

Anti – Bullying Policy

Scoil Náisiunta Cill Richill
Kilrickle N.S.
Roll No: 16293H



Introduction

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 Kilrickle 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.

Headings of policy:

- ***Key Principals of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour***
- ***What is Bullying?***
- ***Identifying the relevant teacher for Investigating and dealing with bullying***
- ***Education & Prevention Strategies***
- ***School Procedures for***
 - a. Investigation,***
 - b. Follow-up***
 - c. & Recording***
- ***The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying***
- ***Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils***

2. Key Principals of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour

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) 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;

b) Effective leadership

c) A school-wide approach

d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact

e) Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that -

- i. build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
- ii. explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying
- iii. effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;

f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

g) Supports for staff

h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and

i) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

3. What is Bullying?

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**.

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.

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 bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

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.*

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

4. Identifying the relevant teacher for Investigating and dealing with bullying

All teachers will act as relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying in this school as any teacher may do so if circumstances warrant it.

5. Education & Prevention Strategies used:

a. School – Wide

b. Curriculum Based

c. Links to other policies

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):

Sample Education and prevention strategies

A) 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 as the need arises.
- An audit of professional development needs with a view to assessing staff requirements through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources as the need arises.
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s) as the need arises.
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community as the need arises.
- 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 school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school during enrolment, both of which will be available online on the schools website.
- The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures: i.e. regular school assemblies by principal, deputy principal, teachers, anti-bullying week, and the implementation of the Stay Safe Programme.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. 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 teacher 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.
 - 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.

B) Implementation of curricula

- The full implementation of the SPHE curricula including RSE,
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes: Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme, Webwise Programme.
- Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes as the need arises.
- School wide delivery of lessons on Relational aggression, Cyber Bullying (Be Safe-Be Web wise, Web wise Primary teachers' resources.)
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary level. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, 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 through differentiation to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.
- The school will implement the advice in "Sexual Orientation advice for schools" (RSE Primary, see booklet).

C) Links to other policies

- School policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying include:
 - Code of Behaviour
 - Child Protections policy
 - Supervision of pupils
 - Acceptable Use policy
 - School Complaints Procedure

6. School Procedures for

a. Investigation,

b. Follow-up

c. & Recording

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;

A) 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 thus encouraging a telling culture.
- 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 a stage deemed appropriate by the teacher 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 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 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;

B) Follow - up

- 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
- 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.

C) Steps for recording bullying behaviour:

1. Informal

2. Formal Stage 1

3. Formal Stage 2

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:

1. Informal - Pre-determination that bullying has occurred:

- All staff must keep their own records of incidents of bullying witnessed by them or notified to them.
- The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

2. 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 an appropriate written record in the incident book (kept in the staffroom filing cabinet) which will assist his/her efforts (actions taken or discussions had) to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

3. 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 circumstance:

- 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.

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal. Appendix 3 templates will be kept with the incidents book.

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 parent(s)/guardian(s) to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- Restorative interviews with individuals
- Restorative conferencing with the whole class

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

(see Section 6.8.16 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools) :

- 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. SPHE programme, Circle Time, etc...
- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies e.g. NEPS, HSE social workers, community workers, etc. 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.

Note that for incidents of Bullying that do not directly involve the school e.g. Cyber Bullying we would encourage parents to liaise with each other before the school becomes directly involved and in the event the parents cannot resolve the issue the school will liaise with all relevant parents to do same.

In cases of Cyber Bullying school staff will encourage children to keep a record of the particular bullying incident and tell someone they trust i.e. their parent being the first port of call or teacher.

8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and Practices (including the Acceptable Use Policy) 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 on _____ [date].
11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). 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 once in every school year. 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: _____ Signed: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

(Principal)

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____