

St. Kevin's N.S. ABC - Anti Bullying Code (Revised)

Definition of Bullying:

Bullying is defined as any behaviour which systematically and deliberately hurts another individual, either physically or emotionally. It can take the form of aggression (verbal, psychological or physical) or it can be subtle or menacing in its nature.

This policy was identified by staff as a School Development Planning priority for the 2004/2005 school year. The existing Anti Bullying Code (1995) was reviewed at a School Development Planning Day on January 24th 2005 to evaluate its effectiveness. This review was necessary as St. Kevin's had completed its transition from Boys' Senior School to a vertical co-educational school. Pupil consultation was carried out in February 2005 to determine pupils' interpretation of the term "bullying" and to analyse their own personal experiences.

A first draft was compiled in April 2005. This was reviewed at a staff meeting on 13th February 2008 and a second draft was compiled. These and subsequent drafts reflect our present "good practice" in dealing with bullying behaviour in St. Kevin's N. S. and form the basis of this policy. Draft four of the policy was approved by representatives of St. Kevin's Parents' Association on April 27th 2010. Draft five was amended by St. Kevin's Board of Management in May 2010.

Objectives:

1. To raise awareness of bullying as an unacceptable behaviour with school management, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents/guardians.
2. To support the school ethos of St. Kevin's N.S. - a school ethos which encourages pupils to respect themselves, respect others and respect their school.
3. To foster an environment of trust and support which encourages all members of the school community to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying.
4. To devise measures to prevent and deal with bullying behaviour.

Types of Bullying:

Bullying may take the form of: physical aggression, damage to property, extortion, intimidation, abusive communication by electronic means (telephone/text/Internet etc.), isolation, exclusion, name calling, "slagging" or any other behaviour which deliberately and systematically hurts another individual.

Procedures for Noting and Reporting Alleged Incidents of Bullying by Pupils:

1. Children, teaching/non teaching staff members, parents/guardians etc. should report any incidents of alleged bullying behaviour witnessed by them or reported to them, to the appropriate staff member (i.e. class teacher or principal).
2. All reports of alleged bullying should be noted, investigated and dealt with by the relevant staff member(s).
3. The staff member(s) should ascertain whether the report relates to bullying or to an isolated incident. An isolated incident should be dealt with in accordance with school procedure as outlined in St. Kevin's Code of Behaviour.
4. Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the teacher(s), in consultation with the principal/deputy principal should follow procedures as outlined in this document.
5. Serious cases of bullying behaviour by pupils should be referred directly to and consequently be noted, investigated and dealt with by the principal/deputy principal.

Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying by Pupils:

1. The staff member(s) should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents/guardians. All such incidents should be investigated sensitively to avoid public humiliation of the pupils involved. The staff member(s) should speak separately to the pupils involved in an attempt to get all sides of the story.
2. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the staff member(s) should seek answers to questions of what?, where?, when?, who? and why?. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
3. If more than one pupil is involved, the staff member(s) should identify the main parties, who should first be interviewed individually and then interviewed with

the group. Each member of the group should be asked for his/her account of what happened in order to build up an accurate account of the incident. Each member of the group should be helped to handle the potential pressures that may face them from other members after their interview with the staff member(s).

4. It should be made clear to any pupil who has been engaged in bullying behaviour how he/she is in breach of the Code of Behaviour. The staff member(s) involved should make every effort to enable him/her to see the situation from the victim's point of view. The pupil(s) may receive an appropriate sanction or sanctions as outlined in St. Kevin's Code of Behaviour.
5. When investigating cases of bullying behaviour, the staff member(s) should keep a written record of discussions with those involved. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident.
6. Parents/guardians of all children directly involved should be informed of the incident so that they have the opportunity to discuss the matter and to meet with the teacher(s)/principal/deputy principal. The actions being taken and the reasons for them should be explained in relation to school policy. Ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions taken by the school should be discussed. Parents should then be in a position to help and support their children.
7. Individual follow-up meetings should be arranged with a view to bringing all parties together at a later date if possible. This can have a therapeutic effect.
8. Where cases relating to a pupil remain unresolved at school level, the matter should be referred to the school's Board of Management.
9. If not solved at Board level, the matter should be referred to the local Inspectorate by the Chairperson of the Board of Management.
10. In some cases, further intervention may be recommended and a referral to outside agencies may be necessary.

Links to our School Ethos & School Curriculum:

Promoting a climate of respect, trust & consideration for others is central to the success of this policy. The pupils & staff of St. Kevin's aim to promote a school climate in which bullying behaviour is unacceptable.

The teachers in St. Kevin's recognise that self esteem is an influential factor in determining behaviour. The SPHE, Stay Safe and Walk Tall programmes incorporate drama, co-operative games, Circle Time, and specific lessons to enhance children's self

esteem. The "Bullying" module of the "Stay Safe" programme is taught every year at each class level. A module on cyber-bullying and mobile phone bullying is included in the Fifth/Sixth class SPHE programme.

Merit systems are used in each class, giving each pupil the opportunity to experience positive motivation and recognition.

Pupils are taught the skills, and given the appropriate language, to deal with social situations that cause them distress (c.f. St. Kevin's Code of Behaviour). This approach commences at infant level and continues throughout the school. Equipping pupils with the skills to deal with distressing situations is a priority. This applies particularly to the school playground.

Procedures for Noting and Reporting of Alleged Incidents of Bullying by Adults:

In the case of a complaint regarding a teaching/non-teaching member of staff, the complaint should be first raised with the staff member in question and/or if necessary, with the principal. Section 24(3) of the Education Act 1998 provides for procedures to deal with such complaints.

Where alleged bullying has occurred between staff members, teaching and non-teaching, reference should be made to the I.N.T.O./Management Bodies publication "Working Together". Procedures and Policies for "Positive Staff Relations" should be followed.

Evaluation of Effectiveness of School Policy on Bullying Behaviour:

St. Kevin's Anti-Bullying Code will be subject to continuous review in the light of incidents of bullying behaviour encountered. It will be included as an item on the agenda for school staff meetings.

Ratification: June 18th 2010

Implementation Date: September 2010

Review: In conjunction with St. Kevin's Code of Behaviour, September 2012