Kilcroan National School Afterschool

MANAGING BEHAVIOUR (Includes school Age Childcare)

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Person(s) responsible for developing, distributing and reviewing Policy	**Cian Boyle**
Person responsible for approving Policy	**Fidelma Croghan**
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This policy is available and has been communicated to parents/guardians and school age children

Relevant staff know the requirements and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to this policy.

All staff have received training on this policy.

All Staff are certified in relation to this policy

Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 (Síolta Standard 5: Interactions) (National Standard 3: Working in Partnership with Parents or Guardians, National Standard 9: Nurture and Well-Being, National Standard 10: Behaviour) Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.

Kilcroan N.S. Afterschool- Policies and Procedures

Statement of Intent:

We will work with the children to ensure they receive positive guidance, support, and encouragement to finding positive solutions to manage their own behaviour. The Service sets realistic expectations of behaviour in accordance to the age and stage of development of the child. We apply rules and expectations fairly and consistently to all children. We do not use any form of physical punishment. We encourage children to respect themselves, others and the environment. We facilitate children to make positive decisions and choices about their own learning and development to develop a positive sense of self. We aim to facilitate a happy, caring environment with stimulating activities for all children. In the case of a particular incident, or persistent unacceptable behaviour, we will *always* discuss ways forward with the parent(s)/guardian of the child.

Note: The guiding principles on reporting child abuse or neglect may be summarised as follows:

1. The safety and well-being of the child must take priority over concerns about adults against whom an allegation may be made.
2. Reports of concerns should be made without delay to Tusla.

Child Abuse

If child abuse or neglect is suspected within Kilcroan National School Afterschool, it will be addressed according to the service's child protection and welfare policy. This policy is designed to ensure that children are safe and protected from harm, and it outlines the steps that should be taken to respond to suspected abuse or neglect in a responsible and legally compliant manner.

The general steps for managing suspected abuse or neglect often include:

1. **Immediate Action**: If a child is in immediate danger, steps should be taken to ensure the child's safety, which may include removing the child from a harmful situation if possible and ensuring that they are not exposed to further harm.
2. **Reporting**: Staff members must report concerns to the designated safeguarding lead, who will assess the situation. In many cases, there is a legal obligation to report suspicions to child protection authorities, such as social services or the Gardi, depending on local laws.

3. **Documentation**: Any signs of abuse or neglect, as well as the steps taken to report and address the situation, should be carefully documented. This is essential for both the protection of the child and for legal compliance.
4. **Investigation**: Child protection services will typically initiate an investigation to assess whether abuse or neglect has occurred. *TLC Unlimited School Age Service* would fully cooperate with these investigations, following any instructions from relevant authorities.
5. **Support**: During and after the investigation *TLC Unlimited School Age Service* will continue to provide support to the child and, when appropriate, their family. This includes ensuring that the child feels safe and maintaining a supportive environment at school.
6. **Confidentiality and Sensitivity**: Information about suspected abuse or neglect should be shared only with those who need to know, including relevant authorities, and handled in a confidential manner to protect the privacy and well-being of the child involved.

Kilcroan National School Afterschool **child protection policy** also includes clear procedures for training staff to recognize the signs of abuse or neglect, as well as providing guidance on how to handle disclosures from children themselves.

The Social and Emotional Wellbeing of all Children is Fostered

- Children are supported to recognise, express and cope positively with emotions.

  Examples:

  - Being supported to communicate their needs and wants, verbally and non-verbally (picture cards, hand signals) in a positive way.
  - Discussing and naming their wide range of emotions and feelings, while empathising with feelings of others (happy, sad, angry, feelings of exclusion and feeling hurt).
  - Assisting children to develop techniques that help them manage their positive and negative feelings OWL (observe, wait, listen).
  - Listening to children in a caring, gentle way when they express emotions and reassuring them that it is normal to experience positive and negative emotions at times.
  - Acknowledging and accepting children's feelings (positive and negative) and the relationships between children's actions and other responses.

- Children are supported to demonstrate self-confidence (example: chose activities that foster children's feelings of competence).
- Children who show signs of social and emotional difficulties are given the appropriate care and support within the Service.

