Kilcoskan National School 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 Kilcoskan NS 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 of Kilcoskan NS 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 (See Appendix 1) 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; involves collaboration among and between staff & pupils and promotes respectful relationships across the school community; encourages the work of the student council in this area
- 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 ongoing 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:

'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
- ✓ 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 do not fall within the definition of bullying and will be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the Kilcoskan NS Code of 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 included as an appendix to this document.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

- The class teacher(s) initially
- The principal thereafter if necessary followed by the Board of Management.

5. The following education and prevention strategies, at the appropriate and relevant level for each class, will be used by the school:

- Encouragement of positive pro-social behaviours and positive self esteem promoted and facilitated by school's Code of Behaviour.
- School's Good News Noticeboard (designed to promote pro-social behaviours and positive self esteem in pupils)
- Prevention and awareness raising measures of all aspects of bullying; to engage pupils in addressing problems when they arise. In particular, such strategies need to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils
- Provide pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth
- Prevention and awareness raising measures focusing on cyber-bullying by educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while online
- Teachers can influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner by dealing with pupil behaviour matters in a manner consistent with the school's values and Code of Behaviour.
- There are a number of curriculum components and programmes which are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying and the promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness, all taught in Kilcoskan NS. The SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships. The Stay Safe & RSE programmes at primary level are personal safety skills programmes which seek to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying. Various other social, health and media education programmes may further help to address the problem of bullying behaviour.
- The above work may be extended into many other areas such as Art, Drama, Religious Education, and Physical Education. Co-operation and group enterprise will be promoted through team sports, school clubs and societies as well as through practical subjects
- Sporting activities in particular can provide excellent opportunities for channelling and learning how to control aggression. GAA coaching is offered to all mainstream class groups from St. Margaret's Games Promotion Officer and teachers are also involved in coaching the school's other sports teams.
- The anti-bullying module of the SPHE programme as it applies during each school year,
- At least three awareness-raising exercises per school year for each class group (one per term) pro-actively explaining the nature and variety, causes, consequences and unacceptability of bullying. These may include visiting workshops / groups trained in fostering social skills with children.
  - Through presentations or other exercises, the school staff and parents/guardians are made aware of the nature of bullying and the signs that might indicate that a pupil is being bullied. They are encouraged to be vigilant in watching out for signs of bullying and to report any suspicion of bullying they may have to the "Relevant Teacher" (in the case of staff members) or any staff member (in the case of parents/guardians).
  - Through regular reports in school newsletters and other communications as well as at meetings with the Parents Association, parents / guardians are regularly informed of the activities of the school regarding combating bullying and encouraged to support its work.
- An annual anti-bullying / friendship week / month will be held.

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, noting that 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):

Child to Child Bullying
Stage One
Unless the incident is of a very serious nature, it will be dealt with by the classroom teacher who will talk to the children involved, within the parameters of the Kilcoskan NS Code of Behaviour & Discipline. Teachers respect the need to support the esteem of each party involved in an incident. When a teacher becomes aware that a child is regularly involved in incidents he/she will start a record of such incidents. The purpose of this record is:

- To aid memory by recording details of the incident
- For clarity in assessment of the situation
- For planning and intervention

Prior to a record of incidences being kept, parent(s) will be informed.

Should the action taken at this stage prove not to have resolved the issue, the staff will proceed to stage two.

Stage Two
The Principal (and if appropriate, the relevant class teacher) will arrange to meet with the parents of the child who is seen to be bullying and separately with the parents of the victim of bullying. The children themselves may be required to attend part or all of these meetings. The child who is bullying will be placed on report. This means that the child's behaviour in all areas is monitored during the day. The child has three meetings with his/her teacher and together they decide on what is to be written for that part of the day. All positive behaviour, progress on work etc will be noted. At the end of the day, the teacher writes his/her own comment. The purpose of this report to focus as much as possible on the positive qualities and efforts of the child, and to motivate the child to move away from negative behaviour. The child should be able to see that parents and school are working together in his/her interest, so the co-operation of the parents is essential. Initially a review of the reports will be carried out on a weekly basis, in a meeting with the Principal, teacher, parents and child. If progress is being made, longer intervals between meetings may be decided upon. The child who is the victim of bullying will also meet with the Principal and his/her parents. The aim of such a meeting(s) will be to address emotional needs and devise strategies for the child to deal with the bullying. This may involve reinforcing the programme being covered in class, or other strategies.

