



Anti-bullying Policy



Policy compiled by Mrs Joan Robb (Pastoral Care Co-ordinator)

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NEWBUILDINGS PRIMARY SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Newbuildings Primary School endeavours to provide a safe, secure and supportive environment so that the academic, personal and social development of all our pupils is realised. We believe that appropriate pupil behaviour is essential in the creation of such an environment and regard bullying as unacceptable behaviour.

Our school community repudiates bullying of any kind, to any member or group of the school community, by any member of the school community.

POLICY AIMS

The aims of this policy are to:

- **Prevent or reduce bullying in any form.**
- **Adopt a consistent approach to dealing with incidents of bullying.**
- **Create an emotionally safe environment where positive relationships can develop.**
- **Ensure that all pupils, parents and staff are aware of this policy and their roles and responsibilities in contributing to its success.**

PRINCIPLES

- **Pupils have the right to learn in a safe and supportive environment, free from intimidation and fear.**
- **The welfare/well-being needs of all children and young people are paramount and pupils' needs (whether a child is displaying bullying behaviours or a child who is experiencing bullying behaviours) need to be separated from their behaviour.**
- **When bullying concerns are identified our school will work in a restorative and solution focused way to achieve the necessary change.**
- **Pupils who are targeted will be listened to and supported.**
- **Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour will be listened to and encouraged to accept responsibility and change their behaviour.**
- **Where a concern arises, staff will receive on-going support from Senior Managers with Pastoral responsibility. Training will be provided as required for staff on how to deal with bullying incidents.**
- **Parents will be made aware of our school's practice to prevent and to respond to concerns through parent information meetings, consultation processes and where necessary, their active participation in partnership with the school to resolve concerns involving their child.**

THE LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

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

- **The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016**
- **The Education and Libraries Order (Northern Ireland) 2003 (A17-19)**
- **The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010**
- **The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995**
- **The Human Rights Act 1998**
- **The Health and Safety at Work Order (Northern Ireland) 1978**

THE POLICY & GUIDANCE CONTEXT

- **The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 Statutory Guidance for Schools and Boards of Governors (DE, 2019)**
- **Pastoral Care in School: Promoting Positive Behaviour (DE, 2001)**
- **Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: A Guide for Schools (DE, 2017)**
- **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 Policies and Procedures (SBNI, 2017)**

THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

This policy is underpinned by Article 19 U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child 1992.

"Children have the right to be protected from all forms of violence (physical and mental). They must be kept from harm and they must be given proper care by those looking after them".

PARTICIPATION AND CONSULTATION PROCESS

This policy has been developed in consultation with pupils and their parents/carers, in compliance with the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (N.I.) 2016.

PUPILS

- Consultative workshops with pupils

- Class-based activities
- Whole school questionnaires distributed to all pupils: foundation Stage, Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2.
- Our School Council meetings.

PARENTS/CARERS

- Questionnaires distributed to all parents/carers online in April 2021.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

There are many definitions of bullying but most have these factors in common:

- **Intentional**
- **Targeted at a specific pupil or group of pupils**
- **Repeated**
- **Causes physical or emotional harm**
- **Omission**

The Legal definition of Bullying for N. Ireland as Outlined in the **2016 Addressing Bullying in Schools Act**.

"Bullying includes but is not limited to the repeated use of -

- Any verbal, written or electronic communication*
- Any other act, or*
- Any combination of those, by a pupil or 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."*

Bullying Behaviours

1. **Physical:** includes jostling, physical intimidation, punching/kicking, any other physical contact which may include use of weapons.
2. **Verbal** - includes name calling, insults, jokes, threats, spreading rumours.
3. **Indirect:** includes isolation, refusal to work with/talk to/play with/help others, interfering with personal property and includes cyber-bullying: misuse of mobile phones and internet programmes to humiliate, threaten and/or isolate.

MOTIVATION BEHIND BULLYING: may include, but are not limited to...

