



Bí Cineálta

Monkstown Educate Together N.S.

September 2025



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Bí Cineálta: A Policy to Prevent and Address Bullying Behaviour

Section A

The Board of Management of Monkstown Educate Together 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 pupil as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Pupil. 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 pupils who attend our school are kept safe from harm and that the wellbeing of our pupils is at the forefront of everything that we do. We recognise the negative impact that bullying behaviour can have on the lives of our pupils 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 pupils 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.

Rationale

The policy as outlined was put in place to:

- Identify METNS's commitment to the prevention of bullying behaviour
- Identify the positive strategies that we have in place in every class in order to prevent any incident of targeted and repeated behaviour
- Outline the support we have in place for pupils who experience hurtful behaviour
- Outline the support we have in place for pupils who engage in bullying behaviour
- Identify strategies for a shared way forward for both parties
- Clarify procedures for pupil, staff, Principal and parental engagement

Aims of this policy

The aims and objectives of the policy can be summarized as follows:

- To prevent any bullying behaviour
- To heighten the community awareness of our practice and rationale
- To define bullying behaviour as:

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.

Examples of Forms of Bullying Behaviour

Physical Aggression	Pushing, poking, punching, kicking, etc	Verbal	Name-calling; humiliating; mimicking etc.
Written	In public places/ passed notes/ drawings	Extortion	Something obtained through force or threat
Relational	Non-verbal gestures, malicious gossip; ‘silent treatment’; manipulation of friendship groups to make someone unpopular; “do this or I won’t be your friend anymore” etc.	Online	Sending/ sharing nasty/ offensive/ intimidating/ insulting messages/images; posting private/ sensitive content; impersonation; exclusion
Exclusion	Deliberately isolated/ ignored/ excluded	Personal Property	Damage to/hiding of/stealing of/ interference with belongings

Strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour that is not bullying behaviour are provided for within the *METNS Behaviour Guidance Policy*.



Participation of all members of the community in developing this Policy.

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	March 5th 2025 The school year 2024-25	Staff Bí Cineálta workshop to discuss the issues we needed to address A sub-committee of staff spent the school year 2024-25 developing this new policy and working with all staff who contributed to many revisions.
Pupils* see below	March/May 2025	Online Survey with specific questions related to lived experience within the school and future possible improvements to our practice. Suggestions made by the children have been incorporated into the development of our policy, and the Children's Bí Cineálta Policy. Class workshops exploring questions such as: What is bullying? How does it make you feel? Where does it happen? What should you do?



		<p>Who are the important adults you should tell?</p> <p>How do you think a child who has experienced unkindness feels?</p> <p>Children participated in the development of the Children's Bí Cineálta Policy</p>
Parents/Guardians* see below	April and May 2025	Whole school online survey with specific reference to the parental experience; awareness of policies, contentment with present practice and possible future improvements. Parental/Guardian suggestions have been incorporated into the development of this policy.
Board of Management	Monthly updates from January- June 2025	Oversite over the process of development became part of every Board of Management meeting.
Wider school community as appropriate, for example, bus drivers		Our ancillary staff have been included in our development process and will be furnished with the finished policy.
Date policy was approved: Sept 9 th 2025		
Date policy was last reviewed: Sept 9 th 2025		



Incorporating community ideas:

The results of the parental survey showed that most parents/guardians were either very happy or mostly happy with current practice. Many areas of agreement between staff and parent/guardians were identified such as:

- the necessity of staff to engage in Continuous Professional Development in the area of trauma-informed education, emotional coaching skills and other soft-skill approaches which will develop understanding of the ‘why’ of any possible unkind behavior. This CPD will inform staff dealings with children
- Creating space for children to confide/communicate and talk to staff were central to the parents/guardians
- Policies to be more visible and accessible
- Keeping kindness and anti-bullying central to the school day
- giving the children the language to advocate for themselves and others

There was a threshold of worry expressed about the ‘restorative and understanding’ way of dealing with bullying behaviour not adequately preparing children for a more harsh and ‘real-world’ approach.

Incorporating children’s ideas.

Results of the children’s survey (3rd-6th classes) showed that up to 90% + felt safe at all times or most of the time. They felt more vulnerable in areas such as the pitch or the yard. The staff will take this insight into consideration when supervising these areas. As with the parental/guardian survey, some children wanted a more punitive approach to the child who was engaged in bullying type behavior, because it would seem to validate their hurt feelings in a more explicit way.



Section B: Preventing Bullying Behaviour

Where can bullying occur?

Inside school

- In the school yard or on the pitch or anywhere on the grounds of METNS
- In the classroom
- Other areas (hall, toilets, etc.)

Outside school:

- Walking, cycling/scooting to or from school
- In an environment unrelated to school
- Online

A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs, when pupils are not in the responsibility of the school. However, if this behaviour has an impact in school, the school is required to support the pupils involved. Expectations, preventative strategies, interventions, supportive actions, reactive strategies will be situation appropriate, age appropriate, tailored to the individual child and clearly explained.

How does bullying occur?

