

Recognise my worth, realise my potential

Kilmore Central School,
Kilmore,
Co. Wexford.
Tel: 053 9135230
Fax: 053 9135811
E-mail: Kilmorens@gmail.com



Scoil Réalt na Mara,
Kilmore,
Co. Wexford.
Rev. Denis Doyle, PP.
(Chairperson of Board)
Micheál Martin (Principal)

Anti-Bullying Policy

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 Realt na Mara, Kilmore 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 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:

- 1. 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;
 - See Appendix 1 for further information
- 2. Effective leadership**
- 3. A school-wide approach**
- 4. A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact**
- 5. 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; In September teachers will teach internet safety lesson and anti-bullying lesson which may be followed up by Learning Support/Resource teachers if necessary for Special Needs pupils.
- 6. Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils**

Supports for staff including training and professional development and information for self care and mental wellbeing, Employment Assistance scheme

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.

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*.

The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is the class teacher

The Relevant Teachers in this school are: Class teacher, Principal, Deputy Principal

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

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

Education and prevention strategies

School-wide approach

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour, through integration with other subjects and informal discussion.
- 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 develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it -prevention and intervention and review its effectiveness.

- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s), when training becomes available through PDST, NEPS, SESS, Education Centre.
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra- curricular activities. 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.
- Involvement of the students in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Lunchtime Buddies on wet days and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support e.g Reading Buddies, Lunchtime drama, Book Writing project etc..
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying information for the school - to be included in student journals and displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.
- 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. It will be displayed on the school website/blog and links given in school newsletter.
- The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures e.g. a dedicated notice board in the school and classrooms on the promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention at entrance to school hall, annual Friendship Week and parent(s)/guardian(s) seminars; student surveys; regular school assemblies by principal and staff. Anti bullying lesson and internet safety lesson taught in September. Post holder will promote these themes throughout the year.
- 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.
- 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.
- Anti-bully or worry-box
- Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
- Administer a confidential questionnaire once a term to all senior pupils.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) are encouraged to approach the class teacher and/or Principal if they suspect that their child is being bullied.
- Acceptable Use Policy in the school includes the necessary information to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored. Pupils are not permitted to have mobile phones in school and if found, they will be kept in the office and collected by parents.
- Supports currently being used in the school include Care team referrals and interventions, pastoral support, lunchtime drama etc. and other supports available to the school through School Completion Programme e.g. Social Skills groups, Play Therapy, Mentoring for Achievement Programme MAP, Transition Programme etc..

Indicators of bullying

All staff, parents and pupils will be vigilant for signs of bullying:

- Anxiety about attending school
- Deterioration in educational performance
- Pattern of physical illness
- Unexplained changes in mood or behaviour
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress
- Possessions missing
- Increased request for money
- Unexplained marks or bruising
- Reluctance to say what is troubling him/her

These signs may not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied but if repeated or in combination, these signs may warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the child

Implementation of curricula

- The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the RSE, Walk Tall and Stay Safe Programmes and Incredible Years Positive Behaviour Programme and Friends for Life Programme
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying and internet safety in September from evidence based programmes, Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme and www.webwise.ie
- Talk for 6th class delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying
- School Completion Programme project worker facilitates cybersafety talk for 6th classes early in the school year
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of Special Educational Needs pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately. Anti bullying lessons will be discussed with LS/RT teachers in consultation with class teachers.
- The school will implement the advice in “Sexual Orientation advice for schools”

Links to other policies

See also: Code of Behaviour, Child Protections policy, Supervision of pupils procedures, Acceptable Use policy, Attendance, Mobile phone policy & SPHE plan

Investigating and Recording

Procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying

1. The primary aim for the relevant teacher 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);
2. In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
3. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by

the relevant teacher. 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;

4. Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners will be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;
5. Parents 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;
6. It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;
7. Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;
8. All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved may also provide very useful information in this way;
9. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what happened, where, when, and who. It may be necessary to determine what preceded the incident. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner;
10. Pupils may be interviewed individually and in groups. Each member of a group will be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;
11. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);
12. In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils;
13. Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy. If appropriate efforts will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;
14. 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;
15. In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template at [Appendix 3](#)

16. 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:

Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;

Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;

Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and

Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school 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;

17. 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.

Procedures for recording bullying behaviour

The Board of Management ensures that the school has clear procedures for the formal noting and reporting of bullying behaviour and these will be documented in the school's anti-bullying policy. All records will be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour will adhere to the following:

While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same;

1. If it is established by the relevant teacher 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. Any notes recorded by the class teacher will be kept in the classroom in the children's files.
2. The relevant teacher will use the recording template at [Appendix 3](#) to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:
 - 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
 - where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour will be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

In each of the circumstances at (a) and (b) above, the recording template at [Appendix 3](#) will be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. The timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template at [Appendix 3](#) does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case. The relevant teacher may consult with the Principal or other relevant teachers at any time during the investigation. It is advised that the Principal is kept informed of all investigations of bullying as early as possible.

If a serious incident happens in the yard it will be recorded in the yard book and dealt with by the teacher supervising the yard. If deemed significant it will be reported to the class teacher by the investigating teacher supervising the yard.

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

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 build resilience e.g.

- Pastoral care system
- Mentoring for Achievement programme

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. This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in May 2014 and will be implemented from September 2014.
9. This policy has been made available to all school personnel, published on the school website/blog and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.
10. 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, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: _____ Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management) (Principal)

Date: _____ Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

APPENDIX 1: Key elements in creating a positive school climate:

- The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.
- The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.
- The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.
 - The school prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members.
 - The school has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of its functioning.
 - The school has the capacity to change in response to pupils' needs.
 - The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupils' attitudes and values.
 - The school 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.
 - The school recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis.
 - The school recognises the role of parents in equipping the pupil with a range of life- skills.
 - The school recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.
 - The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.
 - The school 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.

Practical tips for building a school culture and climate.

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times. Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN. Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are ignored. Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use. Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.

- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school. Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying “hot spots” and “hot times” for bullying in the school.
- Hot spots tend to be in the school yard/outdoor areas, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
- Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the school yard or moving classrooms.

APPENDIX 2: Examples of bullying behaviour

<p>General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying 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.
<p>Cyber</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denigration: Spreading rumors, 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 person’s 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 telephone/mobile phone call • Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls • Abusive text messages • Abusive email • Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles • Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Malicious gossip Isolation & exclusion Ignoring Excluding from the group Taking someone's friends away "Bitching" Spreading rumours Breaking confidence Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear The "look" Use or terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way
Sexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 recognise and defend themselves against bullying 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
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Appendix 3 Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

3. Source of bullying concern/report
(tick relevant box(es))*

4. Location of incidents (tick
relevant box(es))*

Pupil concerned Playground

Other Pupil Classroom

Parent Corridor

Teacher Toilets

Other School Bus

Other

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

Physical Aggression Cyber-bullying

Damage to Property Intimidation

Isolation/Exclusion Malicious Gossip

Name Calling Other (specify)

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic Disability/SEN
related

Racist Membership of

Traveller community

Other (specify)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

* Note: The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.