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 Kilgarriffe National School 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-
     - o is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
     - o encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
     - o 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-
     - o build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
     - o explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying
   - Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
   - Supports and upskilling 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.

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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, which is 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*.

4. The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are the class teachers with the support of the Principal and SET teacher as necessary.

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

- Providing all pupils with opportunities to achieve success in curricular and extracurricular activities, to develop an awareness of their strengths and a positive sense of self-worth e.g. sporting opportunites, drama productions, STEM activities, art competitions, celebrating achievements and promoting a sense of belonging as a school community.
- Teachers and SNAs engaged in supervision of classrooms, playground and on school trips being watchful for bullying behaviour. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- Providing opportunities for pupils to assume responsibilities within the school community, taking on classroom jobs and supporting younger pupils e.g. buddy reading.
- Celebrating diversity within our school community and welcoming new pupils.

- Actively promoting kindness, good manners and a caring attitude e.g. kindness box, affirmation awards, informal yard buddies.
- Engaging in specific lessons on Bullying to increase children's awareness and understanding of what constitutes bullying behaviour and what they should do if they encounter it. Use of the Stay Safe programme, Webwise materials, Walk Tall and FRIENDS for Life.
- Encourage a culture of telling and promoting awareness of the important role that bystanders can play in preventing bullying.
- The development of an Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored.
- School-wide awareness raising on bullying to include pupils, staff, parents and the wider school community. The school's anti-bullying policy will be reviewed annually and discussed with pupils, staff and the Board of Management. The policy will be made available to parents on the school website.

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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:

- 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.
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher(s) will exercise their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type it is if it has and how best the situation might be resolved.
- Any pupil or parent/guardian may report a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, must 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.
- All staff must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.
- Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
- It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset.
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional, problem solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
- While initial investigations of bullying may be conducted in class where possible, incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.

- All interviews should 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.

- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher(s) should seek answers to questions of "What? Who? Where? When? And Why?" This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing with conflict in a non-aggressive manner.

- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.

- It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to give a written account of the incident.

- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the group after interview by the teacher.

- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher(s) 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 to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their children.

- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.

- 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/her parents and the school.

- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect.

- 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 (**Appendix 3).**

- 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;

  - 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.

- 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.

- 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.

- 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.

- The relevant teacher must use the recording template at Appendix 3 to record the bullying behaviour 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.

- The recording template at Appendix 3 must be provided to the Principal and will be stored in the Principal's office. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

- At each Board of Management meeting, the Principal will provide a report setting out the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template at Appendix 3) since the previous meeting and will confirm that all cases have been/ are being dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy and the Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools. The minutes of the Board of Management meeting will not include any identifying details of pupils involved.

- All incidents of bullying that have been referred to Tusla* will be reported to the Board of Management, in redacted format, as part of the Child Protection Oversight Report in accordance with the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017, Chapter 5, Section 5.5.1

* Incidents of bullying will be referred to Tusla when there is reasonable grounds for concern because the impact on the victim reaches a level which indicates emotional or physical neglect (see Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017, Chapter 2, Section 2.2)

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

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 as outlined below:

- The SET/class teacher will provide children who have been bullied with opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed.

- The SET/class teacher will also provide support to those pupils involved in bullying behaviour when deemed necessary. For those with low self-esteem, opportunities will be developed to increase feelings of self-worth. They will also be supported in learning other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

- Through a whole school approach, pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour are encouraged to discuss them with teachers. Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported.
- If appropriate, referrals to outside agencies may be suggested to parents in order to get further support for the pupils and their families if needed.

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 7th May, 2024.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel and published on the school website. 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. 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: May 2025

Appendix 2 Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- 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 the children 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 absent.

- 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 playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, 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 playground/school yard.

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.