

Kilrossanty National School

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 Kilrossanty National School 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.

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 main aims of our anti-bullying policy are as follows:

- 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.

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 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.

Types of bullying

The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst pupils:

- **Physical aggression:** This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in 'mess fights', they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.
- **Intimidation:** Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.
- **Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying:** This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms includes control: "Do this or I won't be your friend any more" (implied or stated); a group ganging up against one person (girl or boy), non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a person or giving them the "silent treatment".
- **Identity Based Bullying:** includes but is not limited to homophobic and transphobic bullying,

racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Travelling community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs. Homophobic and transphobic bullying (bullying targeted at those who are or who are perceived to be LGBT) has also been found to be prevalent with evidence that such pupils have particular difficulty in speaking up or reporting the bullying behaviour.

- **Cyber-bullying:** This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc.
- **Name calling:** Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g., size or clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers, are also targeted.
- **Damage to property:** Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school books and other learning material or interference with a pupil's locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.
- **Extortion:** Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on the demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.

IMPACT AND INDICATORS OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Impacts of bullying behaviour

Pupils who are being bullied may develop feelings of insecurity, humiliation and extreme anxiety and thus may become more vulnerable. Self-confidence may be damaged with a consequent lowering of self-esteem. While they may not talk about what is happening to them, their suffering is indicated through changes in mood and behaviour. Extreme cases of bullying may result in suicide. It is, therefore, essential to be alert to changes in behaviour as early intervention can be very effective.

Pupils who witness bullying may also be affected and may suffer in similar ways to those who are bullied. For example, pupils who witness identity-based bullying and share that identity can experience anxiety and feel under threat themselves. Pupils can also feel guilt or distress at not being able to help the person being bullied.

There are also consequences for individuals who engage in bullying behaviour. Pupils who become involved in such behaviour can be at higher risk of depression. Other possible long-term consequences may include an increased risk of developing an anti-social personality, anxiety disorders, a likelihood of substance abuse and law-breaking behaviour in adulthood and decreased educational and occupational attainment.

Indicators of bullying behaviour

The following signs and symptoms may suggest that a pupil is being bullied: (i) Anxiety about travelling to and from school e.g. requesting parents to drive or collect him/her, changing travel routes, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school; (ii) Unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, truancy; (iii) Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school; (iv) Pattern of physical illnesses e.g. headaches, stomach aches; (v) Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour which may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays; (vi) Visible signs of anxiety or distress e.g. stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting; (vii) Spontaneous out-of-character comments about either pupils or teachers; (viii) Possessions missing or damaged; (ix) Increased requests for money or stealing money; (x) Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing; and (xi) Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her.

There may be other signs depending on the individual and his/her circumstances.

The above signs do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied but if repeated or occurring in combination, these signs do warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the pupil.

Effective Leadership:

Effective leadership, supporting a school culture and climate that celebrates difference, is key to good practice. The role of all those in leadership roles within the school is of great importance in stimulating a school-wide approach to preventing and tackling bullying.

The Principal in particular has a key role in dealing with bullying behaviour in school because she is in a strong position to influence attitudes and set standards in dealing with such behaviour. Principals and other leaders in the school, including all teachers, should strive to engender an ethos under which bullying is unacceptable. All who are identified as leaders within the school community can ensure that practical steps are taken to challenge and respond to bullying. School leaders should also involve both staff and pupils in developing and implementing a vision of the school where diversity is accepted and celebrated.

As pupils model their behaviour on that of adults, Principals and teachers have to be careful to act as good role-models and not misuse their authority. Moreover, they should be fair, firm, clear and consistent in their disciplinary measures.

The Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers published by the Teaching Council makes explicit the values and standards expected of teachers in their daily work with pupils.

The NEWB publication *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools* recognises the role of all adults, including parents, in modelling good behaviour and states "The adults in the school have a responsibility to model the school's standards of behaviour, in their dealings both with pupils and with each other, since their example is a powerful source of learning for pupils. Parents should be expected to model the standards that pupils are asked to respect. In order to do this, they need to be familiar with the standards and to understand the importance of expecting pupils to behave according to these standards. The ways in which parents and teachers interact will provide pupils with a model of good working relationship.