Children Are Supported To Develop Self-Regulation and Pro-Social Behaviour

- The social and physical environment is stimulating, challenging and interesting for children and is focused on their active engagement and involvement.
- Staff help children to recognise and understand the rules for being together with others (examples: waiting their turn, listening to each other, solving problems together, sharing).
- A climate is fostered where children know the boundaries and know how they're expected to behave within the Service.
- Staff support children to enter into social groups, develop friendships with other children and to learn to help and positively engage with other children and adults.
- Staff encourage and praise children for specific, positive and appropriate behaviours.
- Children are given positive alternatives rather than just being told "no"
- Children are supported in preventing, managing and resolving conflict.

Examples:

  - creating conditions that minimise conflict between children (providing enough popular equipment and materials);
  - acting to prevent potential conflicts and encouraging the children to resolve conflict if it exists;
  - responding promptly to children who are giving signals or cues expressing or indicating needs;
  - encouraging children to negotiate and resolve conflicts peacefully, with adult intervention and guidance when necessary;
  - actively supporting children in solving their differences and problems without being "told" or "ordered" what to do; and

- prompting and supporting children to remove themselves from situations where they are experiencing frustration, anger or fear.

- Children with ongoing challenging behaviour are supported and helped to control their emotions and distress.

Examples:

- reviewing the child's programme of care to ensure it is meeting the child's care, learning and developmental needs;
- reviewing the approaches taken to address a child's ongoing challenging behaviour, so that every opportunity is taken to make sure the behaviour improves;
- engaging with the child's parents or guardians to work with them on addressing the issues relating to the child's behaviour (developing a behaviour management plan, assessing the need for help from external experts or professionals; and
- developing a risk assessment to manage the risks associated with the behaviours to the child and to the other children and staff.

We will NEVER inflict corporal punishment on a child.
We not will use or threat any practices that are disrespectful. Degrading, exploitative, intimidating, isolating, emotionally or physically harmful to the child or nogloctful of tho child

Staff support

Management is committed to supporting staff where challenging behaviour is displayed by offering mentoring, training and on-going support.

Kilcroan N.S. Afterschool- Policies and Procedures

General Procedures for Promoting and Nurturing Positive Behaviour:

- During the induction period, all new staff are introduced to the behaviour policy and are asked to sign the policy to say they have read it and agree to implement the policy.
- Staff will adopt a reciprocal and positive relationship with the child.
- Staff will act as a role model and adopt a confident approach to encourage and support positive behaviour.
- Staff will work in a respectful manner and in partnership with other practitioners, children and parents/guardians.
- Staff are role models for the children and should treat one another with respect, use appropriate tone of voice and body language to one another and the children.
- Observation and recording will be used to inform and support staff to decide on appropriate methods and strategies of dealing with behaviour problems.
- The Manager is the person designated as the resource person for staff support on behaviour management issues.
- At an age appropriate level, children will be encouraged and supported in resolving their own disputes.
- Each child should be positively supported and recognised as an individual.
- Staff will practically engage children in resolving their conflicts using age appropriate methods. In doing this, children can explore their feelings and conflicts in a safe controlled way. Staff will positively support children in doing this.
- Training will be provided for staff where necessary.

Rewarding Positive Behaviour:

- Staff will acknowledge and praise positive behaviour as it occurs.
- Children are not rewarded with food, sweets or treats and all staff understand how to support positive behaviour, and how to encourage and facilitate it effectively.
- Positive language will be used rather than negative and statements made. Rather than saying 'no' for example:

- Say: *"I would like you to sit back down on the chair please John, because you will fall off and hurt yourself". Or "We are inside and we don't climb on furniture or equipment inside". Or "I would like you to sit back down on the chair please, do you remember we only climb on things when we are outside"*

- Rather than*: Don't stand on the chair"*

- While encouraging positive behaviour, the child's self-esteem should not be negatively impacted. The child should not be labelled through the use of certain words for example bold, naughty.

Mild Behaviour Issues:

In anticipating occasional inappropriate behaviour, we follow these guidelines:

- Staff will provide a calm, safe and stimulating environment which is age appropriate and of interest to all children present within the group.
- Children are involved where appropriate in the planning of activities and developing the curriculum.
- A routine and rhythm which is practical and beneficial to the age range of children should be developed and sustained.
- Staff will ensure rules are applied consistently to all children within the setting and are aware expectations regarding the children's behaviour.
- Correct Child: Adult ratio's will be implemented according to the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 at all times.
- Children have regular daily access to the outdoor play area.
- Children are kept informed of what is happening and what is expected of them.
- We ensure there are enough suitable age appropriate and activities and equipment for children.