It can be direct:

- Verbal

Or indirect:

- Relational – “Don’t do this or I won’t



- Physical
- Written
- Extortion
- Exclusion, which can take place within and outside of school.

be your friend anymore”, silent treatment etc.

In METNS we understand that the most effective strategy is to prevent bullying behaviour.

We aim to prevent:

- online bullying behaviour
- general mean and offensive behaviour that is targeted and repeated
- homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour
- racist bullying behaviour
- sexist bullying behaviour
- sexual harassment as appropriate
- disablist/exceptionally ableist/less-ableist /physical appearance/ social class /poverty bullying behaviour

General METNS to Prevent Bullying behaviour

We use the following tools to support us in our prevention of bullying behaviour:

School culture:

- A positive and inclusive school culture is essential to prevent and address bullying behaviour
- The school leadership team influences the school culture and sets the standards and expectations for the school (inside the school) and the school community



- Relationships between all members of the school community are based on respect, care, integrity and trust
- Each member of staff is responsible for developing and maintaining a school culture where bullying behaviour is unacceptable. A consistent approach is taken to addressing bullying behaviour. We celebrate acts of kindness and explicitly 'notice' and reference them, both individually and in groups
- When bullying behaviour does occur, our approaches and reactive strategies are designed to be positive and supportive and add to our culture of prevention
- Restorative practices, and Circle Time strategies, are regularly implemented in classrooms. When necessary, appropriate sanctions may also be applied to address behaviour effectively

Our School Policies:

- METNS Acceptable use of Technology Policy for pupils
- METNS Acceptable use of Technology Policy
- METNS Wellbeing Policy is the heart of the METNS school culture; acts of kindness are actively promoted.
- METNS Bí Cineálta Policy
- METNS Bí Cineálta Policy for Pupils
- METNS Communication Policy
- METNS Behaviour Guidance Policy
- METNS Substance Abuse Policy
- METNS Dress Code
- METNS Ethical Education Policy
- METNS Trips and Tours Policy
- METNS ECA policy



Our School strategies

- Using in-school security nets and security platforms. (PDST netnanny, iCloud security and more)
- Organising annual CPD for pupils, staff and parents by professional outside agencies (Webwise, CyberSafe Children, Don't Be Mean, parental-led groups such as the Smartphone Initiative)
- Engaging with parents with regard to the Smartphone Initiative
- Ensuring that parents know the importance of their presence in their pupils' use of social media (phones, devices, gaming consoles)
- Encouraging parents to work together in keeping their pupils away from social media and in supporting each other when bullying behaviour is reported
- To the greatest extent possible, using Restorative Practice techniques and language to deal with unkind or bullying-type behaviour. When necessary, appropriate sanctions may also be applied to address behaviour effectively

The curriculum:

Many areas of the curriculum support us in our prevention of bullying behaviours. These include:

- SPHE and Learn Together (programmes which promote ethics, morality, kindness, tolerance and diversity.)
- The Weaving Wellbeing programme (which specifically addresses issues of positive interpersonal relationships.)
- The anti-bullying module of the SPHE curriculum (communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships)
- Our Ethical Education curriculum (Human rights, The United Nations Sustainable Goals, and many more topics)
- The Stay Safe programme (which specifically addresses personal protection skills)



- The RSE programme (human sexuality and relationships have particular relevance for identity-based bullying)
- Many other cross-curricular areas (English: literature to stimulate discussion, Geography/History: exploitation and dictatorships to illustrate the negative aspects of power, PE: cooperation and channelling energies in a positive manner, Drama, etc)

Our Special Events

- Flag day that ‘normalises’ and celebrates every possible type of diversity and encourages respect for all
- Wellbeing days that encourage kindness and respect
- The Buddies system in the school between Junior and Senior Infant pupils and 5th and 6th class pupils
- Anti-Bullying and other relevant talks for the parent community
- CPD to maintain staff awareness
- Specific, age-appropriate awareness-raising initiatives and exercises that look at the causes of bullying behaviours including dealing with friendships, identity-based bullying, racist, homophobic, transphobic, sexist or sexual harassment (eg. slogan/poster competitions, questionnaires, Student Council-led initiatives)
- Regular Kindness/ Anti-Bullying workshops in all classes to specifically work through the children’s experience of unkind behaviour, how it is addressed and how to prevent it



Strategies to Address Specific Bullying Behaviours

Strategies to prevent and address poor and offensive behaviour online:

We are aware that with increased access to and use of devices, online bullying behaviour has become a more serious problem for young people. Strategies to prevent online bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- ensuring that staff, pupils, parents and Board of Management are made aware of issues surrounding online and social media bullying behaviour
- using in-school security nets and security platforms (PDST Net nanny, iCloud security and more)
- organising annual CPD for pupils by professional outside agencies (Webwise, CyberSafe Children, Don't Be Mean) as well as additional CPD, as required, to support learning about current technologies
- having regular conversations with pupils about developing respectful and kind relationships online
- ensuring that pupils from 2nd-6th class read the *Acceptable Use of Technology for Pupils*, contract written by the Student Council
- providing information, advice and evening workshops for parents on how to inform and upskill themselves about their child(ren)'s activity online
- regularly reviewing and revising this policy and school procedures, with the involvement of staff, pupils and parents
- engaging with parents with regard to the Smartphone initiative (volunteering to keep our primary school Smartphone-free)
- ensuring that parents know the importance of their presence in their children's use of social media (phones, devices, gaming consoles)