The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are the class teachers.

Education and prevention strategies

The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows:

General

- o There is a **strong sense of community and cooperation** between Board of Management, staff, pupils and parents, and each has a clear role in the prevention of bullying. Through a programme of positive action, the school promotes an atmosphere of friendship, respect and tolerance where we seek to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils.
- o The **SPHE curriculum** makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships. The **Walk Tall programme** is used throughout the school. The **RSE and Stay Safe programme** which is also used in all classes is a personal safety skills programme which seeks to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying. Various other social, health and media education programmes can further help to address the problem of bullying behaviour. Teachers have completed CPD/training in the "Friends" and "Zippy Friends" Programmes and run other social skills programmes such as "Mighty Moe" and "Mind Me, Mind You".
- o The school seeks to **foster an attitude of respect for all through the teaching of all subjects** i.e. to promote the value of diversity, to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour. e.g. in English, History, Geography, Art, Drama, R.E. and P.E. Co-operation is promoted through team sports, projects, practical subjects.

The school supports the establishment and work of student committees through our engagement with the Green Flag, Active Flag and Amber Flag programmes. We currently hold our 8th Green Flag, 3rd Active Flag and 2nd Amber Flag. Pupils get to engage actively in working towards these flags which contributes to their overall sense of belonging and connectedness with the school. Pupils who put themselves forward to be on the committees for these flags have to listen to the ideas and opinions of others, come to a decision on actions to be taken and then carry it back to their class/peer group and whole school. They sometimes act as playground leaders for the younger children. We often find that pupils who may not be interested in team sports volunteer to be on these committees. It is a great outlet for them, helps to raise their confidence/self-esteem and profile in the school and makes them feel they are contributing to the school's achievements in a very real way.

- o **Anti-bullying posters** are displayed throughout the school. This raises awareness of what bullying is and suggests ways to deal with it. These are regularly referred to by staff and the school's rules and anti-bullying policy is discussed regularly with pupils.
- o **Positive self-esteem is fostered** among the pupils by celebrating individual differences/achievements, by acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success. This is done through both **curricular and extra curricular programmes**.
- o **Comprehensive supervision and monitoring measures** are in place. "Hot spots" e.g. school

hallways and "Hot times" e.g. lining up in the mornings before doors open, going home in the evenings, going in and out at break time have been identified and interventions made. We repeatedly ask parents and bus drivers every year not to drop their children off before 9.10am in the mornings as there is no supervision available before this time. This is an ongoing issue. In the evenings, Infants and 1st/2nd are brought to the gate by their class teacher, 3rd to 6th classes are observed from the ramp at the back of the school going to the school car park by their class teachers and SNA Karen.

Regarding break times, the teacher who is on supervision is in the yard before pupils go out and monitor them as they are coming back in to their classrooms. All pupils and in particular senior pupils are encouraged to be vigilant in these areas and at these times. There are separate infant, middle and senior yard areas for supervised play times. Pupils who observe bullying are encouraged not to be bystanders but to tell.

- o Pupils are helped to **develop empathy** by discussing feelings and by trying to put themselves in the place of others.
- o **Members of the BOM are familiar with the school's policy on bullying and actively promote it on a repeated basis among staff, parents and pupils.**
- o **Parents contribute to and support the school's policy on bullying by encouraging positive behaviour both at home and at school, by being vigilant for signs and symptoms that their child is being bullied or is bullying others, by communicating concerns to the school.**

A school-wide approach

- **A school-wide approach (involving school management, staff, parents and pupils) to dealing with the problem of bullying behaviour is a key element of effective practice.** Bullying behaviour affects not only those immediately involved. It can affect everyone in the classroom, in the school and, ultimately, in the wider community.

