



## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

### **Policy Statement**

In Ballyholme Primary School we believe all forms of bullying behaviour are unacceptable and we aim to create a safe, secure and happy environment for all children and staff. As a Rights Respecting School we encourage respect across the whole school community and seek to ensure that all children are protected from harm. (Article 19 UNCRC)

The school aims to develop a whole school approach to dealing with 'bullying incidents' in order to create an environment where all children are able to learn and play together.

### **Aims**

- To create a safe and secure environment for all
- To increase awareness, prevent, reduce and eradicate bullying in any form
- To provide support and protection for anyone being bullied
- To ensure that all pupils, staff and parents are aware of this policy and their obligations
- To work in partnership and harmony with parents to build children's confidence and resilience and maintain everyone's self-esteem.

### **Context**

This policy is informed and guided by current legislation and DE Guidance listed below:

### **The Legislative Context**

- Health and Safety at Work NI Order 1978
- The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 Article 3 (see DE 1998/25)
- Welfare and Protection of Pupils Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003
- The Education (2006 Order) (Commencement No 2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2007
- The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010
- Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

## DE Guidance

- Pastoral Care in Schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour DE, 2001
- Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools. A Guide for Schools DE 2017  
– *to be read in conjunction with the following:*
  - Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland, Dept of Health, Social Services and Public Safety 2016
  - Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland's (SBNI) Policies and Procedures 2017
- Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 Statutory Guidance for Schools and Boards of Governors 2019

## The International Context

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

## Key Points

- **The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016:**
  - Provides a legal definition of bullying
  - Places a duty on the Board of Governors to put in place measures to prevent bullying behaviour, in consultation with pupils and parents
  - Requires schools to record all incidents of bullying behaviour and alleged bullying incidents
  - Sets out under which circumstances this policy should be applied, namely:
    - In school, during the school day
    - While travelling to and from school
    - When under control of school staff, but away from school eg school trip
  - Requires that the policy be updated at least every four years
- **The Education and Libraries Order (NI) 2003, requires the Board of Governors to:**
  - Safeguard and promote the welfare of registered pupils
- **The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) sets out every child's right to:**
  - Be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, maltreatment or exploitation
  - Be protected from discrimination
  - Express their views, in a supported and accessible way, on issues that affect them, and to have their opinions taken seriously
  - Education

## **Ethos and Principles**

- We are committed to a society where children and young people can live free and safe from bullying
- We believe in a society where bullying is unacceptable and where every child and young person is safe and feels safe from bullying
- We believe that every child and young person should be celebrated in their diversity
- We are committed to a preventative, responsive and restorative anti-bullying ethos across the whole school
- We value the views and contributions of children and young people, we will actively seek these views and we will respect and take them into account
- We understand that everyone in our school community has a role to play in taking a stand against bullying and creating a safe and welcoming environment for all

## **Definition**

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 provides the following legal definition of bullying:

1. In this Act “bullying” includes (but is not limited to) the repeated use of:
  - a. any verbal, written or electronic communication
  - b. any other act, or
  - c. any combination of those, by a pupil or a group of pupils against another pupil or group of pupils, with the intention of causing physical or emotional harm to that pupil or group of pupils.
2. For the purposes of subsection (1), “act” included omission.

## **Definition used with pupils**

- Bullying is a person, or people, doing nasty or unkind things to hurt or scare you, more than once.
- Bullying is done on purpose, more than once making you unhappy and frightened.

***‘Bullying is behaviour that is usually repeated, which is carried out intentionally to cause hurt, harm or to adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others’ (Education Authority)***

### **Criteria used to define bullying**

The term bullying refers to a range of harmful behaviour, both physical and psychological.

When assessing a one-off incident, to make a decision on whether to classify it as bullying, the school shall consider the following criteria:

- severity and significance of the incident
- evidence of pre-meditation
- impact of the incident on individuals (physical/emotional)
- impact of the incidents on wider school community
- previous relationship between those involved
- any previous incidents involving the individuals

Any incidents which are not considered bullying behaviour will be addressed under Ballyholme PS Positive Behaviour Policy.

