

Kiltiernan National School

Draft Sports Policy 2014

1. Policy Statement

It is the policy of Kiltiernan National School to provide students with access to sports activities through the school curricular and extra-curricular activities throughout the school year. Hurling training is curricular part of the games strand in P.E. Competitions are extra-curricular and not required by D.E.S. but is an opportunity to further develop and promote sport development and skills.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to set out the principles underpinning the approach to sport in Kiltiernan National School; set out the resources and limits within which sport can be promoted within the school; promote best practice when working with young people in sport; ensure that the legislative and regulatory requirements are met; ensure staff, parents, volunteers and students are clear on their roles, responsibilities and rights; set out the procedures involved in making sport available to students.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all sport available to students in Kiltiernan National School, and applies to all individuals involved including staff, volunteers, parents and students.

4. Background

This document outlines the school policy in relation to the organisation of sport for the student body. The key documents which have shaped this policy include:

- *Our Games, Our Code* (2012), the GAA code of practice when working with underage players.
- *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (Dept. of Children and Youth Affairs, 2011).
- *Circular 0063/2010 Recruitment Procedures*, Dept. of Education and Skills.

It endeavours to include the principles of best practice when working with young people in sport. The following principles underpin this policy:

- **The welfare of the children is paramount.**
- **Sport should be available to children in a safe and enjoyable environment.**
- **Children should experience respect, safety and equality in sport.**
- **Physical Education – 1999 revised curriculum**

4.1 Introduction

Participation in sport has many positive benefits for children in relation to their emotional and physical well-being. Physically, it improves fitness, cardiovascular performance, strengthens muscles, and reduces the risk of obesity and chronic disease. Psychologically, it improves self-esteem, reduces stress and anxiety, and develops relationships. The broad range of interest

and skill level within the student body are recognised, and the school would like to meet the different needs of its students within the limited resources that are available within a small school. *“Ensure that the child pursues a healthy lifestyle and develops a positive attitude towards physical activity.”* Physical Education – Teacher Guidelines DES 1999 Page 18

The school has two avenues through which sport can be promoted: through the PE curriculum and through extra-curricular sport. The PE curriculum is broad and includes sport as one aspect of physical activity. PE in Kiltiernan NS includes swimming, dancing, hurling etc. PE generally involves a non-competitive approach to sport.

Extra-curricular sport in most schools typically focuses on one sport, and is the place for team-based competitive sports. Competition can benefit a child by allowing him/her to achieve his/her potential; developing a respect for opponents and rules. However, aspects of competition do not suit all children, and the school aims to provide a balance between competitive and non-competitive activities so that all children have an opportunity to participate in sport in both contexts.

The PE curriculum is followed, as per Dept. of Education and Skills guidelines. There are 6 strands to the curriculum, and involvement in these is determined by the resources available to the school. Strands are as follows: Games, Aquatics, Gymnastics, Dance, Outdoor Activities and Athletics.

Swimming

Aquatics is one of the strands included in the PE curriculum, and necessitates the use of facilities outside the school. Swimming lessons are organised annually, during the last term of the academic year.

Lessons are booked at a local swimming pool for students from 1st to 6th class. All students in these classes are expected to attend lessons. The school does not have the resources to provide supervision for anyone not attending swimming lessons.

Transport is arranged via bus.

4.2 Resources

The organisation of sport within the school is limited by the resources available to it. These include:

- access to inter-school activities including Go Games and inter-school camogie and hurling blitzes
- the availability of trainers/coaches
- school facilities (i.e. pitch)
- transport costs

Access to Inter-school Activities

The GAA organises a Go Games Blitz with other local schools which Kiltiernan School participates in annually. Students from **1st – 6th class** are involved. All students are expected to partake otherwise a note from parents is expected when not partaking.

These follow the typical philosophy of the GAA Go Games, where the games are non-competitive in nature, and focus on equal participation for all. The organisation of these events is independent of the school staff.

The school also has an opportunity to participate in a schools camogie and hurling league. This is played at competitive level and requires additional training. Involvement in these events allows the students to experience the various aspects of competitive sport and provides them with an opportunity to represent their school. Selection for these events is based on a number of criteria including interest, age, skill and availability. Every effort is made to accommodate the older students at these events.

The manager of the relevant team is a member of staff, and training is provided by parents on a volunteer basis.

