

ST. KEVIN'S COMMUNITY COLLEGE ANTI-BULLYING POLICY



	DATE.
RATIFIED BY THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT:	DAY OF 201 .
REVIEW DATE:	DAY OF 201 .

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. Kevin's Community College 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:
 - A positive school culture and climate which-
 - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment;
 - and
 - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
 - Effective leadership;
 - A school-wide approach;
 - A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
 - Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-
 - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
 - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
 - Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
 - Supports for staff;
 - Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
 - On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

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

Examples of Bullying behaviour

- Physical aggression
- Damage to property
- Name calling
- The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures of other materials aimed at intimidating another person.
- Offensive graffiti
- Extortion
- Intimidation
- Invasion of personal space
- Spreading rumours
- Cyber Bullying

Homophobic and Transgender

- Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation
- Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation
- Name calling, e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian ...used in a derogatory manner ☐ Physical intimidation or attacks
- Threats

Race, Nationality, Ethnic background, and membership of the Travelling Community.

- Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background. ☐ Exclusion on the basis of any of the above.

Relational

This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:

- Malicious gossip

- Ignoring
- Excluding from the group
- Taking someone's friend away
- Breaking confidence
- Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear

Special Education, Needs, Disability, High Achievers and Gifted Learners

- Name calling
- Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs
- Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying
- Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues.
- Mimicking a person's disability Setting others up for ridicule.

4. In St. Kevin's CC the relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with bullying is the Year Head.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

The school will provide all necessary information about bullying to parents of enrolling students. All parents/guardians will be given a copy of the Anti-Bullying Policy along with a copy of the Code of Behaviour on enrolment The school will liaise with primary schools as necessary to track any behavioural history relating to bullying.

A survey will be carried out during the first term each year. This will give students the opportunity to express any individual concerns/reports of bullying.

The school will ensure that the teaching staff is kept fully informed of policies and programmes and confirmed cases of bullying as necessary, and that all teachers are vigilant in this particular area.

The school will maintain and further develop an awareness of bullying and its consequences among the student body through SPHE, CSPE, RSE, posters, student poster competition, use of anti-bullying logo, anti-bullying awareness day, the Students' Council and the Parents' Council. The Anti-Bullying Policy will be published on the school's website. Excerpts from the policy along with other relevant information will be included in the students' journal.

Safe Internet Use will be promoted, educating students about safer and more responsible use of online technology and mobile phones, coordinated by ICT and SPHE teachers.

Through the process of School Self-Evaluation we will periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy.

Teachers of all subjects will aim to build empathy, respect and resilience in students and will act as positive role models.

- We will, through our curricular and extra-curricular programmes aim to develop in students a positive sense of self-worth and enhance their self-esteem.
- We aim to facilitate a culture whereby students, teachers and parents alike, are aware of their responsibilities where bullying is concerned.
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s).
- 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.
- The school will encourage the involvement of the Student Council in contributing to a safe school environment to encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- The school will develop a ‘Buddy system’ whereby older students are involved in helping younger students to settle in to the school.
 - The school will encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. 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. They should be aware that there is no such thing as an ‘innocent bystander’.
 - The school will ensure that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.: approach a teacher directly, hand up a note with homework, put a note under the door of the Year Head’s door or get a parent/guardian or friend to tell on their behalf.

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 6.8 in Procedures)

6.8.1 A consistent and clear approach to dealing with bullying when it occurs is essential to effective practice.

6.8.2 A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school. Individual teachers must take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school’s anti-bullying policy.

Established intervention strategies

6.8.6 There are various approaches and intervention strategies that might be used by schools. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour it is generally acknowledged that that no one intervention works in all situations. International and national research also continues to evolve in this area and the effectiveness of particular approaches continues to be reviewed.

6.8.7 Each school must therefore decide on the intervention method(s) that are best suited to its own circumstances. In identifying the most suitable intervention method(s) for a particular school, it is important to research and understand both the techniques of intervention involved and the assumptions and rationale of particular methods. One of the recommendations in the *Action Plan on Bullying* is that a new national anti-bullying website will be set up and this will be a useful and ongoing resource for schools.

6.8.8 To ensure clarity among the entire school community about how bullying cases will be dealt with, the method(s) of intervention that will be used by the school must be specified in the school’s anti-bullying policy.

Procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying

6.8.9

- (i) The primary aim for the relevant teacher 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);
- (ii) 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;
- (iii) All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. 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;
- (iv) Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants, caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;
- (v) 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;
- (vi) It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;
- (vii) Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;
- (viii) Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- (ix) 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;
- (x) 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.
- (xi) 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;
- (xii) 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;
- (xiii) It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);
- (xiv) In cases where it has been determined by the relevant 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;
- (xv) 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 antibullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;

- (xvi) 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;
- (xvii) 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;
- (xviii) 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.
- (xix) 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; and
 - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal
- (xx) Where a parent 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;
- (xxi) 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

6.8.10 The Board of Management must ensure that the school has clear procedures for the formal noting and reporting of bullying behaviour and these must be documented in the school's antibullying policy. All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour must adhere to the following:

- (i) While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same;
- (ii) If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist him/her to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- (iii) 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; 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.

In each of the circumstances at (a) and (b) above, the recording template at **Appendix 3** must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the

recording template at **Appendix 3** does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

Bullying as part of a continuum of behaviour

6.8.11 It is also important to note that bullying behaviour can be part of a continuum of behaviour rather than a stand-alone issue and in some cases behaviour may escalate beyond that which can be described as bullying to serious physical or sexual assault or harassment. To ensure that any such cases are dealt with appropriately, the school's anti-bullying policy must provide for appropriate linkages with the overall code of behaviour and provide for referral to be made to relevant external agencies and authorities where appropriate. In cases where a school has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil, the advice of the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) should be sought.

Referral of serious cases to the HSE

6.8.12 In relation to bullying in schools, *Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011* (Children First) and the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* provide that in situations where "the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school must consult the HSE Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan".

6.8.13 Serious instances of bullying behaviour should, in accordance with the Children First and *the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, be referred to the HSE Children and Family Services and/or Gardaí as appropriate.

6.8.14 The *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* also provide that where school personnel have concerns about a child but are not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, the Designated Liaison Person must seek advice from the HSE Children and Family Social Services.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows: (See 6.8 of Procedures)

6.8.15 A programme of support for pupils who have been bullied must be 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.

6.8.16 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.

6.8.17 Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour should be encouraged to discuss them with teachers.

6.8.18 Details of the school's programme for working with pupils affected by bullying must be set out in the school's 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 was adopted by the Board of Management on 4th Feb 2015

11.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.

12.This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website 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.