

Kilkenny 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 Kilkenny 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 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* on the Department of Education and Skills website homepage.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:
Each case of alleged bullying is unique. Investigations of alleged bullying may involve all or a combination of the following:-
Subject Teachers, House parent (boarding), Head of House (boarding), Year Head / Co-ordinator, Guidance Counsellor, Chaplain, Deputy Principal, Principal, outside agencies may be involved as appropriate.
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:
All members of the Kilkenny College community have a collective responsibility in maintaining our Pastoral Care Programme and Code of Behaviour.

Parents are requested and actively encouraged to make their children aware of the unacceptability of bullying behaviour, and to encourage them to report such behaviour to a member of staff of the college whenever they experience or witness it.

We strive to raise awareness in the college regarding appropriate behaviour and the distress caused by bullying behaviour. We promote values of respect for all members of the school community, of acceptance of diversity and fostering of self-esteem using the following initiatives:-

- Information transfer from Primary school/previous school
- Presentation at Open Day for prospective pupils and parents outlining our expectations and approach as a school community.
- Presentation at Induction meetings for Form 1, Form 4 and other new pupils on entry.
- Integration of Anti-Bullying procedures with the College Code of Behaviour and other relevant policies such as Pastoral Care and inclusion in college activities.
- Involvement of Prefects, Dormitory Prefects and Mentors.
- Student Council Anti-Bullying focus week.
- Student Council identification of high risk places and times.
- Pastoral Care team involvement.
- Class Tutor and Year Head focus.
- Routine year group and full assemblies.
- Supervision and monitoring by teachers and house parents.
- Inclusion in all information meetings with parents.
- Supporting curriculum especially through SPHE, RSE, CSPE, RE and Guidance lessons.
- Whole school focus on building a culture of ‘telling’
- 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 office or to a trusted teacher in the school.
 - KCK Confidential Box in the front hall.
 - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.

- Administer a confidential questionnaire once a year to all pupils.
 - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Nomination of especially ‘safe places’ or ‘drop-in places’ for pupils who feel vulnerable.
 - Further in-service training opportunities for staffing on countering bullying behaviour.
 - Liaising with external agencies and programmes such as ‘Sticks and Stones’ and ‘Stand-up Programme’.
6. The school’s procedure 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:-

The primary aim in investigation 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);

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

Kilkenny College is a ‘telling school’. Information on how to tell is provided on posters, pupil journals and website.

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher or house parent in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher or boarding head.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incident of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant person, normally the Year Head or Boarding Head or Principal.

In investigating and dealing with a report of bullying the relevant staff member will exercise his/her professional judgement and consult as necessary with senior school personnel (see point 4) to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation may be resolved.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) 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.

In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred:-

- The Year Head/Head of House (boarding incident) with other members of the designated team (see point 4) will investigate the incident by interviewing the parties and any witnesses.
 - The victim(s) and perpetrator(s) will be interviewed separately.
 - The interview will be conducted in a fair and non-judgemental manner.
 - Factual notes of the investigation/interview will be recorded using the standardised recording template.

- Students may be requested to put in writing their account of the incident(s).
- The victim of bullying will be assured that s/he is entitled to a school environment free of any bullying and will be encouraged to report any further incidents if they should occur.
- Where bullying behaviour is determined, the perpetrator(s) will be informed that their behaviour is a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour. They may be required to reaffirm their commitment to the School's Code of Behaviour and possibly engage in a behavioural support programme.
- The parents of the perpetrator will be informed and/or invited to a meeting in the school.
- The parents of the victim will also be informed and / or invited to a meeting in the school and where it is deemed necessary, may be offered further help from the school and/or outside agencies.
- Following investigation and consideration, sanctions may be imposed in line with the School's discipline procedures.
- Where bullying behaviour is determined to be a grave nature, additional procedures may take place up to and including suspension and expulsion.
- In-school support will be made available to **both** victim(s) and perpetrator(s); Counselling and remediation will be recommended if deemed appropriate.
- Post intervention monitoring of both parties will occur.

In any situation where disciplinary sanctions are imposed that is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s) / guardian(s) and the school.

Follow up and recording:

Informal pre-determination that bullying has occurred

- All staff will keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher. (Normally the Year Head, House Head, Deputy Principal or Principal).
- 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 must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

Informal – determination that bullying has occurred

- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must 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. Such records will be kept on the confidential files of the pupils concerned.

Formal – recording

The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 2** 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) The school should list behaviours that must be recorded and reported immediately to the principal. All incidents deemed to be bullying are to be reported to the principal/deputy principal.

c) When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal. A designated file for reported bullying incidents will be maintained in strictest confidence by the principal.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:-
In school supports:

- The Pastoral Care system including counselling
- Peer mentoring by designated Mentors, Dorm Prefects and Prefects
- Remediation procedures supported by the care team
- Support of members of staff briefed on the issue appropriately

External supports:

- Facilitation of parents by provision of referral contacts to relevant professionals or agencies.

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 (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.

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 (or where none exists, be otherwise 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.

Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____