Telephone (023) 8849890
Kilbrittain N.S.

Website: www.kilbrittainns.com

Email: kilbrittainns.ias@eircom.net

Kilbrittain

Co. Cork, P72N668

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School Policy on Bullying, Sexual Harassment and Gender Equality

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 Kilbrittain N.S. 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:

   (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;

   In addition, the school also:

   - acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.
   - acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.
   - promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.
   - prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members.
   - has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of its functioning.
   - has the capacity to change in response to pupils' needs.
   - identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupils' attitudes and values.
   - takes particular care of "at risk" pupils and uses its monitoring systems to facilitate early intervention where necessary and it responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.

- recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis.
- recognises the role of parents in equipping the pupil with a range of life-skills.
- recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.
- promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.
- promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school.
- Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of 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; and
- ●explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.

(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); and**

(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 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.

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

General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying	- Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racism, etc. - Physical aggression - Damage to property - Name calling - Slagging - The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person - Offensive graffiti - Extortion - Intimidation - Insulting or offensive gestures - The "look" - Invasion of personal space - A combination of any of the types listed.
Cyber	**Denigration**: Spreading rumours, lies, or gossip to hurt a person's reputation **Harassment**: continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual **Impersonation**: posting offensive or aggressive messages under another persons' name **Flaming**: using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight **Trickery**: fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online **Outing**: posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images **Exclusion**: purposefully excluding someone from an online group **Cyber stalking**: ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety - Silent phone call - Abusive phone calls / text messages / emails - Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook / twitter etc. - Abusive website comments / blogs / images - Abusive posts on any form of communication technology

Identity Based Behaviours **Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation** (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).	
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 Traveller 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 - Isolation & exclusion - Ignoring - Excluding from the group - Taking someone's friends away - Spreading rumours - Breaking confidence - The "look" - Use of terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way
sexual	- Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching - Harassment
Special educational needs, disability	- Name calling - Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs - 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. 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*):

1. Relevant class teacher
2. Principal teacher
3. Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.
4. Teachers on supervision duty will normally report to the relevant class teacher.

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 (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

Education & Prevention Strategies

A. a **school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all** members of the school community.

B. The **promotion of the value of diversity** to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlighting the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.

C. The **fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils**. They will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.

D. **Supervision and monitoring** of classrooms, school grounds, and school tours. 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 (see Kilbrittain NS AUP Policy).

E. Development and promotion of an **Anti-Bullying code for the school** – to be displayed publicly and in common areas of the school.

F. The schools' anti-bullying policy is available for all to read on request.

G. The implementation of **regular whole school awareness measures**. Possibilities include but are not limited to whole school assembly, seminars, friendship week, buddy system, lunchtime pals, or any other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.

H. Encourage a **culture of telling**, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. 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.

I. Ensuring that pupils know **who to tell and how to tell**. E.g.

   i) Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, e.g. after class.

   ii) Hand up note with homework.

   iii) Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.

   iv) Get a parent / guardian to tell on your behalf

   v) Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

   vi) Identify clear protocols to encourage parents / guardians to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied.

vii) AUP policy

viii) Mobile phone policy

J. **Implementation of curricula**

- SPHE Programme
- Walk Tall
- Circle Time
- RSE Programme
- Alive-O Programme
- Webwise Programme (See Acceptable Usage Policy)
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes for Primary level. These lessons, delivered by community Gardaí, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying.
- 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.

K. **Links to other Policies**

Other school policies that are particularly relevant to bullying include:

- Code of Behaviour
- Child Protection Policy
- Supervision of Pupils Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy

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);

The school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach:

Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s) / guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

Reporting bullying behaviour:

- Any pupil or parent / guardian may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be noted, investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher so that pupils will gain confidence in telling. A special incident book will be kept in the office for this purpose.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNA's), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners etc. must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher. Discretion is important
- Serious cases will be referred immediately to the Deputy Principal and then to the principal.
- Parents will be informed by the Deputy Principal/ Principal earlier rather than later. Meetings between parents and teachers will be recorded.
- Parents will be informed of the appropriate person to whom they can make their enquiries regarding bullying. Pupils will be made to understand that reporting is not "telling tales".
- Individual teachers will record and take appropriate measures in accordance with policy.

Investigating and Dealing with Incidents: Style of approach

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the relevant teacher will exercise their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- Parents / Guardians 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.
- Calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- Incidents best investigated outside the classroom situation.
- Teachers would speak separately to the pupils involved.
- Interviews would be conducted with sensitivity & due regard to all parties' rights.
- Answers would be sought to questions of What, When, Where, Who and Why.
- Members of a group would be met individually and as a group. A written account by pupils of any incident(s) may be helpful.

- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after an interview by the teacher.
- A written record of the incident will be kept.
- In cases where it is determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, parents / guardians of all parties will be informed, and if necessary, met. The actions being taken will be explained (by reference to the school policy.) The school should give parents / guardians an opportunity of discussing the ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils
- 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 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.

Follow up and Recording:

- 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:

  (a) Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
  (b) Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
  (c) Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and
  (d) Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal.

- 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
- 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;
- 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.

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. This record will normally be put in the 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 will inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

Formal Stage 1: determination that bullying has occurred

- The relevant teacher will 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.
- The relevant teacher will store records in the class assessment folder.Anonymity will be preserved as reports are written using pupil's roll number.

Formal Stage 2: Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)

The relevant teacher will 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) In certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal

List of behaviours requiring immediate reporting:
1. Serious physical assault
2. Serious sexual assault
3. Serious sexual harassment

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy is maintained by the Principal.

The relevant teacher will keep the record (in the class assessment folder) for the duration of the school year.

The principal will keep a copy of the record in an anti bullying folder until the child is 21.

(if they are kept in a separate bullying/child protection file parents not entitled to see them)

Established Intervention Strategies

- Teacher interviews with all pupils involved
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be formal / informal
- Working with parents / guardians to support school interventions
- No blame approach
- Circle time
- Restorative interviews
- Restorative conferencing
- Implementing sociogram questionnaires
- Peer mediation where suitable training has been given
- Other intervention strategies include, but are not limited to:
  (a) The traditional disciplinary approach
  (b) Strengthening the victim
  (c) Mediation
  (d) Restorative practice
  (e) The support group method
  (f) The method of shared concern
  (g) Other ideas available on
     www.bullyingawarenessweek.org/pdf/BullyingPreventionStrategiesinSchools Ken Rigby.pdf

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*) :

1. Teachers will focus on ways to build the child's self-esteem and self-worth.
2. Teachers will help children to develop social skills e.g. how to deal with anger, hurt etc.
3. Pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an on-going basis.
4. Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour should be encouraged to discuss them with teachers.
5. Circle time: will give opportunities to raise issues children may need to discuss with others or teacher.
6. 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.
7. 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.

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 _____

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. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: _____   Signed: _____
 (Chairperson of Board of Management)   (Principal)
Imelda Hurley   Karen O'Donovan

Date: _____   Date: _____

Date of next review: _____