

KILRUSH COMMUNITY SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

MISSION STATEMENT

In an Irish, European and Christian context, Kilrush Community School endeavours to create a community atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect within which students learn, mature and develop their respective talents.

Kilrush Community School Aims:

1. To develop a challenging learning environment which promotes high expectations of individual performance from students and enables staff to professionally discharge their duties.
2. To give students access to a broad and balanced curriculum within a caring, co-operative community.
3. To ensure that all staff and students enjoy equality of esteem and opportunity.
4. To foster among students an awareness of their environment, heritage and health enabling them to play a positive role within the local and wider community.
5. To equip students with a strong sense of self-esteem, self-discipline and self-motivation.
6. To foster universal values of compassion, integrity, honesty and respect.

KILRUSH COMMUNITY SCHOOL

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 Kilrush Community 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.
2. The Board of Management recognizes the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and staff members. It 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.
3. In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools bullying is identified 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.

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. The relevant staff for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

- The Pastoral Care Team
- The School Completion Programme Team
- The Chaplain
- The Career Guidance Counsellor
- The Boys' Tutor
- The Girls' Tutor
- The Year Tutors
- The Deputy Principal
- The Principal
- Individual staff members.

5. As bullying of any kind detracts from the school's ethos, culture and aims, the entire school community, comprising students, parents and staff, has a role to play in eliminating bullying behaviour from the school.

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

- Particular focus and concentration will be placed on First Year students to raise awareness of bullying as an unacceptable form of behaviour.
- Create an atmosphere that encourages discussion and disclosure.
- Encourage students to have a shared sense of responsibility for the safety and welfare of each other.
- Have a comprehensive system of supervision and monitoring measures.
- Develop collective vigilance by the school community in order to prevent the encroachment of bullying.
- Encourage the reporting of suspected bullying behaviour.
- SPHE, CSPE, Computer Study and RE classes have a role to play in highlighting the need for the disclosure of bullying.

Areas to Consider regarding the Issue of Bullying

Identification

The effects of bullying include: insecurity, anxiety, damaged self-esteem/self-confidence and bed-wetting.

Types/indications of bullying behaviour include:

- Physical aggression e.g. pushing, punching, kicking, poking, tripping and assault.
- Damage to property e.g. clothing, books, pencil cases and bicycles.
- Extortion e.g. demands for money and lunch.
- Intimidation e.g. use of aggressive body language, voice/looks.
- Isolation e.g. deliberately isolated, excluded, ignored and insulted.
- Name calling e.g., which hurts, insults, humiliates.
- Cyber bullying.
- Sexual bullying.
- Identity based bullying; homophobic bullying, transphobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on disability or special needs.

Recognition

Early intervention in cases of bullying behaviour is desirable.

Indications of bullying behaviour include:

- Anxiety, e.g. travelling to and from school.
- Unwillingness/refusal to go to school.
- Deterioration of educational performance.
- Patterns of physical illness.
- Unexplained changes in mood or behaviour.
- Visible signs of distress e.g. stammering, withdrawing.
- Spontaneous out-of-character comments.
- Possessions missing or damaged.
- Increased requests for money.
- Unexplained bruising, cuts, damaged clothes.
- Reluctance/refusal to admit what is troubling him/her.

While these signs may not mean that a student is actually being bullied, if repeated or occurring in combination these signs warrant investigation.

Characteristics in bullying behaviour include:

- A learned behaviour.
- Aggressive attitude combined with a low level of self-discipline.
- Lack of remorse e.g. the victim deserved it.
- Attention seeking.
- Lack of ability to empathize.
- Lack of confidence and/or low self-esteem.

Where can bullying occur/areas to watch:

- The playgrounds, e.g. hidden/obscure areas.
- Games classes, e.g. due to physical contact.
- Toilet areas, cloakrooms, changing rooms.
- In class.
- Between classes.

- Outside of school e.g. school buses.
- On the internet and/or mobile phone.
- Text messages and cyber space.

6. The school's procedures for investigating, following up and recording bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour:

- It is recognised that no one specific intervention works in all situations/cases of bullying.
- The school's Pastoral Care team (PCT) considers and deals with all cases of suspected bullying and bullying in the school. Designated individual staff on the team deal with cases of bullying behaviour. However, other staff may also have a specific role to play.
- Generally one member of the PCT has specific responsibility to investigate and report back to the team and or Principal/Deputy Principal regarding specific incidences of bullying.
- The member of the PCT designated to investigate an issue of suspected or actual bullying depends on the nature of the issue itself and those suspected of involvement. The Year Tutor of student(s) involved also has a role to play in the process.
- The overall aim in any investigation of actual bullying is to resolve the issue and to restore the relationships as far as is practicable.
- Students and parents are required to co-operate with any investigation and to assist the school in resolving any issues.
- Any investigation aims to respect, as far as possible, the privacy and integrity of those involved.
- The key questions of What?, Where?, When?, Who?, and Why? Will be considered.
- Where a group is involved, each member will be met individually at first. Depending on the nature of the issue the group itself may be met at a later stage.
- Parents/Guardians may also be informed so as to reinforce and support the action(s) being taken by the school.
- It will be attempted to try and get a student or students involved in bullying behaviour to see the situation/issue from the perspective of the student(s) being bullied.
- In any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the student being disciplined, his or her parents/guardians and the school.
- Should a staff member feel that bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred it must be recorded by that teacher on the appropriate referral form. The Principal/Deputy Principal must be informed of this.
- The PCT, when determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed, must consider the following factors:
 - Has the bullying behaviour stopped?
 - Have the issues between the parties involved been resolved as far as possible?
 - Has the relationship or status quo between the parties been restored as far as is practicable?
 - Has any feedback been received from the parties involved.

- If a parent/guardian is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a case of bullying, in accordance with these procedures, they may use the appropriate school complaint procedures.
- Should a parent/guardian have exhausted the school's complaint procedures and remain unsatisfied, he/she has a right to make a complaint to the Children's Ombudsman.
- In the most serious cases of suspected or actual bullying, staff should report immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal.
- Any member of staff who suspects that bullying is taking place in the school or outside, where it impinges on school life, must report their suspicions to the PCT, the Principal or Deputy Principal.
- All documentation pertaining to a suspected or actual incidence of bullying must be retained in the school.
- In the event of a student or students resurrecting an issue of bullying where, in the view of the PCT it has been dealt with, such students will face possible suspension and or dismissal in the most serious of cases.
- The Principal, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principals and Year Tutors reserve the right, with permission, to access a student's phone. A student who refuses to co-operate in such a case will be considered to be in serious breach of the School Code.
- The school authorities reserve the right to intervene in issues that arise outside the school environment which in the opinion of the school authorities, impinge on the orderly running of the school.

7. The school's programme of support for working with students affected by bullying:

- Follow-up checks will be made with students, and where necessary with parents, after an issue of bullying has been dealt with.
- Funds permitting, counseling may be provided in the most serious of cases.
- As with any investigation into bullying issues, the methodology used by the PCT will be one of ongoing counselling and monitoring.
- Sanctions may be imposed on students involved in all forms of bullying behaviour especially if the behaviour is repeated, as it was counter to the school rules and ethos. This could result in probable suspension and/or dismissal in the most serious of cases.
- Bullying is a form of harassment and considered to be a criminal offence. It may be necessary, in certain circumstances, for the school authorities to inform the relevant authorities of bullying behaviour.

8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring and practices are in place to help 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 _____ .
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. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: _____
Chairperson, B.o.M.

Signed: _____
Principal.

Date: _____

Date: _____