- **Age**
- **Appearance**
- **Breakdown in peer relationships**
- **Community background**
- **Political affiliation**
- **Gender identity**
- **Sexual orientation**
- **Race**
- **Religion**
- **Disability / SEN**
- **Ability**
- **Looked After Child status**
- **Young Carer status**

PREVENTATIVE STRATEGIES

- Raising awareness and understanding of the positive behaviour expectations, as set out in the Positive Behaviour Policy. Links to Jenny Mosley's Golden Rules.
- Promotion of anti-bullying messages through the curriculum e.g. 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, through PDMU/PD/LLW (e.g. sectarian, racist, homophobic, disablist, etc.)
- Involvement in meaningful and supportive shared education projects, supporting pupils to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity.
- Through the preventative curriculum actively promote positive emotional health and wellbeing (e.g. mindfulness training)
- Participation in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities
- Engagement in key national and regional campaigns, e.g. Safer Internet Day, Good Relations Week, etc.
- Development of peer-led systems (e.g. School Council) to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messaging within the school
- Development of effective strategies for playground management, e.g. training for supervisors, zoning of playgrounds, inclusion of specific resources (buddy benches, play bus stops) and provision of a variety of play options to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Focused assemblies to raise awareness and promote understanding of key issues related to bullying.
- Development of effective strategies for the management of unstructured times (e.g. break time, lunch)
- Provision and promotion of extra- and co-curricular activities, aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks. For example sporting activity, creative arts, leisure and games, etc.
- Addressing key themes of online behaviour and risk through PDMU including understanding how to respond to harm and the consequences of inappropriate use. .
- Engagement with key statutory and voluntary sector agencies (e.g. C2k, PSNI, Public Health Agency, 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.

- Development and implementation of robust and appropriate policies in related areas (e.g. Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy, Filtering and Blocking Policy, Mobile Phone Policy, Connected Devices Policy, etc.)

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Everyone has the responsibility to work together to:

- foster positive self-esteem
- behave towards others in a mutually respectful way
- model high standards of personal pro-social behaviour
- be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying behaviour
- inform the school of any concerns relating to bullying behaviour
- refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying behaviour, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity.
- refrain from retaliating to any form of bullying behaviour
- intervene to support any person who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so.
- report any concerns or instances of bullying behaviour witnessed or suspected, to a member of staff.
- emphasise the importance of seeking help from a trusted adult about bullying behaviour when it happens or is observed
- explain the implications of allowing the bullying behaviour to continue unchecked, for themselves and/or others.
- listen sensitively to anyone who is displaying or experiencing bullying behaviours, take what is said seriously, and provide reassurance that appropriate action will be taken
- know how to seek support - internal and external
- resolve difficulties in restorative ways to prevent recurring bullying behaviour and meet the needs of all parties

Pupils should:

- Report all incidents of bullying (if a child is being bullied or if another pupil is being bullied -tell an adult.)
- Follow the school's rules.
- Avoid inappropriate behaviour which might be considered as bullying.

- Be respectful and supportive to others.

Parents should:

- Work in partnership with the school.
- Advise their children to report any concerns to a member of staff. Discourage behaviours which might be considered as bullying.
- Stress to their children that retaliation is not helpful.
- Contact the School Secretary to arrange an appointment with the child's class teacher to discuss concerns. (or contact the class teacher directly via Seesaw.
- Co-operate with the school, if their child/children are accused of bullying, try to ascertain the truth and point out the implications of bullying, both for the children who are bullied and for the bullies themselves.
- Accept their role in dealing with bullying behaviours which occur outside the school so that they do not interfere with effective learning and teaching during the school day.

Our Staff will:

- Foster self- esteem, self- respect and respect for others
- Demonstrate by example the high standards of professional and social behaviour we expect of our pupils
- Discuss bullying with our classes so pupils learn about the damage it causes and the importance of telling the teacher
- Be alert to the signs of bullying
- Respond to any bullying incident

WHEN RESPONDING TO A BULLYING CONCERN:

Be calm. It is important to be clear thinking and emotionally in control.

Be positive. Have in mind the importance of maintaining a positive relationship with the pupil. A pupil is much more likely to modify his/her behaviour if he/she perceives that a teacher cares.

Be assertive. Staff should directly and clearly express their thoughts, feelings and expectations concerning the need for the pupil to not only stop bullying, but also make restitution with the child who has been bullied.

