

A large red arrow pointing to the right, positioned to the left of the school name.

St Kevin's  
Community College

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**Anti-Bullying Policy**

## St Kevin's Community 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 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 behaviour is deliberate and repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against any person.***

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

- Verbal – attacks of a highly personal or sexual nature, which may be directed at a student’s family, culture, race or religion, or the spreading of malicious rumours.
- Physical
- Gesture Bullying – non-verbal threatening gestures, which convey intimidating or frightening messages, deliberate exclusion or isolation, extortion.
- 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.***

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with 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.***

## **Examples of Bullying Behaviour**

<b>General behaviours which apply to all</b>	Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><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></ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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 style="text-align: center;"><b>Cyber</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Denigration:</b> Spreading rumours, 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> <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>• <b>Silent telephone/mobile phone call</b></li> <li>• <b>Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls</b></li> <li>• <b>Abusive text messages</b></li> <li>• <b>Abusive email</b></li> <li>• <b>Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles</b></li> <li>• <b>Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures</b></li> <li>• <b>Abusive posts on any form of communication technology</b></li> </ul>

<p><b>Identity Based Behaviours</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <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).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Homophobic and Transgender</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Spreading rumours</b> about a person’s sexual orientation</li> <li>• <b>Taunting</b> a person of a different sexual orientation</li> <li>• <b>Name calling</b> e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner</li> <li>• <b>Physical intimidation or attacks</b></li> <li>• <b>Threats</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Race, Nationality, Ethnic Background and the 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> </ul>
<p><b>Sexual</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching</li> <li>• Harassment</li> </ul>

<p><b>Special Educational Needs Disability</b></p>	<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</li> <li>• to recognise and defend themselves against bullying</li> <li>• Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity</li> <li>• to understand social situations and social cues.</li> <li>• Mimicking a person's disability</li> <li>• Setting others up for ridicule</li> </ul>
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**4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:**

<p><b>Principal</b>  <b>Deputy Principal</b>  <b>Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator</b>  <b>Year Heads</b>  <b>Tutors</b>  <b>The Care Team</b>  <b>The School Counsellor</b></p> <p><b>Any Teacher may act as a relevant teacher if the circumstances warrant it</b></p>
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**5. The education and prevention strategies in St Kevin's Community College are as follows:**

**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 the relevant teacher(s)
- School wide awareness raising 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.
- St Kevin's Community College has an effective mentoring system in place. The student council and Gluais/Ember contribute to a safe school environment e.g. lunchtime clubs, whole school activities to help support and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school to be included in student journals.
- Raise awareness with students, parents and guardians: The school's Anti-Bullying Policy is discussed with all students and all parents and guardians. Parents and guardians receive a copy of the policy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school every year. Students sign an Anti-Bullying contract at the start of each school year.
- SPHE is an effective programme for identifying bullying behaviours.
- Random Acts of Kindness Weeks are arranged throughout the school year.
- The "Friends for Life" or "Cool schools relational bullying" programmes can be taught in first year through SPHE or Tutor time. Advocating a "telling school", teachers encourage a culture of telling with particular emphasis on rescuing or helping each other.
- Regular assemblies on Bullying and teachers are encouraged to attend training sessions throughout the school year.
- 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.

### **Implementation of curricula**

- Full implementation of the SPHE and CSPE curricula and the RSE programme
- 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,, On My Own Two Feet, Friends for Life, Webwise Resources, B4U Decide and the Trust Pack.
- Delivery of the Garda Schools Programmes covering Personal Safety and Cyber Bullying and Substance Use.
- 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.

**Links to other policies:**

- Child Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Statement
- RSE Policy
- Code of Behaviour

**6. St Kevin’s Community College’s procedures for follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for investigating and dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:**

**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).

When harm is caused a restorative practice approach is adopted. Restorative questions, conversations and circles are used to help resolve issues that arise with students and their peers. This restorative approach can be used informally or the student may be asked to take part in a restorative circle in order to resolve conflict effectively. If a formal circle is required colleagues may be asked to co-facilitate.

**Reporting Bullying Behaviour**

Any pupil or parent/guardian may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school. The teacher will report the incident to the relevant teacher.

All reports and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, SNA’s, caretakers, and cleaners must report any bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them to the relevant.

**Steps for investigating and dealing with incidents**

1. The relevant teacher/ Anti-bullying co-ordinator deals with the report of bullying and meets the students involved. All meetings are recorded.
2. The incident is reported to the Principal.
3. Each party has the opportunity to tell their side of the incident fairly and the relevant teacher records all information on a Pre-DES form.



4. A warning is issued to the student involved and the student is informed that the behaviour must cease immediately. The student is asked not to discuss this issue with other students.
5. The relevant teacher highlights the relevant section of the Anti-Bullying Contract which has been breached.
6. The relevant teacher needs to ensure that the student understands the contract. In some cases, if required for SEN students a resource teacher or tutor may allocate extra teaching time to ensure they fully understand the incident. Appropriate resources may be used to assist this teaching. (E.g. Primary School “my selfie” etc.)
7. When the relevant teacher has ensured that the student understands the issue and what is required going forward from the student in relation to respect, the student is asked to re-sign the Anti-Bullying contract.
8. A phone call is made to parents/guardians of all students involved. In recurring or very serious incidents this may be a face to face meeting, with the student present. In rare circumstances a phone call is not made. This is documented and this is a decision made by school management.
9. In the case that the school is aware of a student who is involved in sexual activity (whether this be related to bullying or not), the parent or caregiver is informed.
10. If the student involved in the bullying continues this behaviour with the same student or towards another student within 21 days, the issue must be reported to the Board of Management using the DES form. The same steps above are taken.

### **Follow up and Recording**

**No relevant teacher should deal with a bullying issue without informing the Principal of the School**

In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must take the following factors into account:

- Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased
- Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as possible
- Whether the relationships between the parties have been resolved as far as practicable
- Any feedback from the parties involved

Follow up meetings with the relevant students should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together later if this is appropriate and the student being bullied agrees.

Where a parent/guardian is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with the procedures, the parent/guardian may be referred as appropriate to the school’s complaint procedures. In the event that the parent/guardian has exhausted the school’s complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise them of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

### **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 record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. 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 it. The record must be recorded on the **blue** incident form.
- When the **blue recording template** is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy made to the Principal and stored in the Principal's office.

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

- If it is established that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must forward appropriate written records to the relevant person which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- All documentation regarding incidents of bullying and follow up documentation will be stored in the central filing system.

#### **Formal (See Appendix 3)**

The relevant teacher must use the recording template provided by the Department of Education 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 person 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
- 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%20KenRigby.pdf)

- The traditional disciplinary approach
- Strengthening the victim
- Mediation
- Restorative Practice
- The Support Group Method
- The Method of Shared Concern

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 e.g.

- Pastoral care system
- Mentoring system
- Tutor/Year head system
- Group work such as circle time

- If pupils require counselling or 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.

## **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.

- All common areas are monitored in the morning and afternoon and all teachers are constantly on duty on the corridors and report and sightings of bullying behaviour.
- Staff members are trained on the school Bullying policy and are aware of responsibility and actions to follow if incidents of bullying come to their attention in any form.
- A Gluais/Ember system, student council, and a Buddy system is in place to counteract bullying.
- The Acceptable Use Policy is in place and a teacher monitors internet sessions. Students use only approved sites and a Net Nanny has been installed on every computer.
- No social media sites or chat rooms are accessible by students.
- The internet use is for Educational purposes only.

## **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.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 30<sup>th</sup> day of November 2021.

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.

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 readily accessible to parents and pupils on request 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.