 2025	Board of Management presentation
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers	3 rd March 2025	Representatives from whole school community in attendance at PLE
Date policy was approved: 28 th May 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: 28 th May 2025		

Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

Outlined below is how Malahide Community School will work with the school community to prevent bullying behaviour under the following headings:

- Culture and environment
- Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)
- Policy and Planning
- Relationships and Partnerships
- Preventing Cyberbullying behaviour
- Preventing homophobic / transphobic bullying behaviour
- Preventing racist bullying behaviour
- Preventing sexist bullying behaviour

- Preventing sexual harassment

Culture and Environment:

Malahide Community School will strive to create a positive and inclusive school structure and culture that:

- encourages a sense of belonging
- is welcoming of difference 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 within a positive atmosphere
- takes a consistent and zero tolerance approach to bullying behaviour

The following strategies will be used, among others, to help us create a positive and inclusive school culture:

- Our Mission Statement which guides our vision will inform our policy and planning
- Our Core Values of Respect – Kindness – Inclusion underpin everything we do
- Effective leadership will set the tone and the standards expected
- Effective and open communications between our in-house structures and all stakeholders: Senior Leadership Team, Middle Management, Year Heads, Pastoral Team, Teaching and Non-Teaching staff, Tutors, SEN, Head Team, Prefects, Mentors, Board of Management, Parents Association, Parents / Guardians, Outside Supports
- Tutor system
- Year Head system
- Friendship week
- The Prefect system
- The TY Mentor Programme
- Stand Up Week
- Active Week
- A varied Extra-Curricular programme
- Regular school surveys in relation to bullying promoting and supporting a “telling environment”
- Whole school engagement in Restorative Practice
- Effective supervision and monitoring of students
- Designated areas in which to eat and socialize
- Murals, artwork and signage that promote inclusion, diversity, kindness, respect, tolerance, etc.

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning):

Malahide Community School understands the importance of Teaching and Learning that is collaborative and respectful. We also understand the importance of having a shared understanding of bullying behaviour and its impact in order to prevent bullying behaviour occurring. We will use the following strategies to ensure that our students are provided with opportunities to build their sense of connection, belonging and empathy towards others:

- Collaborative learning – opportunities to work in groups, e.g., CBAs, Project work etc.
- A wide variety of subjects with a free choice for students – this ensures greater connection to their learning
- The CSPE, SPHE, RSE and RE programmes
- Subjects at both Junior and Senior Cycle that offer learning opportunities that foster inclusion, diversity, awareness raising, etc.
- Guest Speakers that promote diversity, inclusion, awareness raising, etc.
- Finding opportunities in every subject to promote diversity, inclusion, awareness raising, etc.
- Debating competitions
- Focus on the interdependence of communities in relevant subjects
- Extra-curricular programmes that explicitly address issues. For example:
 - Active Consent
 - Zeeko Internet Safety
 - Sex on our Screens
 - Lockers Programme
 - Digital Safety and Digital Citizenship
 - Friends for Life (for students with SEN)
 - Rainbows (Bereavement)
 - Resilience Workshops (Dr. Claire Hayes)
 - Belong To and TENI Workshops
 - Cycle Against Suicide
 - Pieta Amber Flag
 - Jigsaw – One Good School, One Good Adult, Peer Mentoring
 - Tackle Your Feelings Programme
 - Bodywhys and Bodykind
 - Planet Youth Surveys and Planet Youth TY Programme
 - Community Programmes – School Link, GAA Coaching, Generation Tech, Fundraising Collections

Policy and Planning:

Malahide Community School's Mission Statement and Core Values guide our vision and inform our planning and policy making. We recognise the importance of the participation of all stakeholders in the development of school policies i.e., students, staff, parents, guardians, Board of Management, etc. We review these policies on a regular basis.

Staff are encouraged to engage in continuous professional development that will not only support them in identifying bullying behaviour, but will also build their capacity to address any bullying behaviour that occurs and support affected students. (See Curriculum section previously for some of the courses that staff have undertaken. This list is not exhaustive.)