Be Confident. It is important to trust that you will be successful in implementing supportive practices.

We believe that the only effective way of dealing with bullying is for the whole school community (teachers, pupils, parents, ancillary staff, Board of Governors) to confront the issue and work together in a concerted way to establish a safe emotional and physical environment where bullying cannot flourish.

REPORTING A BULLYING CONCERN

PUPILS

Every child needs to know who to contact if they are bullied:

- The child's classroom teacher
- Any teacher
- Any ancillary staff
- The Principal
- Parents
- A friend - who also knows that the incident must be reported to an adult
- Make use of a classroom 'Comments box'/Bubble Time.

PARENTS

- In the first instance, all bullying concerns should be reported to the Class Teacher
- Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to the Principal.

Where the parent/carer remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the school's complaints procedure should be followed. This usually involves making a formal, written complaint, to the Chair of the Board of Governors. It is important that this information is included within the Anti-Bullying Policy and that information on how to make this complaint is accessible to all parents. (**Appendix 5**: Complaint Form)

PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED FOLLOWING AN ALLEGATION OF BULLYING (Supported by **Appendix 4**: Flowchart)

1. Gather and clarify the facts.
2. Check:
 - That the behaviour constitutes behaviour as defined by school.
 - Records for any previous incidents.
3. Complete Bullying Assessment Form. (**Appendix 1**)

4. On the basis of this initial assessment:
 - Choose appropriate intervention from intervention levels 1-4.
 - Ensure effective communication amongst all parties. (**Appendix 3**)
 - Consider the possible need for: Parental involvement, Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) involvement, Risk Assessment, External agency involvement
5. Refer to the support materials provided on the intervention selected.
6. Monitor and evaluate the on-going effectiveness of chosen intervention.
7. Record actions taken and outcomes achieved. (**Appendix 2**)
8. Review the outcomes to determine whether further action is required and progress accordingly.

Choosing an Appropriate Intervention

There is no one preferable intervention. The main aim of intervention is to RESPOND to the bullying that is taking place, RESOLVE the concern and RESTORE the well-being of all those involved. In selecting an intervention our school will take account of:

- The level of severity
- The age and ability of those involved and level of understanding
- Whether an individual pupil is displaying bullying behaviour or is involved as part of a group
- The level of staff agreement, confidence and competence in adopting a restorative, behaviour changing approach.
- The agreement of parents/carers
- Whether the pupil(s) displaying bullying behaviour acknowledge(s) the unacceptable behaviour and can be enabled to feel empathy for the pupil experiencing bullying, and act appropriately.
- The willingness to engage in a group intervention method
- Whether it is realistic to expect that the child experiencing bullying can be strengthened adequately to deal with the situation.

LEVELS OF INTERVENTION

Level 1 Interventions: Low Level Bullying Behaviour

Interventions at this level are to help individuals to recognise/reflect on their unacceptable behaviour and to 'get them back on track' while listening to and supporting/strengthening the pupil(s) experiencing bullying. Never ignore low level bullying behaviour.

Staff should:

- Explain the inappropriateness of the behaviour

- Identify possible consequences if the bullying behaviour continues.
- Point out the level of distress experienced by the child experiencing bullying. Talk with the child experiencing bullying to explore whether in any way he/she has provoked the bullying behaviour.
- Help the bullied child to identify ways in which he/she may be strengthened and supported.
- Encourage reparation if appropriate.
- Monitor the situation carefully.
- Be prepared to intervene with a higher response level if the situation persists or deteriorates.

Level 2 Interventions: Intermediate Level Bullying Behaviour

While interventions at Level 2 involve continuing with the above, there is a shift from individual work to group interventions. To be effective small group work needs:

- The consent of the child being bullied
- To be planned and timetabled, session length dependent on age and ability
- Parental/carer consent and agreement from participating pupils
- Carefully selected group membership
- To be facilitated in a positive manner, ideally by two adults, one participating one observing
- Structured and focused activities to stimulate discussion and debate amongst members and develop group identity
- Decisions and outcomes to be agreed and recorded
- To facilitate the development of empathy amongst pupils
- A solution focused approach
- To provide opportunities for pupils to take responsibility
- Regular meetings of the group
- Regular meetings with the child displaying bullying behaviours/ the child experiencing bullying behaviours, to assess on going effectiveness of agreed actions.