Implementing Positive Steps to Supporting Positive Behaviour:

- Children should be made aware of the expectations and their responsibility
    - *No hurting bodies*
    - *No hurting feelings*

- Positive behaviour should be supported and encouraged from all children consistently throughout the day by all staff.
- Incidents should be dealt with immediately by the staff who witnesses it.
- Staff should not speak about the child, or their behaviour in front of other parents/guardians, children or the child.
- The child should not be labelled by staff.
- Positive behaviour should be consistently encouraged to **all children**.
- Correct Child: Adult ratios should be implemented at all times.
- Positive behaviour should be implemented within the curriculum throughout various themes. Age appropriate activities, prompts and materials should be provided to children to explore their feelings and emotions throughout the year.
- The staff, where possible, should have a quiet area where children can retreat if they are experiencing negative feelings for example a quiet corner.
- At an age and developmentally appropriate level, when the child is calm, the staff should explore the behaviour with the child using prompts for example I noticed you got [feeling] when you were at the [area].....what could you do the next time you feel....Do you know what I do when I am [emotion]...

Procedures for Supporting Positive Behaviour:

ABCD: **A**ction **B**ehaviour **C**hoice **D**ecision

Minor Behaviour Problems:

In these type of situations, the child may have caused no issue and all day and suddenly their behaviour changes. Minor behaviour problems are behaviours in line with the child's age and stage of their development (See Appendix A: Children and Behaviour).

Staff should positively support the child's well-being and identity throughout the process of supporting positive behaviour. The child should always feel valued, respected, empowered, cared for, and included.

Staff will assess each situation and use their best judgement in dealing with the matter. Situations may arise where the staff may allow the children 'resolve their own battles' or ignore minor incidents.

A sensible approach is recommended in dealing with minor behaviour problems. It is not always evident to staff what the cause of an incident has been.

Conflict Resolution Approach (Adapted from High/Scope)		
Age of child:	Approach:	Examples of behaviour:
	1. Approach calmly 2. Stop any hurtful actions 3. Acknowledge children's feelings 4. Gather information 5. Restate the problem 6. Ask for ideas for solutions and decide on an outcome the child.	• Temper tantrums • Possessive of toys • Use of bad language • Whiny • Verbally hits out • May be bossy

If a child has a temper tantrum, the age of the child is taken into consideration. A child **under** three years is more likely to have tantrum out of frustration. A child **over** three years is more likely to be linked to defiance. Staff will take a gentler approach with the younger child and a firmer approach with the older child. Staff will explain to the older child in a calm clear way using simple words why they cannot have what they want. If the tantrum continues and other children are getting upset or hit the child will be moved to another area in the room until they calm down.

he staff member should act in a calm and fair manner and allow the child to re-join the activity when they have calmed down as if nothing has happened.

At this stage, boundaries should be highlighted to the child. The expectations **must** be clear and reasonable to the age of the child and their developmental level.

Where it is evident that a child is about to misbehave for example taking a toy from another child then the staff member should comment on the behaviour. *'Mary, you know we take turns and share. Angela will let you have that toy [name toy or doll] to play with when she is finished. Will we ask Angela to let you have that toy when she is finished?'* This provides the child with an opportunity to change the behaviour and not take the toy from the other child. If the child continues a second reminder should be given and what the consequences will be if they continue.

Managing Moderate Behaviour Problems:
ABCD; **A**ction **B**ehaviour **C**hoice **D**ecision

Moderate behaviour problems tend to happen more frequently than the 'once off' type behaviours and have a greater impact on the child themselves and other children in the room.

Staff should positively support the child's well-being and identity throughout the process of supporting positive behaviour. The child should always feel valued, respected, empowered, cared for, and included.

Age of child:	Approach:
	1. Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions 2. Acknowledge children's feelings 3. Gather information 4. Restate the problem 5. Ask for ideas for solutions and 6. Choose a decision together 7. Be prepared to give follow-up supports for Supporting Positive Behaviour 8. Observe the child

Staff will ask the child what is wrong or bothering them. Emotion picture cards may be used with younger children to support how they may be feeling.