- encouraging parents to work together to keep their pupils away from social media
- encouraging parents to listen to and support each other when bullying behaviour is reported amongst their children. Parents can and do play a major part in the resolution of poor online behaviour, when this behaviour takes place outside of school hours
- investing in safety packages which prevent pupils from accessing inappropriate material in school and protects pupils from in-school bullying behaviour
- encouraging bystanders to report when they witness online bullying behaviour.
- endeavoring to support pupils involved in online bullying behaviour that occurs outside of the school environment * and, in such circumstances, endeavoring to ensure that parents are working together to help resolve the difficulties

* *'A school is not expected to deal with bullying behaviour that occurs when pupils are not in the care or responsibility of the school'* (Bí Cineálta pg. 43). However, when the external behaviour has an impact, in school, METNS will endeavor to support the pupil involved.

Preventing and addressing homophobic/transphobic bullying behaviour

All pupils including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender pupils, have a right to feel safe and supported at school. METNS is strongly committed to creating an environment in which all pupils feel accepted and supported. Strategies to prevent homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- maintaining an inclusive physical environment such as by displaying relevant posters
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy building activities
- challenging gender stereotypes
- Occasional conducting of workshops and seminars for school staff and parents to raise awareness of the impact of homophobic bullying behaviour, possibly with the joint schools Ethos Committees.



- encouraging pupils to speak up when they witness homophobic behaviour
- maintaining a gender-affirming environment which respects child and parent wishes regarding gender identity

Preventing racist bullying behaviour

Schools have become much more culturally diverse over the last number of decades. Pupils attending METNS come from many different cultures and backgrounds. We are aware that pupils from diverse backgrounds may face discrimination and prejudice and may be subject to racist bullying behaviour. Strategies to prevent racist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- fostering a school culture where diversity is celebrated and where pupils “see themselves” in their school environment
- having the cultural diversity of the school visible and on display
- conducting workshops and seminars for pupils, school staff and parents to raise awareness of racism
- encouraging peer support such as peer mentoring and empathy-building activities
- encouraging bystanders to report when they witness racist behaviour
- providing supports to school staff to respond to the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language and for communicating with their parents
- providing supports to school staff to support pupils from ethnic minorities, including Traveller and Roma pupils, and to encourage communication with their parents
- inviting speakers from diverse ethnic backgrounds
- METNS Anti-Discrimination & Equality Policy
- discrete lessons on racism under Learn Together



Preventing sexist bullying behaviour

Sexism and sexist comments are normalized in many aspects of society. Focusing on gender equality is part of our school's measures to create a supportive and respectful environment. Strategies to prevent sexist bullying behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- ensuring members of staff model respectful behaviour and treat pupils equally irrespective of their sex
- ensuring all pupils have the same opportunities to engage in school activities irrespective of their sex
- celebrating diversity at school and acknowledging the contributions of all pupils
- organising awareness campaigns, workshops and presentations on gender equality and respect
- encouraging parents to reinforce these values of respect at home

Preventing sexual harassment

Preventing sexual harassment requires an approach that focuses on education, awareness and clear enforceable policies. Our school makes it clear that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment. Strategies to prevent sexual harassment include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- ensuring that sexual harassment is not dismissed as teasing or banter
- using the updated SPHE specifications to teach pupils about healthy relationships and how to treat each other with respect and kindness
- promoting positive role models within the school community
- challenging gender stereotypes that can contribute to sexual harassment



Preventing Faith-based Discriminatory Behaviour

Our school is multi-denominational and has a diverse range of learners from different faith backgrounds. All learners deserve to feel celebrated and valued. We celebrate this difference from the day a pupil enters our school. Strategies to prevent faith-based discriminatory behaviour include the following, which is not an exhaustive list:

- exploring and celebrating different faiths, including Atheism, Agnosticism and Humanism through our Learn Together curriculum
- celebration a variety of faith-based holidays
- celebrating a variety of global celebrations through our annual Winter Songfest
- constantly challenging discussions and opinions regarding “dominant” religions

Preventing other forms of bullying:

Acknowledging that bullying can take place for other reasons makes the staff in METNS conscious and aware enough to look out for:

- **disablist bullying behaviour:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a pupil because of a perceived or actual disability or additional need
- **exceptionally able bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a pupil because of their high academic ability or outstanding talents
- **perceived ‘less able’ bullying:** Behaviour or language that intends to mock, tease or harm a pupil because of their weakness in a certain area of development (academic, sports, art, music, social, language and articulation etc) or another pupil’s perception that this is the case
- **physical appearance bullying:** behaviour or language that intends to harm a pupil because of their physical appearance. Pupils who “look different” can be mocked or criticised about



the shape, size or appearance of their body

- **poverty bullying:** behaviour and language that intends to humiliate a pupil because of a lack of resources.

