

KWETB Youthreach Anti-Bullying Policy

Youthreach Centre: Naas Youthreach

Accompanying Procedure: DES Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013)

Complementary Policies: DES Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools; Youthreach Centre Child Safeguarding Statement; Youthreach Code of Behaviour for Students; KWETB Code of Conduct for Staff; KWETB Bullying Prevention Policy.

Note: In accordance with the DES Operational Guidelines for Youthreach 2015 Education and Training Boards (ETB) the Chief Executive (CE) of each ETB has executive responsibility for the programme and for ensuring a co-ordinated approach to its implementation. The Adult Education Officer, working with the Director of Further Education and Training, takes the place of a Board of Management for the purposes of management of the Youthreach centre and reporting requirements of this policy. The Youthreach Oversight Group provides additional oversight in the implementation of this policy.

Definition of roles:

1. Youthreach Coordinator: Manager of the Youthreach centre with responsibility for programme delivery, staff management, building management, student education and wellbeing in the programme.
2. Deputising Coordinator: Staff member who is deputising for the Youthreach Coordinator in their absence, either as a result of the Coordinator being absent from the centre for a day or for a longer continuous period of time. Deputising Coordinator assumes the responsibilities of the Coordinator while acting in this capacity.
3. Resource Person/Teacher/Tutor: Member of the teaching team with direct contact with students.
4. Adult Education Officer: KWETB Senior Manager with responsibility for Youthreach programmes.

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 education needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including 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 Centre's Code of Behaviour.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the Centre'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.

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

In accordance with section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools the relevant staff member(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying in this Centre is(are) as follows:

- Youthreach Coordinator or Deputising Coordinator, in the absence of the coordinator, has overall responsibility for investigating and dealing with bullying in this Centre;
- Youthreach Resource Person or tutor may report a bullying concern to the Coordinator/Deputising Coordinator. They will assist in investigating and dealing with the bullying in the Centre;
- Students, parents, non-teaching staff or members of the wider community may bring a bullying concern to any member of the teaching and resource staff. The staff member who receives the bullying concern will report it to the Youthreach Coordinator or Deputising Coordinator, for investigation and dealing with the concern.

5. Education and prevention strategies to combat bullying

In accordance with Section 6.5 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools:

on the clear understanding that these matters are being reported in confidence (copy of bullying policy and procedures)

This means that a student who draws concerns about bullying to the attention of a member of staff will not have his/her identity divulged in any way that might result in those against whom allegations are being made identifying the source of the report. At all times students will be kept informed of their rights and will be supported by the Centre team.

More than anything else, the combating of bullying will depend on the extent to which students note and report bullying. In this context, the well-being of students is very much dependent on the vigilance of their fellow students and their preparedness to report concerns about bullying to the teaching staff and/or Centre management. All teaching staff will reinforce this point to students on an ongoing basis.

- 5.8 The Centre will adopt a Centre-wide approach (involving management, staff, parents, students and members of the wider community with a connection to the Centre) to prevent and combat bullying. In this context, the Centre is committed to engaging with parents:

5.8.1 to provide updates on the policies and practices to combat bullying.

5.8.2 to provide information for parents at induction to ensure that they understand the way the Centre deals with bullying, and to provide them with reliable information on how they may contribute towards combating bullying. In this regard, it is important that parents realise that **anyone can be a bully and anyone can be a target of bullying**. It is not just other peoples' sons and daughters that can bully. Here, also, it is important to realise that disagreements between young people are part and parcel of negotiating the road to adulthood and that **every youthful disagreement should not be treated as a full-blown bullying episode**.

- 5.9 In accordance with 6.8.9 of the DES Procedures 'parents and students are expected to co-operate with any investigation and assist the Centre in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible'.
- 5.10 The Centre will establish links with others who come in contact with its students in order to enlist them in countering bullying behaviour by reporting it to parents and/or the Centre.
- 5.11 Where necessary the Centre will seek the assistance of and work with National Education and Psychological Services (NEPS), the HSE and the Gardaí, as appropriate, to combat bullying, identify the perpetrators and support the victims.
- 5.12 In combating bullying, the Centre will take particular account of the needs of students with disabilities or with Special Educational Needs. This will involve improving inclusion, focusing on developing social skills, paying particular attention to student induction and cultivating a Centre culture that respects everyone and values helping one another.
- 5.13 The Centre will devote a staff development session each year towards raising the awareness of bullying among staff, building an understanding of what bullying is and providing guidance on how it is best combated, prevented, detected, investigated, documented (as appropriate) and resolved. This session

the centre community and it impinges on the work or well-being of a student on the programme, even where the bullying acts are committed outside of the Centre.

