



# ST. BRIGID'S NATIONAL SCHOOL KILLYGARRY



## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

### INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 Section 23 and the Code of Behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of St. Brigid's National School, Killygarry 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 and with Circular 0044/2013.

Our Anti-Bullying policy encourages all those working in the school – pupils, teachers, parents and all others involved in school activities, e.g. sports' coaches, to respect, trust and show consideration and support for everyone in the school community.

The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment. The school promotes habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.

Our policy also follows the guidelines as laid down by Department of Education and Science (27/11/2002).

Our policy is underpinned by best practice in accordance with our Child Safeguarding Statement.

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-
  - (a) is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
  - (b) encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
  - (c) 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-
  - (a) build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
  - (b) 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.

In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows:

## **DEFINITION OF BULLYING**

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.

## **TYPES OF BULLYING**

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.

### **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.

### **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.

### **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.

### **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".

## 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.

### Examples of bullying behaviours

<p><b>General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc.</li> <li>• Physical aggression</li> <li>• Damage to property</li> <li>• Name calling</li> <li>• Slagging</li> <li>• The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person</li> <li>• Offensive graffiti</li> <li>• Extortion</li> <li>• Intimidation</li> <li>• Insulting or offensive gestures</li> <li>• The “look”</li> <li>• Invasion of personal space</li> <li>• A combination of any of the types listed.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cyber</b></p>	<p><b>Denigration:</b> Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person’s reputation</p> <p><b>Harassment:</b> Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual</p> <p><b>Impersonation:</b> Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person’s name</p> <p><b>Flaming:</b> Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight</p> <p><b>Trickery:</b> Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online</p> <p><b>Outing:</b> Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images</p>

<p><b>Cyber</b></p>	<p><b>Exclusion:</b> Purposefully excluding someone from an online group</p> <p><b>Cyber stalking:</b> Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Silent telephone/mobile phone call</li> <li>• Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls</li> <li>• Abusive text messages</li> <li>• Abusive email</li> <li>• Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles</li> <li>• Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures</li> <li>• Abusive posts on any form of communication technology</li> </ul>
<p><b>Identity Based Behaviours</b></p>	<p><b>Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation</b> (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).</p>
<p><b>Homophobic and Transgender</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spreading rumours about a person’s sexual orientation</li> <li>• Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation</li> <li>• Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner</li> <li>• Physical intimidation or attacks</li> <li>• Threats</li> </ul>
<p><b>Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background</li> <li>• Exclusion on the basis of any of the above</li> </ul>
<p><b>Relational</b></p>	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Malicious gossip</li> <li>• Isolation &amp; exclusion</li> <li>• Ignoring</li> <li>• Excluding from the group</li> <li>• Taking someone’s friends away</li> <li>• “Bitching”</li> <li>• Spreading rumours</li> <li>• Breaking confidence</li> <li>• Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear</li> <li>• The “look”</li> <li>• Use or terminology such as ‘nerd’ in a derogatory way</li> </ul>

<b>Sexual</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching</li> <li>• Harassment</li> </ul>
<b>Special Educational Needs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name calling</li> <li>• Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs</li> <li>• Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying</li> <li>• Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues.</li> <li>• Mimicking a person's disability</li> <li>• Setting others up for ridicule</li> </ul>

The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are the class teachers. Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

### **POLICY AIMS**

1. To create a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour. We are a telling school. We look after each other.
2. To create a school climate which is open, supportive and encourages pupils to disclose and discuss bullying behaviour;
3. To raise awareness amongst the entire school community (including school management, teachers, pupils, parents, volunteers etc.) that bullying is unacceptable behaviour;
4. To ensure comprehensive supervision and monitoring through which all aspects of school activity are kept under observation;
5. To provide procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying behaviour;

6. To provide procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour;
7. To develop a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour;
8. To work with and through the various local agencies in countering all forms of bullying and anti-social behaviour; and
9. To facilitate ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the school's anti-bullying policy.