These reasons for bullying behaviour are often the most commonly identified among the population in a primary school. Our Learn Together curriculum, ethos and pro-active strategies identified above help us to see and actively work with the pupils to prevent these forms of bullying behaviour.

Section C: Addressing Bullying Behaviour

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

- All staff are responsible for the safety of pupils
- ANAs will report incidents to relevant teachers
- The class teacher or support teacher, with the support of the Principal, will take responsibility for addressing the behaviour
- A 'key adult' with whom the pupil may have a special relationship may be involved
- The Principal will be involved in all cases where bullying behaviour has been identified
- The Principal will inform the BoM of a case that is being dealt with, without naming pupils or families
- If the bullying behaviour continues, details of the case may be spoken of at the Board of Management. All names will be redacted
- In the process of addressing the bullying behaviour, where appropriate the Board of Management will follow procedures laid out in the Behaviour Guidance Policy (see Appendix 2)



Proactive /preventative strategies may include:

- Positive relationships between child and staff; identification of key adult
- Positive relationships between children and developing their ability to advocate for themselves
- An active and neuro-affirmative approach school-wide, with strategies identified here such as:
 - Collaborative communication with pupil and hearing the voice of the student
 - Visual timetables in the class
 - Predictable routines in the classroom and for other times such as assembly and lining up after breaks
 - A tidy and visually calm classroom environment
 - Emotional regulation strategies taught to the whole class
 - Access to movement breaks within the classroom
 - Access to sensory supports/ breaks
 - Calm Corner in the classroom
 - Environmental checklist used to assess the classroom environment (see [*Special Educational Needs: Continuum of Support*](#) for sample checklists)
 - Sensory checklist
 - Placement within the classroom
 - Executive functioning supports
 - Focused, genuine praise
 - Classroom-based interventions such as stamp or sticker charts
 - Strategies to support student, e.g. access to post-its as an alternative to talking out of turn and other ways to collect all pupils' responses
 - Access, where appropriate, to learning support groups to support pupils where difficulties with content might be a trigger



- Flexible seating/ access to quiet work areas
- Access to social groups where possible/ deemed appropriate
- Basic needs checklist to identify any physical needs and to support access where necessary, e.g. bathroom schedule, extra snacks, water breaks etc.
- Practice of validating the feelings of pupils when talking to them

Underlying principles

When identifying if bullying behaviour has occurred the school will consider every aspect of the situation; what happened, why it might have happened, where it happened and who was involved.

As part of our preventative and reactive measures, it will be actively discussed in all classes that pupils who report bullying will understand that they are not getting others "in trouble" so much as enabling them to get out of trouble.

When bullying behaviour occurs, METNS will:

- be solution focused with a view to exploring the best way forward for all
- be age-appropriate in their judgement of behaviours of concern. The staff at METNS know that appropriate strategies in working with a Junior infant will differ hugely from strategies used with a pupil in 3rd class and different again from a pupil in 6th class
- understand that when working with younger children or those with developing social and emotional understanding—including some neurodivergent pupils—we will emphasize terms like 'unkind' or 'hurtful' rather than 'bullying' to better support their comprehension and learning

Staff recognize that while some pupils at this stage of development may use the term 'bullying,' they may not yet have the emotional maturity to fully grasp its deliberate and



targeted nature. However, all pupils can develop an understanding of kind and unkind behaviour and can be supported in making positive and respectful choices

- deal with both parties in the context of the insight staff have of all pupils. Staff will have information about possible reasons why a pupil would act as inappropriately as engaging in bullying behaviour (additional needs, pupils affected by trauma, children anxious not to feel left out, neurodivergence etc.) and take these insights into consideration
- act in a neuro-affirmative way, endeavoring to ensure that all pupils are in a state of positive emotional regulation when speaking to the pupils
- ensure that the pupil experiencing bullying behaviour is heard and reassured and be guided as to how best *they* feel the situation should be addressed
- inform parents of those involved
- seek to ensure the privacy of those involved
- conduct all conversations with sensitivity
- think and act holistically, with the wellbeing of all pupils in mind. The discussions will never be 'shame-based'
- act in a timely manner; the regulated period of response is 20 working days

We recognize that bullying behaviours and incidents can vary in severity. Some children may repeatedly engage in unkind behaviour without fully understanding its impact, while others may deliberately and manipulatively target a peer. Some may show remorse and stop the behaviour immediately, while others may continue despite intervention. As a school we are committed to addressing each situation appropriately, considering the intent, impact, and response of the child involved.



