Anti-Bullying Policy

Introduction

Kildare Town Educate Together National School believes that each pupil has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation.

The school regards bullying as a serious infringement of individual rights and a serious threat to the self-esteem and self-confidence of targeted pupil(s). Therefore, it does not tolerate bullying of any kind.

Every report of bullying is treated seriously and dealt with, having due regard for the well-being of the targeted pupil(s) and the perpetrator(s).

An 'Anti-Bullying Team,' exists to cultivate an environment free from bullying. This team is made up of the In School Leadership Team (ISL).

The immediate priority, should a bullying incident occur, is ending the bullying, (*thereby protecting the person(s) being targeted*) and resolving the issues and restoring the relationships involved insofar as is practicable using a restorative practice approach.

All members of our school community are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance of a safe environment in the school. On becoming aware of any bullying situation, in or outside the school, involving members of the school community they should notify a trusted responsible adult. Bullying behaviour is too serious not to report.

Pupils' participation in school life in general is encouraged through existing school structures. Awareness of bullying, and willingness to take action to prevent or stop it, is part of this participation.

Policy Details

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 Kildare Town Educate Together National 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.

1. 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 –
    - o is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity
    - o encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment

- o   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:
  - o   Build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils
  - o   Explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including, homophobic and trans-phobic 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
2. 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 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.

The definition of bullying outlined above includes a wide range of behaviour, whether verbal or written, whether physical or social, whether targeting person or property, whether carried out directly or indirectly or through any electronic or other medium, which could harm a pupil or undermine her/his self-esteem or self-confidence.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.*

3. The "Relevant Teachers" for investigating and dealing with bullying in this school refers to each class teacher who has a responsibility for their own class.

(*"At primary level, the relevant teacher will normally be the class teacher."* Procedures 6.8.3).

4. The education and prevention strategies used in KTETNS are as follows:
- Anti-Bullying is explicitly taught as part of the SPHE programme, every year, in every class
- Friendship and Anti-Bullying week takes place each September

Through explicit education and awareness:

- Pupils are helped to examine the issue of bullying in a calm rational way, outside of the tense context of particular bullying incidents. Children are made aware of the nature of bullying and the various forms that it can take.
- Pupils are made aware that the consequences of bullying behaviour are always bad for those who are targeted, even if this is not always obvious at the time.
- Pupils are encouraged to recognise, reject and report bullying behaviour
- School staff and parents/guardians are made aware of the nature of bullying and the signs that might indicate that a pupil is being bullied. They are encouraged to be vigilant in watching out for signs of bullying and to report any suspicion of bullying they may have to the relevant teacher or any other trusted staff member.
- We employ a restorative practice approach, see Appendix 1
5. 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:

Stage 1:

- The 'Relevant Teacher' investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour, whether these take place within the school or outside it, with a view to establishing the facts and bringing any such behaviour to an end. As part of this investigation, the teacher may ask the relevant pupils to write an account of what happened. All pupils will be interviewed by the relevant teacher to establish the nature and extent of the behaviour and any reasons for it. The teacher does not apportion blame, but takes a restorative practice approach, focusing on future actions. Depending on the severity of the behaviour, at this point, there are no sanctions placed on the child.
- All reported/suspected incidences are logged on the Form for Recording Bullying Behaviour, available on Aladdin.

Stage 2

- If there is a second reported incident involving the same pupil, regardless of the target of the behaviour, the teacher investigates the report with all parties. A meeting will be held with teacher, parents and the child (if appropriate) to attempt to reach a positive conclusion for all parties.

Stage 3

- If stages 1 and 2 do not yield a positive outcome, a meeting is held with parents and principal (and the child, if appropriate). At this point sanctions are enforced as per the Code of Behaviour. All incidences of bullying at Stage 3 will be reported to the Board of Management.

Depending on the severity of the incident, the principal and parents may be involved at any stage of the process. Likewise, the Code of Behaviour may be enforced at any stage depending on severity of behaviour.

6. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:
- Bullied pupils:
  o Ending the bullying behaviour
  o Changing the school culture to foster more respect for bullied pupils and all pupils
  o Changing the school culture to foster greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils
  o Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the awareness-raising programme
  o Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations
  o After resolution, enabling bullied pupils to complete a victim-impact statement
  o Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g., participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).
  o Implementing a "buddy system" for that child if deemed necessary.
- Bullying pupils:
  o Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a "clean sheet"
  o Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honourable thing and giving them praise for this,
  o Making adequate supports available to help those who need it learn other ways of meeting their needs besides violating the rights of others
  o Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g., participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school where appropriate)
  o Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth,
  o In dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child,
  o In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a "clean sheet" and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.

7. 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.

8. The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps as 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.
9. This policy was first adopted by the Board of Management on 24/09/15 and is annually updated.
1. 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 of Education and Skills and to the patron if requested.

2. Useful contacts:

Service	Website	Contact Details
Barnardos	www.barnardos.ie	01-4530355
Jigsaw	www.jigsaw.ie	01-5380087
Tusla – Child & Family Agency	www.tusla.ie	01-7718500
Anti-Bullying Centre	www.dcu.ie/abc	01-7009139
Childline	www.childline.ie	1800 666 666
ISPCC	www.ispcc.ie	01-6767960
National Association for Victims of Bullying		0506-31590
Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy	www.irish-counselling.ie	01-2303536
National Parents Council	www.npc.ie	01-8874477
Parentline	www.parentline.ie	1890 927277

Stay Safe	www.staysafe.ie	
Bully 4 U	www.bully4u.ie	

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 to the Department of Education and Skills and to the patron if requested.

Implementation and Review:

Date Created	February 2014
Date of Review	November 2022
Date for Next Review	November 2023