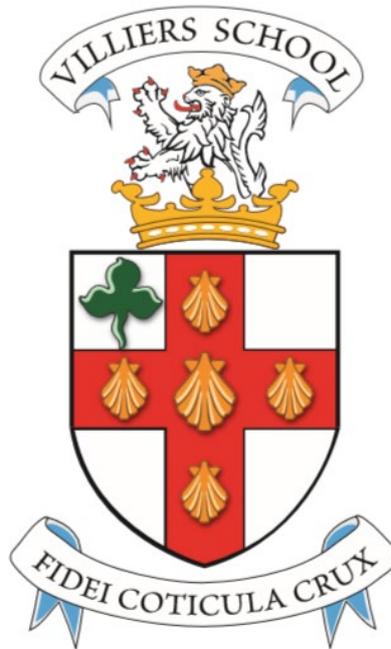# Villiers School

Anti-Bullying Policy

2022-2023

Villiers School Anti-Bullying Policy

Villiers School is dedicated to developing each student as an individual. Our pastoral care throughout the school goes hand in hand with ensuring personal success. All members of staff share a collective responsibility to act to prevent bullying behaviour in our School Community. The School aims to create a 'telling' atmosphere where students safely disclose incidents of bullying behaviour. The aim of this policy is to ensure the School is a safe and secure environment for all.

Scope:

This policy applies:

- At any time when students are in School
- During School tours/matches/extra-curricular activities
- To any bullying behaviour outside School which seriously impacts on a student's participation in School.

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 Villiers 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 students 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 students 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 students; and
- explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of students;
- 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.
- Villiers School endorses the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools where bullying is defined as follows:
- Bullying is 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 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*.

Basic Considerations:

- Every case of bullying is unique and different
- Villiers School reserves the right at all times to protect the students in its care from bullying behaviour
- Parents/Guardians should inform the School of episodes which they suspect to be bullying which have come to their attention through their children or through other parents/guardians or though social or personal media and have a negative impact on a student's participation in School
- Investigations of alleged bullying can take a considerable amount of time
- Investigations and resolutions of bullying behaviour must follow the process as outlined in Section 6 of this Policy

Supervision and Monitoring

Villiers School has an obligation to provide, to the best of its ability, a safe environment for all our students. We believe students need a certain amount of personal freedom to encourage and foster independence and responsibility and furthermore it is impossible to supervise and monitor all students at all times. We expect that all students adhere to a standard of acceptable and respectful behaviour, whether in the presence of a member of staff, or not.

Most cases of bullying happen outside of class time. We are fortunate to have strong staff presence outside class time as many teachers are involved in afternoon and extra- curricular activities, we have a boarding staff and we have staff members who reside on the campus, however constant, incessant supervision and monitoring of all students at all times is neither possible not desirable.

EXAMPLES OF BULLYING BEHAVIOURS

General behaviours which apply to all	- Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation – e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc. - Physical aggression - Damage to property - Name calling - Slagging - The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person. - Offensive graffiti - Extortion - Intimidation - Insulting or offensive gestures - The "look" - Invasion of personal space - A combination of any of the types listed.

Cyber	- **Denigration**: Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation. - **Harassment**: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual. - **Impersonation**: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name. - **Flaming**: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight. - **Trickery:** Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online. - **Outing**: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images. - **Exclusion**: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group. - **Cyber stalking:** Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for their safety. - Silent telephone/mobile phone calls - Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls. - Abusive text messages. - Abusive email. - Abusive communication on social networks – e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles. - Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures. - Abusive posts on any form of communication technology.

Identity Based Behaviours:

Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).

Homophobic and Transgender	- Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation. - Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation. - Name calling – e.g. gay, queer, lesbian … used in a derogatory manner. - Physical intimidation or attacks. - Threats.
Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community	- Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or Traveller background. - Exclusion on the basis of any of the above.
Relational	This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include: - Malicious gossip - Isolation and exclusion. - Ignoring - Excluding from the group - Taking someone's friends away - "Bitching" - Spreading rumours - Breaking confidence

	• Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear • The "look".
Sexual	• Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching. • Harassment • Sexting -ie the sharing of explicit text and images about or of students or others without their permission
Special Educational Needs, Disability	• Name calling • Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs. • Taking advantage of some students' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues. • Mimicking a person's disability. • Setting others up for ridicule.

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

- All Subject Teachers
- Form Tutors
- Year Heads
- Guidance Councellor
- Chaplain
- Boarding Staff
- Deputy Head of School
- Head of School

Note that any teacher or boarding or other staff member may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

4.   The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the School are as follows:

A whole school approach in creating and maintaining an open and inclusive School which values and respects every student. It is the responsibility and duty of all School personnel (teaching and non-teaching) to ensure these values are upheld and are communicated to students. Non-teaching and ancillary staff are encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Involvement of the Student Council and Prefects in contributing to a safe School environment, eg. mentoring, lunchtime club and other student support activities is encouraged. The School encourages a culture of telling with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. It is made clear to all students that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly. Students are informed of how to tell and who to tell, for example to directly approach a teacher or any staff member, to approach a form tutor, to get a parent or friend to tell on behalf of another student.

