

1 ANTI BULLYING

Ref. also Health and Safety Statement, Code of Behaviour, Complaints Procedure

We are proud at Kilcolgan Educate Together that by and large the children in our school are happy children. There is an atmosphere of respect and this is created by the children and the staff working in tandem. Inappropriate behaviour is challenged and high standards of behaviour are acknowledged. This is ingrained in day to day behaviour.

This anti-bullying policy operates in conjunction with the Code of Behaviour. The Code of Behaviour is used to address isolated instances of anti-social behaviour whereas the Anti-Bullying policy addresses repeated instances of inappropriate behaviour by one child or group of children towards another child or group.

The school has a central role in the children's social and moral development just as it does in their academic development. In school, we work towards standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of honesty, respect, consideration and responsibility. The individuality of each child needs to be accommodated while at the same time acknowledging the right of every child to education in a disruption free environment.

1.1 WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is defined as intentional repeated aggression, whether verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others. Examples of bullying include physical aggression, damage to property, intimidation, isolation, name-calling, cyber-bullying, taunting or 'slagging'. Child to child bullying, teacher to child, intra staff bullying, parent to staff and parent to child bullying (including a child other than their own) are examples of the areas where bullying may occur.

Isolated instances of aggressive behaviour, which would be dealt with under the Code of Behaviour, would not be described as bullying. However when the behaviour is systematic, ongoing and intentional, it can be described as bullying.

The school acknowledges that there are three parties involved in bullying – those who bully, those who are bullied and those who witness the bullying. Staff and teachers bear this in mind when dealing with bullying incidences and try to support and work with all parties involved.

Some Types of Bullying

- Name calling
- Exclusion/ isolation
- Spreading rumours
- Physical aggression
- Cyber bullying
- Taunting/ attempting to embarrass others
- Intimidation
- Damage to others property

1.2 AIMS OF THE POLICY

- To foster a school ethos of mutual and self-respect.
- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour.
- To outline, promote and raise awareness of preventative approaches that can be used in response to reported incidences of bullying.
- To develop a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- To outline procedures for noting and reporting instances of bullying behaviour.
- To outline procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.

1.3 PRO-ACTIVE MEASURES TO PREVENT BULLYING

- Prior to starting school parents/ guardians of all new entrants will receive a copy of the schools Code of Behaviour and the Anti-Bullying policy to be read and signed. It is also available on the school's website.
- Each class will highlight the children's awareness of bullying as unacceptable behaviour, in an age-appropriate way. This will be explored through The Learn Together Programme, S.P.H.E (Social, Personal and Health Education) and Our Annual Bullying Awareness Week in November.
- Whilst S.P.H.E provides the main focus for dealing with issues around bullying, all teachers and S.N.A's can influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in positive manner through teaching conflict resolution strategies. Children are taught to challenge inappropriate behaviour in an assertive manner.
- Buddy Bench or table for children who do not like playing physical games to sit and chat.

1.4 WHAT HAPPENS WHEN BULLYING DOES OCCUR - CHILD TO CHILD BULLYING

Children at Kilcolgan Educate Together are taught how to resolve minor disputes themselves using the following steps:

1. Tell the person you don't like the behaviour and clearly ask them to stop
2. If the behaviour does not stop, tell an adult
3. If this adult cannot help you, tell your class teacher
4. If the problem persists inform the principal

The teacher will then speak to the child/ children involved and assist the children in resolving the dispute.

The aim of the teacher is to encourage the children to resolve the issue by speaking to each other in a supportive environment.

Personality clashes do occur and age, maturity, level of understanding and whether or not a child has special needs are all factors that are considered when teaching children strategies to respect each other.

1.4.1 STEP 1 – IDENTIFICATION

Bullying can be identified in different ways

- by the child being bullied,
- teachers, staff,
- peers and other children,
- Parents.

See Appendix 1 – Guidelines for parents – if you are concerned that your child may be being bullied. Remember to talk to a teacher *immediately* when you feel there are behaviours that are against the school's Code of Conduct that have not been dealt with.

In the event of a parent reporting a bullying incident to the school, the school must be given a reasonable amount of time to objectively investigate the allegation. The earlier a parent comes with concerns and the more specific they are in the details provided, the easier it is for the teacher to support the children and monitor the situation.

Before labelling behaviours as bullying we are careful to ascertain that the behaviour is **repeated and intentional**.

If the school identifies a concern we will move immediately to step 2.

1.4.2 STEP 2 – SUPPORT AND MONITORING

- a. The parties involved are taken aside by the teacher and or principal and the alleged inappropriate behaviours are clearly outlined to both parties.
- b. The child being allegedly bullied will be assigned a designated member of staff as contact person to whom they will report immediately if inappropriate behaviour occurs. All children involved will be given some strategies to help them manage the purportedly offensive behaviour. These will be tailored to each individual. The emphasis is on providing a supportive environment for both parties to resolve their differences with a focus on building self-esteem and assertiveness.
- c. The parties involved are informed that all staff are aware of the situation and are there to support them. Teachers are asked to monitor the situation more closely and report any conflict to the class teacher and or principal.
- d. The class teacher will inform the parents of the alleged bully and the alleged victim separately to outline concerns and strategies that have been implemented.
- e. The class teacher will record facts at this point in the files of each child.
- f. The class teacher may decide to zone in on bullying, conflict and friendships as themes with the class to heighten awareness.
- g. Parents continue to liaise closely with teacher and continue to report incidents that have been reported at home.