Level 1

- The Principal will be informed and involved in all incidents of bullying and may be involved with all parties at this stage, depending on the nature and severity of the case.
- The relevant teacher(s) will deal with the pupils in a holistic way
- The relevant teacher(s) will investigate all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour, whether these take place within the school or outside of school with a view to establishing the facts and bringing any such behaviour to an end. The staff acknowledge that the primary responsibility for out of school incidents rests with the parents and will only get involved should school relationships be impacted.
- The relevant teacher(s) will explore a 'preferred future' with both parties.
- The school, through the relevant teacher(s) will engage with individual pupils and then with a group of pupils should that be necessary.
- Pupils who are alleged to have been involved in bullying behaviour will be spoken to by the relevant teacher(s) to establish the nature and extent of the behaviour and any reasons for it. The process will engage in reflective practice and will consider all factors that may have contributed to the situation in hand.
- The relevant teacher(s) will not apportion blame but rather treat bullying behaviour as unacceptable behaviour that can and must be changed.
- The relevant teacher(s) will emphasise that the intention is not to sanction but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop.
- The pupil involved in bullying behaviour may be asked to reflect on something kind that they might do for the other pupil as a restorative gesture.



- The relevant teacher(s) will complete a report, to include the findings of the talks with the pupils, the reactive strategies adopted, the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information.

Possible Reactive Strategies:

- Looking at our Behaviour Guidance policy and how the bullying behaviour breaches it
- Discussion of the behaviour with the relevant teacher/pupil(s) who witnessed it
- Reinforcement of alternative positive behaviour
- Supported, collaborative reflection on the situation either immediately or following a period of time to support regulation
- Explicit teaching of the upsetting and destructive outcomes of bullying behaviour
- Establishing a behaviour plan or contract that would aim to eliminate all bullying type behaviours in the future
- Reactive strategies that take into account the perspectives and experiences of the pupil affected by bullying behaviour
- Possible withdrawal of an in-school privilege (Golden Time, local trip etc)

Reviewing Progress

- When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the relevant teacher will complete a report with and for each child involved, to include the findings of the talks with the pupils, the reactive strategies adopted, the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information. This will be stored securely on Aladdin with each pupil's records. The name of the second party will not be on the

document on either pupil's record. The second party will be registered as the pupil's initials (AB for example).

- It is important to remember that both parties (the pupil engaged in the offensive behaviour and the pupil(s) hurt) need support
- The pupil(s) who have experienced bullying behaviour must feel that they have been listened to and believed
- If a pupil has reflected on his/her behaviour, apologises to the hurt pupil and yet continues the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer just be considered as a single incident

Level 2 In the event of the bullying behaviours continuing:

Where a pupil has been found to be engaged in bullying behaviour, has formally promised to stop and has broken that promise, the relevant teachers will proceed as follows:

- Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted by the relevant teacher or Principal and informed of the nature and extent of the bullying behaviour. This contact will be with a view to agreeing a strategy whereby a promise to end the bullying behaviour would be honoured
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) will engage in contact with the Principal and relevant teacher(s) (a meeting or phone calls), and involve the pupil in the design of an agreed plan of action. This will involve repairing the relationship with the pupil who has been bullied and some gesture of kindness for this pupil will be agreed. It will also acknowledge and emphasise that the trust the school had placed in the pupil had been breached and an agreed reactive strategy must be sought. Parents and relevant parties (including the Principal) in the school, will endeavour to deepen awareness of the effect of the pupil's behaviour on the pupil who has been bullied. This work will concentrate on developing



empathy (Weaving Wellbeing programmes. Walk Tall, Stay Safe etc.) and the staff will be actively encouraging parental engagement and support

- Reactive strategies will be discussed with the Principal, parents and pupils and an agreed way forward will be found

Possible Reactive Strategies:

- Any combination of steps from level one, including time away from the playground/pitch should this be the site of the bullying behaviour
- Discussion of behaviour with the Principal
- Completion of a more formal reflective activity where appropriate
- Reflective session with relevant personnel during Golden Time or another discretionary time which suits all
- Loss of the privilege of school trips and tours, if this is when the bullying behaviour has happened
- Loss of privilege of school tours and trips as a consequence of breaking the initial promise to stop the behaviours

Level 3 In the event of the bullying behaviours still continuing:

Should the pupil who is participating in the bullying behaviours persist despite all support and interventions, this will be classified as 'Level 3: Behaviours of significant or increased concern' and will be dealt with in direct alignment with such behaviours in the Behaviour Guidance Policy. Both



the pro-active and reactive strategies will be followed up to and including Voluntary Removal from the School, Suspension or Expulsion.

See Appendix 2

Recording of Bullying Behaviour:

Underlying Principle:

(see Bí Cineálta Record, Appendix 1. The document records all meetings, including the review meeting.)

All bullying behaviour will be recorded (see Appendix 1, Bí Cineálta Reporting Document) and stored securely and confidentially on Aladdin with each pupil's records. The name of the second party will not be on the document on either pupil's record; the second party will be registered as the pupil's initials (AB for example). METNS will endeavour to guard the privacy of all pupils and families meticulously.

The Bi Cinealta Reporting Document records the names of the pupils who are involved, the type of behaviour, where and when it took place, the date of the engagement with pupils and parents, the voice of the pupils involved, the voice of the parents involved, any restorative actions taken, the actions and supports agreed to address bullying behaviour and any other relevant information, including a review with all relevant parties.