Observations will be used to assist making an assessment as to what may cause the behaviour. Observations will be used to capture when the child's behaviour is more positive as when behaviour is more challenging children are regularly corrected. Constant correction can have a negative impact on the child's self-esteem. Staff will use the observation of 'positive' behaviours to give plenty of encouragement and praise which should help to develop self-esteem.

This approach can be shared with parents/guardians and used at home and in the service. Observations should be looking for:

- When the child is at their best behaviour and when they 'act out'.
- Consideration will be given to whether the child likes the activity or not, is there a particular child they don't get on with, are they tired, hungry, or perhaps ill?
- If the group of children are becoming disruptive review the activities the staff will review activities to ensure children do not become bored or sit for too long.

Staff will consider changing the layout of the room regularly, and perhaps changing the daily routine to ensure that there is variety and children do not become bored.

Staff will consider liaising with the designated person responsible for behaviour management for support when they have used strategies that have not seen an improvement in behaviour.

Managing Severe and Challenging Behaviour:
ABCD: Action **B**ehaviour **Ch**oice **D**ecision

Severe and challenging behaviours are frequent and repeated actions by a child that impact significantly on other children and the child themselves. The child may also find it difficult to engage in the activities being undertaken. In this type of situation, the

behaviour has not improved using the usual behaviour management strategies and may often require more intensive one-to-one support to the child.

Staff understand that it is important to recognise in managing severe/challenging behaviour that there is a problem.

Staff will discuss the behaviour problem with the designated person who has overall responsibility for managing children's behaviour problems to put an action plan together.

At any age:	Approach:	Examples of behaviour:
	1. Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions. 2. Make eye contact with the child 3. Acknowledge children's feelings. 4. Gather information. 5. Restate the problem and ensure the child understands 6. Suggest solutions and choose one together. 7. Be prepared to give follow-up supports for supporting Positive Behaviour 8. Observe the child	• kicking, • hitting, • bad language, • prolonged screaming, • breath holding, • head banging, • ongoing biting, Other behaviours may present as the child refusing to engage, being over anxious, avoiding contact with others and unusual behaviours.

Staff will ensure that instructions or corrections are given in simple words and kept short and that similar phrases are used by all staff and the child's parents/guardians so that the information been given to the child is consistent.

Where a child is receiving professional support the Service will work with the parents/guardians and the professionals to implement the programme or approaches recommended.

A behaviour management strategy plan will be drawn up based on observations and professional support guidance where possible. All staff will adopt the same approach to what to do when the child shows signs that the challenging behaviour is about to be

presented, how best to manage that behaviour when it happens, how to limit the negative impact on other children or activities and strategies that can be taught to the child to help them control their own behaviour.

The Service will engage and work with the parents/guardians to work towards the same approach at home and in the Service to behaviour management

Procedures Which Are Unacceptable for Supporting Positive Behaviour:

- Physical punishment (corporal punishment).
- Sending children out of the room.
- Isolating children from the group e.g. time out.
- Shouting or raising of a voice
- The use of or threat of any practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitative, intimidating, isolating, emotionally and/or physically harmful to the child or neglectful of the child.
- Bullying in any form
- Physical restraint for example holding will not be used unless it is required to prevent injury to child, other children, adults or property. Staff must ensure that no physical pain is inflicted upon the child(ren). In cases where it is required to hold a child in such manner, it **must** be recorded in the accident and incident report. Parents/guardians **must** be informed of the incident.
- It is not the Service's policy to use any kind of restraint in managing behaviour. If restraint is considered a last resort option the Service will seek professional advice and staff will attend specialised training on evidence -based methods to ensure it is used appropriately, safely and with respect so that the child's dignity is not undermined. Staff who feel under pressure due to a child's difficult behaviour should seek support from management so a plan can be devised. No staff member is permitted to use physical restraint routinely.
- Speaking negatively about the child to other staff *or* in front of the child/other children.
- The child should not be labelled.

- Staff should not expect unrealistic behaviour from a child in accordance with their age and stage of development.
- Once the incident is over, the staff member should not place emphasis or keep reminding the child of their behaviour.
- The child should not be humiliated.
- Withholding food or drinks.
- Showing favouritism.
- Failing to reassure or comfort a child.