## **IMPACT AND INDICATIONS OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR**

### **Impacts of bullying behaviour**

- Pupils who are being bullied may develop feelings of insecurity, humiliation and extreme anxiety and thus may become more vulnerable. Self-confidence may be damaged with a consequent lowering of self-esteem. While they may not talk about what is happening to them, their suffering is indicated through changes in mood and behaviour. Extreme cases of bullying may result in suicide. It is, therefore, essential to be alert to changes in behaviour as early intervention can be very effective.
- Pupils who witness bullying may also be affected and may suffer in similar ways to those who are bullied. For example, pupils who witness identity-based bullying and share that identity can experience anxiety and feel under threat themselves. Pupils can also feel guilt or distress at not being able to help the person being bullied.
- There are also consequences for individuals who engage in bullying behaviour. Pupils who become involved in such behaviour can be at higher risk of depression. Other possible long-term consequences may include an increased risk of developing an anti-social personality, anxiety disorders, a likelihood of substance abuse and law-breaking behaviour in adulthood and decreased educational and occupational attainment.

### **Indications of Bullying Behaviour – Signs and Symptoms**

The following signs/symptoms may suggest that a pupil is being bullied :-

- anxiety about travelling to and from school – requesting parents to drive or collect them, changing route of travel, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school;
- unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, mitching;
- deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school;
- pattern of physical illnesses (e.g. headaches, stomach aches);

- unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour; it may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays;
- visible signs of anxiety or distress – stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting;
- spontaneous out-of-character comments about either pupils or teachers;
- possessions missing or damaged;
- increased requests for money or stealing money;
- unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing;
- reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her.

There may be other signs depending on the individual and his/her circumstances. The above signs do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied. If repeated or occurring in combination those signs do warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the pupil.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF EDUCATION AND PREVENTION STRATEGIES INCLUDING AWARENESS RAISING**

- Effective practice includes prevention and awareness raising measures across all aspects of bullying and involves strategies to engage pupils in addressing problems when they arise. In particular, such strategies need to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils.
- As self-esteem is a major factor in determining behaviour, St. Brigid's National School will, through both curricular and extra-curricular programmes, provide pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth.
- Initiatives and programmes focused on developing pupils' awareness and understanding of bullying, including its causes and effects, should deal explicitly with the issue of identity-based bullying and in particular homophobic and transphobic bullying. Teaching the Social, Personal, Health Education (SPHE) resource, *Growing Up LGBT* and participating in LGBT awareness events are just some of the ways in which the school could address homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- Prevention and awareness raising measures must also deal explicitly with cyber-bullying. The best way to address cyber-bullying is to prevent it happening in the first place. Prevention and any awareness raising measures should focus on educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while on-line and also on



developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying. The school-wide approach and the role of parents is of importance in this regard. The prevention and awareness raising measures should also take into account the scope for cyber-bullying to occur as a result of access to technology from within the school. On occasion the Parents Association/Board of Management will provide information evenings/online training for parents on the topic of Cyber Bullying. The school will organise workshops for pupils on the topic of Cyber Bullying if this issue becomes apparent. The school has purchased the 'Bullying in a Cyber World' Programme along with posters and workbooks from Prim Ed. for use in all classrooms.

- Our school's approach to tackling and preventing bullying should take particular account of the needs of pupils with disabilities or with SEN, should join up with other relevant school policies and supports and should ensure that all the services that provide for such pupils work together. Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for pupils with SEN include improving inclusion, focusing on developing social skills, paying attention to key moments such as transitioning from primary to post-primary and cultivating a good school culture which has respect for all and helping one another as central.
- A school's prevention and awareness raising measures need to be appropriate to the type of bullying and take into account the age and gender of the pupils involved. Each school must work to raise the awareness of bullying so that all members of the school community understand what bullying is and how the school deals with bullying behaviour. In 2013 the school implemented the 'Stand up for yourself' programme and posted anti-bullying posters throughout the school. All pupils were trained in how to stand up for themselves and how to report any bullying activity going on in the school.
- On occasion the school may have a staff day on the subject of bullying complemented by an awareness day for pupils and parents. An awareness day can help give the parents of a pupil who is being bullied the confidence to approach the school and also helps to send a clear message to the parents of a pupil who is engaged in bullying behaviour that they have a major responsibility in addressing their child's behaviour.
- Teachers can influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner through a range of curricular initiatives. There are a number of curriculum components and programmes which are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying and the promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness. The SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the interrelated areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships. The Stay Safe programme at primary level, is a personal safety skills programme which seeks to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying. The Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme at post-primary provides opportunities to explore and discuss areas such as human sexuality and relationships, which has particular relevance to identity-based bullying. Various other social, health and media education programmes can further help to address the problem of bullying behaviour.
- There is space within the teaching of all subjects to foster an attitude of respect for all: to promote the value of diversity; to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight

the unacceptability of bullying behaviour. In English, there is a wide range of literature available which could be used to stimulate discussion. In Geography and History references to colonisation, exploitation and dictatorships could be used to illustrate the negative aspect of power. The work could be extended into many other areas such as Art, Drama, Religious Education, and Physical Education. Co-operation and group enterprise can be promoted through team sports, school clubs and societies as well as through practical subjects. Sporting activities, in particular, can provide excellent opportunities for channelling and learning how to control aggression.

**Possible Measures to: (a) raise awareness  
(b) prevent Bullying**

- Raising awareness of bullying as a form of non-acceptable behaviour through discussion e.g. circle time
- Co-operation and group enterprise through team sports.
- School subjects e.g. English, Art, Religious Education, S.P.H.E.
- Specific programmes – Stay Safe; Walk Tall Programme, Zippy’s Friends, Friends for Life,
- Use of Senior pupils as a resource to assist in countering bullying.
- Anti-Bullying Day or Week
- Poster Competition
- Notices
- Friendship Week
- Anti-Bullying Agreement – Signed by pupils, parents and staff
- Surveys to ascertain pupils perceptions of bullying behaviour and/or extent of bullying and where it happens such as a class observation form, bullying questionnaire or a bullying sociogram (see appendix B & C)
- New Year Resolution – Be Friends  
‘We are a telling school’
- Participation in the Health Promoting Schools initiative
- Workshops for parents on bullying and cyber bullying
- Workshops for pupils on bullying and cyber bullying

- Implementation of the ‘Bullying in a cyber world’ programme
- ‘Stand up for yourself’ programme to be taught throughout the school
- Anti-bullying/friendship questionnaire
- Peer mentoring
- Restorative Practices

## EDUCATION & PREVENTION STRATEGIES

### 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.
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of all teachers
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
- 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
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school to be displayed around the school.
- The school’s anti-bullying policy is discussed with the pupils and parents at information meetings and is given to all new parents and published on our school website.

- 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.
  - ❖ Hand note up with homework.
  - ❖ Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
  - ❖ Anti-bully or Niggle box
  - ❖ Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
  - ❖ Administer a confidential questionnaire to all pupils.
  - ❖ Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Identify clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied. The protocol should be developed in consultation with parents.
- 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.

### Implementation of curricula

- The full implementation of the SPHE curricula and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence-based programmes, e.g. Cool School Lessons, #UP2US, Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme, On My Own Two Feet.
- School wide delivery of lessons on **Relational aggression** (Cool School Programme: A Friend in Deed), **Cyber Bullying** (#UP2US, Be Safe-Be Web wise, Think Before you Click, Let’s Fight it Together, Web wise Primary teachers’ resources), Webwise Anti-Cyber Bullying Programme, Garda Primary Schools Programme, **Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying** (Growing up LGBT, Stand Up Programme, The Trust pack )**Diversity and Interculturalism**, Health Promoting Schools Programme, external facilitators for pupils, parents and staff.
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes. 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 to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.

- The school will implement the advice in “Sexual Orientation advice for schools” (RSE Primary, see booklet).

### **Links to other policies**

- List school policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying, e.g. Code of Behaviour, Child Protections policy, Supervision of pupils, Acceptable Use policy, Attendance, Sporting activities, Social Personal and Health Education Policy.

### **Classroom Based Prevention**

Classroom management and organisation can be used as an anti-bullying prevention method in the classroom by encouraging active involvement of students in formulating rules and sanctions for those in breach of the rules. The creation of a safe and caring classroom environment where the rules, rights and responsibilities in relation to bullying behaviour is clearly defined and the all students have clear expectations on how issues will be dealt with by the class teacher. Pupils will be involved in the formulation of the class rules which will respect to be built and pro-social behaviours.

