

Anti-Bullying POLICY

Killinarden

Community

School

Revised: 10th September 2024

1. Overview

Killinarden Community School and Board of Management believe that the academic, personal and social development of each member of the school community is important. We believe that education flourishes in an environment where good relationships are encouraged, where people feel valued and respected and where there is genuine support for those in difficulty.

This school is committed to providing a safe and secure environment where bullying is neither accepted nor tolerated. This is reflected in the school's Anti-Bullying Policy devised in 2000 and revised in 2007 , 2013 and 2019 in conjunction with the DES guidelines & Child Protection Guidelines 2004/2005.

It is revised annually in compliance with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools which were published in September 2013.

2. Scope of Policy

This policy seeks to address issues of bullying, harassment and intimidation as they apply to students and staff.

- a) This policy applies to the whole school community in their relationships with students, teachers, management, parents, guardians, administration and ancillary staff.
- b) As employer school management complies with the provisions of the Employment Equality Act 1998 and 2004. These provisions address issues relating to teachers, administration and ancillary staff.
- c) This Policy will apply during school time; during usual periods of coming to and returning from school, during all and any activity organised by the school; during all school trips and tours.

3. Rationale

- a) The Dept. of Education and Skills requires school to have a written policy on bullying.
- b) The Board of Management has an obligation to ensure that a policy is in place that reflects the values and educational philosophy of the school.
- c) The formulation and implantation of the policy promotes partnership between all the members of the school community. Its implementation and review raises awareness of the issue and ensures that it remains a living policy.

4. Goals and Objectives

- a) To create a school environment which discourages bullying and respects diversity, enabling students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying and to be sure that they will be supported.
- b) To ensure that each student feels safe and secure within the school.
- c) To increase awareness that it is everyone's responsibility to create a safe environment.
- d) To establish clear steps for reporting, monitoring and resolving bullying.
- e) To raise awareness of bullying through Social Personal and Health Education Programme.
- f) To involve students, teachers, parents and local agencies in measures to reduce, combat and prevent bullying both inside and outside school.

5. Prevention

The Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Curriculum addresses the topic of bullying. Students are free to discuss the topic and the ways in which they can safely and effectively respond to bullying, in a safe environment. They engage in confidence building exercises and group building activities.

All students are encouraged to participate in awareness raising events during the school year. These include, Friendship Weeks, whole school Anti-Bullying Programmes, Poster Competitions, Assertiveness Programmes, Invited Speakers, Team Building Workshops and Away Activities.

A regular questionnaire is done with students to raise awareness and to facilitate reporting of incidents.

There is a Pastoral Care System in place in KCS. Tutors and Year-Heads play a vital role in supporting students throughout their time in the school. School Counsellor also play an important role in supporting students and delivering programmes to enhance student confidence and develop in personal skills.

6. Definition

"Bullying is repeated aggression conducted by an individual or group against others - such aggressive behaviour may be verbal, psychological or physical". (Department of Education and Science, Guideline on countering bullying behaviour in Primary and Post Primary School 1993)

There are many headings under which bullying can happen some common ones are; gender, marital status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, or membership of the Travelling Community. Bullying can last for days, weeks or even years.

It affects everyone; those who are bullied and those who bully. Types of bullying includes: intimidation (verbal or non-verbal, non-physical or physical e.g. 'the Look', gestures, pushing, striking etc...), slugging, (including reference to one's sexual orientation), name calling, harassment, physical aggression, fighting. This also includes repeating malicious rumour that causes offence.

It rarely sorts itself out and therefore needs to be dealt with through the proper channels, as outlined in our policy.

Cyber: abusive emails, texts, phone calls, messages, misuse of internet sites, social networking sites. Cyber bullying refers to bullying and harassment of others by means of new electronic technologies, primarily mobile phones, internet and social media sites.

Other types of bullying include threatening behaviour, excluding individuals, taking or damaging property, racial comments or discrimination including comments about colour, nationality, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or Traveller background, unwelcome sexual comments or touching, graffiti & rumour spreading.

7. Steps to be taken where bullying incidents are reported

The Department of Education and Skills (DES) insist that all schools keep a permanent record of bullying in pupil's file and this information be made available, if appropriate, to others on request.

(a) For Teachers / Staff.