Stage 3
It is the duty of the school to provide a safe environment for all the children. Should the above interventions fail and the bullying continue, a programme of appropriate sanctions may be implemented by the Principal in consultation with the parents and Board of Management. Sanctions implemented aim to encourage positive behaviour and support the esteem of the child. These sanctions may include a period of suspension during which there will be ongoing consultation with the parents to decide on appropriate action(s) to be taken in the best interests of the child. Suspension for any period of time will be reported in writing by the Principal to the Chair of the Board of Management.

Bullying by Adults

In the case of **intra-staff bullying between teachers**, Kilcoskan National School will adopt the procedures outlined in Section C (c2) of the INTO booklet: 'Working Together: Procedures and Policies for Positive Staff Relations'. A copy of this document is available for

download on the INTO website. For other staff, the matter will be dealt with in a manner consistent with the spirit of the above publication.

In the case of **Teacher / Staff – Child bullying**, a complaint should in the first instance be raised with the teacher in question by the parent/guardian of the child if possible and then if necessary referred to the Principal. Where it has not been possible to agree a framework for resolution, the matter should be referred in writing by both parties to the Board of Management for investigation.

In the case of **Parent – Teacher / Staff** bullying, the Principal should be informed in the first instance, and if deemed necessary the Board of Management should subsequently be informed in writing.

In the case of **Parent/Visitor to the school – Child** bullying, the complaint should be referred in the first instance to the child's class teacher and subsequently to the Principal if unresolved.

In the case of **Principal / Staff – Parent/ Child** bullying, the matter should be raised with the Principal if possible, or referred to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

NOTES:
- 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). 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
- Non-teaching staff such as secretary, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretaker and cleaner are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.
- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents will be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures
- In the event that a parent has exhausted the Kilcoskan NS 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.

RECORDING: Noting and reporting of bullying behaviour will be documented using the *template for recording bullying behaviour* (Attached). 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:

(i) While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher(s), the relevant teacher(s) will use his/her/their professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same
(ii) If it is established by the relevant teacher(s) that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher(s) 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
(iii) The relevant teacher(s) will use the recording template (attached) to record the bullying behaviour which is available in the school.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves a whole school approach. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, no one

intervention/support programme works in all situations. Therefore various approaches and intervention strategies may be used, some as listed above. These may also include suggesting that parents seek referrals to outside agencies so that appropriate further support may be obtained if necessary. Should parents refuse to follow such recommendations, the matter may be referred to the Board of Management.

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. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____.

10. This policy is made available to school personnel and published on the school website, is readily accessible to parents and pupils upon request and is provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

11. 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 all school stakeholders via the school website and from the Board of Management upon request. 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: _____

Strategies used in Kilcoskan NS for building a positive school culture and climate:

The following are some practical strategies which are / may be used in Kilcoskan NS to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- Modeling respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times
- Explicitly teaching pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school
- Displaying key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involving pupils in the development of these messages
- "Catch them being good" - noticing and acknowledging desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention
- Consistently tackling any 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 special needs.
- Giving constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent
- Having a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines
- Explicitly teaching pupils about the appropriate use of social media
- Positively encouraging pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use
- Following-up and following through with pupils who ignore the rules
- Actively involving parents and the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media and bullying prevention
- Actively promoting the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school
- Highlighting and explicitly teaching school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas / the school playground
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour
- Ensuring there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision
- School staff may get pupils to help them to identify bullying 'hot spots' and 'hot times' for bullying in the school
- Supporting the establishment and work of Green School / student councils

Types of bullying

The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst pupils:

Physical aggression: This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in 'mess fights', they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain

Intimidation: Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation. It may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.

Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying: This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms includes control: 'Do this or I won't be your friend anymore'(implied or stated), a group ganging up against one person (girl or boy), non-verbal gesturing, malicious gossip, spreading rumours about a person or giving them the 'silent treatment'.

Cyber-bullying: This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, email, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face-to face-contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc.

 Name calling: Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) that hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g. size or clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers are also targeted

Damage to property: Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school books and other learning material or interference with a pupil's locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden

Extortion: Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on the demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.

Template for recording bullying behaviour to be used in Kilcoskan NS

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)

Pupil concerned	
Other pupil(s)	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

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

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
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. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

8. Details of actions taken
_____
_____
_____

Signed _____   Date _____
       (Relevant Teacher 1)

Signed _____   Date _____
       (Relevant Teacher 1)
Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____