Partnership with Parent(s)/Guardians:

- It is our policy to work in close collaboration with parents/guardians. We recognise and value the role of parent(s)/ guardians in their child's life in supporting positive behaviour, working in partnership with parent(s)/ guardians is important. It is our policy to inform parent(s)/ guardians at the enrolment stage, of the policies and procedures in relation to behaviour. The supporting positive behaviour policy will be explained, in doing this, a consistent approach can be adopted.
- Parent(s)/guardians are encouraged to share any difficulties/concerns which they may be experiencing regarding the child's behaviour for example bereavement, illness, a new baby etc.
- Where a child's behaviour is causing concern, it is our policy to do this in a consultative manner, and staff will endeavour to work in partnership with the parent(s)/ guardian to develop a strategy for dealing with the situation.
- Discussing the child's behaviour in front of the child/ other children/parents/guardians will be avoided.

Where a significant incident occurs regarding a child's behaviour, the following should be documented.

- The child's full name
- Time and location of the incident
- Events leading up to the incident
- What happened

- Others involved
- Witnesses
- How the situation was handled (**ABCD**)
- Follow up with the children

Anti-bullying:

Children are afforded a right to their own time and space. Depending on the child's age and stage of development, it may not be appropriate to expect children to share. However, we feel it is important to acknowledge both children's feelings, and to support them in understanding how the other child may be feeling.

Diversity and equality is important for children to understand and we endow to create a positive and supportive environment for all children. Staff will encourage all children to acknowledge and celebrate difference. Consequently, children will recognise from an early age, bullying, fighting, hurting and racial comments are not acceptable behaviour.

Bullying can take many forms. It can be physical, verbal or emotional, but it is always repeated behaviour which makes other people feel uncomfortable or threatened. Any form of bullying is **unacceptable** and will be dealt with immediately. At our Service, staff follow the guidelines below to ensure children do not experience bullying.

Identifying Bullying:

Bullying can take many forms. It can be physical, verbal or emotional, but it is always repeated behaviour which makes other people feel uncomfortable or threatened. Any form of bullying is **unacceptable** and will be dealt with immediately. At our service, staff follow the guidelines below to ensure children do not experience bullying.

Definition

Bullying consists of repeated inappropriate behaviour whether by words, by physical action or otherwise, directly or indirectly applied, by one or more persons against

another person or persons which undermines the individual person's right to personal dignity.

Cyber Bulling or E-Bullying

Cyber bullying or E-Bullying is the use of emails, text messages, instant messages or web pages to spread rumours, make threats or harass. It can include written messages, photographs, videos or voice messages.

- This may involve individuals set up as 'groups' in an online social network. These 'groups' may be used to jeer at or target someone in a cruel way. Those who are organising this may remain anonymous.
  Someone may make a light-hearted joke or post online and it could develop into a bullying situation if others add cruel remarks or comments.
  Technology can be used to bully and say things online or by text that individuals would never say face to face. Everyone needs to know that they are responsible for their words and actions in cyberspace as well as in the real world. If it comes down to it, the source of the abuse, the computer or phone being used, can be identified by the Gardaí.
  This type of bullying is just as harmful and upsetting as face to face bullying.
- Where cases of serious incidents of bullying are reported to the Gardaí the source of the messaging e.g. a computer or phone can be traced to identify the perpetrator of such bulling messages.

Where the Service becomes aware of cyber-bulling (e-bullying) by children in the service:

Where it is brought to the attention of the Service by a staff member, parent/guardian or child, that a child or children in the Service are cyber-bullying (e-bullying) another child or children in the services the following initial and immediate steps will be taken to prevent and endeavour to stop such cyber bullying (e-bullying):

1. Explain to the child or children responsible for such bullying that what they are doing is wrong and explain that it is bullying.
2. Explain to the child how serious what they are doing is.
3. Explain the serious consequences for everyone involved.
4. Explain that bullying over the internet is just as serious as face to face bullying.

Note: Please also see below the Service's procedure for reporting incidents of bullying and how they are dealt with by the Service.

Note: this is not to be confused with good-natured banter that goes on as part of the normal social interchange between pupils or normal professional classroom management by staff.