### **Socially Unacceptable Behaviour**

The Anti-Bullying and Positive Behaviour Policies for Ballyholme Primary School both recognise that there is a range of socially unacceptable behaviours which contravenes everyone's right to be safe. They include but are not limited to the following examples:

1. PHYSICAL - jostling, pushing, punching, kicking and other physical contact
2. VERBAL - name calling, insults, jokes, threats, spreading rumours
3. INDIRECT - omission, refusal to work with/talk to/play with/help others, interfering with personal property of someone and can include misuse of a digital device and/or social media platforms.

Socially unacceptable behaviours will be dealt with according to the school's Positive Behaviour Policy.

Every child can make errors of judgement behaving in ways that are hurtful to others. In most cases a quiet word and an explanation of how others feel is sufficient to make a difference.

Children can and do learn over time how to care for themselves and for others. We believe that learning from mistakes and being genuinely sorry for them is part of growing up to be a socially well-adjusted person.

As outlined by EA, some examples of socially unacceptable behaviour are e.g. pushing, nipping, punching, spreading rumours etc. which can occur from time to time when children are playing together.

Socially unacceptable behaviour however can become bullying behaviour when the information gathered by members of staff and shared with members of the Anti-Bullying Support Team clearly demonstrates that the unacceptable behaviours meet the criteria listed below. i.e.

- Intentional
- Targeted at a specific pupil or group of pupils
- Repeated (but is not limited to this)
- Causing physical or emotional harm

### **Bullying Behaviour**

The following unacceptable behaviours, **when repeated, targeted and intentionally hurtful**, may be considered a bullying behaviour:

- Verbal or written acts
  - saying mean and hurtful things to, or about, others
  - making fun of others
  - calling another pupil mean and hurtful names
  - telling lies or spreading false rumours about others
  - trying to make other pupils dislike another pupil/s
- Physical acts
  - hitting
  - kicking
  - pushing
  - shoving
  - material harm, such as taking/stealing money or possessions or causing damage to possessions
- Omission (Exclusion)
  - leaving someone out of a game
  - refusing to include someone in group work
- Electronic Acts
  - using online platforms or other electronic communication to carry out many of the written acts noted above
  - impersonating someone online to cause hurt
  - sharing images eg photographs or videos online to embarrass someone

Bullying is an emotive issue, therefore it is essential that we ensure we use supportive, understanding language when discussing these matters. For that reason we will not refer to a child as 'a bully', nor will we refer to a child as 'a victim'. Instead, we will refer to the child by describing the situation surrounding that child, for example:

- ***A child displaying bullying behaviours***
- ***A child experiencing bullying behaviours***

We will encourage all members of the school community to use this language when discussing bullying incidents.

**In determining 'harm' we define:**

- Emotional or psychological harm as intentionally causing distress or anxiety by scaring, humiliating or affecting adversely a pupil's self-esteem
- Physical harm as intentionally hurting a pupil by causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts.

**Preventative Steps within school**

- Promoting good discipline both in the classroom and playground so that children are aware of consequences of unacceptable behaviour.
- Promotion of anti-bullying messages through the curriculum eg inclusion of age-appropriate material specific to individual subject areas related to bullying, positive behaviour and inclusion
- Addressing issues such as the various forms of bullying, including the how and why it can happen eg through PDMU
- Encouraging parents to inform a supervisor or teacher if they are aware of or suffer from bullying
- Encouraging parents to inform the school if any incidents of bullying are known to them
- Recording and investigating as quickly as possible all reported cases of bullying
- Giving help, support and advice to the child experiencing bullying behaviour
- Ensuring that pupils, parents and staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the policy on anti-bullying
- Involving outside agencies for support and advice where appropriate.
- Applying sanctions as outlined in the Positive Behaviour Policy
- Actively promote positive emotional health and well-being eg Love for Life Programme, PDMU activities, focused assemblies
- Participation in NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week
- Development of Ballyholme PS School Council to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messaging within the school
- Development of effective strategies for playground management eg training for lunchtime supervisors, zoning of playgrounds, inclusion of buddy benches, provision of a variety of play options
- Provision of a range of extra-curricular activities to help support the development of effective peer support relationships for a variety of age-groups