If the bullying behaviour is a pupil protection concern the matter will be addressed without delay. The relevant teacher(s) will record the incident(s) and give it to the Principal.

Should the case proceed to Levels 2 or 3, the Principal will take a redacted copy to the Board of Management for information and advice.



The BoM will use the Bí Cineálta Appendix D, E and F as appropriate to record decisions.

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.

Signed _____

Date _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed _____

Date _____

(Principal)



Appendix 1



Bi Cinealta Recording Form

PLEASE ENSURE DIGITAL COPY IS STORED/FILLED
ON ALADDIN & HARD COPY IN PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

In the interest of GDPR, please
consider, when writing, who may
be reading this in the future

- Use initials only when referring to other pupils
- Remain short, concise and factual
- Avoid sharing of opinions

1. Date Of Initial Engagement with Student(s) and Parent(s) _____

2. Name and Class of Pupil Experiencing Bullying Behaviour

Name: _____ Class: _____

3. Name(s) and Class(es) of Pupil(s) Engaged in Bullying Behaviour



4. Name(s) of Person(s) Who Reported the Bullying Concern

5. Location(s) of Incidents

Yard/Pitch		Toilets	
Classroom		Other (specify)	
Corridor			

6. Form of Bullying Behaviour*

Physical Aggression		Personal Property	
Verbal		Relational	
Written		Online	
Extortion		Other (specify)	
Exclusion			

7. Type of Bullying Behaviour (related to)

Ability		Race/Ethnicity	
Physical Appearance		Social class	
Religious Identity		Gender (sexism)	



Gender Identity/ Homophobic/ Transphobic		Other (specify)	
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8. Brief Description of Bullying Behaviour and Its Impact, as Understood by Staff

9. Views of Student(s) Regarding Actions to be Taken to Address Bullying Behaviour

10. Views of Parents(s) Regarding Actions to be Taken to Address Bullying Behaviour

11. Details of Actions Taken (include reference to any external agencies involved, if appropriate)

12. Agreed Date/Timeframe for Review Meeting (within 20 days)



Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Relevant Teacher)

Date Submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal: _____

The following section to be completed at Review Meeting(s)

**13. Views of Student(s) Regarding Continuation/Cessation of Bullying Behaviour,
Effectiveness of Strategies Used and Current Relationship Between Those Involved**

**14. Views of Parents(s) Regarding Continuation/Cessation of Bullying Behaviour,
Effectiveness of Strategies Used and Current Relationship Between Those Involved**

15. Details of Any Further Actions



16. Agreed Date/Timeframe for Review Meeting (if deemed appropriate)

17. Date it Has Been Determined That Bullying Behaviours Have Ceased , as Understood by Staff

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Relevant Teacher)

Date Submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal: _____

Appendix 2

(extract from METNS Behaviour Guidance Policy)

7.3 Level 3: Behaviours of significant or increased concern

Level 3, behaviours of significant or increased concern, are considered the most serious. These behaviours endanger the immediate health, safety and personal well-being of the pupils and staff of the school. They represent a direct threat to the orderly operation of the school environment. Situations, which include illegal activity, may result in contact with the Garda Síochána after parental/ guardian involvement.

Listed below are some examples of the types of behaviour which are considered to be of significant or increased concern. Please note the following lists are neither exhaustive nor prescriptive. Each pupil is an individual and responses to all moderate behaviours of concern will be viewed through that lens.

7.3.1 Examples

- Repeated or serious instances of level two moderate behaviours of concern which have not been modified by intervention.
- Continues serious disruption of a class by a student.
- Targeted and repeated bully- behaviours against another child
- Any violation of a person's body boundaries, including touching an area usually covered by a swimsuit (considering the age, level of understanding and intent of the action)
- Gross discriminatory or prejudicial activities or actions toward another person or group involving race, gender, religion, physical condition, disability, or ethnic origin.
- Gross disrespect to any staff member, any other pupil, or visitor to the school.
- Gross insubordination: resistance to, or defiance of, authority or a disobedience, refusal or failure to obey reasonable instructions causing risk. This does not refer to



instances of extreme distress on the part of a pupil where they are unable to comply with an instruction due to extreme dysregulation or where they cannot understand what is being asked of them.

- Deliberate recording of school activities which is likely to embarrass or undermine any member of the school community.
- Verbal abuse, aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards others.
- Violent fighting, physical assault or intentionally causing physical harm to others.
- Behaviour deemed inappropriate or liable to endanger in any manner a member of the school community or which has been identified by members of staff as dangerous
- Very serious breaches of general, class and playground rules.
- Willful damage or attempted willful damage of school property, property of staff, fellow pupils or school visitors.
- Serious theft.
- Possession / supply and / or use of alcohol, cigarettes, illegal drugs and/ or other harmful substances. Please refer to school substance use policy.
- Intentional possession or use of dangerous equipment, weapons or harmful implements/ substances that would inflict harm on any member of the school community.
- Setting fires.
- Leaving school premises without permission. Where a pupil is regularly experiencing a flight response or is a flight risk due to their experience of the school environment, attempts to leave the school premises will be dealt with as an on-going safety rather than behavioural concern as appropriate.

