

## **St Kieran's NS Anti Bullying Policy**

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 St Kieran's NS has adopted the following anti-bullying policy. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools which were published in September 2013. (A copy of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2013 is available for viewing on the main school computer. This can also be viewed by visiting the DES website)

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:

- The school sets out to create a positive school culture and climate which is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity
- The school always seeks to build on an environment which 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; the principal continues to make all staff and pupils aware of their responsibilities in the area of anti-bullying.
- A school-wide approach; all partners were involved in drawing up this policy.
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact; all partners are aware of what is contained within the policy.
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; these are taught within the context of the SPHE programme.
- Explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying within the context of the schools SPHE programme.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils; pupils are supervised and monitored. Staff shares their experiences at staff meetings.
- Supports for staff; staff are always encouraged to avail of in-service opportunities in the area of anti-bullying.
- Investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour. The school uses the template for recording bullying behaviour. See template attached. The school uses this template as the basis for investigating bullying behaviour.
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy; the Board of Management will carry out a checklist as part of an annual review of the anti-bullying policy. See check list attached.

In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools bullying is defined as follows: 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 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 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.

The relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows; The teacher who initially becomes aware of and identifies an issue of bullying, this teacher will work with the principal teacher in investigating and dealing with the problem. In the case where the principal teacher is the one who initially becomes aware of an issue of bullying, the deputy principal will investigate the issue with the principal teacher.

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are those which are set out in Section 6.5 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

#### **Education and Prevention Strategies**

The education and prevention strategies that will be 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures eg; regular school assemblies by Principal and other teaching staff.
- Encourage a culture of openness and looking out for each other with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in confiding. This confidence factor is of vital importance. 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 member of staff at an appropriate time, for example after class.
  - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
  - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Identify clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied e.g. through the monthly newsletter.
- The development of an Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.

### **Implementation of Curricula**

- The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum including the 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,
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programme to cover 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.
- The school will implement the advice in "Sexual Orientation advice for Primary Schools"

### **Links to other policies**

The following school policies, practices and activities are particularly relevant to bullying: Code of Behaviour, Child Protection Policy, Supervision of Pupils, Acceptable Use Policy, Attendance Policy, and Sporting Activities.

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 set out in Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

### **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);

#### **Reporting Bullying Behaviour**

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) 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 (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher or Principal.

#### **Investigating and Dealing with Incidents**

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;

- Parent(s)/guardian(s) 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;
- Teachers 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(s)/guardian(s) 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 parent(s)/guardian(s) 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 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 parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) 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 parent(s)/guardian(s) 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(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

### **Recording of Bullying Behaviour**

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

#### **Informal - Pre-determination that Bullying has Occurred**

- All staff must inform the relevant class teacher of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them and ensure that it is recorded in the Class Incident Book.
- 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 in the Class Incident Book.
- 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. These will be recorded in the Class Incident Book.

## Formal Stage 2

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

- 1) 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.
- 2) In cases where behaviours of a serious nature (please see Code of Behaviour) have occurred and are deemed to have been bullying.
- 3) Where the relevant teacher and Principal deem it necessary to record because of repeated instances of bullying behaviour.

All documentation regarding bullying incidents and their resolution are retained securely in the school.

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as set out in Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

### Programme of Support

The schools programme of support for pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

- **Bullied pupils:**
  - Ending the bullying behaviour
  - Changing the school culture to foster more respect for bullied pupils and all pupils,
  - Changing the school culture to foster greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils,
  - Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the awareness-raising programme,
  - Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations
  - Making adequate counselling facilities available to pupils who need it in a timely manner,
  - Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extracurricular group or team activities during or after school).
- **Bullying pupils:**
  - Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed
  - Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honourable thing and giving them praise for this,
  - Making adequate counselling/mentoring facilities available to help those who need it learn other ways of meeting their needs besides violating the rights of others,
  - Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in

group work in class and in extracurricular group or team activities during or after school),

- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth,
- In dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child,

**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.

**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.

This policy was reviewed and adopted by the Board of Management at a meeting on the 7/10/24.

This policy has been made available to school personnel and published on the school website. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

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 published on the school website. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: Michael Cassell  
Chairperson of Board of Management  
Management

Signed: Helena Dunne  
Principal/Secretary to the Board of  
Management

Date: 7/10/24

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Date of next review: September 2025.