- **A positive school-wide attitude and involvement can assist considerably in countering bullying behaviour in schools.** 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. Parents are encouraged to recognise that our school openly discusses bullying and that they need to work with the school by encouraging positive behaviour both at home and at school, by being vigilant for the signs and symptoms that their child is being bullied or is bullying others, by communicating concerns to the school. Parents are made aware of the strict anti-bullying policy of the school on Induction Day in Junior Infants and of their role in it. A copy is made available to them and it is also on our school website kilrossantyns.com

Bullying in schools frequently takes place in the playground but it can also occur in the classroom. It may occur subtly through glances, looks and sniggers but may take the more overt form of physical intimidation. It may also be exacerbated if a classroom atmosphere prevails whereby pupils are allowed to make derogatory comments about their classmates or other teachers. However, teachers need to be alert to the underlying reasons for such comments in case pupils are trying to disclose something which is disturbing them and thus needs further investigation.

Bullying behaviour thrives in an atmosphere of uncertainty and secrecy in which the pupil often

feels a sense of hopelessness and futility against the power being exercised by the person engaged in bullying behaviour. A high degree of school-wide vigilance and openness is important in ensuring that bullying behaviour can be adequately tackled.

The school's physical environment promotes friendship and fair play towards others. **Playground Rules are displayed** clearly outside and **shed murals encourage positivity and kindness.**

Kilrossanty National School is located in a small community where home/school community links are strong and well promoted. **Bullying behaviour can often occur on the journey to and/or from school.** We welcome those members of the wider community who come directly in daily contact with school pupils e.g. School bus drivers and local shopkeepers are encouraged to play a positive role in assisting the school to counter bullying behaviour by reporting such behaviour to parents and/or to the school as appropriate, but ultimately the school cannot take on responsibility for incidences that take place out of school hours.

In certain cases it may be necessary for the school to seek the assistance of other local people and formal agencies such as NEPS, HSE workers, community workers, Gardai etc.

Key Strategies re identity-based bullying.

- **While each person is unique, we respect all children irrespective of gender, race, special needs or culture: Kilrossanty National School Ethos Statement.**
- Many of the issues above are dealt with on an ongoing basis through our SPHE and RE curriculum. **RSE /Stay safe/ Walk tall** are followed in the school.
- Exploration of **identity-based themes are explored through class novels** e.g. The travelling community through "Stanley". Social deprivation through "Reaching the heights", "Holes" and "Street Child". Empathy through "Carrie's War". "War Game", "Under Goliath", "The Mozart's Question", "Wonder", Waiting for Anja.
- **History:** identity-based themes discussed e.g. Anti-Semitism (WW II), apartheid, minority groups etc.
- **Geography:** identity-based themes covered in people and other places strand e.g. indigenous peoples - Aboriginals, North American Indians.
- **Music:** Involvement in North - South projects e.g. Peace Proms.
- **Green Flag:** Global Citizenship theme. We have regular contact with an Irish priest who works in Pakistan on social and environmental issues. We fundraise to help him with his work and he visits classes when he comes back to Ireland and informs us on the progress of projects he is working on. He works mainly with Muslims and Christians.

Homophobic and transphobic bullying is tackled through the **RSE and Stay Safe programmes** in SPHE in the Senior classes through story, discussion, group scenarios.

Key Strategies re cyber-bullying.

- The school uses webwise.ie and other web sites to inform pupils and parents of ways to counter act cyber-bullying. **Internet Safety Day** is acknowledged every year with lessons on staying safe online with links for parents given so it can also be discussed at home.
- **The Stay Safe Programme** incorporates cyber bullying and strategies to deal with it.

- Students and staff are expected to comply with the schools **Acceptable Usage Policy** on the use of internet in the school. Parents are given a copy of this policy and asked to sign on enrolment of their children in the school.
- **No pupil is allowed to work on the internet unsupervised** in the school without a member of staff present.
- The school provides **facilitators** to inform parents on issues regarding cyber-bullying from time to time.
- **Posters** are displayed throughout the school on cyber-bullying and ways to combat it.

Parents and students are advised that it is **illegal for a child under 13 to register with and use many social media networks** including Facebook, Instagram and Snap Chat.

