Kealkill National School

Anti Bullying Policy

This anti-bullying policy operates in conjunction with the Code of Behaviour, which is used to address isolated instances of anti-social behaviour. In accordance with circular 0045/2013, a new policy on anti bullying has been formulated and approved by the Board of Management.

Kealkill National school has a central role in the children's' social moral development just as it does in their academic development. In Kealkill National School, we work towards standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of honesty, respect, consideration and responsibility. We want to create an environment that is safe, inclusive, conducive to learning and free from harassment and bullying as per the school's code of behaviour policy. The individuality of each child needs to be accommodated while at the same time acknowledging the right of every child to education in a disruption free environment.

Bullying is defined as repeated aggression, whether verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others. Examples of bullying include physical aggression, damage to property, intimidation, isolation, name-calling, taunting or 'slagging'. Child to child bullying, teacher to child, intra staff bullying, parent to staff and parent to child bullying (including a child other than their own) are examples of the areas where bullying may occur.

Isolated instances of aggressive behaviour, which would be dealt with under the Code of Behaviour, would not be described as bullying. However when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing, it is bullying.

The school acknowledges that there are three parties involved in bullying – those who bully, those who are bullied and those who witness the bullying. Staff and teachers bear this in mind when dealing with bullying incidences and try to support and work with all parties involved.

Aims of the Policy

- To foster a school ethos of mutual self-respect
- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour
- To outline, promote and raise awareness of preventative approaches that can be used in response to reported incidences of bullying
- To develop a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour
- To outline procedures for noting and reporting instances of bullying behaviour
- To outline procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour

What can you do if you are being bullied?

- Remember that your silence is the bully's greatest weapon.
- Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied and that it is wrong.
- Be proud of who you are. It is good to be an individual.
- Try not to show that you are upset; it is hard but a bully thrives on someone's fear.
- Stay with a group of friends/people (unless the bullying is happening in that group). There is normally safety in numbers.
- Be assertive and follow the Stay Safe rules: **Say No, get away and tell someone you trust.**
- Talk to a teacher for advice and help or if at home talk to your parents.
- Teachers will listen to you and in accordance with procedure, will endeavour to deal with the issue. Teachers will usually tell the Principal about the problem and together they will decide how to deal with it

If you know someone is being bullied

- Take action. You might tell the bully to stop doing what they are doing; you might get some of your friends to help you with this. You could also make sure that the victim is not left alone until the problem is resolved. Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the bully. It makes the victim feel more unhappy and on their own.
- If you feel you cannot get involved, tell an adult immediately. If you're at school tell a teacher so they can help, without getting you into trouble.
- Do not be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully

As a parent

- Be aware of unusual behaviour in your children. For example, they may suddenly not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to their normal standard. They may not want to invite certain children to play or go to activities they used to enjoy.
- Always take an active role in your child's education. Enquire how their day went, who they spend their time with, how break time was spent etc.
- If you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour, inform the school immediately. It is very helpful for the school if you can list the 'who, where, when and how' of the behaviours affecting your child.
- It is important that you advise your child not to fight back. It can make matters worse.
- Tell your child that there is nothing wrong with her/him; it is not her/his fault that they are being bullied.
- Make sure your child is fully aware of the school policy regarding bullying and that they should not be afraid to ask for help.

As a school

- Organise the community in order to minimise opportunities for bullying; make sure that supervision is sufficient at all times.
- Use opportunities to discuss aspects of bullying and the appropriate way to behave towards each other. In this respect the SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education) programme is very important and especially the Stay Safe lessons addressing bullying.
- Deal quickly, firmly and fairly with any complaints, involving parents where necessary.
- Regularly review the school policy and procedures and assess its success or otherwise.
- When buying teaching materials (books, posters, software etc) ensure that nothing gives a negative view of any group because of their ethnic origin, gender etc.
- Continue to have a firm and fair discipline structure.
- Encourage pupils to discuss how they get on with other people and to form positive attitudes towards other people. This includes work on friendship and what it really means.
- Encourage pupils to treat everyone with care and respect.
- Treat bullying as a serious matter and take every possible action to prevent it happening in our school.
- Use and continue to update a variety of materials and resources available to assist us in devising appropriate anti-bullying programmes. Include workshops on bullying issues from outside agencies.

Actions to be taken when bullying is alleged

If bullying is alleged or suspected we talk to the alleged victim, the alleged bully (or bullies) and any witnesses. This will include the taking of a written record of what happened, clarifying the 'who, where, when and how' of the incidents.

Help and support will be given, as appropriate, to both the victims and the bully (bullies). Access to a counselling service may be offered, if deemed appropriate.

We support ***the victim*** in the following ways:

- By offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about the incidents with their class teacher, or another teacher if they choose.
- By informing the victim's parents/guardians.
- By offering continuing support when they feel they need it.
- By taking one or more of the disciplinary steps described below to prevent more bullying.

We also discipline, yet try to help, ***the bully (bullies)*** in the following ways:

- By talking about what happened to discover why they became involved, the extent of their involvement and their understanding of their own culpability.
- By informing the bully's (bullies') parents/guardians.
- By continuing to work with the bully (bullies) in order to challenge negative attitudes as far as possible.
- By taking one or more of the disciplinary steps described below to prevent more bullying.

