

# St Kieran's College

## 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 St Kieran's College Secondary 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 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.

**Key principles of best practice:**

**(a) A positive school culture and climate** which is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity, encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment and promotes respectful relationships across the school community

**(b) Effective leadership**

**(c) A school-wide approach**

**(d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact**

**(e) Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures)** that build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils, explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including, in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying and effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

**(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils**

**(g) Supports for staff**

**(h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies)**

**(i) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy**

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

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying
- cyber-bullying
- 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*.

#### 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>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Denigration</b> - Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person’s reputation</li> <li>• <b>Harassment</b> - Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Impersonation</b> - Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name</li> <li>• <b>Flaming</b> - Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight</li> <li>• <b>Trickery</b> - Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online</li> <li>• <b>Outing</b> - Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images</li> <li>• <b>Exclusion</b> - Purposefully excluding someone from an online group</li> <li>• <b>Cyber stalking</b> - Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety</li> <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>  <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>	
<b>Homophobic and Transgender</b>	<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>
<b>Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community</b>	<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>
<b>Relational</b>	<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, Disability</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>
--	---

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

The Relevant Teachers in this school are:

The Principal  
The Deputy Principals  
Year Heads  
The Chaplains / Guidance Counsellor  
TY Co-ordinator  
Form Teachers

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

**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. This is addressed from First Year through the First year Anti-bullying day and the Cairdeas programme which helps First year students with the transition to secondary school.
- 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 and through the many extra curricular activities offered in St Kieran's College.
- 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. All staff should be familiarised with the school's Code of Behaviour and the measures taken when one encounters issues of bullying.
- Use of the SPHE resource "Growing Up LGBTI" will be taught. The teaching of the SPHE, CSPE and RSE curriculums in the school will provide opportunities for students to explore issues relating to human sexuality, relationships, human rights and the importance of interdependence of people in communities at local, national and international level.

- School wide awareness raising on aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community. Anti-bullying and LGBT posters will be displayed prominently. Relevant staff members will attend anti-bullying / cyber-bullying workshops.
- 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.
- All pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s)s are made aware of the anti-bullying policy and the Code of Behaviour of the school available on the school's website.
- Encourage a culture of telling. 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: Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class. Hand note up with homework. Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
- Parents can call or make an appointment to meet with relevant teachers if they suspect that their child is being bullied. 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 and CSPE curricula and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- 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 any SEN pupils.

#### **Links to other policies**

Other relevant policies are available on the school's website.

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 (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

#### **6.8.9. 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)**

#### **Stage 1 - Prevention:**

St Kieran's College condemns all forms of bullying. The Board of Management strongly asserts the right of each student to learn in a non-threatening environment.

Every student is made aware of the school's strategies for dealing with bullying. This is achieved through the First Year induction programme, the Cairdeas programme and the First Year retreat, which focuses specifically on the issue of bullying. All teaching staff are encouraged to be vigilant in relation to student bullying and are aware of the pastoral care

team in the school. A general awareness of bullying is also focused on in the CSPE and SPHE subjects. Parents and guardians are also informed of these strategies at the Open Evening.

### **Stage 2 - Reporting bullying behaviour**

It is our intention to deal with bullying in a pro-active manner involving a whole school approach. Information is of key importance. Parents, guardians, teachers and students are encouraged to inform the relevant school authorities discreetly of any bullying situation. This information may come from the victim or classmates, parents/guardians of the victim or classmates, Cairdeas leaders, teaching or ancillary staff or other contacts from outside the school. All instances of bullying can be reported to any teacher, the relevant Year Head, Pastoral Care Team, Deputy Principal and/or Principal.

#### **Therefore:**

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

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

Confirmation that the details of the report are correct is of key importance. The extent of the problem should be established discreetly before the perpetrator(s) is/are approached. When the perpetrator(s) is/are approached the following is discussed:

Why the bullying is taking place / the role of the victim / the fact that all students have the right to an environment free of bullying / the prospects for the future / organising a “cooling off period”.

There may be a follow up meeting between the students involved and a member of the pastoral care team. If formal counselling is required from an external source then this can only be arranged through the Principal.

#### **Therefore:**

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant) teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) 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.
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- Where possible incidents should be 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 relevant 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 may face them from the other members of the group after the 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 relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) 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).
- Where the relevant 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 parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school.

### **Stage 3 - Follow up and Recording**

Should a problem persist it is now a matter of discipline and some/all of the following steps may be taken: a meeting with parents / sanctions on the student(s) / signed written statement from the student(s) which will be kept on file to assure the end of such behaviour. (See also School Code of Behaviour) Finally, if a problem still isn't solved at this stage then the Principal may refer particularly serious cases to the Board of Management.

- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
  - Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased
  - Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable
  - Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable
  - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s) or the school Principal or Deputy Principals
- 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.

## **Recording of bullying behaviour**

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

### **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.

### **Formal Step 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.

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

The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 3** 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
- 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 Principals 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.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and



social skills and build resilience.

- The Designated Liaison Person will contact the HSE Children and family social services if necessary in accordance with Child Protection Guidelines.
- The pastoral care team will provide supports for students who are victims of bullying. Such support will depend on the needs of the victim. Follow up meetings and further assistance will be made available if necessary. This may involve regular meetings with a member of the pastoral care team and / or efforts to integrate the student into school life/ assistance in dealing with any on-going issues.
- If pupils require counselling of further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.
- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

**Notes:**

- When a parent/guardian of the victim of bullying doesn't want the school to take any action, this request must be submitted in writing. Ordinarily, every effort is made to discourage such an attitude.
- In the event of a teacher being the alleged perpetrator/victim, the matter is first referred to the Principal. If it cannot be satisfactorily dealt with at that level, it will be dealt with by the Board of Management and any other legal agency outside the school that may be deemed necessary. This latter situation also applies where the Principal is the alleged perpetrator/victim in which case reference would be made to the School Policy: "Dignity at Work Charter and Anti Bullying Policy"

### **8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils**

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

### **9. Prevention of Harassment**

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

10. This policy 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.