- **Pupil mobile phones are not permitted** in the school.
- **Staff:** CPD assists on learning about current technologies.
- **5th and 6th Class** are provided with a course from the local **Gardaí** regarding issues arising from cyber bullying when gardai are available.

Bullying of more vulnerable pupils with disabilities or SEN

While bullying can happen to any pupil, it is known that some may be more vulnerable to or at risk of experiencing bullying. Such vulnerable groups include pupils with disabilities or special educational needs, those from ethnic minority and migrant groups, pupils from the Traveller community, lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) pupils and those perceived to be LGBT and pupils of minority religious faiths. 4.3.2 There can be an increased vulnerability to bullying amongst pupils with special educational needs and particularly those who do not understand social cues and/or have difficulty communicating. Some pupils with complex needs may lack understanding of social situations and therefore trust everyone implicitly. Such pupils may be more vulnerable because they do not have the same social skills or capacity as others to recognise and defend themselves against bullying behaviour. Research suggests that children with disabilities and with special educational needs (SEN) are more likely to be bullied than others. Bullying can also have a more severe impact on such children. For example, some studies which compare the impact of bullying on children with and without certain disabilities, such as a speech and language difficulty, show that bullying has a greater impact on self-esteem for those with a disability.

Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying of pupils with SEN:

The school will focus on:

- **Developing social skills** with vulnerable pupils through social skills programmes like Mind Me, Mind You, Socially Speaking /Time to Talk, Mighty Moe, and Social Stories by Carol Gray
- Promoting school culture which has **respect for all** and helping each other as central.

Preparing and helping pupils with SEN in the transition from primary to post primary e.g. NEPS pack.

- **Being mindful** of certain times and situations in the life of children with SEN in our school

which may be extra challenging for them or where they may feel most vulnerable.

Procedures re bullying behaviour.

Procedures for investigation, follow-up, recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

Investigation of Bullying

- (i) The primary aim for the class 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 bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- (iii) All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the class teacher. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It is made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly;
- (iv) Non-teaching staff e. g. secretary/cleaner, are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the class teacher;
- (v) 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;
- (vi) It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;
- (vii) Teachers should 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 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;
- (x) When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the class teacher will 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 will 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;

- (i) Each member of a group will be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;
- (ii) It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);

(iii) In cases where it has been determined by the class teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved will 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 will give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils. All staff will be made aware at this stage of the bullying in order to be put on alert.

(iv) Where the class 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. Sanctions may be imposed on the pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour at this stage as outlined in the school code of behaviour. The action being taken and the reason for it will be explained to the parents of both parties and ways in which they can re enforce the school action will be explored;

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;

Follow up procedures

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;

Following any incident of bullying the school recognises that issues relating to the prevention of bullying may need to be examined. This will involve the exploration of suitable programmes with victims, bullies and their peers. Whole school focus or specific class lessons may need to be revised dealing with respect, self-esteem, aggression or the issue of bullying itself.

All Staff are particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of bullying/being bullied at this time.

Information re any bullying issues will be passed on to the new teacher at the start of a new year.

In cases where a school has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil or where an individual needs specific support, the advice of NEPS will be sought.

In cases where the class teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the class teacher in the recording template at Appendix 1

In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the class teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:

Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;

Whether 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; and

Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;

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;

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.

In relation to bullying in schools, Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 (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 abusive, 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.

Procedures for recording bullying behaviour

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour must adhere to the following:

(i) While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the class teacher, the class 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;

(ii) If it is established by the class teacher that bullying has occurred, the class teacher will 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 and the Principal will be informed at this stage.

(iii) The class teacher will 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 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.

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 or Deputy Principal as applicable. It should also be noted that the time line for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template at Appendix 1 does not in any way preclude the class teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

Supports for pupils affected by bullying.