Bullying Preventative Measures

- Staff ensure all children feel safe, happy and secure within the setting.
- Staff develop positive relationships with all children and encourage children to speak about their feelings.
- Staff are encouraged to recognise that active physical aggression in the early years is a part of children's development and recognise positive opportunities should be in place for children to channel this positively.
- Children are learning about their feelings, staff will support children in identifying their feelings and actions for example happy, sad, and angry.
- At an age and stage appropriate level, children will be encouraged to resolve their problems and take responsibility for their actions.
- Staff are encouraged to adopt a policy of intervention when they think a child is not being treated in a fair or appropriate manner.
- Staff are aware when play becomes 'aggressive' and will initiate an appropriate activity with the children.

- Any instance of bullying will be discussed fully with the parents/guardians of all involved to look for a consistent resolution to the behaviour.
- If a parent(s)/ guardian has a concern regarding their child's behaviour, the staff member or Manager will be available to speak to the parent. It is through partnership with parent(s)/ guardians which we can ensure a child will feel confident and secure in their environment, at home and in the setting.

BULLYING AND PHYSICAL VIOLENCE IS NOT TOLERATED WITHIN THE SERVICE, WHETHER INFLICTED ON ADULTS OR CHILDREN.

What causes children to be aggressive?

Sometimes, aggression takes the form of instigating fights, sometimes the child may provoke other children to fight, or may antagonise or threaten other children. Other children do not like this behaviour and will often feel intimidated and insecure in their environment.

Children who display aggressive behaviours will often have low self-confidence, poor social skills and may have difficulties with their speech. However, any child regardless of their age or stage of development may experience aggression at some stage. Aggression brings power and often children who are aggressive will seek the control and position which comes with it among their peers.

How can we support positive behaviour?

- Aggressive behaviour should never be ignored.
- Staff should not get into a power struggle with the child.
- Be firm but gentle in their approach. The child should not be given mixed messages at this stage.
- The child should always feel valued, respected, cared for, and included.
- One-to-one work should be initiated with the child, and a plan should be devised. For example, when I get angry, I will go to the … [area].

- Provide opportunity for the child to display positive behaviour, acknowledge and praise this behaviour.
- Provide the child with opportunities which demonstrates leadership and communication in a positive manner.
- The **ABCD** model should be used with the child, where age and stage appropriate, the child should make the choice, and also take responsibility for their actions.
- The staff member should be fair in their expectations, and should be consistent, patient and understand change will take time.

Rough and Tumble Play/ Fantasy Aggression:

Young children often engage in play which has aggressive themes- such as superhero and weapon play. This may take over some children's play. This is an interest of that particular child, and *it is not a precursor for bullying*. We will ensure the behaviour does not become inconsiderate or hurtful and will address it if we feel necessary.

- We recognise rough and tumble play is part of children's development, and it is acceptable within limits. We view this type of play as role play, and not as problematic or aggressive.
- We will offer opportunities for children to explore this type of play in a safe and secure environment.
- Children will be aware of the boundaries with this form of play and will be aware when this behaviour is not acceptable.
- We recognise fantasy play may contain violent dramatic strategies- blowing up, shooting etc. We will use these opportunities to explore lateral thinking and conflict resolution. These themes often refer to 'goodies and baddies', we will use such opportunities to explore concepts of right and wrong, and alternatives to the dramatic strategies.

Bullying Procedure for School Aged Service

It is always best to work towards bullying prevention as outlined above. However sometimes serious bullying may be taking place. Every person in the Service is entitled to respect and to be free of any type of bullying.

We will work proactively, as far as it can, to ensure that bullying does not take place. Reporting incidents of bullying is responsible behaviour and not telling tales.

A record will be kept of any genuine incidents of bullying.

The matter will be dealt with seriously.

Appropriate action will be taken to ensure that it does not continue.

Types of behaviour deemed to be inappropriate

- Humiliation; including name-calling, reference to academic ability etc.
- Intimidation; including aggressive use of body language.
- Verbal abuse, anonymous or otherwise.
- Physical abuse or threatened abuse.
- Aggressive or obscene language.
- Offensive jokes; whether spoken or by email, Facebook, text messaging etc.
- Victimisation; including very personal remarks.
- Exclusion and isolation.
- Intrusion through interfering with personal possessions or locker.
- Repeated unreasonable deadlines or tasks.
- Threats, including demands for money.
- An attack by rumour, gossip, innuendo or ridicule on any individual's reputation.