The following policies support the implementation of Bí Cineálta:

- Code of Behaviour
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Mobile Phone / Wellbeing Policy
- SEN Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Dignity in the Workplace

Relationships and Partnerships:

Malahide Community School recognizes the vital role that positive, respectful relationships play in effectively preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. We strive to build strong, interpersonal connections within our school community; student – teacher relationships, peer – peer relationships, relationships with parents / guardians and relationships with the wider school community. We do this in the following ways:

- Supporting the active participation of students in school life;
 - Student Council
 - Student Focus Groups
 - Student Wellbeing Committee
 - Head Team
 - Prefect System
 - Mentors
- Supporting the active participation of parents / guardians in school life;
 - Parent / Guardian – Teacher meetings
 - Parent Information Evenings / Workshops e.g., Resilience Talks for Parents / Guardians, Internet Safety Talks, Drug Information Talks, Planet Youth
 - Incoming 1st Year Parent / Guardian Night,
 - Transition Year Information Evening,
 - 5th Year Subject Option Night
 - Careers Fair
- Supporting activities that build empathy, respect, kindness and resilience
- Effective, open communications with home e.g., Communications Protocol, School App etc.
- Promoting positive behaviour in assemblies, tutorials, Merit Awards, announcements etc.

- Partnering with local organisations e.g., Sports Clubs, the Malahide Lions Club, the local Parish Centre, Malahide Library
- Taking part in local community events e.g., fundraising events
- Working with the wider school community to prevent and address bullying behaviour e.g., bus drivers, canteen staff, caretakers, janitorial staff, clerical staff, outside coaches, local businesses etc.

Preventing Cyberbullying Behaviour:

Malahide Community School will use the following strategies, among others, to prevent cyberbullying behaviour. We will strive to:

- implement the SPHE curriculum
- hold Internet Safety Courses e.g., Zeeko Internet Safety, Digital Safety and Digital Citizenship, Sex on our Screens etc.
- organise events around Internet Safety Day
- address the importance of safe, respectful, kind online behaviour at assemblies and in tutorials
- have a robust Acceptable Use Policy that is reviewed regularly
- refer to appropriate / inappropriate online behaviour in the Code of Behaviour
- promote workshops / courses / information evenings for Parents / Guardians in relation to safe online behaviour
- offer Continuous Professional Development for staff around safe online behaviour for students
- ensure that all members of the school community model appropriate online behaviour

Preventing Homophobic/Transphobic Bullying Behaviour:

Malahide Community School will use the following strategies, among others, to prevent homophobic / transphobic bullying behaviour. We will strive to:

- implement the SPHE curriculum
- foster an inclusive school culture
- work with LGBTQ+ organisations to raise awareness and build empathy e.g., Belongto and TENI etc.
- invite guest speakers who are members of the LGBTQ+ community
- encourage peer support, peer mentoring
- challenge gender stereotypes
- address the issue of homophobic / transphobic behaviour / language at assemblies and in tutorials
- encourage students to speak up and report when they witness homophobic / transphobic behaviour / language
- maintain an inclusive environment with murals, artwork, posters, etc.
- promote workshops / courses / information evenings for Parents / Guardians in relation to homophobic / transphobic bullying
- offer Continuous Professional Development to staff in relation to supporting LGBTQ+ students and preventing and addressing homophobic / transphobic bullying behaviour
- organise events around Stand-Up Week

- ensure that all members of the school community model inclusive behaviour

Preventing Racist Bullying Behaviour:

Malahide Community School will use the following strategies, among others, to prevent racist bullying behaviour. We will strive to:

- implement the SPHE curriculum
- foster a school culture where diversity is celebrated
- work with organisations to raise awareness and build empathy e.g., Irish Refugee Council etc.
- invite guest speakers from diverse backgrounds
- encourage peer support, peer mentoring
- address the issue of racist behaviour / language at assemblies and in tutorials
- encourage students to speak up and report when they witness racist behaviour / language
- maintain an inclusive environment with murals, artwork, posters, etc.
- promote workshops / courses / information evenings for Parents / Guardians in relation to racist bullying
- offer Continuous Professional Development to staff in relation to preventing and addressing racist bullying behaviour
- organise events to celebrate the cultural diversity of the school on “Culture Day”
- ensure that all members of the school community model inclusive behaviour

Preventing Sexist Bullying Behaviour:

Malahide Community School will use the following strategies, among others, to prevent sexist bullying behaviour. We will strive to:

