

Anti-Bullying Policy



Ballyhenry Primary School

"Achieving Potential in a Caring Environment."

Agree Date	Review Date	Person Responsible
2021	2023	Mrs. L Knocker
Date ratified by Board of Governors: 24-04-21		

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Section 1 – Introduction and Statement

At Ballyhenry Primary School we believe all forms of bullying behaviour are unacceptable. We believe that all pupils have the right to learn in a safe and supported environment.

The Board of Governors, Principal and Staff of Ballyhenry Primary School wish to foster a happy and caring atmosphere within the school so that all pupils may be educated to the best of their ability. In order to achieve this, we believe that it is essential to create an environment where bullying in any form will not be tolerated.

We believe that every member of the school community has the right to:

- feel safe and secure, free from intimidation and fear;
- be treated with respect and courtesy;
- have equal opportunities regardless of sex, race, religion or ability;
- be able to learn;
- be valued as a member of the school community;
- know who to talk to and the procedures to follow in a situation involving bullying.

Aims of the Policy

1. To create an atmosphere within the school where everyone will be tolerant of others regardless of age, sex, size, race, religion, ability or disability.
2. To raise awareness in the children, all teaching and non-teaching staff and parents of the seriousness of bullying.
3. To take proactive steps to minimise the likelihood of bullying in our school.
4. To develop a consistent approach to dealing with incidents of bullying.

Section 2 – Context

This policy has been developed in the light of a number of legislative and policy/guidance framework contexts. These include:

THE LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT:

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

This Act provides a legal definition of bullying. It places a duty on the Board of Governors to put in place measures to prevent bullying behaviour, in consultation with pupils and parents. It requires schools to record all incidents of bullying behaviour and alleged bullying incidents and outlines the circumstances in which 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)
- When receiving education organised by school but happening elsewhere (e.g. in another school)

The Act requires that the policy is updated at least every four years.

This order requires Board of Governors to “Safeguard and promote the welfare of registered pupils.” (A.17)

- The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010
- The Education and Libraries Order (Northern Ireland) 2003 (A17-19)
- 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

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. (A.19)
- Be protected from discrimination. (A.2)
- Express their views, in a supported and accessible way, on issues that affect them, and to have their opinions taken seriously. (A.12)
- Education. (A.28)

Section 3 – Ethos & Principles

A happy and caring school environment characterises the ethos of our school learning community. Positive behaviour is promoted through our learning programmes to underpin the following 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 contributions of our pupils and will actively seek and respect their views.
- 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.

Section 4 – Consultation and Participation

This policy has been developed in consultation with registered pupils and their parents/carers, in compliance with the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016. The policy has been created in co-ordination with staff and governors. Consultation with pupils has taken place through class-based activities. Parents have had an opportunity to view the document in draft format and to respond.

Section 5 – What is Bullying?

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 provides schools with a legal definition and this is the definition of bullying which will be used at Ballyhenry Primary School.

Addressing Bullying in Schools 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” includes omission.

Therefore, 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.

While bullying is usually repeated behaviour, there are instances of one-off incidents that Ballyhenry Primary School may consider as bullying. 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 relationships between those involved
- any previous incidents involving the individuals
- saying mean and hurtful things to, or about, others
- making fun of others
- calling another pupil mean and hurtful names
- telling lies or spread false rumours about others
- try to make other pupils dislike another pupil/s
- Hitting
- kicking

Any incidents which are not considered bullying behaviour will be addressed under our school’s Positive Behaviour Policy.

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

- Verbal or written acts
- Physical acts
 - pushing
 - shoving
- material harm, such as taking/stealing money or possessions or causing damage to possessions
- Leaving someone out of a game
- Refusing to include someone in group work
- 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 (e.g. photographs or videos) online to embarrass someone
- Omission (Exclusion)
- Electronic

It should be stressed that this list is not exhaustive and other behaviours which fit with the definition may be considered bullying behaviour. Various methods of bullying behaviour can occur separately or together. Not all unacceptable behaviour is bullying behaviour.

There are a range of motivations behind bullying, including those named in the Act. These include, but are not limited to:

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

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 encourage all members of the school community to use these terms in discussion of bullying incidents.

INTENTION TO CAUSE HARM

The 2016 Act requires schools to determine that the act was intentional of the pupil(s) displaying bullying behaviour. The school will use its discretion to assess an individual pupil's capacity to understand the impact of their behaviours e.g. due to developmental age/delay, diagnosis (e.g. SEBD, ASD, MLD etc.). 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.

Section 6 – Preventative Measures

The main focus of anti-bullying work at Ballyhenry Primary School is on prevention. The school has established and will maintain the following strategies to prevent and reduce bullying behaviour:

- Using the Ballyhenry Way to encourage children to develop respect for self and others and foster a sense of belonging to the school community.
- Raising awareness and understanding of the positive behaviour expectations, as set out in the Positive Behaviour Policy
- Recognising and rewarding positive behaviour in class and at whole school level
- Promoting 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
- Supporting pupils to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity.
- Promoting positive emotional health and wellbeing (e.g. Wellbeing activities) through the preventative curriculum.
- Participating in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities
- Engaging in key national and regional campaigns, e.g. Safer Internet Day etc.
- Developing peer-led systems (e.g. School Council, Buddy system) to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messaging within the school
- Developing effective strategies for playground management, e.g. vigilant supervision, zoning of playgrounds, inclusion of specific resources (e.g. buddy benches) and provision of a variety of play options to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Developing effective strategies for the management of unstructured times (e.g. break time, lunch)
- Holding specific assemblies to raise awareness and promote understanding of key issues related to bullying e.g. Safer Internet Day/ Anti Bullying focused assemblies
- Provision and promotion of extra-curricular activities, aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks. For example, sporting activity, creative arts, leisure and games, etc.