6.3 KWETB reserves the right, in accordance with Section 6.3.5 of the DES Procedures to seek the assistance of agencies such as NEPS, the HSE, and the Gardaí, where it deems such assistance is necessary to dealing effectively with bullying behaviour. In any case, where KWETB deems bullying behaviour to be potentially abusive (see sections 6.8.12, 6.8.13 and 6.8.14 of the DES Procedures) it will consult with the HSE's Children and Family Services to assist it in drawing up an appropriate response or to obtain advice or to make a formal Child Protection Report to Tusla or the Gardai.

6.4 Concerns about or allegations of bullying will be investigated and addressed in accordance with Section 6.8.9 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools. These are summarised as follows:

- a. In investigating and dealing with bullying the focus will be on resolving the interpersonal issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved - rather than apportioning blame.
- b. In investigating and dealing with bullying, the Coordinator or Deputising Coordinator, in consultation with relevant staff members will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- c. It will be made clear to all students that when they report bullying behaviour they are behaving responsibly and that the well-being of other students is dependent on them reporting such behaviour.
- d. All non-teaching staff such as clerical and administrative, caretakers, cleaners, those taking extracurricular activities and other campus users will be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to either a Resource Person or the Coordinator or Deputising Coordinator. Best practice would suggest that the reporting is done before the end of the day.
- e. Incidents of bullying will be investigated in a calm, unemotional problem-solving manner.
- f. Incidents of bullying will generally be investigated outside of the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- g. All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard for the rights of students.
- h. Those investigating bullying behaviour will calmly seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why.
- i. Where a group is allegedly involved in bullying behaviour, each student will be interviewed individually in the first instance. Thereafter, where appropriate,

- Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and
- Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents/guardians or Coordinator.

r. Where a parent/guardian or a student who is more than 18 years old is not satisfied

that the matter has been dealt with in accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, they will be advised of their right to make an appeal to the Adult Education Officer of KWETB. Such appeals shall be submitted, in writing, setting out the grounds for the appeal, within 15 working days of the parent/guardian informing the Coordinator or Deputising Coordinator that they are of the opinion that Youthreach Centre has not dealt with the bullying case in accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools. Where a parent/guardian, having exercised their appeal, is still not satisfied they will be advised of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

7. In accordance with section 6.8 of Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools a programme of support for working with students affected by bullying:

The Centre will put in place a programme of supports for students who have been bullied. This programme will involve the following elements.

- Students who have been bullied will be:
 - offered appropriate counselling; and
 - provided with opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their social skills and to build their resilience.
- Students who have been involved in bullying behaviour will be:
 - provided with counselling to help them to learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others; and
 - provided with appropriate opportunities to build their self-esteem and feelings of self-worth.
- 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 have experienced.

8. Supervision and Monitoring of Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures in Centre

- KWETB 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.
- Data gathered through the reporting templates (Appendix 1) will be collated and analysed annually with a view to monitoring levels of bullying behaviour and identifying recurring issues requiring attention. This analysis will complement the

available to the AEO and the KWETB Youthreach Oversight Group and, if requested, the Department.

Signed: Brenda Lynch Date: 10/2/2021
Adult Education Officer (on behalf of SMT)

Signed: Janet Moss Date: 10/2/2021
Youthreach Co-ordinator

Date of next review: 10th February 2024

Name Calling		Other (Specify)	
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7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	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: _____
Youthreach Coordinator

Date: _____

	Yes/No
Has the SMT of KWETB formally approved the Anti-bullying Policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Centres</i> ?	Yes
Has the Centre made a hard copy of the policy available in the Centre and inform parents of the policy at induction.	Yes
Has the Co-ordinator or Deputising Coordinator ensured that the Policy has been made available to Centre staff, including new staff?	Yes
Is the Co-ordinator or Deputising Coordinator satisfied that Centre 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?	Yes
Has the Centre ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all students?	Yes
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the Centre applies?	Yes
Have all the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	Yes
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	Yes
Is Co-ordinator or Deputising Coordinator satisfied that all teaching staff are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	Yes
Has the AEO received the periodic summary reports of the Co-ordinator?	Yes
Is the AEO satisfied with how well the Centre is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Co-ordinator's periodic report to the AEO?	
Have there been any complaints from parents regarding the Centre's handling of Bullying incidents?	No
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the Centre citing dissatisfaction with the Centre's handling of a bullying situation?	No
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the Centre's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	No
Has the data available from cases reported to the Co-ordinator or Deputising Coordinator (by the Bullying Recording Template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
Has the AEO identified any aspects of the Centre's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	No
Has the Co-ordinator or Deputising Coordinator put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	
Signed:  Youthreach Co-ordinator Date: <u>10/2/21</u>	
Signed: _____ Adult Education Officer Date: _____	