**Killashee Multi-Denominational National School**

**Anti-Bullying Policy**

# 1 Introduction

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 Killashee MDNS 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 and reflects the recommendations outlined in the Cineáltas (Department of Education) Action Plan on Bullying, Ireland's Whole Education Approach to preventing and addressing bullying in schools 9 December 2022

This review was carried out over a three month period (April-June 2024) with the support of students, staff, parents and member of the BOM.

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;
    - 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;
    - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including racial, homophobic and gender based/sexist 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);

- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

In agreement with the Cineáltas report, Killashee MDNS recognises Bullying as a Children's Rights issue that bullying interferes with the following rights of the child:

> The right to freedom of expression (Article 13)

> The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 14)

> The right to freedom of association and freedom of peaceful assembly (Article 15)

> The right to privacy (Article 16)

> The right to be protected from all forms of abuse and neglect (Article 19)

> The right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health (Article 24)

> The right to education (Article 28)

> The right to enjoy their own culture, religion or language (Article 30)  ( Cinealtas Report 2022)

## 2 Definition of Bullying

In accordance with the Cineáltas Report 2022 bullying behaviour is defined as

Bullying is targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused, can be **physical, social and/or emotional in nature.** Bullying behaviour is **repeated** over time and involves an **imbalance of power** in relationships between two people or groups of people in society.  (Cineáltas Report 2022)

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 ;

- 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;

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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 Appendix One   (This list has been compiled taking into account the list outlined in *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools and the input of sixth class students 2024)*

## 3 Education and prevention strategies

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

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community;
- Prevention and awareness raising measures across all aspects of bullying involving strategies to engage pupils in addressing problems when they arise. In particular, such strategies need to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils;
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour throughout the school with social stories Circle Time, Stay Safe, RSE, Walk Tall, SPHE and specific programmes e.g.   "Weaving Wellbeing"
- 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 develop an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it;
- School wide awareness-raising on all aspects of bullying to include pupils, parents, guardians.

- Identifying and making use of additional supports available to the school e.g. NEPS, ISPCC, Barnardos, Naas Child And Family Project, Community Garda
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching, ancillary staff and external teachers/coaches will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers.
- The implementation of whole school prevention, awareness initiatives including

    - general class reviews to be facilitated at least twice a term, (circle time reviews and/or individual written review 2nd -6th, circle time review and/ or one to one discussion Junior Infants -1st)
    - one SPHE class per month focusing on Anti Bullying awareness and strategies to prevent address bullying,
    - School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g .Anti Bullying Campaign, Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme, Webwise
    - School wide delivery of the Weaving Well Being Programme
    - annual Friendship Week,
    - annual International Day.

- Encouraging a culture of naming "mean behaviour", and letting the perpetrator know that it is not acceptable. Telling a relevant teacher. It will 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.
- Acceptable Internet Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school
- Bullying behaviour in general will be addressed by the school principal at assembly.
- Students from 1st-6th class will sign up to the Anti- Bullying Code at the beginning of each new academic year. This code will also be counter signed by their parents

## 4  Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

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 outlined below.

### The Investigation

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved. With, this in mind, the school's procedures are as follows:

- The alleged bullying is reported to the relevant teacher. The relevant teacher will investigate and deal with the reported incident with the aim of resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher(s) will exercise his/her/their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type if it has and how best the situation might be resolved;

- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher(s);

- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher will use the questions  influenced by restorative justice practice to address the issue

| Restorative Questions |
|---|
| What happened? |
| What were you thinking at the time? |
| What have you thought about it since? |
| Who has been affected and in what way? |
| How could things have been done differently? |
| What do you think needs to happen next? |

- The relevant teacher will deal with incidents of bullying in a calm, non-aggressive manner;

- The relevant teacher may receive the support of the principal and/or the anti-bullying co-ordinator in the determining of an appropriate investigation and follow up; (Information will be kept confidential and only be shared with relevant personnel)

- The most appropriate method of eliciting information will be determined in the initial stages of the investigation. When determining the most appropriate method, the relevant teacher will take into account the incident reported, the number of students involved and the age and maturity of the students. (Additional needs of

students will also be taken into account). In many situations a blended approach may be adopted using both individual and group interviews and written accounts of the incident. Information will be sought from those involved directly and bystanders;

- In the majority of situations interviews (individual and small group) will take place outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;

- All interviews will 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;

- Getting a written account from pupils involved (including bystanders) may be very helpful and appropriate;

- When a group is involved, each member of the group will be asked to give an individual report before having a group meeting. Each member of the group should be supported with recognition given to possible pressures that they may face from other group members.