1. Listen to the student, be calm and objective. Take notes as these will form the basis of a report. If the matter is serious refer it directly to the Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal.
2. Reassure the student that help is available and that they do not have to cope alone. Be clear that you may need to discuss this with others, but only with those who need to be involved and that you will build in safe guards.
3. Speak to the students involved to establish the facts.
4. Tell the students that you will keep them informed.
5. Consult one or more of the following people within the school to assist, using notes taken from talking with the students:
 - Class tutor
 - Year-head/Assistant Year-head
 - Anti-Bullying Team
 - School counsellor
 - Chaplain
 - Principal/Deputy Principal

It may be necessary to consult with parents and/or outside agencies. Where a bullying incident is dealt with a written report should be given to the relevant Year-Head(s). All information should be placed in the relevant student file and retained in the Year Head's office.

6. Where a complaint relates to a staff member this should be referred directly to the Principal.

Sanctions which may be invoked:

The following responses may be used depending on the severity of the incident and/the age of the students.

1. Verbal Warning
2. Report to parents
3. Detention
4. Contract of good behaviour
5. School Community Service
6. Withdrawal of privileges
7. Other sanctions which are deemed to be appropriate
8. Suspension
9. Referral to Board of Management
10. Exclusion with due regard to students' rights under the Ed. Welfare Act.

Supports which are in place:

Supports which are in place for both the victim and the person bullying include:

1. The pastoral care system of the school.
2. Referral to the school counsellors or other relevant outside agencies.
3. Behaviour For Learning Teacher K2
4. School Clubs.
5. SPHE lessons.
6. The contact with home through Home School Liaison Teacher.

(b) For students:

1. 'Keeping it quiet is keeping it going', so tell someone you trust, if you or someone you know is being bullied or if you are aware of bullying incidents.
2. There are many people within the school who are ready to help you, for example:
 - Any teacher or member of staff who you trust.
 - Your tutor or Year-Head or Assistant Year-head
 - The chaplain or counsellor
 - Principal or Deputy Principal
 - HomeSchoolCommunityLiaison (HSCL) Teacher
 - Senior Student Mentors

(c) For Parents

Parents know their own children best. If parents are concerned about a child or feel that something may be going on which is out of the ordinary or upsetting the child, they should contact the school. An appointment can be made and the matter discussed with the relevant person.

The Home School Liaison Teacher is always available to visit the home or discuss any matter with parents. The contact should be made as soon as a parent becomes concerned.

Every young person must be given the knowledge and the confidence to respond effectively to a cyber-attack, notably by

1. Not retaliating or replying
2. Saving the evidence
3. Making sure they tell someone or calling a helpline.
4. Blocking the sender.
5. Reporting the incident to the provider of the service (e.g. Mobile phone operator or social networking operator) and if posing a serious threat reporting it to the police.

All members of the school community, teachers, parents and students need to collaborate in order to combat cyber-bullying. In case of a cyber-bullying situation, all parties involved need to work together.

Referral of serious cases to the HSE

In relation to bullying in schools, Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011 (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.

8 Policy as part of curriculum and school ethos.

The Anti-Bullying Policy is part of the school programme which has as its aim to encourage students to be caring and responsible members of the school community. We also aim to provide students with the skills to work with others to counter bullying in all its forms.

We work to prevent incidents of bullying and to have a comprehensive and speedy response where such incidents happen. As a result of the 'digital divide' between young people and adults, parents may feel limited in how they can support their child to effectively prevent and respond to cyber-bullying.

To this end the Anti Bullying Programme is closely linked to the following subjects and programmes:

- Social Personal and Health Education
- Civic Social and Political Education
- Relationship and Sexuality Education
- Guidance and Counselling Programme
- Leaving Cert. Applied Programme
- Senior Student Mentoring Programme

- Student Council
- Induction Programmes for both staff and students.

The extra-curricular activities, which are a central part of school life provide students with opportunities to make friends, share, mature and grow into responsible young adults. The informal curriculum e.g. incentives, friendship week, poster, story/poem competitions are also used to highlight the issue of bullying on a regular basis.

This policy is also linked to other policies which form the school's framework. These links are: Admissions Policy; Child Protection Policy; Internet Access Policy; Health and Safety Policy; Induction of new staff; Mobile Phone Policy; Contract of Behaviour.

This policy was ratified originally by the Board of Management in October 2019 and been subject to annual review since

Signed: ____Frank Moran____
Chairperson Board of Management

Signed: Adrienne Whelan_
Secretary Board of Management

Date of next review: September 2025