Level 3 - Interventions Complex Bullying Behaviour

It is clear that more complex bullying situations, which may be resistant to change, require the school to collaborate and network with parents/carers and other agencies, in addition to working with individual pupils. Consequently, at this level, regarding a pupil's bullying behaviour require a formal referral to the Pastoral Co-Ordinator who will assume over-arching responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of school-based interventions. In addition, she will have a lead role when liaising with external agencies. The

Pastoral Coordinator will refer to the school's Positive Behaviour and Anti Bullying Policies to ensure that the response is consistent with the provisions in these policies. These pupils will be at Stage 3 of the SEN Code of Practice requiring that the SENCO and Pastoral Coordinator determine appropriate interventions. The inappropriate pupil behaviour should be identified within an Individual Education Plan (IEP) with the intervention detailed in the Behaviour Support Plan. It is imperative that other school staff implementing discrete interventions have been assigned responsibility accordingly. At this level all available information should be used to inform a Risk Assessment. This assessment should involve an analysis of the presenting Risk Factors and Protective Factors. This risk analysis will determine the level of risk and needs and appropriate intervention from the framework. We consider these in terms of the following:

- **School Environment**
- **Family Environment**
- **Peer Environment**

This planning may also occur through a Multi-Agency Support Team meeting (MAST). For vulnerable pupils at higher risk the Pastoral Coordinator should further liaise with the DTCP/ Principal and consider the need for a UNOCINI assessment for Family Support by the Health and Social Care Trust is required.

Level 4 - Interventions High Risk Bullying Behaviour

Bullying behaviours assessed as level 4 are severe and involve a significant threat to the safety and welfare of any or all of the pupils involved. Such severe bullying concerns may be new or may have proved resistant to earlier school interventions and have now been assessed as high risk. The school's Child Safeguarding Procedures will need to be invoked. MAST meeting to be organised to develop an inter-agency risk management plan. This may incorporate intensive support services to the pupils involved and their families. DE's guidance 'Pastoral Care in School: Child Protection (Circular1999/10) states:

'Where a pupil's bullying behaviour is persistent and defies attempts by the school to address it satisfactory by behaviour management strategies or disciplinary methods within a reasonable time, the child protection procedures should be instigated. The victim's needs should always be paramount. (para87) Regional Child Protection Policy and Procedures 9.50 (2005) The framework in accordance with CH5 of these procedures should be instigated in the following circumstances:

- **Anti- bullying procedures have failed to be effective**
- **Bullying is persistent and severe, resulting in the child experiencing bullying behaviour suffering/likely to suffer significant harm**

- **There are concerns that the bullying behaviour is indicative of the child displaying bullying behaviour is likely to suffer significant harm**

Where concerns exist in relation to the parent's/carer's capacity to meet the needs of the child Referral to inter and multi -agency liaison and integrated working with other external agencies is required at this stage. Referral to and /or liaison with other EA support services may occur at this time as the Behaviour Support Team, EWS and Educational Psychology. Other external agencies may include the Gateway Team, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Team (CAMHS), PSNI.

LINKS WITH OTHER SCHOOL POLICIES

Other school policies which link into the Anti-bullying policy are: Pastoral Care; Child Protection; Positive Behaviour; Special Education and Inclusion; Attendance; Safe-Handling; First Aid and Administration of Medicines; Relationships and Sexuality; Educational Visits; Intimate Care; E-Safety; and Staff Code of Conduct Policies.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF POLICY

To appropriately monitor the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy, the Board of Governors will:

- **maintain a standing item on the agenda of each meeting of the Board where a report on recorded incidents of bullying will be noted**
- **identify trends and priorities for action**
- **assess the effectiveness of strategies aimed at preventing bullying behaviour**
- **assess the effectiveness of strategies aimed at responding to bullying behaviour**

This Anti-Bullying Policy will be reviewed, in consultation with pupils and their parents/carers, on or before June 2024.