- implement the SPHE curriculum
- foster a school culture where students are treated equally irrespective of their sex
- ensure that students are provided with the same opportunities irrespective of their sex e.g., subject choice, extra-curricular activities
- encourage peer support, peer mentoring
- address the issue of sexist behaviour / language at assemblies and in tutorials
- encourage students to speak up and report when they witness sexist behaviour / language
- maintain an inclusive environment with murals, artwork, posters, etc.
- promote workshops / courses / information evenings for Parents / Guardians in relation to sexist bullying behaviour
- offer Continuous Professional Development to staff in relation to preventing and addressing sexist bullying behaviour
- ensure that all members of the school community model respectful behaviour and interactions with others

Preventing Sexual Harassment:

Malahide Community School will use the following strategies, among others, to prevent sexual harassment. We will strive to:

- implement the updated SPHE specifications at Post Primary level to teach students about healthy relationships
- implement the Consent Training to students in Transition Year
- foster a school culture that does not tolerate sexual harassment
- work with organisations to raise awareness and build empathy e.g., Women's Aid
- encourage peer support, peer mentoring
- address the issue of sexual harassment at assemblies and in tutorials
- encourage students to speak up and report when they witness sexual harassment
- maintain an environment that does not tolerate sexual harassment with murals, artwork, posters, etc.
- promote workshops / courses / information evenings for Parents / Guardians in relation to sexual harassment
- offer Continuous Professional Development to staff in relation to preventing and addressing sexual harassment
- ensure that all members of the school community model respectful behaviour and interactions with others

Malahide Community School recognises the importance of appropriate supervision and monitoring policies in order to prevent and address bullying behaviour. These include the following:

- Morning, Break and Lunchtime supervision
- Substitution as per Supervision and Substitution Scheme for all absent teachers
- Adequate supervision of students on school activities, sports, trips, etc.
- Visibility of staff during unstructured time
- Prefect System
- CCTV
- Ancillary Staff supervising during unstructured time
- Good lighting
- Murals, artwork and signage that promote inclusion, diversity, kindness, respect, tolerance, etc.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

- The teacher who discovers the bullying behaviour
 - Tutor
 - Year Head
 - Guidance Counsellor
 - Deputy Principal
 - Principal
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Malahide Community School will investigate all allegations of bullying and will take appropriate action where necessary.

Concerns or allegations of bullying will be investigated and addressed in accordance with *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and post-Primary Schools*.

Identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred:

In order to determine if bullying behaviour has occurred. Malahide Community School will consider the following:

- What?
- When?
- Who?
- Why?

We will take the following steps in determining these facts:

- Meet with the students involved
- Get a written account from each student individually (if a student requires it, they can dictate their account to the person investigating)
- Speak to the parents / guardians of the students involved. Parent(s) / Guardian(s) are required to assist the school by cooperating with any investigation
- Students may or may not be asked to meet in a group
- Reports of bullying behaviour will be investigated in a fair, consistent and timely manner
- All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard for the rights of students, irrespective of whether they are allegedly involved in bullying behaviour or in a position to provide information about the behaviour being investigated

Once these accounts are gathered, Malahide Community School will use the definition of bullying provided in Chapter 2 of the *Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* to identify if bullying behaviour has taken place. We will consider the following elements:

- Targeted Behaviour: Is the behaviour targeted at a specific student or group of students? Does the student displaying the behaviour know that their behaviour is harmful or is perceived as harmful by the student(s) experiencing the behaviour?
- Harmful Behaviour: Is the behaviour intended to cause physical, social or emotional harm?
- Repeated Behaviour: Is the behaviour repeated? A single / one off harmful message / image / video posted online is highly likely to be reposted or shared and is therefore considered to be bullying behaviour.
- Imbalance of power: Is there an imbalance of power real or perceived by the student experiencing the bullying behaviour? This imbalance of power may manifest itself through various differences e.g., size, strength, age ability, race, sexual orientation (see Chapter 2 of the Guidelines for full list)

Incidents can occur where behaviour is unacceptable and hurtful but the behaviour is not bullying behaviour. Strategies that deal with inappropriate behaviour are provided for within the school's Code of Behaviour.

Where bullying behaviour has occurred:

When bullying behaviour occurs and it has been identified as such, Malahide Community School will:

- ensure that the student experiencing bullying behaviour is heard and reassured
- seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- consider the age and ability of those involved
- listen to the views of the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as to how best to address the situation
- take action in a timely manner
- inform parents of those involved at an early stage to inform them of the matter and consult with them on the actions to be taken to address the behaviour as outlined in our Bí Cineálta Policy.
- focus on resolving the interpersonal issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved - rather than apportioning blame.
- support the students involved through Guidance, the Chaplain, the Year Head, other teachers and outside agencies where relevant.
- make it clear to the student that they have been engaged in bullying behaviour and are in breach of our Bí Cineálta Policy.
- consider the use of approaches such as Restorative Practice, mediation, counselling etc. to address the bullying behaviour.

