



Principal:
Mr. Cormac Flynn

Mohill Community College

Bí Cineálta Policy



Deputy Principal:
Mr. Seamus Kennedy

1. School commitment

Mohill Community College is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, respectful, and caring environment where all members of the school community — students, staff, parents/guardians — are treated with dignity and kindness. In line with national policy, the school adopts the Bí Cineálta approach, acknowledging that every child has the right to learn, socialise and flourish free from bullying, harassment, or harmful behaviour.

2. Why this policy matters

Bullying behaviour — whether physical, verbal, relational, online, or based on identity (e.g. race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation) — can adversely affect a student's wellbeing, sense of belonging, engagement with school, and educational outcomes. The school recognises that bullying is a children's rights issue and can undermine a student's sense of safety, self-esteem, and capacity to participate in school life.

As such, the primary aim of this policy is to stop bullying behaviour and, where possible, restore relationships and support those affected.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all students registered at Mohill Community College, during all school-related activities including inside school buildings, school grounds, during school trips, extra-curricular activities, and in any context where a student is participating in school-related events. The policy also covers bullying behaviour that occurs online or outside normal school hours if it has a negative impact on a student's well-being or school life. This reflects the broad remit of the national Bí Cineálta procedures.

4. Legal and statutory basis

The policy is grounded in Irish legislation and statutory obligations, including but not limited to:

- The Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the associated Code of Behaviour Guidelines, requiring an anti-bullying policy.
- The Equal Status Acts 2000–2018, which prohibit harassment and discrimination based on protected characteristics.
- The Children First Act 2015, imposing a duty on the school to protect as far as practicable the safety and welfare of children under its care.
- The Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020, relevant particularly to cyberbullying and harmful communications including intimate-image abuse (Coco's Law).

5. Principles underpinning this policy

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The school's policy is built around the four core principles of Bí Cineálta: Prevention, Support, Oversight, and Community.

- Prevention: proactive strategies to reduce the likelihood of bullying behaviour.
- Support: providing supports and interventions for those affected by bullying, and for those who show bullying behaviour, with a view to restoring relationships.
- Oversight: ensuring that there is clear leadership, reporting mechanisms, monitoring and evaluation of bullying incidents.
- Community: engaging all stakeholders — staff, students, parents/guardians — in whole-school approaches to promote a culture of kindness, respect, inclusion, and empathy.

Responsibilities of the School Community

1. Board of Management (BoM)
 - The Board must oversee the development, implementation and periodic review (at least annually) of the school's Bí Cineálta policy, ensuring that effective prevention and intervention strategies are in place.
 - The BoM must ensure adequate resources — staff time, supervision, supports — to implement the policy effectively.
 - The BoM must support continuous professional development for staff in line with national guidance.
2. School Leadership and All Staff
 - Promote an inclusive and respectful climate, embedding kindness, empathy, and respect in everyday interactions.
 - Maintain vigilance — including during breaks, transition times, extra-curricular activities particularly in areas or times identified as high-risk for bullying.
 - Intervene promptly when bullying behaviour is observed or reported; follow the reporting and investigation procedures under this policy.
 - Contribute to monitoring, record-keeping, and support, including restorative measures as appropriate.
 - Participate in relevant professional training regarding bullying, diversity, inclusion, online safety, and student wellbeing.
3. Students
 - Students are encouraged to support their peers, behave respectfully and kind-heartedly, and to report bullying behaviour if they experience it or observe others being bullied.
 - Students must engage in restorative processes, where appropriate, to help rebuild relationships.
4. Parents / Guardians
 - Work in partnership with the school: support the school's values and expectations; reinforce respect, empathy, and kindness at home.
 - Report concerns or incidents of bullying; cooperate with any investigations and follow-up support.

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- Engage with the school when invited — e.g. meetings, information sessions, feedback on policy review.

Preventative Strategies & Whole-School Approach

Mohill Community College will use a variety of measures to create a safe and inclusive culture, reducing the likelihood of bullying behaviour. These include:

1. School Culture and Environment
 - Promote a school ethos of respect, kindness, empathy, inclusion, and celebration of diversity (cultural, ethnic, religious, gender, identity, ability).
 - Ensure school grounds, corridors, common areas, toilets, recreational spaces, and other physical areas are supervised appropriately (especially during unstructured times: breaks, lunch, before/after school) to reduce opportunities for bullying.
 - Provide structured and supervised activities at break times (e.g. clubs, sports, social/cultural activities) to give students positive alternatives and strengthen peer relationships.
2. Curriculum and Teaching & Learning
 - Embed respect, inclusion, kindness, diversity, and formation of healthy relationships across the curriculum where feasible (SPHE, Civic, social & personal education, wellbeing programmes, tutor-time, assemblies).
 - Provide education about online safety, responsible digital citizenship, respect in online interactions — to guard against cyberbullying. This aligns with the ways bullying has evolved in the digital age.
 - Promote peer-support programmes: student mentorship, peer-led inclusion/ wellbeing initiatives, student voice structures (e.g. student councils, focus groups) — enabling students to participate in making the school safer and more inclusive.
3. Policy & Planning
 - Publish the full Bí Cineálta policy on the school website and make a student-friendly version available (e.g. in student-friendly language, displayed on noticeboards, in student handbooks). The national Procedures include template policy and student-friendly template.
 - Review and update the policy at least annually, taking into account feedback from staff, students and parents, and data from any bullying incidents or concerns.
 - Ensure alignment with other school policies (Code of Behaviour, Child Protection/Safeguarding, Acceptable Use of ICT, Equality & Inclusion, Attendance, etc.).
4. Community Engagement
 - Encourage active participation of parents/guardians in school life, information sessions, policy consultation, and review processes.
 - Foster links with external support services (e.g. counselling, mental health services, community organisations) to support students in need.