7.3.2 Proactive Strategies to Support the Learner

All the proactive strategies listed above also apply here. Additional proactive strategies may include:



- Team conference.
- Full team meeting with parent(s)/ guardian(s) and school team including school Principal.
- Advice or support may be sought from outside agencies including NEPS, CDNT, Lucena CAMHS, and others.
- Community Garda may be invited in to speak to pupils.
- Contract of behaviour.
- Additional review of the school environment, sensory environment and adaptations made where necessary.
- Additional support from a SET teacher to address any identified gaps in skills such as social, academic or language skills
- Access to nurture breaks/ down time to support regulation
- Explicit 1:1 teaching of emotional regulation strategies where possible/ appropriate
- ANA access where possible/ appropriate
- Increased supervision to support positive interactions with others/ safety
- Access to sensory room or other withdrawal space (pupil-led) to support regulation and to feel safe.
- Focus on relationships with pupil and identification of key adult
- Increased use of visual communication techniques
- Logging of behaviours to support the identification of patterns, triggers and functions of behaviour to inform strategies/ planning for the student.

7.3.3 Reactive Strategies to Respond to Behaviour

Reactive strategies utilised at this level may include:

- Any combination of steps from levels one and two
- Review of current levels of support and strategies in use for pupil.



- Consultation and/or support may be sought from NEPS, the NCSE or other external agencies.
- **Contract of behaviour** created with all stakeholders, including the pupil, to ensure that all voices are heard.
- **Behaviour management plan** may be developed collaboratively with the school team, family and external agencies where appropriate
- **Exclusion from school trips** may be considered where a pupil's behaviour is considered to be a danger to themselves or others.
- **Voluntary removal from school** for a period may be considered where it is in the best interests of the pupil or where it may be necessary for staff or other pupils to recover or regulate following a crisis situation. This should be agreed with parent(s)/ guardian(s) and should be for a fixed, agreed length of time. This will happen following consultation with NEPS where a suspension would not be deemed appropriate or of any benefit. A record will be kept.
- **Suspension from school for one to three days:** this response may occur with the first instance of a level three behaviour of concern. The Principal, following due process and procedure, can issue a suspension. See procedures in the following section for further details.
- **Suspension from school for four to ten days:** this response will occur with the repeated instance of a level three behaviour of concern or a severe expression of this level of behaviour. A suspension of this magnitude will only be issued with the approval of the Board of Management. See procedures below.

A detailed account of the circumstances of this suspension will be kept by the school. Upon return to school. The student along with their parent(s)/ guardian(s) will understand not to repeat the specific behaviour to the best of the student's ability.



Please note: in exceptional circumstances, e.g. a situation in which an expulsion is being considered, the suspension period may be further extended.

- **Expulsion:** Significant behaviours of concern can result in a student being expelled. Please see the section below for procedures.

8 Procedures for Suspension & Expulsion

As part of Monkstown Educate Together National School's Positive Behaviour Policy, the Board of Management of Monkstown Educate Together has ensured that the school's policy on, and procedures for, the use of suspension and expulsion are in line with guidelines for Developing a Code of Behaviour (2008) as outlined by The National Educational Welfare Board.

8.1 Suspension

Definition of Suspension:

'... requiring the student to absent himself/ herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days'

(Developing A Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008)

8.1.1 Authority to Suspend:

The Board of Management of Monkstown Educate Together N.S. formally and in writing imposes an 'Immediate Suspension'. An 'Immediate Suspension' may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific behaviour. In exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Board of Management the suspension may be for a longer period but will not exceed five school days.

Furthermore, the Board of Management has the authority to impose an 'Automatic Suspension' for named behaviours detailed in this policy. An Automatic Suspension may be for a period of one to



three school days depending on the severity of the specific behaviour, in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but will not exceed ten school days. The Board retains its authority to suspend a student in all other cases/circumstances.

8.1.2 Immediate Suspension and Automatic Suspension

An 'Immediate Suspension' will be deemed necessary where after a preliminary investigation the Principal reaches the determination that the continued presence of the pupil in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety and well-being of pupils or staff of the school or that the action of the pupil warrants a suspension. An 'Immediate Suspension' may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific behaviour. In exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period as detailed above.

An 'Automatic Suspension' is a suspension imposed for named behaviours. The Board of Management of Monkstown Educate Together, having given due consideration to its duty of care as prescribed by Health & Safety Legislation, has determined that the following named behaviours will incur 'Automatic Suspension' as a sanction;

- Any behaviour outlined in this or other policies which the Principal feels is likely to endanger or has endangered the health and safety of the student/s responsible or the school population.
- Physical assault/violence resulting in bodily harm to a pupil or member of staff.
- Physical violence resulting in serious damage to school property.