Should the action taken at this stage prove not to have resolved the issue, the staff will proceed to step 3.

1.4.3 STEP 3 – FORMAL INTERVENTION

The Principal and 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 teacher will set targets together with the child and a specific behaviour plan will be put in place. The school acknowledges that bullying can be symptomatic of other issues and the child who is bullying will be supported in a non-humiliating or stigmatising way.

The teacher will record progress three times a day in consultation with the child. 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 is 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.

At this point parents may be advised to seek further professional intervention to assist their child in overcoming any behavioural, emotional and social challenges they may be experiencing. If a child is diagnosed with special needs at this point, a very specific behaviour plan will be put in place in consultation with relevant external professionals to enable the child to manage their behaviour in the school environment.

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 further strategies for the child to deal with the bullying.

If the parties involved, the teacher and the Principal agree that the issue remains unresolved after a reasonable period of time despite above interventions, it will be necessary to proceed to step 4.

1.4.4 STEP 4 – FORMAL SANCTIONS

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. It is the duty of the school to provide a safe environment for all the children. 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 on-going 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 Chairperson of the Board of Management.

1.5 BULLYING BY ADULTS

Ref. Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers, Complaints Procedure

In the case of **intra-staff bullying**, Kilcolgan Educate Together 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 free download on the INTO website.

In the case of **Teacher – 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 (unless they think the child would be at a greater risk) 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 **Teacher – Parent** bullying, the parent should if possible raise the issue with teacher in question, or refer the issue to the Principal. Failing resolution the matter should be reported in writing to the Board of Management.

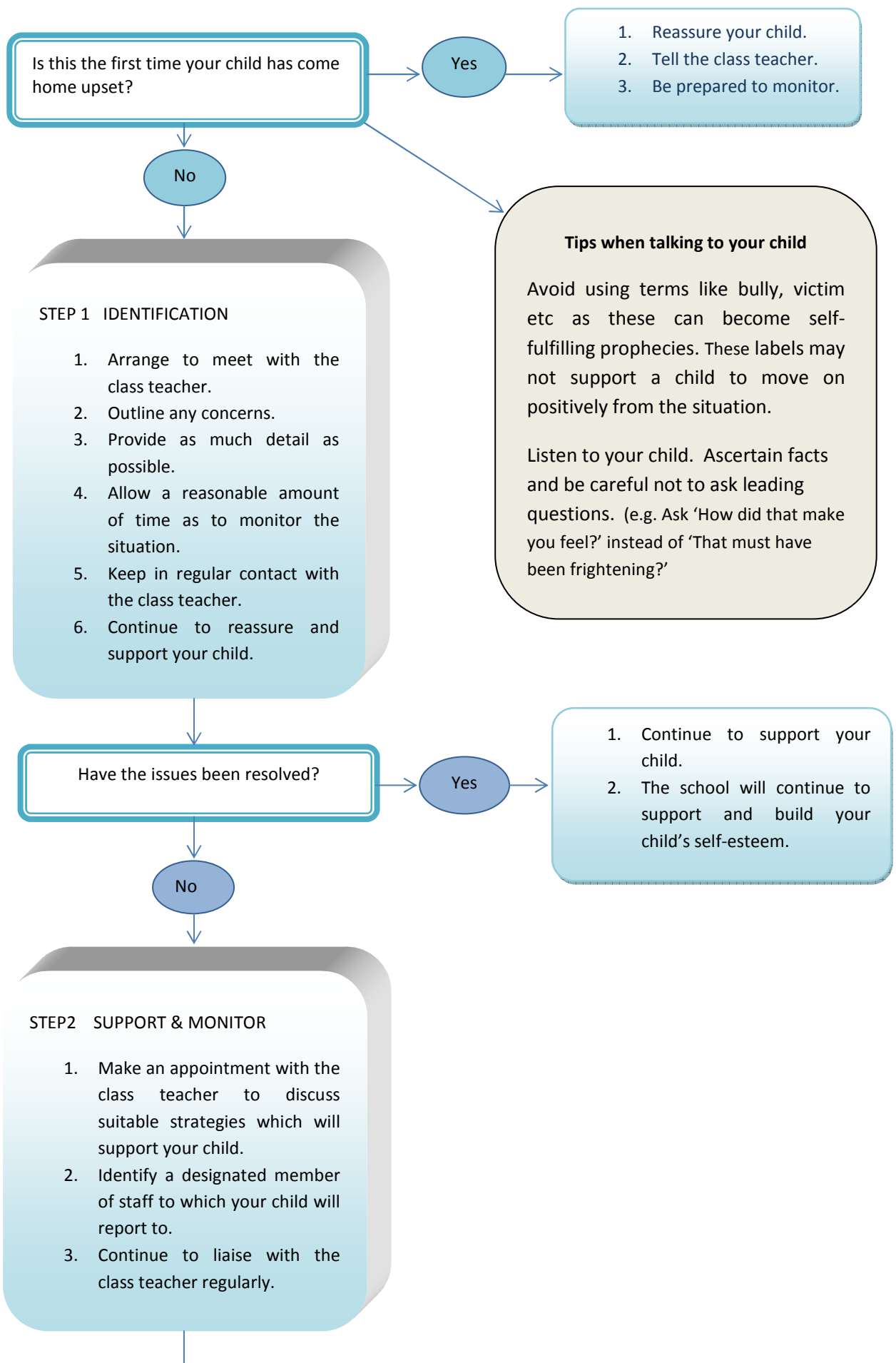
In the case of **Parent – Teacher** bullying, the matter should be raised by the teacher with the parent if possible and the Principal should be informed, and if deemed necessary the Board of Management should subsequently be informed in writing.