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- Encourage partnerships with other schools, and community groups, reflecting the “whole-education” and “community” orientation of Bí Cineálta.

Procedures for Reporting, Investigating and Addressing Bullying Behaviour

1. Definition of Bullying Behaviour

- The school adopts the definition of bullying behaviour set out in the Bí Cineálta Procedures:

Repeated, intentional behaviour by one or more persons that causes harm (physical, emotional, psychological, social), or causes fear or distress. This includes but is not limited to physical aggression, verbal harassment, relational/social exclusion, cyberbullying, and identity-based bullying (e.g. race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity).

2. Reporting Mechanisms

- Students, parents/guardians, or staff can report incidents of bullying to designated staff (e.g. Year Head, Guidance Counsellor, Deputy Principal, Principal).
- Reports may be written, verbal, or online.
- All reports will be treated confidentially, taken seriously, recorded, and followed up in a timely way.

3. Investigation and Response

- The school will investigate all reported incidents promptly, gathering information from all relevant parties (victim, alleged perpetrator(s), witnesses) and documenting findings.
- Where bullying behaviour is confirmed, the school will act to stop the behaviour immediately.
- The primary objective will be to restore relationships, where possible, through appropriate supports and restorative processes, unless circumstances require a more formal sanction.
- Any sanctions imposed will be proportionate to the severity and frequency of the behaviour, consistent with the school’s Code of Behaviour.
- Provide support to the student(s) affected: counselling, mentoring, peer support, involvement of parents/guardians, as appropriate.

4. Recording, Monitoring, and Oversight

- Maintain a secure, confidential bully-incident register/log — recording date, nature of incident, persons involved, actions taken, outcomes, follow-up.
- Data from the incident log will be reviewed regularly (e.g. termly) by school leadership / BoM to identify patterns, high-risk times/locations, and to evaluate effectiveness of preventative measures.
- The school will report annually to the Board of Management on bullying incidents, interventions, and any revisions to policy/ practice.

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5. Restorative and Supportive Approach
 - Wherever feasible, use restorative practices to rebuild relationships and support reintegration.
 - Provide targeted support to both those harmed and those who engaged in harmful behaviour (counselling, mentoring, behavioural support, peer mediation).
 - Encourage a culture of empathy, forgiveness, accountability, and community — consistent with the “Be Kind” ethos.

Roles and Implementation

1. Designated Responsibility
 - The Principal will have overall responsibility for the implementation, monitoring, and review of the Bí Cineálta policy.
 - One or more staff members (e.g. Deputy Principal, Year Head, Guidance Counsellor, Chaplin, Bí Cineálta Coordinator) will be designated as “Bí Cineálta Coordinators” — responsible for receiving reports, coordinating investigations, liaising with parents/guardians, supporting restorative processes, and maintaining the incident register.
 - The BoM will oversee and periodically review the policy, approve any necessary revisions, and ensure adequate resources.
2. Professional Development & Training
 - All staff will receive training in the Bí Cineálta Procedures, including recognising different forms of bullying (cyber, identity-based, relational), restorative practices, record-keeping, and promoting inclusion and diversity.
 - New staff (teachers, SNAs, and ancillary staff) will receive induction in the policy and school procedures.
 - The school will take advantage of professional learning opportunities offered by the support service Oide and other relevant agencies.
3. Communication and Publication
 - The full policy will be made available to parents/guardians and students (e.g. via school website, student handbook).
 - A student-friendly summary of the policy will be produced, using accessible language, made visible in common areas (corridors, canteen, staff rooms). National templates may be used.
 - The policy will be formally adopted by the Board of Management before the commencement of the 2025/2026 school year (in line with national timeframe).
4. Review and Evaluation
 - The policy will be reviewed annually (or sooner if needed), with input from staff, students, parents/guardians.

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- The annual review will consider: number and nature of bullying incidents, effectiveness of interventions, feedback from school community, any emerging trends (e.g. cyberbullying), and changes in context (school population, technology, societal issues).
- The school will use data collected to plan targeted prevention or support strategies, allocate resources, and refine school practice.

6. Conclusion & Commitment

Mohill Community College recognises that the success of this policy depends on the commitment of all members of the school community — staff, students, parents/guardians, and the Board of Management. We commit to working together, under the guiding principle of kindness (“Bí Cineálta / Be Kind”), to prevent bullying, address it promptly and compassionately when it occurs, support those affected, and foster a school culture of respect, inclusion, and empathy.

By ratifying this policy, the Board of Management of Mohill Community College reaffirms its responsibility under national legislation and guidelines to safeguard the welfare and well-being of all students, and to foster a learning environment in which every child can feel safe, supported, valued, and able to achieve their full potential.

Chairperson Board of Management	_____	Principal	_____
Date	_____	Date	_____

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