An Automatic Suspension may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific behaviour. In exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period as detailed above.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed of an Immediate or Automatic Suspension by telephone, and arrangements will be made with them for the pupil to be collected, where possible. In no circumstance will a student be sent home from school before the end of the school day prior to



his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) being notified. Formal written notification of the suspension will issue in due course. Such a notification will detail:

- i. The duration of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- ii. The reasons for the suspension
- iii. Any study programme to be followed
- iv. The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the pupil and the parent(s)/guardian(s).

The Board of Management acknowledges that the decision to impose either an Immediate or Automatic Suspension does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures. In this regard, and following a formal investigation, the Board may invite the pupil and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) to a meeting to discuss:

- i. The circumstances surrounding the suspension,
- ii. Interventions to prevent a reoccurrence of such behaviours of concern.

The Board of Management of Monkstown Educate Together acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation process. In this regard the following undertaking is given: No person with a vested interest in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure if feasible.

8.1.3 Procedures in Respect of Other Suspensions:

In cases other than those of Immediate or Automatic Suspension the following procedures will apply:

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms behaviour of significant and/or increasing concern that could warrant suspension, the school will initiate a formal investigation of the matter. Such behaviour may well be ongoing and a direct result of identified or emergent additional needs. The use of suspension will only be considered if all alternatives have been exhausted and if no extra provision is granted in the care of the student. The Health and Safety and wellbeing of the entire school community will be paramount in any such issue.

The following procedures will be observed.



Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be;

- i. Informed of details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the impending investigation process, and notification that the allegation could result in suspension.
- ii. Invited to a meeting and provided with an opportunity to respond before a decision is made or a consequence imposed.

The Board of Management of Monkstown Educate Together acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation and decision-making process. In this regard the following undertakings are given; No person with a vested interest in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure, nor will such a person be involved in the decision-making process if feasible.

Where a decision to suspend has been made, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will receive written notification of the decision. The letter will confirm:

- i. The duration of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end
- ii. The reasons for the suspension
- iii. Any study programme to be followed
- iv. The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the pupil and the parent(s)/guardian(s)
- v. The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management.

Where a suspension brings the total number of days for which the pupil has been suspended in the current school year to twenty days the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under Section 29 or the Education Act 1998 and will be provided with information on the submission of such an appeal. The school will take due cognisance of the number of days the student/s has also not been in school for other reasons.



8.2 Expulsion

Definition of Expulsion:

‘A student is expelled from a school when a Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him or her from the school, having complied with the provisions of section 24 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.’

(Developing A Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008)

8.2.1 Authority to Expel:

The authority to expel a pupil is reserved by the Board of Management.

8.2.2 Procedures in Respect of Expulsion:

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms behaviour of significant and/or increasing concern that could warrant expulsion the following procedures will apply:

Step 1: A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal (or a Nominee of the Board if required)

As part of the investigation a written letter containing the following information will issue to parent(s)/guardian(s);

- i. Details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the impending investigation process, and notification that the allegation could result in expulsion.
- ii. An invitation to a meeting, to be scheduled no later than five school days from the date of the letter, where parent(s)/guardian(s) are provided with an opportunity to respond before a decision is made or a sanction imposed.

Step 2: The Principal (or BoM Nominee) will make a recommendation to the Board of Management

Where the Principal (or nominee) forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal (or nominee) makes a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion.



In this event the Principal (or nominee) will:

- i. Inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) that the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- ii. Ensure that parent(s)/guardian(s) have records of: the allegations against the student; the investigation; and written notice of the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion
- iii. Provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parent(s)/guardian(s)

Step 3: Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's (or BOM's Nominee) Recommendations & the Holding of a Hearing.

If, having considered the Principal's report, the Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student a hearing will be scheduled.

The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified in writing;

- i. As to the date, location and time of the hearing
- ii. Of their right to make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management
- iii. That they may, if they so choose, be accompanied by another adult at the hearing

The Board of Management undertakes that the timing of such written notification will ensure that parent(s)/guardian(s) have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing. In respect of the expulsion hearing the Board gives an undertaking that;

- i. The meeting will be properly conducted in accordance with Board procedures
- ii. The Principal (or BoM nominee) and parent(s)/guardian(s) will present their case to the Board in each other's presence
- iii. Each party will be given the opportunity to directly question the evidence of the other party
- iv. The parent(s)/guardian(s) may make a case for a lesser sanction if they so choose



Step 4: Board of Management Deliberations & Actions following the Hearing

Where the Board of Management, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the pupil should be expelled the Board;

- i. Will notify the Educational Welfare Officer in writing by registered post of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion.
- ii. Will not expel the student before the passage of twenty school days from the date on which the Educational Welfare Officer receives this written notification
- iii. Will in writing notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their decision and inform them that the Educational Welfare Officer is being contacted
- iv. Will be represented at the consultation to be organised by the Educational Welfare Officer
- v. Will suspend the student, if it is deemed likely that the continued presence of the student during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others, or represent a threat to the safety of other pupils or staff.