### **Preventative Steps on the way to and from school**

- Development of a culture where pupils take pride in their school and are viewed as ambassadors for their school within the community
- Regular reminders of the positive behaviour expectations of pupils whilst travelling to and from school
- Measures to empower pupils to challenge inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour of their peers during the journey to and from school
- Regular engagement with transport providers to ensure effective communication and the early identification of any concerns
- Promotion of key anti-bullying messages and awareness of behaviour expectations of pupils amongst the local community, including information on how to raise any concerns with the school
- Appropriate deployment of staff to support the transition from school day to journey home e.g. escorting children to playground at end of school day/after school activity.

### **Preventative Steps through the use of electronic communication**

- Addressing key themes of online behaviour and risk through PDMU including understanding how to respond to harm and the consequences of inappropriate use
- Participation in Anti-Bullying Week activities
- Engagement with key statutory and voluntary sector agencies eg C2k, PSNI, Safeguarding Board for NI e-safety Forum to support the promotion of key messages
- Participation in annual Safer Internet Day and promotion of key messages throughout the year eg parent/pupil workshop on safer internet
- Development and implementation of robust and appropriate policies in related areas

The new legislation gives the authority to take steps to prevent bullying through the use of electronic communication amongst pupils at any time during the term, where that behaviour is likely to have a detrimental effect on the pupil's education at school.

### **Individual Responsibilities**

The issue of bullying is a matter of partnership including all pupils, staff and parents. Everyone has a responsibility for contributing to the creation of a safe and supportive learning environment for all members of the school community.

### **School Responsibilities**

- Provide a safe environment for all children
- Promote an ethos of respect for the individual
- Foster positive self-esteem
- Emphasise the importance of seeking help from a trusted adult about bullying behaviour when it happens or is observed
- Take all aspects of bullying seriously, listening sensitively and providing reassurance that appropriate action will be taken
- Log all incidents
- Celebrate and promote good behaviour
- Focus attention, and provide advice on anti- bullying education if required, to individuals, groups, classes or year groups.
- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying behaviour
- Intervene to support any person who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so
- Explain the implications of allowing the bullying behaviour to continue unchecked for themselves and/or others
- Explain how to seek support – internal and external
- Resolve difficulties in restorative ways to prevent recurring bullying behaviours and meet the needs of all parties

### **Pupil Responsibilities**

- Report bullying
- Avoid any bullying behaviour
- Pupils should not react aggressively
- Pupils should have respect for themselves and others
- Adhere to and promote the school's code of behaviour and charters
- Behave towards others in a mutually respectful way

### **Parental Responsibilities**

- Discourage a tendency towards bullying behaviour
- Work in partnership with the school
- Report any concerns or instances of bullying behaviour to the school
- Stress to children that retaliation is not helpful
- Resolve difficulties occurring outside school to prevent them continuing outside school
- Model high standards of personal pro-social behaviour
- Parents should understand that on-going issues or difficulties experienced outside school, within the community, are beyond the jurisdiction of the school.



