



**Kilmurry National School
S.N. Cill Mhuire**

Anti –Bullying Policy:

1: In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the N.E.W.B. the Board of Management of Kilmurry 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 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 not-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 pupils
- Supports for staff/training etc
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies once training has been received); 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 follows:

Bullying Behaviour:

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 types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying and
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

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 should 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 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(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:

All class teachers; Deputy Principal; Principal

5: The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-

bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

School-wide approach

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.

- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it-prevention and intervention.
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra- curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school-to be included in student journals and displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) of incoming pupils are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour.
- The school's anti-bullying policy will also be available to view in the school and on school website.
- The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures may include:
 - Friendship Week (Children will be taught strategies to help resolve conflict)
 - Well-being Wednesdays
 - Questionnaires/surveys in senior classes
 - Assemblies
 - NEPS programmes e.g. Friends For Life
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. It should 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.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
 - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
 - Hand note up with homework.
 - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
 - Administer a confidential questionnaire to pupils in senior classes.
 - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Identify clear protocols to encourage parents/guardians to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied.

Implementation of curricula

- The full implementation of the SPHE, RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence-based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme, Prim-Ed Anti- Bullying-

- Identify, Prevent, Cope, Anti-bullying Campaign.ie, Be Safe-Be Web Wise, HTML Heroes, Friends For Life etc.
- Online safety to be covered every year in school – Stop & Screen Shot, Block, Tell
 - Utilise our community Garda to speak to our classes on issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying
 - The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.

Links to other policies:

- Code of Behaviour Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Attendance policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- ICT and Acceptable Use Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

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: (see section 6.8 of the anti-bullying procedures for primary and post – primary schools):

6.8.9 Procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying:

The primary aim 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): The school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parents/guardians understand this approach from the outset.

Reporting bullying behaviour

- Any pupil or parent/guardian may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (S.N.A.'s), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviours witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher:

Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach (see section 6.8.9)

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant)teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved
- Parents/guardians of all parties will be contacted immediately/on first incident once investigation has concluded.
- Teacher should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach

- Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved
- All interviews should 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
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner
- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher, it may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s)
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent/guardian of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy.) The school should give parents / guardians an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents/guardians that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents/guardians and the school

Follow up and recording:

- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, 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/guardians or the school Principal or Deputy Principal

- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should 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
- Where a parent/guardian is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents/guardians must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent/guardian has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent/guardian of their right to make a complaint to the ombudsman for children

Recording of bullying behaviour:

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

Informal- pre-determination that bullying has occurred

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. Consideration needs to be given to where the records will be made e.g. incident book. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same
- The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated

Formal stage 1 –determination that bullying has occurred

- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant 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.
- The school in consultation with the relevant teacher/s should develop a protocol for the storage of all records retained by the relevant teacher.

Formal stage 2 appendix 3 (from DES procedures)

The relevant teacher must use the recording template at appendix 3 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 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 or Deputy Principal as applicable

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the Principal.

Established intervention strategies:

- Teacher interviews with all pupils

- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process
- Working with parents/guardians to support school interventions no blame approach
- Circle time
- Restorative interviews
- Restorative conferencing
- Implementing sociogram questionnaires (once training has been received)
- Peer mediation where suitable training has been given

Role of Parents:

These procedures highlight the importance of a school-wide (management, staff, pupils and parents) approach. In addition to the role of management and staff, parents and pupils have a role and responsibility in helping the school to prevent and address school-based bullying behaviour and to deal with any negative impact within school of bullying behaviour that occurs elsewhere.

The Board of Management must ensure that the policy is regularly highlighted and promoted on a school-wide basis with particular attention being given to incoming pupils and their parents. School management must ensure that pupils, parents and staff members are made aware that the relevant teacher is responsible for dealing with bullying concerns. School rules and other information on bullying should be provided in a pupil friendly way, and age appropriate formats should be displayed around the school building.

Escalation beyond Bullying:

It is also important to note that bullying behaviour can be part of a continuum of behaviour rather than a stand-alone issue and in some cases, behaviour may escalate beyond that which can be described as bullying to serious physical or sexual assault or harassment. To ensure that any such cases are dealt with appropriately, the school's anti bullying policy must provide for appropriate linkages with the overall code of behaviour and provide for referral to be made to relevant external agencies and authorities where appropriate. In cases where a school has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil, the advice of the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) should be sought.

Referral of serious cases to the HSE:

In relation to bullying in schools, Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011 (Children first) and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools provide that in situations where 'the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abuse, the school must consult the HSE Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan.

Serious instances of bullying behaviour should, in accordance with the Children First and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools, be referred to the HSE Children and Family Services and/or Gardaí as appropriate.

The Child Protection Procedures for primary and Post-Primary schools, also provide that where school personnel have concerns about a child but are not sure whether to report the

matter to the HSE, the Designated Liaison Person must seek advice from the HSE Children and Family Social Services.

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

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.
 - pastoral care system
 - buddy/peer mentoring system
 - care team/student support team
 - group work such as circle time
 - NEPS

TUSLA:

- If pupils require counselling of further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour
- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

8: Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils:

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices 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 sexual harassment of pupils or staff or 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.

11: This policy has been made available to school personnel, and is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and a copy has been provided to the Parents Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

12: This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management annually. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, also readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and a copy provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested to the patron and the Department.

Ratified by B.O.M.

Nora Murphy *Nora Murphy* Nora Murphy, Chairperson B.O.M.

Trish Collier *Trish Collier* Trish Collier, Principal

Date: 5/12/22 To be reviewed annually