SCOIL MHUIRE

KANTURK

Anti-Bullying Policy

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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 Scoil Mhuire Kanturk 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.

    The school reserves the right to apply its anti-bullying policy in respect of bullying that occurs at a location , activity, function or programme that is not school related if in the opinion of the Principal and/or Board of Management the alleged bullying has created a hostile environment at school for the victim, has infringed on the rights of the victim, of the school and/or has materially or substantially disrupted the education process or the orderly operation of the school.

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-
        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; and
        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; and
        o 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.

Sharing of explicit images and in particular sharing of explicit images of pupils without their permission is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour and Discipline.

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

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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*):

- Principal

- Deputy Principal

- Programme Managers

- Year Heads

- Guidance Counsellor

- Programme Co-ordinator

- Others as identified by school management

- Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

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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 and prevention strategies may include the following

School – wide approach

- A school wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of 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 extra-curricular activities. Students will be provided with opportunities to develop an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on students' lives and the need to respond to its prevention and intervention.
- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develop an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on students' lives and the need to respond to its prevention and intervention.
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s).
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff are encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- Involvement of the student council in contributing to a safe environment e.g. Cairde system, mentoring and other student support activities that can help to support students and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school which may be included in student journals.
- The school's anti bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school (annually if required).
- The implementation of regular (e.g. per year/term/month/week) whole school awareness measures eg. regular whole school or year group assemblies by principal, deputy principal, programme managers, year heads, Wellbeing Week, pastoral care class.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way students 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.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.

    Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.

    Hand note up with homework

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

    Get parent(s)/guardian(s) to tell on your behalf.

    Administer a confidential questionnaire to students.

    Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that

    bullying is taking place.

- Encourage parents to approach the school if they suspect their child is being bullied

Implementation of curricula

- The full implementation of the SPHE and CSPE curricula and the RSE, Stay Safe and FUSE Programmes
- CPD for staff developing these programmes
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes by the Community Garda
- Consideration of the needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation

Links to other policies

- Code of Behaviour
- Child Protection Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Extracurricular activities policy
- Attendance and participation policy
- Mobile Phone Policy

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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*) :

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame)

Reporting of bullying behaviour

- Any pupil or parent/guardian may bring an alleged bullying incident to any teacher in the school
- All reports, including anonymous reports must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher
- Teaching and non-teaching staff must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them to the relevant teacher.

Investigating and dealing with incidents

- In investigating bullying, the teacher will exercise professional judgement to determine if 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 practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach
- Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned
- When analysing incidents the relevant teacher should seek answers to the questions of what, where, when, who and why.

- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter all those involved may be met as a group. At the group meeting each member may be asked for his or her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about all statements.

- Each member of the group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from other members of the group after the interview. It may be appropriate to ask those involved write an account of the incident(s)

- Where it has been determined that bullying has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved should be contacted to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school should give parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and supports provided to the pupils

- Where it has been determined that a pupil has been involved in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how s/he is in breach of the school's anti bullying policy and efforts should be made to get him/her see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied

- It must be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required , this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school

Follow up and recording

- The relevant teacher must take into account

a. whether bullying has ceased

b. whether issues between parties involved have been resolved as far as is practicable

c. whether relationships are restored as far as practicable

d. feedback from parties involved, parent(s)/Guardian(s) or the school Principal or Deputy Principal.

- Follow up meetings with the relevant parties involved separately at first and collectively at a later date if all parties are agreeable

- Where parent(s)/guardians are not satisfied that the school has dealt with the bullying case in accordance with procedures the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be referred further as appropriate, to the schools' complaints procedure or informed of the 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

- Staff must keep a written record of incidents witnessed or notified by them. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher.

- All reports must be investigated by the relevant teacher. A written record of the report must be kept, of actions taken and any discussions with those involved.

- The relevant teacher must inform the Principal of incidents being investigated.

Informal determination that bullying has occurred

- If established that bullying has occurred, appropriate written records must be kept by the relevant teacher to assist efforts to resolve issues and restore the relationships of the parties involved in so far as practicable.

- All records shall be stored in the school.

Formal Appendix 3

The relevant teacher must use the recording template Appendix 3 to record bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

a. In cases where s/he has determined that bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after s/he has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred and

b. Where the school has decided that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal. The following list of examples is non exhaustive:

- Physical intimidation

- Physical aggression or attacks

- Threatening behaviour

The recording template is to be retained by the relevant teacher and a copy maintained by the Principal.

Intervention strategies which may be used

- Teacher interviews with all pupils

- Negotiating agreements between pupils and follow up by monitoring progress

- Working with parents/guardians to support school interventions

- Restorative interviews

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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*) :

    - 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 to build resilience e.g.

    a. Pastoral Care System

    b. Mentoring system(s)

    c. Programme Manager / Year Head Teams

    - 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 should be strongly encouraged to report all incidents of bullying behaviour 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, in the context of resources received from DoE, to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.
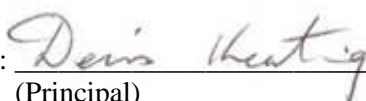
9. **Prevention of Harassment**

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.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request 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, be readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Date modified 19/11/2024

Signed: _Padraic o'Conn___   Signed: _Denis Keating___
(Chairperson of Board of Management)   (Principal)

Date: 19-11-2024   Date: 19-11-2024

Date of next review: Bí Cineálta to be adopted for September 2025