These anti-bullying values are taught to the students through:

- The School's wellbeing programme, including:
- SPHE, RSE, CSPE and PE programmes
- the Student AUP
- designated health and safety days
- through School Prefects and the Student Council
- Special Initiatives and guest speakers

These values are enhanced by encouraging the self-esteem of students in tutor time, assembly, in extra-curricular activities and in the classroom.

The Pastoral Care Team and Student Support Teams have a particular role in supporting students and staff if bullying is suspected.

Other School policies that link with this policy are the Acceptable Use Policy, the Code of Behaviour, including Behaviour Pyramid and the Child Safeguarding Statement.

5.   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 (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

- Incident comes to the attention of any staff member
- The incident is then referred to the relevant personnel – teacher, tutor, year head, chaplain, counsellor, boarding staff, deputy and head of school
- In dealing with an allegation of bullying the teacher/staff member will exercise their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best to resolve the situation
- Investigation to be carried out, including the interviewing and taking of statements from those involved and from witnesses and bystanders
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all students concerned
- Parents to be contacted and if necessary, requested to meet in School with the relevant personnel
- Parents, guardians and students are required to cooperate with any investigation and assist the School in resolving any issues and restoring as far as is practicable the relationships of the parties involved
- In cases where it has been determined that bullying has occurred it should be made clear to the student who engaged in bullying behaviour how they are in breach of the School's anti bullying policy and efforts will be made to get them see the situation from the perspective of the student being bullied
- Following investigation: meeting to discuss findings and to agree proposed actions (including disciplinary and support actions required for parties involved)
- Head of School/Deputy Head of School to ratify proposed actions
- Parents and students informed of actions
- Where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between any student being disciplined, their parents/guardians and the School
- Bullying Incident Report Form, if applicable, to be stored in Disciplinary File
- The School will, at all times, endeavour to comply with current legislation

Record Keeping:

The relevant teacher must keep a record of their investigation.

The relevant teacher must use the recording template (Appendix 2) to record bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

(a) in cases where they consider that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after they have determined that bullying has taken place
and/or,
(b) If the bullying behaviour is of sufficient gravity to be recorded immediately, eg. serious assault

In the circumstances of (a) and (b) above the recording template at Appendix 2 must be completed in full and a copy retained by the relevant teacher and a copy provided to the Head of School/Deputy Head of School. The recording template can be completed in written or e-format.

NOTE

In an investigation the rights of all students will be respected, and a fair hearing will be awarded to all students

Investigations into alleged incidents of bullying are thorough and take time
The aim is to ensure that both the alleged bully and alleged victim can establish a mutually respectful relationship.

6.   The School's programme of support for working with students affected by bullying is to ensure that both the victim of bullying behaviour and the person/persons responsible for the offending behaviour will be offered ongoing informal and formal support from within the School. Villiers School supports restorative practices. The support offered in School may be in the form of monitoring, internal counselling and/or referral to an external counselling agency, a psychologist, psychotherapist or other agencies, if deemed more appropriate and agreed to by parents/guardians.

7.   Supervision and Monitoring of Students
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.

8.   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 students or staff or the harassment of students 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.

9.   This policy has been made available to School personnel, published on the School website and provided to the Parents' Association and Student Council. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and to the Board of Governors if requested.

10.   Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bulling policy

To School Personnel and Parent Teacher Association The Board of Management of Villiers School wishes
to inform you that:

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 10th April 2014 and reviewed yearly. The Board of Managements annual review of the school's anti-bulling policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of 23rd May 2022.

This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in Appendix 4 of the Department's
Anti-Bulling Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Signed: _____   Date: 23rd May 2022
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: _____   Date: 23rd May 2022
Head of School

Appendix 1 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 students 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 students in the development of these messages.
- Catch them 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 students with a disability or SEN. Give constructive feedback to students 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 students about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage students to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.
- Follow up and follow through with students 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 student 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 students to help them to identify bullying "hot spots" and "hot times" for bullying in the school.
o   Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
o   Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when students are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms. Support the establishment and work of student councils.

Appendix 2 Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of student being bullied and class group
Name _____Class_____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of student(s) engaged in bullying behaviour
_____
_____
_____

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))*
Student concerned
Other Student
Parent
Teacher
Other

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *
Physical Aggression
Damage to Property
Isolation/Exclusion
Name Calling
Cyber-bullying
Intimidation
Malicious Gossip
Other (specify)

4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))*
Playground
Classroom
Corridor
Toilets
School Bus
Other

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:
Homophobic   Disability/SEN   Racist   Membership of Traveller community
          Other (specify) related

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9.   Details of actions taken

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher)   Date _____

Date submitted to Head of School/Deputy Head of School _____

Appendix 3 Template Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its Implementation

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 Answers

Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*?

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 students?

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 Head of School?

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 Head of School'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 Head of School (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?