## **Reporting a Bullying Concern**

- Since we take the problem of bullying seriously, any reported incidents will be dealt with accordingly and will be responded to in line with this policy.
- The problem may be reported by a child, parent etc. to a teacher or supervisor who will deal initially with the situation. If the situation falls under the category of socially unacceptable behaviour, it will be dealt with according to the Positive Behaviour Policy. If deemed to fall under the category of bullying behaviour the information will be passed on by the class teacher to the Anti-Bullying Support Team who will discuss and decide the next steps to be taken.
- The incident(s) will be investigated thoroughly including separate discussions with both the pupil(s)/person(s) experiencing the bullying behaviour and the pupil(s)/person(s) displaying bullying behaviour. All relevant details will be recorded. The outcome of these discussions will be reported to the parents.
- It may be necessary under certain circumstances to impose sanctions of the pupil displaying bullying behaviour. They will be made aware that their behaviour will be closely monitored over a stated period of time. Sanctions may include exclusion from the playground. Refer to Positive Behaviour Policy for further details on sanctions.
- The school may seek advice and support of the Educational Welfare Officer and Educational Psychologist through the Special Needs Code of Practice
- Feedback will be made to the person who made the report.
- It must be noted, however, that no information about action taken in relation to a pupil can be disclosed to anyone other than the pupil and his/her parents/carers.

## **Responding to a Bullying Concern**

The processes outlined below provide a framework for how the school will respond to any bullying concerns identified.

Using the NIABF Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource, the Anti-Bullying Support Team will:

- Clarify facts and perceptions
- Check records (SIMS)
- Assess the incident against the criteria for bullying behaviour
- Identify any themes or motivation factors
- Identify the type of bullying behaviour being displayed
- Identify intervention level
- Select and implement appropriate interventions for all pupils involved including consequences and sanctions where relevant
- Track, monitor and record effectiveness of interventions
- Review outcome of interventions

- Select and implement further intentions as necessary

When responding to a bullying concern, school staff shall implement interventions aimed at responding to the behaviour, resolving the concern and restoring the wellbeing of those involved. Where appropriate, school staff may implement sanctions for those displaying bullying behaviour – see Positive Behaviour Policy.

### **Recording**

Ballyholme PS will centrally record all relevant information related to reports of bullying concerns, including:

- how the bullying behaviour was displayed (the method)
- the motivation for the behaviour
- how each incident was addressed by the school
- the outcome of the interventions employed

As well as hard copies of written records, records will be kept on the online SIMS Behaviour Management Module, which is part of the C2k system in school. Access to these records will be restricted and only provided to those members of school staff with a legitimate need to have access.

All records will be maintained in line with relevant data protection legislation and guidance and will be disposed of in line with the school's Retention and Disposal of Documents Policy. Collated information regarding incidents of bullying and alleged bullying behaviour will be used to inform the future development of anti-bullying policy and practice within the school.

### **Professional Development of Staff**

Appropriate and adequate training for staff, including teaching and non-teaching staff will be ongoing. This will include:

- ensuring staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of CPD provision
- noting the impact of the training given on both the policy and its procedures eg amendments made, inclusions added etc
- ensuring that opportunities for safeguarding training are afforded to Board of Governors and all staff, teaching and non-teaching
- ensuring that CPD records are kept and updated

### **Links with other Policies**

In the development and implementation of this Anti-Bullying Policy, the Board of Governors has been mindful of related policies, including:

- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy
- E-Safety Policy and Acceptable Use of Internet Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

This policy was formulated in consultation with school Governors, staff, pupils and parents. The Governors will be involved in the tracking and monitoring procedures i.e. this will be an item on the Agenda of Governor Meetings, relating to the efficacy or otherwise with regard to individual interventions and strategies used or the overall effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy and practice.

The school will use the ETI Safeguarding Proforma along with the SIMS.net records to check whole-school effectiveness. The school will continue to focus on helping children understand the difference between socially unacceptable and bullying behaviours making changes where needed to ensure they understand the differences.

The school will review measure in intervals of no more than 4 years or if directed by DE to do so e.g. new legislation introduced, following an ETI Inspection or after dealing with a particularly challenging situation which has highlighted the need for amendments to be made.

The Safeguarding Team/Anti-Bullying Support Team will on an annual basis review the data held regarding bullying behaviours, identifying trends and evaluate the effectiveness of anti-bullying strategies.

It is important to remember that staff, pupils and parents all have an active part to play and have a responsibility to ensure effective implementation and maintenance of this policy.