**Action to Recognise the Wrong and Restore Relationships**

1. Where the relevant teacher(s) has/have determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to them how they are  in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get them to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;

2. If this is a first offence  in relation to bullying behaviour the 'Relevant Teacher' does not apportion blame but rather treats bullying behaviour as a "mistake" that can and must be remedied.  The teacher will support the "perpetrator" to develop an understanding of how harmful and hurtful bullying is and seeks a verbal promise that it will stop.

3. The teacher also (not referring to any child  or incident) reinforces with the class what is considered bullying behaviour, and strategies for all class members to adopt which will support a positive bully free environment .

4. If the bullying behaviour continues, the pupil is once again spoken to individually, reminded that this is now seen as ongoing bullying behaviour and there is need for further action.  The perpetrator is asked to seriously reflect on their actions and required to sign a binding promise (Pupil Behaviour Promise) that they will treat all

pupils fairly, equally and respectfully including the targeted pupil(s) **(see attached Pupil Promise sheet).**

5. The child /children will present the signed sheet to the school principal who will store it in the appropriate file in the office.

6. Parents are informed non- formally (phone call) of the incident but no sanction is imposed at this stage if the promise of changing behaviour is forthcoming and adhered to.  (*This method encourages pupils to report bullying easier as they are aware that they are not getting others "in trouble" so much as enabling them to avoid serious trouble which would be the result if the bullying continued.);*

7. If that promise is honoured and the matter is resolved, the child/ children will have the slate wiped clear.  There will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter;

8. If a pupil has signed **Pupil Promise 1** but then chooses to break that promise and continues the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer be considered a "mistake." In this event parent(s)/guardian(s) will be formally informed and requested to countersign their child's promise. **Pupil Promise 2.**   Time off the yard, may also be included at this stage to allow the student to reflect on their behaviour.

9. Parents will be given an opportunity to reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for the students;

10.  Breach of this additional promise by further bullying behaviour is regarded as a very grave matter (a serious misdemeanour) and will be dealt with in line with the school Code of Behaviour;

After investigation, taking into account the gravity of the incident and the age and maturity of the perpetrator(s), the action may jump levels to the most relevant level outlined above.

It will be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required that this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.

**Aftermath**

When 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:

- o Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
- o Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
- o Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable;
- o Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents, or the Principal or Deputy Principal.

- 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 will advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children;

- All formal documentation regarding bullying incidents and their resolution is retained securely in the school, by the anti-bullying coordinator/principal;

- When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the 'Relevant Teacher' will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information.

- All formal documentation regarding bullying incidents and their resolution is retained securely in the school, by the anti-bullying coordinator/principal.

## 5 Follow up Support

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

- Ending the bullying behaviour.

- Ongoing support and monitoring to develop self-esteem (This monitoring and support will target both the victims and the perpetrators);

- Implementation of the education and prevention strategies already mentioned;

- A programme to raise self-esteem and to develop friendship and social skills may be implemented if required. (This programme can target the class as a whole or a small group supported by the special education team).

# 6 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.

# 7 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.

# 8 Monitoring and Review

This policy and its implementation will be monitored by the Board of Management on an ongoing basis.   Dealing with bullying will be included as part of the agenda in all BOM meetings and any incidents that are classified serious misdemeanours that have occurred will be reported to the BOM. The policy will be reviewed  annually.

A copy of the revised document will be provided to the Parents' Association and the Patron Board.

This policy was ratified   by the Board of Management on **10/06/2024**

Signed: _____          Signed: _____

       (Chairperson of Board of Management)                        (Principal)