Determining if Bullying Behaviour has ceased:

In order to determine if bullying behaviour has ceased, Malahide Community School will:

- engage with students and parents involved no more than 20 school days after the initial discussion to review progress following the initial intervention.
- consider the nature of the bullying behaviour, the effectiveness of the strategies used to address it and the relationship between the students involved.
- will give ongoing supervision and support even if it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- will review the strategies used in consultation with students, parents, guardians if it has been determined the bullying behaviour has not ceased.
- will agree to meet again over an agreed timeframe until it can be determined the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- will consider using the strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour as provided for within the school's Code of behaviour when it becomes clear that the student who is displaying the bullying behaviour is continuing to display this behaviour. If disciplinary sanctions are considered, this is a matter between the relevant student, their parents and the school.

Where Bullying Behaviour occurs outside of 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.
- Where the student displaying the bullying behaviour is not a student in the school, but the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour is a student in the school, the school should support the student who is experiencing the bullying behaviour as appropriate and engage with them and their parents to determine what steps can be taken.

Requests to take no action:

- Student: A student who reports experiencing bullying behaviour may ask that the school does nothing about it. Malahide Community School will:
 - show empathy toward the student
 - deal with the matter sensitively
 - negotiate with the student the steps that can be taken
 - negotiate with the student the steps that will be taken to inform their parent(s) / guardian(s)
 - ensure the student feels safe
- Parent(s) / Guardian(s): Parent(s) / Guardian(s) may report bullying behaviour to the school and request that no action is taken. Malahide Community School will:
 - ask for this request in writing
 - facilitate the request to be put in writing where there are literacy, digital literacy barriers
 - acknowledge the request
 - determine, based on the circumstances, whether to address the bullying behaviour
 - inform parent(s) / guardian(s) of the steps that will be taken

Recording Bullying Behaviour:

Malahide Community School will record all incidents of bullying behaviour. The record should document the form (Section 2.5) and type (See Section 2.7) of bullying behaviour, if known, where and when it took place and the date of the initial engagement with the students and their parent(s) / guardian(s).

The record should include the following:

- the views of the students and their parent(s) / guardian(s) regarding the actions to be taken to address the bullying behaviour.
- the review with students and their parent(s) / guardian(s) to determine if the bullying behaviour has ceased and the views of students and their parent(s) / guardian(s) in relation to this.
- the date of each of these engagements and the date that it has been determined that the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- any engagement with external services / supports should also be noted.

These records will be retained in accordance with Malahide Community School's record keeping policy and in line with data protection regulations.

Where a Student Support File exists for a student, schools are encouraged to place a copy of the record on the student's support file. This will assist the school's student support team, where they exist, in providing a consistent and holistic response to support the wellbeing of the students involved. Where a Student Support Plan exists, the plan should be updated to

incorporate response strategies and associated supports.

Malahide Community School will use any or all of the following actions to support those who experience, witness and display bullying behaviour:

- Referral to relevant supports within the school e.g., Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor, Chaplain, Tutor and other staff
- Resilience courses
- Mediation / Restorative Practice
- Referral of students to outside agencies, e.g., NEPS, TUSLA, Jigsaw, Pieta House etc.
- Behaviour for Learning Initiatives
- Student Support Plans
- Provision of the SPHE / RSE curricula

All bullying behaviour will be recorded. This will include the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, and the date of the engagement with students and parents. The actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour will be documented. If the bullying behaviour is a child protection concern the matter will be addressed without delay in accordance with *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Section D: Oversight

The principal will present an update on bullying behaviour at each board of management meeting. This update will include the number of incidents of bullying behaviour that have been reported since the last meeting, the number of ongoing incidents and the total number of incidents since the beginning of the school year. Where incidents of bullying behaviour have occurred, the principal will also provide a verbal update which will include where relevant, information relating to trends and patterns identified, strategies used to address the bullying behaviour and any wider strategies to prevent and address bullying behaviour where relevant. This update does not contain personal or identifying information. See Chapter 7 of the Bí Cineálta procedures.

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

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