

K.S.P. Anti-Bullying Policy

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Code of Behaviour Guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of the Kilkenny School Project N.S. has **adopted the following anti-bullying policy** within the framework of the school's overall Code of Behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013.
2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following **key principles of best practice** in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:
 - A positive school culture and climate which-
 - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
 - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
 - Effective leadership;
 - A school-wide approach;
 - A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
 - Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness- raising measures) that-
 - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
 - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including, in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
 - Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
 - Supports for staff
 - Consistent recording, investigation and follow-up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
 - On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

3. In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, bullying is defined as the following:

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

The following are some of the types of bullying that can occur among pupils, and the behaviours they can include:

- Physical aggression: Deliberately pushing, hitting, kicking, tripping
- Intimidation: Threatening or intimidating words / behaviour;
Facial expressions / physical gestures to convey dislike or aggression
- Relational bullying: Deliberate isolation / exclusion from a group or activity
Offensive graffiti, notes, drawings
Spreading false rumours; malicious gossip; insults
Pressure to engage in dangerous or unacceptable behaviour
- Name-calling: Mocking, taunting, imitating, name-calling
Negative remarks about personal appearance
- Identity-based bullying: based on race, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexual orientation
- Damage to property: Defacing, breaking, stealing personal belongings
- Extortion: Demands for money / other items
- Cyber-bullying: Intimidating / hurtful / inappropriate phone calls, texts, messages or images

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and will be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network or site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

4. The **relevant teacher** for investigating and dealing with bullying is generally the Class Teacher, with reference to the Principal Teacher.

5. The education and prevention strategies used by the school are as follows:

School-wide approach

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community, and promotion of the value of diversity;
- The fostering and enhancement of the self-esteem of all pupils through both curricular and co-curricular activities, with opportunities for pupils to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions;
- Assemblies held throughout the year in order to heighten awareness, and promote development of, positive friendships and relationships among all members of the school community;
- Whole-staff professional development on bullying prevention and intervention;
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and other school activities;
- Liaison between all relevant staff, including support teachers and SNAs, regarding pupils with SEN, and the use of circle-time, role-play and various social skills programmes to endeavour to protect pupils with social difficulties and enhance social cohesion;
- Measures to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect include our Cara (at playtime) and Buddy (for swimming) systems;
- Development of a culture whereby bullying is recognised and reported by pupils;
- The school's Anti-Bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parents are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school.

Implementation of curricula

- Self- Esteem is addressed in S.P.H.E. and Learn Together by using a range of resources in all classes throughout the year, e.g. Walk Tall, Stay Safe, RSE.
- Pupil awareness and understanding of bullying, including identification, causes and effects, is addressed through various Anti-Bullying Programmes. Topics are explored through role-play, DVDs, video clips, novels and online resources. Posters are displayed around the school.
- The E. T. Learn Together programme focuses on tolerance, respect for minority groups, and acceptance of diversity in order to prevent identity-based bullying, including homophobic or transphobic bullying.
- The Stay Safe programme (personal safety skills programme) seeks to enhance children's self-protection skills, including their ability to recognise and deal with bullying. This programme is covered annually in all classes.
- Materials from a range of programmes such Web-wise (Senior classes) and 'Cyber-Bullying' series (Junior, Middle and Senior) are used to educate pupils in

- appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe online, and also in developing a culture of reporting any incidents of / concerns about cyber-bullying.
- Guest speakers are invited to address P.T.A. groups on internet safety and cyber-bullying.
 - The school policy on mobile phones and other devices and the Internet Acceptable Use Policy is enforced.
 - Cross-curricular opportunities (across a range of subject areas) are used to foster an attitude of respect for all, to promote the value of diversity, to address prejudice and stereotyping, and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.

6. The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour, and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour, are as follows:

Initial Reports:

(i) The primary aim for the relevant teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame).

- (ii) In investigating and dealing with a bullying report, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- (iii) The Principal will be informed of the report and liaison with other staff members may also be appropriate at this stage. Use of the school's inter-staff written communication procedure can be helpful.
- (iv) A pupil or parent may bring a bullying report to any staff member in the school.
- (v) Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.
- (vi) All reports, including anonymous reports, of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. A record of this investigation may be kept by the teacher. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It will be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.

Investigation

- (vii) Teachers will take a calm, unemotional, problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
- (viii) Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- (ix) All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.

- (x) When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This will be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- (xi) If a group is involved, each member may be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved can be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.
- (xii) Some members of a group may need to be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.
- (xiii) It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).
- (xiv) In some cases it may be helpful to contact parents of either or both parties during the course of the inquiry, depending on the circumstances of the situation, and at the discretion of the teacher.
- (xv) Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
- (xvi) It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand this approach from the outset.

Follow-up:

- (xvii) In cases where it has been determined by the teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved will be contacted to inform them of the matter and to explain the actions being taken. The school will give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school, and also the supports for the pupils.
- (xviii) Where the teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- (xix) It will also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents, and the school.
- (xx) Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved will be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect.
- (xxi) In cases where the teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed by the child(ren) involved within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it will be recorded by that teacher in the recording template at *Appendix 1*, and a copy provided to the Principal.
- (xxii) In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher will, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
 - Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
 - Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
 - Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable;

- Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents, staff members or the school Principal.
- (xxi) Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents will be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- (xxii) In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Procedures for recording bullying behaviour

All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation.

Informal

While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.

Formal Stage 1

If it is established by the teacher that bullying has occurred, the teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved. A copy of the teacher's report will be given to the Principal and this information will be passed on / available to future class teachers.

Formal Stage 2

The teacher must use the recording template at *Appendix 1* to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances.

- a) in cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed by the child(ren) involved, within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred, and
- b) where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal.

In each of the circumstances at (a) and (b) above, the recording template at *Appendix 1* must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal.

In these circumstances, parents will be invited to discuss further steps which the school may deem appropriate or necessary, including referral to outside agencies, or (further) sanctions from the Code of Behaviour.

Parents may be requested to refer to outside agencies, such Primary Care and Child Psychology Service (Drop-In Clinic facility) or CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service).

7. The school's **programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying** is as follows:

For the child who has been bullied: The class teacher and the child will set aside an agreed time to check in and monitor the situation. The child's own suggestions for support will be welcome and considered.

For the child who has engaged in bullying behaviour: The class teacher and the child will set aside an agreed time to check in and monitor the situation. Building self-esteem and empathic skills are two areas for development.

For the child who has witnessed bullying behaviour: SPHE, the Learn Together programme, Circle Time and Drama could all be useful tools in changing the class dynamics. A suitable programme will be chosen or devised based on the particular circumstances involved (see *Appendix 2* for list of resources).

Efforts will be made to encourage peer support within the class in order to encourage reconciliation.

Staff will be informed as to which children are involved.

Parental Support will be vital to the process.

NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service) may provide useful advice or support to the school.

8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

9. Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its 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, i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 17th June 2014.
11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website, and provided to the Parent Teacher Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.
12. Every school term, the Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management in accordance with the 'Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools'.
13. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website, and provided to the Parent Teacher Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made Available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: Linda Rainsberry
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: Mary Nicholson
(Principal)

Date: September 2014

Date of next review: _____