

## 1 ANTI BULLYING POLICY

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

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 Kilcolgan Educate Together 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, Ref Circular 045/2013.

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, staff and school leadership working together in tandem. Inappropriate behaviour is challenged and high standards of behaviour are acknowledged. This is ingrained in day to day behaviour.

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-
  - 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;
- 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
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

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. Across the 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 negative behaviour**, 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 identity based bullying, such as, racism, homophobic, transphobic bullying and against those with disabilities or special needs. 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

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

## Impact of Bullying

Loss of self esteem,  
Anxiety,  
Stress,  
Depression,  
Difficulties with school work,  
Reluctance to attend school, and, in extreme cases, self harm and suicide

*(Taken from Action Plan On Bullying Report of the Anti- Bullying Working Group to the Minister for Education and Skills January 2013)*

*<http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Anti-Bullying-Procedures-for-Primary-and-Post-Primary-Schools.pdf>*

### 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, covered in the Stay Safe Programme) and the annual bullying awareness month 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. Playworks initiative is being implemented currently in the yard to include children who find yard play difficult.

## 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

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.

- 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. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows: Principal/Vice Principal.
- c. 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.
- d. 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.
- e. 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.
- f. The class teacher will record facts at this point in the template for recording bullying behaviour as required by the Department of Education (See Appendix 3 Circular 045/2013) and to continue to monitor the situation for 20 days as recommended by the department.
- g. The class teacher may decide to zone in on bullying, conflict and friendships as themes with the class to heighten awareness.
- h. Parents continue to liaise closely with teacher and continue to report incidents that have been reported at home.
- i. Staff will be supported by principal and other staff members in dealing with alleged bullying incident.

Should the action taken at this stage prove not to have resolved the issue, the staff will proceed to step 3 and the principal/deputy principal shall be informed.

#### 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 continues 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 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 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.

## 1.6 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.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_ [date].

This policy has been made available to school personnel, is published on the school website and hard copies are available from the school on request. The Parents Association have been emailed a copy of this policy. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. The BOM will review the school Anti Bullying Policy annually using the checklist (See Appendix 4 Circular 045/ 2013) as is required by the Department of Education. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) 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: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