Classroom rules and responsibilities will be set out with expected behaviour of pupils in the classroom, playground and during all school events. Clear examples of bullying will be made explicit to pupils including cyber bullying and identity based and homophobic bullying. The class rules will make is clear to pupils that they must ‘say no’ to anything they think is wrong and to report their concerns to the class teacher. Rules/Rights and Responsibilities, Golden Rules or Classroom Charter to be displayed on classroom walls to remind the pupils of their responsibilities.

### **Social, Personal and Health Education**

Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) is the overarching context for anti-bullying work in our school. SPHE is intended to support the personal development, health and wellbeing of young people and help them to create and maintain supportive relationships. The Stay Safe Programme works to enhance the self-protective skills of the students across a range of situations and encourages telling an adult when harmful situations arise. The SPHE curriculum promotes personal development and wellbeing of students and focuses on issues around bullying including conflict resolution, friendship, safety and relationships.

### **Prevention at Individual level**

Supports will be put in place for pupils with individual needs especially those who are vulnerable, victimised or are perpetrators of bullying behaviour. These pupils may require additional and dedicated time to:-

- ❖ explore the concepts taught as part of the SPHE curriculum
- ❖ develop strategies and skills needed for their protection
- ❖ develop understanding and empathy for others
- ❖ build resilience and to strengthen self
- ❖ build positive and respectful relationships with peers and staff

- ❖ explore how they make and keep friends
- ❖ discuss and agree behaviours that are unacceptable in their class
- ❖ make an agreement on how they will behave in class

Use of teaching strategies such as direct teaching, learning, role-play, modelling, repetition, and use of social stories may be used to help individual pupils in need of extra support.

Assistance from outside agencies may need to be sought on occasion.

## PROCEDURES FOR INVESTIGATING AND DEALING WITH BULLYING

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).

**The school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach.** Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/ guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

### Reporting bullying behaviour

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school. Normally the issue would be brought to the attention of the child's class teacher in the first instance.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the class teacher. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the class teacher

### Strategies to investigate bullying behaviour

- Confidential Questionnaires (See appendix B)
- Bullying Sociogram (See appendix C)
- Class Observation (See appendix D & E)

### Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach

- 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

- 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 involved as quickly as possible;
- It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents
- Incidents are generally best 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 class 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 they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher
- 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 class teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school should 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
- Where the class 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 parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school

## Follow up and recording

- 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:
  - (a) Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased
  - (b) Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable
  - (c) Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and
  - (d) Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should 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. This can have a therapeutic effect.
- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) 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;
- In cases 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 must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template
- 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

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

All records of bullying behaviour will be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour will adhere to the following:

### **Informal- pre-determination that bullying has occurred**

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. Consideration needs to be given to where the records will be made e.g. incident book. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same
- The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.



### **Informal-determination that bullying has occurred**

- If it is established by the class teacher that bullying has occurred, the class 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 school in consultation with the class teacher should develop a protocol for the storage of all records retained by the class teacher.

### **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 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 school in consultation with the relevant teacher/s should develop a protocol for the storage of all records retained by the relevant teacher.

### **Formal Stage 2-Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)**

The relevant teacher must use the recording template attached to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

- a) 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; and
- b) 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.

The school should list behaviours that must be recorded and reported immediately to the principal. These should be in line with the school's code of behaviour.

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal. Due consideration needs to be given to where these records are kept, who has access to them, and how long they will be retained. Decisions around record keeping should be noted in this policy.

### **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
- Implementing sociogram questionnaires

- Peer mediation where suitable training has been given

The procedures may involve intervention strategies such as:-

- The traditional disciplinary approach
- Strengthening the victim
- Mediation
- Restorative Practices
- The Support Group Method

## ANTI-CYBER BULLYING PROCEDURES

Killygarry NS aims to ensure that children are safe and feel safe from bullying, harassment and discrimination. This school is committed to teaching children the knowledge and skills to be able to use ICT effectively, safely and responsibly.