Procedures for Reporting Incidents of Bullying

School aged children should discuss any incident of bullying with a staff member or another trusted adult within the Service; this is responsible behaviour rather than 'telling tales'.

Parents/guardians should contact the manager regarding incidents of bullying behaviour which they might suspect or that have come to their attention through their children or other parents.

Incidents of bullying behaviour, no matter how trivial, which are drawn to the attention of a staff member, will be dealt with in the following manner

Appropriate personnel will interview all the pupils involved in a bullying incident.
The alleged victim and alleged perpetrators of the incident will be spoken to and encouraged to solve the problem.

All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all children involved.

Records will be kept of all incidents and of the procedures that were followed.

The Manager will monitor progress of pupils involved in a bullying incident by liaising with the staff member and children involved (separately) at follow-up meetings.

Where the incident is deemed to be minor, a verbal warning will be given to the bully to stop the inappropriate behaviour, pointing out how he/she is in breach of the normal standards of behaviour at the Service and trying to get him/her to see the situation from the victim's point of view. If deemed appropriate, parents may be contacted. The incident will no longer be considered if there is no recurrence within the term.

If the behaviour persists, the parents/guardians of the victims and bullies will be informed. Thus, they will be given the opportunity of discussing the matter and are able to help and support their children before a crisis occurs. Appropriate sanctions

will be imposed. The incident will no longer be considered if there is no recurrence within that year.

If there is a serious incident, perhaps repeated verbal assault or coercion, management and parents will be involved, and appropriate sanctions applied.

Where the incident is deemed to be more serious (e.g. gross misbehaviour or physical assault), management should be informed immediately

Offenders and victims of bullying may be referred to counselling with parental agreement.

Sanctions may include:

- A contract of good behaviour
- Withdrawal of privileges
- Other sanctions as may be deemed appropriate
- Withdrawal from the service

Note: that asking a parent to withdraw their child is the last resort and will not happen without exploring other strategies

In the case of a complaint regarding a staff member, this should be referred immediately to management who will invoke the HR Policies if deemed necessary

Advise to staff if investigating Incidents of Bullying

Staff are best advised to take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour reported by children, staff or parents/guardians. Such incidents are best investigated outside the classroom situation to avoid the public humiliation of the victim or the pupil engaged in bullying involved, in an attempt to get both sides of the story. All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all children concerned.

children who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.

When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.

If a gang is involved, each member should be interview individually and then the gang should be met as a group. Each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear about what everyone else has said.

If it is concluded that a child has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the accepted standards of behaviour expected and try to get him/her to see the situation from the victim's point of view.

Each member of the gang should be helped to handle the possible pressures that often face them from the other members after interview by the staff

Staff who are investigating cases of bullying behaviour should keep a written record of their discussion with those involved. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their accounts of the incident.

In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, consult with management who may decide to meet with the parents or guardians of the parties involved. If so, they will explain the actions being taken and the reasons for them, referring them to the policy. They would also discuss ways parents/guardians can reinforce or support the actions taken by the school.

Management may then arrange follow-up meetings with the parties involved separately, with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the victim is ready and agreeable. (this can have a therapeutic effect).

Physically Intervening to Prevent Injury

Physical restraint is not used within our service except in circumstances where we have to intervene to prevent injury to the child or others and to prevent significant damage to equipment or property

- It is only used as a last resort
- It ensures no pain is inflicted on the child
- The incident will be recorded
- Parents/Guardians will be advised immediately
- Only staff who have attended certified training are permitted to physically intervene and will have been trained and certified in the method
- Methods of intervention will be evidence based

If children attending our service display severe & aggressive behaviour we will risk assess the child and staff will be trained on approved methods of physical intervention

Biting:

Biting happens in almost all child care settings where young children are together and dealing with biting can be challenging. Biting is a developmental stage which children may go through. All biting incidents are upsetting for children and will be dealt with in a calm and clear manner. The staff will use clear language and be consistent in their approach. We aim to support children in developing self-control; however, the safety of each child is our primary concern.

Why do children bite?