While many of the measures outlined above will support the development of an anti-bullying culture, there are a number of ways Ballyhenry Primary School will further build upon this related specifically to the journey to and from school. These include:

- Development of a culture where pupils take pride in their school and are viewed as ambassadors for their school within the community. This includes regular reminders of the positive behaviour expectations of pupils whilst travelling to and from school.

- Appropriate deployment of staff to support the transition from school day to journey home e.g. staff supervision on the school grounds at the beginning and end of the school day.

There is no duty on the school to take action if online bullying through electronic communication is taking place outside school or beyond the definitions listed in this policy and within the remit of the 2016 Act. However, as part of our ongoing work in Using ICT and PDMU, we will raise awareness of the nature and impact of online bullying and support our pupils to make use of the internet in a safe, responsible and respectful way. This may include:

- 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 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)

It is important to remember that the Anti-Bullying Policy is one of a number of policies in the wider pastoral care and safeguarding suite of policies. These other policies are set out in Section 12 of this policy.

Section 7 – Responsibility

Everyone has responsibility for creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all members of the school community. Everyone in the school community, including pupils, parents/carers and our staff are expected to respect the rights of others to be safe.

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 has been bullied, 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

Section 8 – Reporting a Bullying Concern

PUPILS REPORTING A CONCERN

Children who have a concern about a potential bullying situation should discuss this with a member of staff that they trust. Pupils are encouraged to raise concerns with any member of staff, including teaching and non-teaching staff.

Pupils can report bullying concerns through a number of methods, including:

- Verbally- talking to a member of staff
- By writing a note to a member of staff (e.g. in a homework diary)
- By posting a comment in a ‘worry box’

ANY pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing this behaviour. Through the preventative work taken forward under Section 6 of this policy, this message should focus on ‘getting help’ rather than ‘telling’. As such, all pupils should be encouraged to ‘get help’ if they have a concern about bullying that they experience or is experienced by another.

PARENTS/CARERS REPORTING A CONCERN

We encourage parents and carers to raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour with the school at the earliest opportunity and the need to encourage their children to react appropriately to bullying behaviour and to not do anything to retaliate or to ‘hit back’.

The process of parents/carers reporting bullying concerns will differ, depending on the size of the school and the number of pupils and teachers.

Generally, the processes tend to be:

- 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 our pastoral co-ordinator, Mrs L Knocker
- Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken by the pastoral co-ordinator 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 involves making a formal, written complaint, to the Chair of the Board of Governors. A copy of the school’s complaints procedure is available on the school website or from the school office.

All reports of bullying concerns received from pupils and/or parents/carers will be responded to in line with this policy and feedback will be made to the person who made the report. However, it must be noted 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.

Section 9 – 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 member of staff responsible shall:

- Clarify facts and perceptions
- Check records (SIMS/Class teacher)
- Assess the incident against the criteria for bullying behaviour
 - Is the behaviour intentional?
 - Is the behaviour targeted at a specific pupil/group of pupils?
 - Is the behaviour repeated?
 - Is the behaviour causing physical/emotional harm?
 - Does the behaviour involve omission? (may not always be present)
- Identify any themes or motivating factors
- Identify the type of bullying behaviour being displayed
- Identify intervention level
- Select and implement appropriate interventions for all pupils involved, including appropriate interventions, consequences and sanctions
- 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. Information regarding any action taken regarding a pupil cannot be disclosed to anyone other than that pupil and his/her parents/carers.

Section 10 – Recording

The school 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.

Records will be kept on the online SIMS Behaviour Management Module, which is part of the C2k system in schools. 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.

Section 11 – Professional Development of Staff

We recognise the need for appropriate and adequate training for staff, including teaching and non-teaching school staff. This includes:

- our commitment to ensuring that staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school's ongoing CPD/PRSD provisions
- noting the impact of the training given on both the policy and its procedures - e.g. any amendments made, inclusions added etc.
- ensuring that opportunities for safeguarding training are afforded to Governors and all staff – teaching and non-teaching

Section 12 – Links to 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 & Acceptable Use of Internet Policy
- Acceptable use of Mobile Phones in School Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct Policy

Section 13 – Monitoring and Review of Policy

It is the responsibility of the Board of Governors, in liaison with the Principal, to monitor the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy. To appropriately monitor the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy, the Board of Governors shall:

- 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 shall be reviewed as required, in consultation with pupils and their parents/carers, on or before **June 2025**. However, a review may happen before this date following any incident which requires such a revision or if directed to do so by the Department of Education in the light of new guidance.

Ballyhenry PS