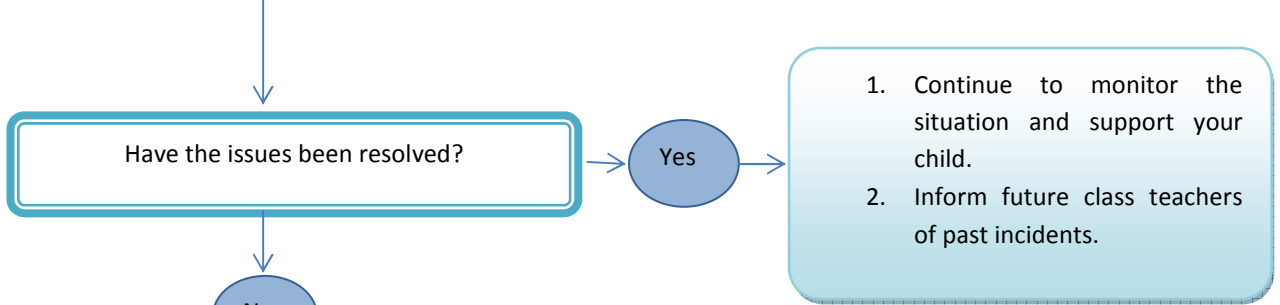
In the case of **Parent/Visitor to the school – Child** bullying, the complaint should be referred in the first instance to the child's class teacher and subsequently to the Principal if unresolved.

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

Bullying Prevention Guidelines for Parents

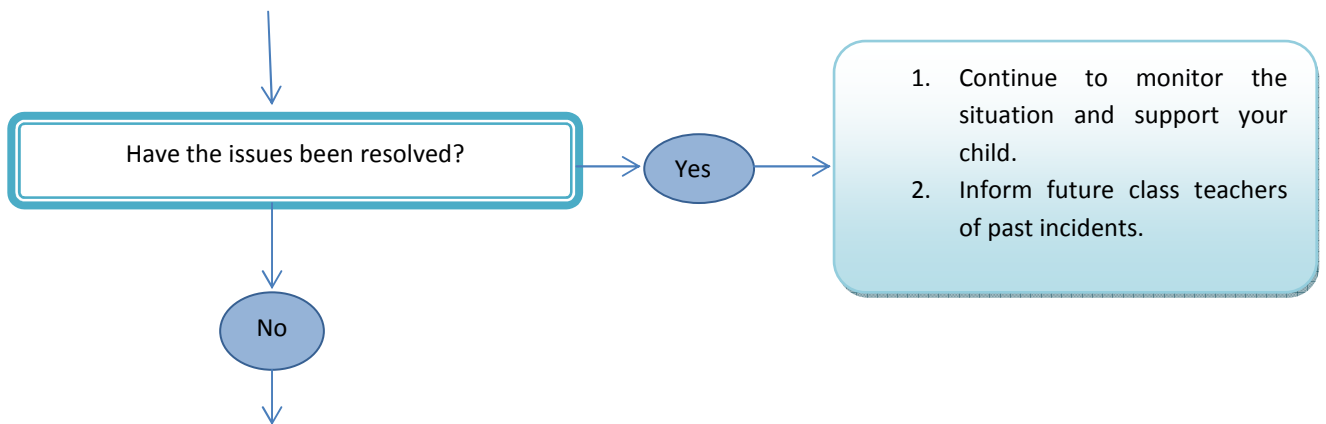
My child has come home upset from school, what steps should I take?





STEP 3 FORMAL INTERVENTION

1. Arrange a meeting with the class teacher and the principal.
2. Discuss the specific behaviour plan put in place.
3. Regular consultation will take place between your child, class teacher and designated person.
4. Further strategies will be discussed to enable your child to deal with bullying.
5. Continue to liaise weekly with the class teacher.



STEP 4 FORMAL SANCTIONS

1. In consultation with the principal & class teacher, discuss aspects of interventions that have worked.
2. The principal will discuss with you whether it is appropriate to implement formal sanctions at this stage.
3. These sanctions will be reported in writing by the principal to the Board of Management.