Availability of Trainers

The GAA provide access to a hurling and to a football coach during the academic year. First to 6th classes have 10 hurling coaching sessions per term (30 per school year) and 2 terms of football coaching (20 per school year).

The training concludes with participation in a Go Games blitz with other local schools. Additional training in preparation for the inter-schools competition is reliant on the goodwill of individual parents who are available to give their time and skill to the students. Traditionally, this has involved camogie and hurling training, but could potentially involve basketball, athletics or any other sport where inter-school activities are organised and where a parent can volunteer to provide training.

The school follows the *Children First* guidelines, whereby all coaches are recommended to undertake Garda vetting, before they work on their own with the students. Coaches who are provided through the GAA have followed the Garda vetting process within that organisation. Parents who volunteer are provided with Garda vetting forms through the school.

Coaches are required to sign the Coaches Code of Conduct, which outlines the appropriate behaviour of coaches, and the way in which they are expected to engage with students.

School Facilities

The school grounds include a large playing field which is available to the students for the various sports.

Access to astro turf facilities incurs a cost and involves transport via bus.

Transport

Transport to sporting events is by one of two means, generally. At times, a bus will be hired to bring the students to and from a sporting event.

At other times, the parents are relied on to bring students to and from events.

Injury

Parents are provided with an opportunity to buy accident insurance for students which provides 24-hour cover during the school year. This insurance covers accidents during sporting events, on the school grounds and away from the school grounds.

The school has the mandatory Public and Employers Liability Insurance Policies in force.

All serious incidents of injury are recorded in our Incident Book.

5. Code of Behaviour

The following Code of Behaviour addresses the minimum appropriate levels of behaviour, practice and conduct required from our students, coaches and parents/guardians.

Students, parents/guardians and coaches are all required to sign the relevant Code of Behaviour.

Code of Conduct: Students

Students can benefit greatly from sports in terms of personal development and enjoyment. As part of their participation they will be encouraged to realise that due to their participation in sport they also have a responsibility to treat others with fairness and respect. With rights there will always be responsibilities.

Students are entitled to:

- Be safe and feel safe.
- Have fun and experience a sense of enjoyment and fulfilment.
- Be treated with respect, dignity and sensitivity.
- Comment and make suggestions in a constructive manner.

Students should always:

- Play fairly, do their best and enjoy themselves.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of all students regardless of differences. We are all equal.
- Represent their team, their school and their family with pride and dignity.
- Respect all coaches, officials and their opponents.
- Be gracious in defeat and modest in victory.
- Shake hands before and after a game, irrespective of the result.
- Take due care of school equipment.
- Adhere to acceptable standards of behaviour.

Name (block capitals) _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Code of Conduct: Coaches/Trainers

COACHES SHOULD:

- Undertake Garda vetting.
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every student.
- Treat each student.
- Be positive during coaching sessions to foster a sense of achievement and self-esteem in the students.
- Support each child to develop to their own potential.
- Never use foul language.
- During matches, coaches should respect and accept the judgement of match officials.
- Encourage sportsmanship and fair play on the field.
- Not smoke or consume alcohol immediately prior to or while students are in their care.
- Develop an appropriate working relationship with children based on mutual trust and respect.
- Challenge bullying in any form whether physical or emotional.
- Avoid incidents of horse play or role play or telling jokes etc. that could be misinterpreted.
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with students
- Be accompanied by at least one other adult in team dressing rooms.
- Respect children regardless of ability, culture or ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation or religious belief.

Name (block capitals) _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Code of Conduct: Parents/Guardians

PARENTS/GUARDIANS SHOULD:

- Encourage their child to always play by the rules.
- Encourage their child to improve their skills levels.
- Encourage their child to appreciate everybody on their team, regardless of ability.
- Encourage their child to maintain a balanced and healthy lifestyle with regard to exercise, food, rest and play.
- Adopt a positive attitude to their children's participation in our games.
- Respect officials' decisions and encourage children to do likewise.
- Not exert undue pressure on your child.
- Never admonish your own child or any other child for their standard of play.
- Be realistic in your expectations.
- Show approval for effort, not just results.
- Inform the school of any changes in their child's medical or dietary requirements.
- Provide their child with adequate clothing and equipment as may be required
- Show approval whether the team wins, loses or draws a game.

Name (block capitals) _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____