Disciplinary steps

- Pupils will be warned officially to stop their bullying behaviour.
- In cases where it has been determined that serious bullying behaviour has occurred, the teacher and Principal will request a meeting with the parents or guardians of the two parties involved (separately).The purpose of the meeting is (a) to inform parents/guardians of the problem (b) explain actions being taken and (c) the reasons for them. Their assistance will be sought in preventing a repeat of the behaviour.
- Separate follow-up meetings, with the two parties involved, may be arranged, with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date, if the victim is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect.
- Loss of specific privileges as appropriate. These will be discussed with the parents/guardians before implementation and can include the following
  Exclusion from break/lunch times for a specific number of days.
  Parents may be requested to escort their child to and from school.
- Repeated offending may result in a shortened school day. A shortened school day will be put in place for a period of time agreed by the school principal, class teacher and parents/guardians of the pupil. Written notification will be sent out to parents/guardians outlining the dates of the shortened school day. Parents/guardians will be invited to school during this period to discuss the matter.
- Continuing to offend, following the above measures, will result in a recommendation to the Board of Management for Suspension (Temporary – Three Days) Written notification sent out to parents by registered post signed by Chairman of Board of Management informing the parents/guardians that pupil was being suspended from school and the dates of the suspension stated in the letter. Parents/guardians will be invited to visit school during suspension without pupil
- The Board of Management has the authority to expel a pupil in an extreme case e.g. where repeated incidents of serious misbehaviour interfere with the educational opportunities of fellow students or where there is a threat to the health and safety of either students or staff. Where expulsion is considered the school authorities will have tried a range of other interventions and will have formed the opinion that they have exhausted all possibilities for

changing the pupil's behaviour. This sanction would be imposed under the terms of the Education Welfare Act (2000). Suspension/expulsion procedures are in accordance with the Education Act (1998).

- These sanctions are in line with the schools code of behaviour

Child to Child Bullying

Stage One

Unless the incident is of a very serious nature, it will be dealt with by the classroom teacher who will talk to the children involved. Teachers respect the need to support the esteem of each party involved in an incident. When a teacher becomes aware that a child is regularly involved in incidents he/she will start a record of such incidents. The purpose of this record is:

- To aid memory by recording details of the incident
- For clarity in assessment of the situation
- For planning and intervention

Prior to a record of incidences being kept, parent(s) will be informed. Should the action taken at this stage prove not to have resolved the issue, the staff will proceed to stage two

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Stage Two

The Principal will arrange to meet with the parents of the child who is seen to be bullying and separately with the parents of the victim of bullying. The children themselves may be required to attend part or all of these meetings. The child who is bullying will be placed on report. This means that the child's behaviour in all areas is monitored during the day. The child has three meetings with his/her teacher and together they decide on what is to be written for that part of the day. All positive behaviour, progress on work etc will be noted. At the end of the day, the teacher writes his/her own comment. The purpose of this report is to focus as much as possible on the positive qualities and efforts of the child, and to motivate the child to move away from negative behaviour. The child should be able to see that parents and school are working together in his/her interest, so the co-operation of the parents is essential. Initially a review of the reports will be carried out on a weekly basis, in a meeting with the Principal, teacher, parents and child. If progress is being made, longer intervals between meetings may be decided upon. The child who is the victim of bullying will also meet with the Principal and his/her parents. The aim of such a meeting(s) will be to address emotional needs and devise strategies for the child to deal with the bullying. This may involve reinforcing the programme being covered in class, or other strategies.

Stage 3

It is the duty of the school to provide a safe environment for all the children. Should the above interventions fail and the bullying continue, a programme of appropriate sanctions may be implemented by the Principal in consultation with the parents and Board of Management. Sanctions implemented aim to encourage positive behaviour and support the esteem of the child. These sanctions may include a period of suspension during which there will be ongoing consultation with the parents to decide on appropriate action(s) to be taken in the best interests of the child. Suspension for any period of time will be reported in writing by the Principal to the Chair of the Board of Management.

Bullying by Adults

In the case of **intra-staff bullying**, Kealkill National School will adopt the procedures outlined in Section C (c2) of the INTO booklet: 'Working Together: Procedures and Policies for Positive Staff Relations'. A copy of this document is available for free download on the INTO website.

In the case of **Teacher – Child bullying**, a complaint should in the first instance be raised with the teacher in question by the parent/guardian of the child if possible and then if necessary referred to the Principal. Where it has not been possible to agree a framework for resolution, the matter should be referred in writing by both parties to the Board of Management for investigation.

In the case of **Parent – Teacher** bullying, the Principal should be informed in the first instance, and if deemed necessary the Board of Management should subsequently be informed in writing.

In the case of **Parent/Visitor to the school – Child** bullying, the complaint should be referred in the first instance to the child's class teacher and subsequently to the Principal if unresolved.

In the case of **Principal – Parent/ Child** bullying, the matter should be raised with the Principal if possible, or referred to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.
The school may seek assistance and advice from outside agencies if necessary, including National Educational Psychological Service, the National Educational Welfare Board, HSE (social services) and Juvenile Liaison Office.

A record is kept of all incidents of bullying and the subsequent investigation and disciplinary measures taken.

Signed: _____ (Chairperson, Board of Management)

Date: 18/10/23

_____ (Principal)

18/10/2023

This policy was ratified on 04/02/14 and has been reviewed yearly in line with Appendix 4 of the Department's Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools. Most recent review took place on 18/10/2023

Appendix 1 Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive. School culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.
- Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying "hot spots" and "hot times" for bullying in the school.
- Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
- Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.
- Support the establishment and work of student councils

Appendix 2 Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____Class_____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

_____
_____
_____

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))*

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))*

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

Physical Aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Other (specify)	

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

*** Note:** The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.

Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy

To: Parents / Guardians

The Board of Management of Kealkill NS wishes to inform you that:

- The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of _____ [date].

- This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in **Appendix 4** of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.*

Signed _____ Date 18/10/2023
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____ Date 18/10/2023
Principal