## UNDERSTANDING CYBER-BULLYING:

- Cyber bullying is the use of ICT (usually a mobile phone and or the internet) to abuse another person
- It can take place anywhere and involve many people
- Anybody can be targeted including pupils and school staff
- It can include threats, intimidation, harassment, cyber-stalking, vilification, defamation, exclusion, peer rejection, impersonation, unauthorized publication of private information or images etc.
- While bullying involves a repetition of unwelcome behaviour the **Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, September 2013**, states:

*2.1.3. In addition, in the context of these procedures 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.*

## WHAT IS CYBER-BULLYING?

There are many types of cyber-bullying. The more common types are:

1. **Text messages** – can be threatening or cause discomfort. Also included here is ‘Bluejacking’ (the sending of anonymous text messages over short distances using bluetooth wireless technology)
2. **Picture/video-clips via mobile phone cameras** – images sent to others to make the victim feel threatened or embarrassed
3. **Mobile phone calls** – silent calls, abusive messages or stealing the victim’s phone and using it to harass others, to make them believe the victim is responsible
4. **Emails** – threatening or bullying emails, often sent using a pseudonym or somebody else’s name

5. **Chat room bullying** – menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in a web-based chat room
6. **Instant messaging (IM)** – unpleasant messages sent while children conduct real-time conversations online using MSM (Microsoft Messenger), Yahoo Chat or similar tools
7. **Bullying via websites** – use of defamatory blogs (web logs), personal websites and online personal ‘own web space’ sites such as You Tube, Facebook, Ask.fm, Bebo (which works by signing on in one’s school, therefore making it easy to find a victim) and Myspace – although there are others.

**Explanation of slang terms used when referring to cyber-bullying activity:**

1. **‘Flaming’**: Online fights using electronic messages with angry and vulgar language
2. **‘Harassment’**: Repeatedly sending offensive, rude, and insulting messages
3. **‘Cyber Stalking’**: Repeatedly sending messages that include threats of harm or are highly intimidating or engaging in other on-line activities that make a person afraid for his or her own safety
4. **‘Denigration’**: ‘Dissing’ someone online. Sending or posting cruel gossip or rumors about a person to damage his or her reputation or friendships
5. **‘Impersonation’**: Pretending to be someone else and sending or posting material online that makes someone look bad, gets her/him in trouble or danger, or damages her/his reputation or friendships
6. **‘Outing and Trickery’**: Tricking someone into revealing secret or embarrassing information which is then shared online
7. **‘Exclusion’**: Intentionally excluding someone from an on-line group, like a ‘buddy list’

This list is not exhaustive and the terms used continue to change.

**PROCEDURES TO PREVENT CYBER-BULLYING:**

- Staff, pupils, parents and Board of Management (BoM) will be made aware of issues surrounding cyber bullying through the use of appropriate awareness-raising exercises
- Pupils will learn about cyber bullying through Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), assemblies, friendship week activities and other curriculum projects
- Pupils are not permitted to bring any mobile devices to school.
- Parents and pupils will be informed regularly that the age of consent for Social Media is 13 and the school does not recommend that any child uses a mobile device with access to social media until that age.
- Staff CPD (Continuous Professional Development) will assist in learning about current technologies
- Parents will be provided with information and advice on how to combat cyber bullying
- Pupils will sign an Acceptable Use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) contract
- Parents will be expected to sign an Acceptable Use of ICT contract prior to enrolment and to discuss its meaning with their children
- Parents will be urged to monitor their children’s use of the internet to prevent, as far as possible, cyber-bullying occurring in the first place.
- Parents will be advised that in the case of cyber-bullying which takes place outside of school hours that they should contact the parents of the other child and attempt to resolve the issue themselves in the first instance.

- Should this fail to resolve the problem, parents should then report the incident of cyber bullying to the school.
- All reports of cyber bullying will be investigated, recorded, stored in the Principal's office and monitored regularly.
- Procedures in our school Anti-bullying Policy shall apply
- The police will be contacted in cases of actual or suspected illegal content
- This policy will be reviewed annually. Pupils, parents and staff will be involved in reviewing and revising this policy and any related school procedure

## INFORMATION FOR PUPILS:

If you are being bullied by phone or on the Internet:

- Remember, bullying is never your fault. It can be stopped and it can usually be traced.
- Don't ignore the bullying. Tell someone you trust, such as a teacher or parent or call an advice line.
- Try to keep calm. If you are frightened, try to show it as little as possible. Don't get angry, it will only make the person bullying you more likely to continue.
- Don't give out your personal details online – if you are in a chat room, do not say where you live, the school you go to, your email address etc. All these things can help someone who wants to harm you to build up a picture about you.
- Keep and save any bullying emails, text messages or images. Then you can show them to a parent or teacher as evidence.
- If you can, make a note of the time and date bullying messages or images were sent, and note any details about the sender
- There is plenty of online advice on how to react to cyber bullying. For example, [ie.reachout.com](http://ie.reachout.com) and [www.wiredsafety.org](http://www.wiredsafety.org) have some useful tips.

