

Anti-Bullying Policy

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 Kyle Park 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.

Best Practice in the Prevention of Bullying Behaviour

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 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.

Definition of Bullying

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 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 anymore" (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".

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. In relation to cyber bullying the following should be noted: If the cyber bullying is ongoing within the school the incident is dealt with as per the procedures outlined in this policy. If the cyber bullying happens outside of school but is brought to the school's attention then both sets of parents are notified of the situation. In this scenario, the school does not suspend, punish or keep notes. As a proactive follow up class teachers should conduct an anti-bullying lesson as part of S.P.H.E.

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.

4. School Contact Personnel

Mrs. Marie Murphy and Miss Colette Horan

Education and Prevention Strategies

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:
- The SPHE curriculum including the Stay Safe Programme, the Relationships and Sexuality Programme and elements of the Walk Tall Programme. Both the formal and informal curriculum will be used to foster positive relations and to empathise that bullying is unacceptable e.g. co-operative games, arts activities, P.E.
 - Positive self-esteem is fostered among pupils by celebrating individual differences, by acknowledging good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success
 - Pupils are helped to develop empathy by discussing feelings and by trying to put themselves in the place of others
 - The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed regularly with pupils. Children will be encouraged to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour, They will be helped to differentiate between incidents of a minor nature and those that constitute bullying, They will also be taught the difference between "telling tales" and asking for help
 - Staff are particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of bullying/being bullied
 - Members of Board of Management, staff and parents are familiar with the school's anti-bullying policy thus promoting a school-wide approach
 - The Board may organise talks for parents, staff or pupils by a trained guest speaker on the subject of bullying and cyber-bullying.

Investigation and Follow-up Procedures

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:
- a) The primary aim for the relevant 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);
 - b) 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;
 - c) All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. 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;
 - d) Non-teaching staff will be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;
 - e) 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 as quickly as possible;
 - f) Care will be taken to ensure all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the approach from the outset;
 - g) Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;
 - h) Incidents will be investigated outside the classroom insofar as possible;
 - i) All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved may also provide very useful information in this way;
 - j) When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher will seek answers of what, where, when, who and why. This will be done in a calm manner, setting example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
 - k) 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 is clear about each other's statements;

- l) Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;
- m) Where it has been determined by the relevant 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 (as per 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;
- n) Where the relevant 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;
- o) 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 and his/her parents and the school;
- p) 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;
- q) Where the relevant 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 will be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template at Appendix 3;
- r) In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher will, 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, and
 - any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal

- s) Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures;
- t) In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Procedures for recording bullying behaviour

- a) While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same;
- b) If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant 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.
- c) The relevant teacher will use the standard recording template to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:
 - 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.
 - 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 c) above, the recording template 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 timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

Working with Pupils Affected by Bullying

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:
- In cases where a school has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil, the advice of the National Education Psychological Service should be sought.
 - In relation to bullying in schools, Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011 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 will, 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-Primary the Gardaí
 - 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.

Supports for Pupils affected by bullying

- Pupils who have been bullied may need counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed
- Pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those with low self-esteem, opportunities will be developed to increase feelings of self-worth. It is , therefore, important that the learning strategies applied within the school allow for the enhancement of the pupil's self-worth. 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.
- Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour will be encouraged to discuss them with the teacher.

Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

8. 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

9. 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.

Policy Ratification:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Kyle Park N.S. at its meeting on 09/12/2014.

Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Communication:

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

Implementation Review:

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

**St. Patrick's National School,
Kyle Park,
Borrisokane,
Co. Tipperary.**

Date:

Name of Teacher:

Name of Pupil:

Incident/Behaviour:

Advice / Actions:

Signed: _____ Teacher

_____ Pupil

St. Patrick's N.S.,
Kyle Park,
Borrisokane,
Co. Tipperary.

Date:

Name of Teacher:

Name of Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

Incident/Behaviour:

Agreed Actions:

Signed: _____ Teacher

_____ Parent(s)/Guardian(s)