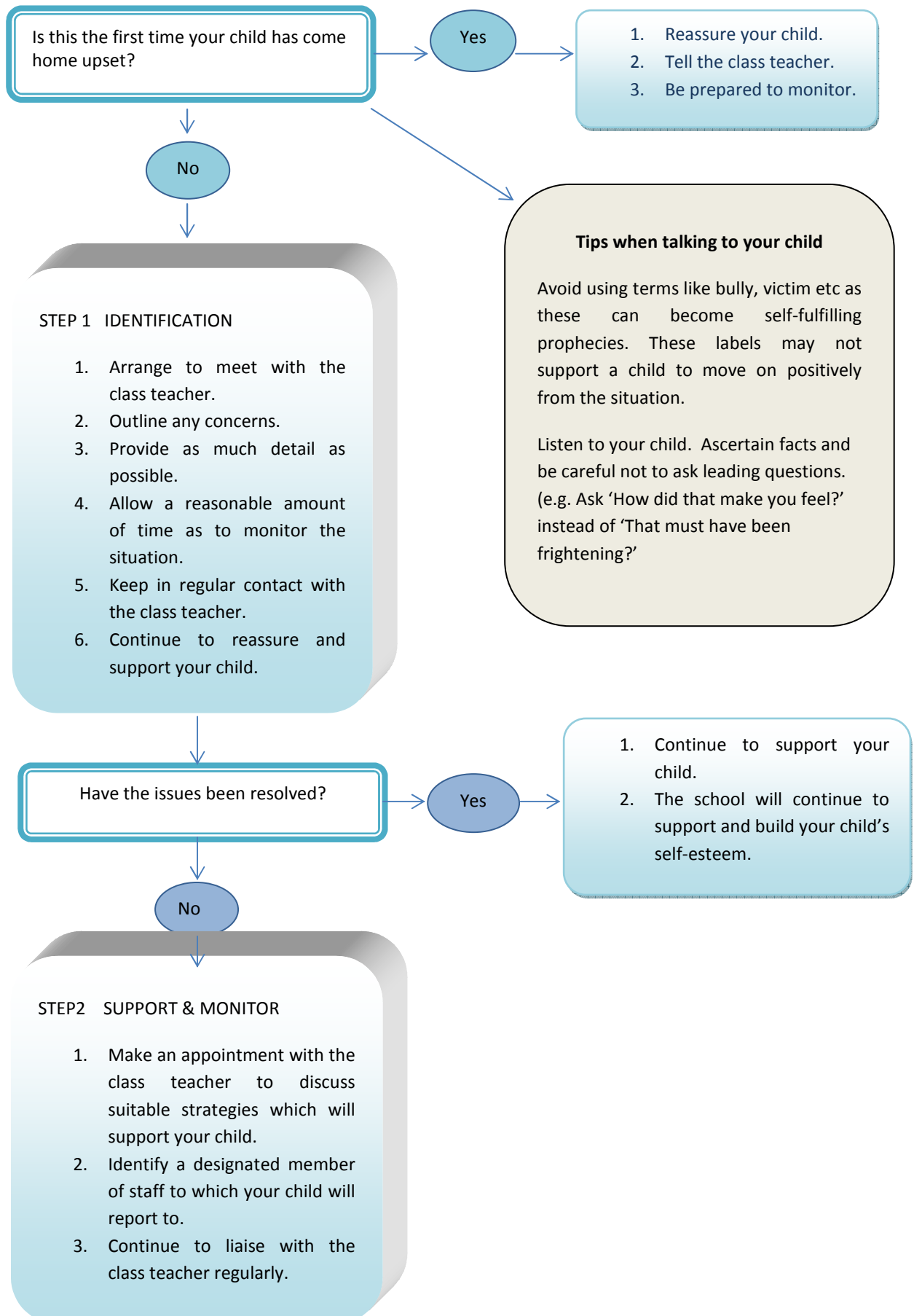
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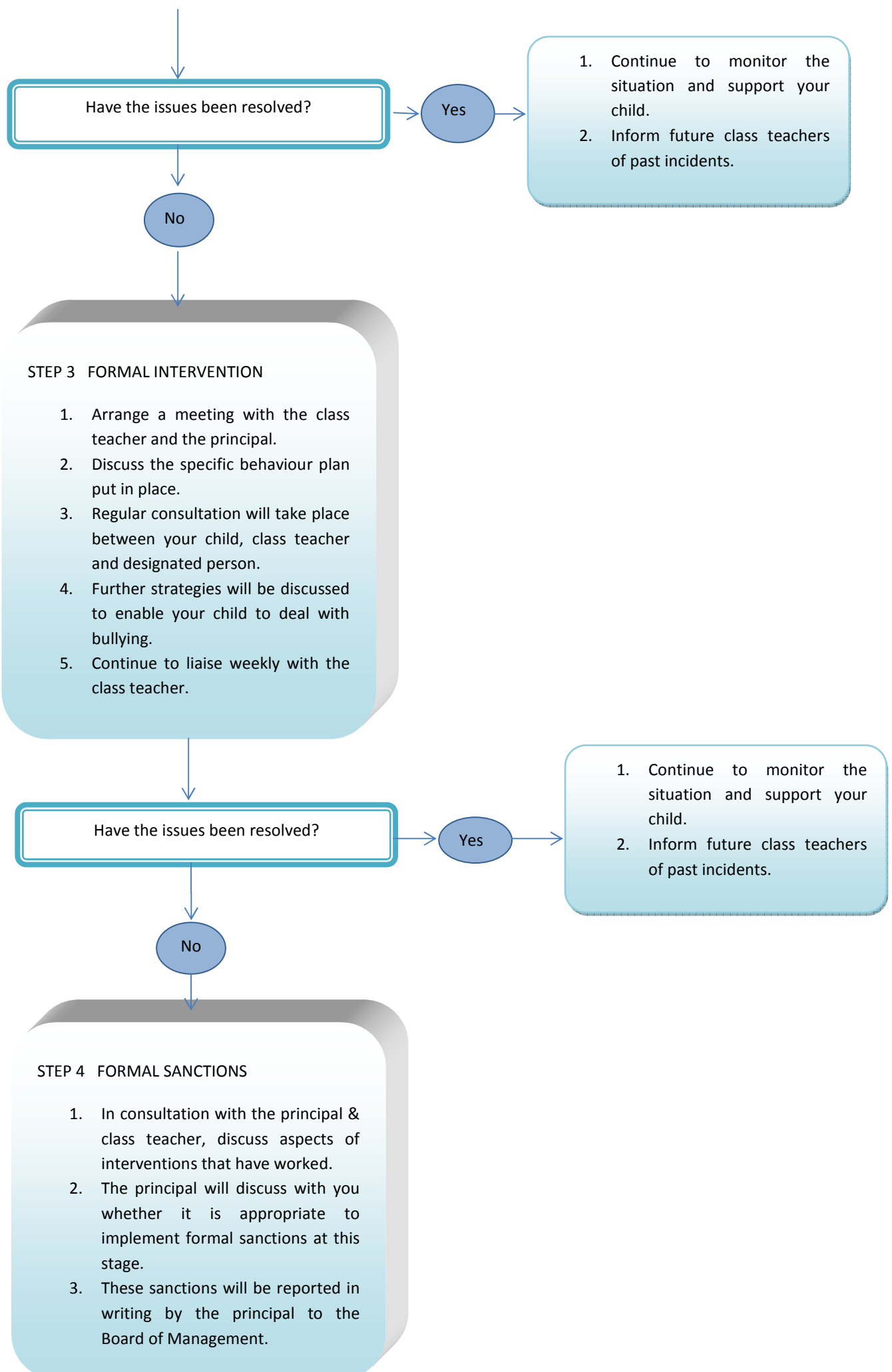
Date of next review: \_\_\_\_\_



## APPENDIX 1: BULLYING PREVENTION GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS

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





## CIRCULAR 045/2013

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

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Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

[illegible]

**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**

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**9. Details of actions taken**

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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.

## APPENDIX 4 CHECKLIST FOR ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE ANTI-BULLYING POLICY AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

CIRCULAR 045/2013

The Board of Management must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.

Yes /No

Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	

Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Chairperson, Board of Management)

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Principal)

## NOTIFICATION REGARDING THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT'S ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

CIRCULAR 045/2013

The Board of Management of Kilcolgan Educate Together N.S. wishes to inform you that:

- The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of \_\_\_\_\_ [date].
- This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in **Appendix 4** of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Principal