- Children experience many emotions (positive and negative) that are difficult to express, and at times control.
- Biting sometimes occurs for no apparent reason.

Kilcroan N.S. Afterschool- Policies and Procedures

Biting Prevention:

- The correct child: adult ratios will be in place within the setting at all times.
- The layout of the room will be appropriate to the age and stage of development of the child and staff can see all children at all times from all areas of the room.
- Age and stage appropriate materials are present within the room for children to access at all times.
- Staff are vigilant to the relationships between children and are aware of possible conflicts.
- Staff are aware of the temperaments of the children.
- Staff should encourage children to use language to express feelings/emotions.

Where a child does bite, staff should follow these guidelines and try to distinguish a pattern:

- Are there particular times of the day which the child bites?
- Do toys seem to be causing biting incidents?
- Does the child focus on one particular child?
- Can something be offered to soothe the child's biting? For example, toys/food with textures or coldness.

Procedures to follow when biting occurs:

Usually the skin isn't broken and the wound isn't serious. However, the appropriate first aid should be administered.

If the skin is not broken:

- Wash the area with mild soap and water (do not rub) and pat dry.

If the skin is broken:

- The human mouth is full of bacteria, and there may be a risk of infection. Serious bites to the face, hands, or genitals can be especially dangerous.
- Wash the area — but don't scrub —with mild soap and running water for three to five minutes, then cover it with a clean dressing.
- If the wound is bleeding, apply pressure with a clean, dressing and elevate the area if possible.
- If the skin is broken, the child will need to be seen by a doctor, who will clean and examine the wound. Unless the bite is very serious or on a child's face, the doctor

will probably prefer not to give a \child stitches. Stitching the bite closed can increase the risk of infection. The doctor may prescribe a short course of antibiotics to prevent infection, depending on the location and severity of the bite.

- The child is comforted and reassured of their safety.
- The Staff will explain to the child who has bitten using a firm but gentle approach that biting is not allowed.
- The person in charge will be informed and details should be recorded in the Accident and Incident Report Form.
- The situation is dealt with professionally, and confidentiality is adhered to. Both parents/guardians are informed separately, and the accident and incident report is signed.
- The staff should explain the methods which will be adhered to so it does not occur again and highlight the importance of partnership with parents/guardians.
- If the child bites again, the child should be observed for a period of time to try and develop a pattern of behaviour.
- In the event of a child repeatedly biting, the Manager will speak to the parent(s)/ guardian. If all avenues have been exhausted, the person in charge may suggest seeking help/support outside the setting.

Please note that every effort will be made to support the biting child and we will work closely with the parents/guardians to find appropriate strategies.

In rare circumstances our efforts to manage behaviour may not be successful. Sometimes as a last resort for risk management reasons and with the welfare of all children in mind a child's place may need to be terminated or suspended until a solution is found. Our approach is always to find ways of retaining children in the Service rather than terminating places.

Kilcroan N.S. Afterschool- Policies and Procedures

Where a Child Leaves the Service Unaccompanied and without Authorisation:

If a child attempts to and/or leaves the Service unaccompanied and without authorisation staff will:

1. Stay calm. Reason with the child. Contact the manager.
2. Reason with the child and ask them how they can be supported to make the correct choice/return. Staff will discuss the situation and try supporting them to resolve it.
3. Offer to phone parents to let them discuss it with them.
4. If a child still insists on going staff will keep trying to contact parents. Allow the child to speak to parent/guardian if phone contact can be made with them.
5. Stand at exit door. If child leaves the Service a staff member will follows if available.
6. The Service should continue to try contact parents.
7. The two staff will walk if possible and try to keep the child calm by speaking to them.
8. If parents or guardians cannot be contacted the other emergency number given by parents can't be phoned.
9. If parents cannot be contacted and staff are concerned for the child's safety, Tusla and/or An Garda Síochána will be contacted.
10. When the child comes back to school a detailed investigation will be carried out. The school Code of Behaviour will be adhered to. A support plan will be put in place and reviewed within required timeframes.
11. Written records of the incident will be kept.
12. Once a child voluntarily leaves the school, the school is no longer responsible for the child.

Please also see the Service's Outings and Missing Child Policies and Dropping off and Collection of Children Policy

Signed: Fidelma Croghan

Date: 30/4/2025

Person Responsible for approving the Policy