Any pupil through no fault of their own may be a target of bullying. It is common in the course of normal interaction for pupils to tease or taunt each other. However, at a certain point, teasing and taunting may become forms of bullying behaviour. As pupils can be particularly quick to notice differences in others, pupils who are perceived as different in some way can be more prone to encounter such behaviour. However, the pupils who are most at risk of being bullied are those who react in a vulnerable and distressed manner. The seriousness and duration of the bullying behaviour can be related to the pupil's continuing response to the verbal, physical or psychological aggression. Pupils who are bullied often experience difficulties in speaking up about bullying. The difficulties include:

- (i) Fear of reprisals;
- (ii) Concerns about being perceived as a "tell-tale" for reporting bullying;
- (iii) Concerns about "getting into trouble" with the principal or teacher for reporting bullying;
- (iv) Not having evidence to back up a bullying allegation;
- (v) Not knowing how the matter will be dealt with by the school; and
- (vi) Not feeling fully confident of being believed.

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

For the Victim:

The class teacher will endeavour to assure the child that they are the victim and they did the right thing by telling.

The teacher will monitor the situation in the period after the bullying incident/s and regularly check with the child/children to see how things are going. She will assure the victim that the school community will help them and put monitoring procedures in place to safe guard them. She will encourage them to report further incidents should they occur. All staff will help in the monitoring of "hot spots" and "hot times" and will be made aware of the situation.

The class teacher will take every opportunity to increase feelings of self-worth if the child has low self-esteem. They may design activities to raise self-esteem and develop friendship and social skills within the class through programmes such as Friends and Zippy's Friends. The option of counselling may also be needed for these children.

The Principal will follow up by checking in regularly on how the situation has developed.

Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour should be encouraged to discuss them with teachers.

For the bully:

The pupil who engages in bullying behaviour

A significant proportion of bullying is not merely behavioural but is rooted in a lack of respect for diversity and in social inequalities. "Prejudice-based" or "identity based" bullying can be a significant factor in bullying behaviour.

Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour tend to display aggressive attitudes combined with a low level of self-discipline. They may lack any sense of remorse convincing themselves that the other person deserves the treatment they are receiving.

Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour can be attention seeking: setting out to impress bystanders and responding to the reaction their behaviour provokes. They can lack the ability to empathise. They can appear unaware or indifferent to the other person's feelings. It is of note that pupils who exhibit bullying behaviour often suffer from a lack of confidence and have low self-esteem.

However, it must also be recognised that pupils who engage in bullying behaviour do not always intend to bully or may not recognise the potential negative impact of their words and actions on others.

It is not uncommon to find that pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may have been bullied themselves.

Pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an ongoing basis. This will include speaking with them to discover why they became involved and continuing to work with them and their parents to modify their behaviour. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others. They may also benefit from inclusion in social programmes that will enhance their self-worth.

Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti- bullying policy

The effectiveness of the school's anti-bullying policy is subject to continuous review in the light of incidents of bullying behaviour encountered. The school makes provision for periodic examination of the prevention and intervention strategies in place at staff meetings and Croke Park hour meetings on a regular basis, taking into account relevant feedback from pupils and parents.

The template in Appendix 1 for recording and reporting bullying to the school Principal or Deputy Principal is a valuable and readily accessible source of data in relation to bullying behaviour in the school. Data gathered from these reports is regularly (at least once in every school year) collated and analysed with a view to monitoring levels of bullying behaviour and identifying any particular issues that require attention or any significant trends in behaviour. A record of this analysis is retained and made available to the Board of Management. Appropriate responses to any issues identified are drawn up and implemented.

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. Hot spots and times have been identified.

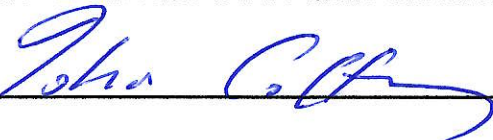
Prevention of Harassment

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.

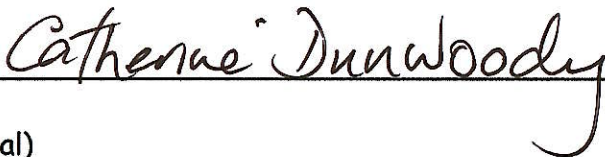
This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 01/10/2024

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and provided to the Parents' Association. 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 made available to school personnel, published on the school website and 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.

Signed: 

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: 

(Principal)

Date: 1/10/24