

# Eureka Secondary School Kells

EUREKA



## Anti-Bullying Policy

Eureka Secondary School is a voluntary Catholic school for girls, under the Trusteeship of CEIST, and under the direction of a Board of Management. The school was first established in the Mercy Convent in 1924, and moved to Eureka House in April 1956.

### ***Mission Statement***

1. Eureka Secondary School aims to provide the highest quality education possible to meet the needs of all students, within the limits of available resources, and within an environment and ethos that promotes Christian values, mutual respect and responsible citizenship.
2. The school aims to offer opportunities equally to all its students, whatever their ability, circumstances or religious experiences, in order to develop each person's potential to the full. Programmes are provided to facilitate students whose goal is further education; those who wish to enter the world of work; and those who wish to return to full-time study.
3. The school is committed to maintaining a supportive partnership with parents who are the primary educators of their children; with employers, schools, the local community, and the parishes from which the pupils come.
4. The staff, the school's most valued resource, are supported and encouraged in their work, and we aim to promote their individual and corporate development through supportive structures and in-service training, both internal and external.
5. The school is committed to developing a community where mutual respect reigns, where personal standards of work and behaviour are high, and where students grow to recognise fully their responsibilities both to themselves and to others. Our hope is that when they leave school they may be better able to take their place in society as mature and responsible citizens imbued with the Christian values, which are the inspirations of this school.

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the TUSLA, the Board of Management of Eureka Secondary 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
    - 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 whole school 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
    - 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.
  
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 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
- 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 or 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.

In the context of this policy, placing a once off or hurtful public message image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where the 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 teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:  
Any member of the teaching staff is deemed to be a relevant teacher in the context of Section 6.8.3 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools*.
5. 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:
  - Eureka is a school which promotes respectful relationships across the school community.
  - There is a whole school agreement on the policy and procedure to be followed and bullying is completely unacceptable.
  - The subject of bullying is dealt with in all year groups through the SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education) Programme.
  - A whole school Friendship Week designed for specific age groups will be delivered to each year group providing an overall education on bullying and its effects. Cyber-bullying is an integral part of the Anti-Bullying / Friendship Week to help build understanding, empathy, respect and resilience in pupils. The best way to prevent cyber bullying is to prevent it happening in the first place – educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, on how to stay safe, and develop within pupils' means and a culture of reporting any concerns they have in a safe environment.
  - A confidential questionnaire is conducted each term, with all students, so that bullying can be reported in a safe and secure manner.
  - Leaving Certificate students are prefects for first year students – they provide extra support and guidance to students and bullying behaviour may be reported to prefects.

- An information evening is held for parents of incoming first years about the anti-bullying policy in the school.
  - There is ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.
  - Staff are regularly updated regarding bullying and the school's anti-bullying policy.
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:
- A questionnaire will be given, each term to students to allow them to tell safely.
  - A confidential box is present outside the main office, to allow students to report any instances, at their ease and in private.
  - All reports, including anonymous reports will be dealt with by the relevant teacher, using the recording template. The teacher will use his/her professional judgement on how the situation will be resolved.
  - Any report of bullying will be fully investigated in a sensitive and caring manner, and with due regard to the rights of all students concerned. Interviews will take place outside of the classroom situation, and the teacher/year head shall speak separately to the students involved so as to hear both sides of the story.
  - Students who are not directly involved may also be interviewed as they can often provide useful information.
  - Interviews will be held in private.
  - In investigating incidents of bullying it is usual procedure to ask a student to write an account of what happened.
  - A restorative approach will be used and the emphasis will be on seeking a change in behaviour. Sanctions will be imposed where necessary.
  - Parents of both parties will be informed should we deem it to be a bullying incident. As every case is different we will discuss strategies with individuals concerned. If we believe that reconciliation between parties is possible, we will act as mediators provided the victim is ready and agreeable.
  - The person to whom the matter is reported will record the initial incident using "template for recording bullying behaviour" (Appendix 4). He/she should report the matter to the tutor or year head. Serious cases of bullying behaviour may be reported immediately to the Principal/Deputy Principal.
  - **All** reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teachers.
  - When the school has investigated and established that bullying has taken place, a written record will be kept of bullying incidents, including the action taken.
  - Students may be asked to write an account of the incident.
  - Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants, bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

- Students, Parents or any member of the wider community who witnesses cyber bullying are urged to keep a record of all instances, and provide these when needed.
  - All records of cyber bullying will be obtained, and where necessary outside agencies e.g. An Garda Síochána may assist.
  - Teachers will monitor students for a period of time after an incident.
  - The year head will check from time to time that the bullying has stopped.
  - The student who has been bullied and/or her parent/guardian should inform the school immediately if there is a recurrence.
  - Records of bullying will be kept in the school for three years after all students concerned in the incident have left the school.
7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:  
Eureka Secondary School will put in place a programme of supports involving the following elements:
- A. The school is committed to provide counselling to students who have been bullied with opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, develop their social skills and build their resilience. They will be offered a programme of support through prefects, form tutor and year head. In cases where the student has been isolated the Threads group will monitor progress from a distance.
  - B. The school is committed to provide counselling to students who have been involved in bullying behaviour to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others. They will be offered a programme of support through prefects, form tutor and year head and provided with appropriate opportunities to build their self-esteem and feelings of self-worth.
  - C. Students who observe incidents of bullying behaviour will be encouraged to discuss them with their teachers and their parents and to avail of counselling where they feel it may assist them to cope effectively with what they witnessed.

In a case where there are serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil, the advice of the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) will be sought.

## **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 has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

11. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website 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.

### **Anti-Bullying Contract**

I agree to accept the Anti-Bullying Policy as set out in the School Journal

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Student)

I agree that I will support the school in upholding the standard set out under the Policy.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent)

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting of \_\_\_\_\_  
(date).

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson)

Next review date \_\_\_\_\_