 Date: _____                                     Date: _____

## Appendix One

**Examples of bullying behaviours (This list is non exhaustive)**

| 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, racist bullying etc.<br><br>• Physical aggression<br><br>• Damage to property<br><br>• Name calling<br><br>• Body Shaming<br><br>• Slagging<br><br>• Threats or mean comments<br><br>• The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person<br><br>• Offensive graffiti<br><br>• Extortion<br><br>• Intimidation<br><br>• Insulting or offensive gestures<br><br>• The "look" *(Staring at another student in a threatening r demeaning manner , making the other student feel uncomfortable)*<br><br>• Invasion of personal space<br><br>• Prank calling<br><br>• Comparing to fictional characters who have specific challenges<br><br>• A combination of any of the types listed. |
|---|---|
| **Cyber** | • **Denigration**: Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation<br><br>• **Harassment**: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual target people |

| | |
|---|---|
| 11 | • **Targeting others**: Setting up group chats to deliberately target someone.<br><br>• Taking photos without permission.<br><br>• Posting inappropriate images , commenting on race, stature height   or weight in a derogatory fashion<br><br>• Photoshopping and creating images of people<br><br>• Spamming with hateful comments<br><br>• **Impersonation**: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name<br><br>• **Flaming**: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight<br><br>• **Trickery**: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online. Creating fake accounts deliberately<br><br>• **Outing**: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images<br><br>• **Exclusion**: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group<br><br>• **Cyber stalking**: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety<br><br>• Silent telephone/mobile phone call<br><br>• Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls<br><br>• Abusive text messages<br><br>• Abusive email<br><br>• Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles<br><br>• Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures<br><br>• Spamming with hateful comments<br><br>• Posting of inappropriate images<br><br>• Abusive posts on any form of communication technology<br><br>• |
| **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<br><br>• Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation<br><br>• Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner<br><br>• Physical intimidation or attacks<br><br>• Threats |
| **Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community** | • Using offensive language<br><br>• Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background<br><br>• Exclusion on the basis of any of the above |
| **Relational** | This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:<br><br>• Malicious gossip<br><br>• Isolation & exclusion<br><br>• Extortion<br><br>• Ignoring<br><br>• Excluding from the group<br><br>• Taking someone's friends away<br><br>• Spreading rumours<br><br>• Breaking confidence<br><br>• Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear<br><br>• The "look" *(Staring at another student in a threatening r demeaning manner , making the other student feel uncomfortable)*<br><br>• Use or terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way |
| **Sexual** | • Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments |

| | |
|---|---|
| 13 | • Unwelcome or inappropriate   touching<br><br>• Harassment<br><br>• Asking inappropriate questions (sexual)<br><br>• |
| **Special Educational Needs,**<br><br>**Disability** | • Name calling<br><br>• Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs<br><br>• Exclusion due to a person's special education need<br><br>• Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying<br><br>• Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues.<br><br>• Mimicking a person's disability<br><br>• Trying to get a rise out of a pupil due to their special education need<br><br>• Setting others up for ridicule<br><br>• Targeting students and comparing students unfavourably with  others |

Name _____Class _____

 Date _____

# General Class Review

**1 Name your three favourite school activities.**

_____

_____

_____

_____

**2.  What makes you happy in school?**

_____

_____

_____

**3. Is there anything going on in class or school that makes you unhappy?**

_____

_____

_____

**4   Are you or anyone in your class getting a hard time in school?    _____**

**If yes can you tell us a little about it? (***What is happening?  Who is involved?)*

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

**5  How do you think <u>you</u> treat other people in your class or school?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

**6      Would you think everyone in the class would agree with your self-assessment?  _____**

**If not why not?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

**7 How do you think you can ensure that everybody in your class and school feels happy and included?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

**8 Name one thing you would like to see included in school activities.**

_____

_____

**Go raibh maith agat**

# General Class Review

| Name | |
|------|--|
| Class | Date |

**1  Name three things that make you happy in class/ school.**

_____

_____

_____

**2  What are your favourite subjects?**

_____

_____

**3   What are your least favourite subjects?**

_____

_____

_____

**4  Is there anything going on in class/school that makes you unhappy?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

**5    Are you or anyone in your class getting a hard time in school?   If yes can you tell us a little about it?**

 Name of pupil (s) getting a hard time. (If it is yourself include your name here)

_____

_____

**Does this involve?**

Calling them names    [    ]   Making fun of them  [    ]   Going at their stuff  [    ]

Not letting them join in  [  ]  Pushing them  [    ]   Hitting or kicking  [    ]

Any other ways someone is mean to them     _____

_____

**6    Name any pupil(s) who may be treating them (you) this way.**

_____

_____

_____

_____

**7    Name any other pupils who know about this even though they may not be doing it.**

_____

_____

_____

**8 Name three things that you can do to help everybody in your class to be happy and getting on?**

_____

_____

_____

**Go raibh maith agat**