**Anti-Bullying Policy**

**Killoughteen National School**

**Introduction**

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Killoughteen 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.

**Policy Formulation**

In formulating this policy the B.O.M. completed the following steps;

The principal attended the Anti-bullying seminar run by the Limerick Education Centre. A policy was drafted by principal based on template provided. It was then discussed with staff. The parents Council were given a copy and were invited to make submissions based on the content of the policy. The policy was reviewed and amended in-line with feedback received.

2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following **key principles of best practice** in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

(a) 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;

•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

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• build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and

• explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying;

(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. 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.

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| **General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying** | * Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc * Physical aggression * Damage to property * Name calling * Slagging * The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person * Offensive graffiti * Extortion * Intimidation * Insulting or offensive gestures * The “look” * Invasion of personal space * A combination of any of the types listed. |
| **Cyber** | * **Denigration**: Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person’s reputation * **Harassment**: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual * **Impersonation**: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person’s name * **Flaming**: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight * **Trickery**: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online * **Outing**: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images * **Exclusion**: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group * **Cyber stalking**: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety * Silent telephone/mobile phone call * Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls * Abusive text messages * Abusive email * Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Twitter or on games consoles * Abusive posts on any form of communication technology |
| **Identity Based Behaviours**  **Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation**  (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community). | |
| **Homophobic and Transgender** | * Spreading rumours about a person’s sexual orientation * Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation * Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner * Physical intimidation or attacks * Threats |
| **Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community** | * Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background * Exclusion on the basis of any of the above |
| **Special Educational Needs,**  **Disability** | * Name calling * Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs * Taking advantage of some pupils’ vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying * Taking advantage of some pupils’ vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues. * Mimicking a person’s disability * Setting others up for ridicule |

4. The teacher responsible for investigating and dealing with bullying is defined as the ‘relevant teacher’.

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;

* The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum including RSE, Walk Tall and the Stay Safe Programmes.
* Delivery of the Garda SPHE programme. These lessons will be covered by community Gardaí covering issues of personal safety and cyber bullying.
* At least five awareness-raising exercises per school year for each class group (*from the ‘Awareness-Raising’ strand of the Anti-Bullying Campaign, via its website*), pro-actively explaining the nature and variety, causes, consequences and unacceptability of bullying.
* Pupils are helped to examine the issue of bullying in a calm rational way, outside of the tense context of particular bullying incidents. In the process they are made more aware of the nature of bullying and the various forms that it can take.
* Pupils are made aware that the consequences of bullying behaviour are always bad for those who are targeted, even if this is not always obvious at the time.
* Pupils are encouraged to recognise, reject and report bullying behaviour, either spontaneously or through questionnaires that are regularly used in the school.

Through presentations from the Anti-Bullying Campaign website and exercises the pupils complete from this, the school staff and parents/guardians are made aware of the nature of bullying and the signs that might indicate that a pupil is being bullied. They are encouraged to be vigilant in watching out for signs of bullying and to report any suspicion of bullying they may have to the ‘Relevant Teacher’ (in the case of staff members) or any staff member (in the case of parents/guardians).

* An annual anti-bullying poster competition.
* 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.
* The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures (e.g. a dedicated notice board in the classrooms on the promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention; biannual student drama; ‘Stop and Stare’ drama group and regular school assemblies by principal.)
* 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 will be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
* Encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied. We will have an open door policy and be available to meet parents.
* The annual review of the Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored.

**Links to other policies**

Code of Behaviour, Child Protection policy, Supervision of pupils, Acceptable Use policy, Attendance.

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;

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);

Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

(T*he six step approach available from the ‘Dealing with Incidents’ section of the Anti-Bullying Campaign website*) are as follows:

* The ‘Relevant Teacher’ investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour, whether these take place within the school or outside it, with a view to establishing the facts and bringing any such behaviour to an end.
* The School, through the ‘Relevant Teacher’ reserves the right to ask any pupil to write an account of what happened, as part of an investigation. This will be a standard procedure and does not necessarily imply that a pupil is guilty of misbehaviour.
* Pupils who are alleged to have been involved in bullying behaviour are interviewed by the ‘Relevant Teacher’ to establish the nature and extent of the behaviour and any reasons for it. In the event that they have been involved in bullying behaviour they are asked to sign a binding promisethat they will treat all pupils fairly, equally and respectfully including the targeted pupil(s).
* The 'Relevant Teacher’ does not apportion blame but rather treats bullying behaviour as a ‘mistake’ that can and must be remedied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter.Pupils who report bullying therefore are not getting others ‘in trouble’ so much as enabling them to get out of trouble into which they may ultimately get if the bullying continued.
* When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the 'Relevant Teacher' will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information.
* If a pupil has signed such a promise but then chooses to break that promise and continue the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer be considered a ‘mistake.’ In this event parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed and requested to countersign their daughter/son’s promise. Breach of this additional promise by further bullying behaviour is regarded as a very grave matter and a serious sanction may be imposed by the school authorities (See sanctions below).
* All documentation regarding bullying incidents and their resolution is retained securely in the school.
* Sanctions:

Where a pupil has been found to be engaged in bullying behaviour, has formally promised to stop and has broken that promise, any of the following sanctions may be imposed:

* S/he may be required to sign another promise, this time countersigned by a parent/guardian;
* Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be contacted by the ‘Relevant Teacher’ and informed of the nature and extent of the bullying behaviour with a view to agreeing a strategy whereby a promise to end the bullying behaviour would be honoured;
* Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be invited to a meeting with the ‘Relevant Teacher’ and the Principal and the pupil may be suspended from school.
* The case may be referred to the Board of Management and the pupil may be expelled from the school.

Formal Recording of bullying incidents by ‘Relevant Teacher’.

* 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 relevant teacher must use the recording template in the office (**Appendix 3)** to record bullying behaviour in cases where the bullying has not been adequately dealt with or appropriately addressed in the opinion of the relevant teacher within 20 days after s/he has determined that bullying has taken place.
* It will be noted that an (Appendix 3) form is being completed/ not completed at each BOM meeting.
* 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

* The recording templates will be retained by the relevant teachers and a copy maintained by the principal. These records will be kept in the school office until a year after the specific students leave sixth class.
* Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) who has co-operated with an investigation to assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring the relationships of the parties involved quickly are not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will 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 will advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

7. The school’s programme of support for working with 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,
* After resolution, enabling bullied pupils to complete a victim-impact statement,
* 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 extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).
* Bullying pupils:
* Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a ‘clean sheet,’
* Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honorable thing and giving them praise for this,
* Making adequate counseling 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 extra-curricular 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,
* In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a ‘clean sheet’ and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.

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 on 02/4/2014.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel and is readily accessible to parents from the school principal on request. A copy has been given 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 once in every school year. Written notification that the review when completed will be made available to school personnel and made known 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: Sheilagh O Mahony Kennedy Signed: Willie Curtin

(Chairperson of Board of Management) (Principal)

Date: 28-11-2017 Date: 28 – 11 - 2017

Date of next review: September 2018