### Text/video messaging

- You can easily stop receiving text messages for a while by turning-off incoming messages for a couple of days. This might stop the person texting you by making them believe you've changed your phone number
- If the bullying persists, you can change your phone number. Ask your mobile service provider about this.
- Don't reply to abusive or worrying text or video messages.
- Your mobile service provider will have a number for you to ring or text to report phone bullying. Visit their website for details.
- Don't delete messages from cyber bullies. You don't have to read them, but you should keep them as evidence.

### Useful Websites

[www.spunout.ie](http://www.spunout.ie)

[www.childnet.int.org](http://www.childnet.int.org)

[www.kidsmart.org.uk/beingsmart](http://www.kidsmart.org.uk/beingsmart)

[www.antibullying.net](http://www.antibullying.net)

[www.bbc.co.uk/schools/bullying](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/bullying)

<http://ie.reachout.com>

[www.childline.ie/index.php/support/bullying/1395](http://www.childline.ie/index.php/support/bullying/1395) [www.abc.tcd.ie](http://www.abc.tcd.ie)

[www.chatdanger.com](http://www.chatdanger.com)

[www.sticksandstones.ie](http://www.sticksandstones.ie)

[www.kidpower.org](http://www.kidpower.org)

## **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
- Restorative conferencing
- Implementing sociogram questionnaires
- Peer mediation where suitable training has been given

The Procedures mention the following intervention strategies and reference Ken Rigby; [www.bullyingawarenessweek.org/pdf/BullyingPreventionStrategiesinSchools\\_Ken\\_Rigby.pdf](http://www.bullyingawarenessweek.org/pdf/BullyingPreventionStrategiesinSchools_Ken_Rigby.pdf) and an shortened version can be found in the PDST Anti-Bullying Support Material.

- The traditional disciplinary approach
- Strengthening the victim
- Mediation
- Restorative Practice
- The Support Group Method (formerly the No Blame Approach)
- The Method of Shared Concern

### **Restorative Practices**

In 2022 the whole school staff was trained up in Restorative Practices with a cohort of eight staff members, including an SNA, being give more in depth training in this model. In Killygarry National School we will endeavour to use this practice as much as possible to deal with complaints of bullying.

The following questions will be asked of the pupil engaged in the bullying behaviour:-

1. *What happened?*
2. *What were you thinking about at the time?*
3. *What have your thoughts been since?*
4. *Who has been affected by what you did?*
5. *In what way have they been affected?*
6. *What do you think needs to happen next?*

The following questions will be asked of the pupil who is being bullied:-

1. *What happened?*
2. *What were your thoughts at the time?*
3. *What have your thoughts been since?*
4. *How has this affected you and others?*
5. *What has been the hardest thing for you?*
6. *What do you think needs to happen next to make things right*

## **SUPPORT FOR PUPILS AFFECTED BY BULLYING**

A programme of support for pupils who have been bullied will be put in place. Such pupils may need counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed.

A programme of support for those pupils involved in bullying behaviour must also be part of the school's intervention process. Pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those with low self-esteem, opportunities should 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 should be encouraged to discuss them with teachers.

The following strategies support may be put in place to help build the child's self-esteem and enable them to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience:-

- Pastoral care system
- Buddy/Peer mentoring system
- Support team
- Group work such as circle time
- Restorative circles

## **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.

## **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.

Letters will be sent out to parents a few times a year in relation to prevention of cyber bullying e.g. not allowing children form class whatapp groups, not allowing access to snapchat and various other social media outlets, etc.

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2023.

The following sign is posted all around the school and on the entrance doors:-

**Killygarry National School is a No Bullying Zone**

1. Everyone can play every game.
2. We treat everyone with respect, even when they're not being nice.
3. Stand up for yourself, stand up for your friends.

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 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. The Anti-Bullying checklist will be completed each year and approved by the Board of Management.

Signed: Hubert Conaty  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: Serena Prior  
(Principal)

Date: 01/02/23

Date: 01/02/23