

# BELLAGHY PRIMARY SCHOOL

## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

## INTRODUCTION

At Bellaghy Primary School, we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a **CARING, SHARING SCHOOL – WE CARE FOR EACH OTHER, WE SHARE OUR PROBLEMS.** (This statement is displayed in the school foyer and in other communal areas) This means that if anyone knows that bullying is happening, they are expected to tell a member of staff and know that the problem will be investigated.

## RATIONALE

All schools have a pastoral responsibility towards the children in their charge and should take all reasonable steps to ensure that their welfare is safeguarded and their safety is preserved. At the centre of our whole school approach to promoting an anti-bullying culture is the creation of a positive school culture which encourages respect, trust, consideration, tolerance and sensitivity towards others. The process of establishing this culture will be facilitated through attitudes, reactions, support and an overall teaching and learning environment in which pupils feel secure, are free from emotional and physical harm, have their opinions valued and their concerns dealt with sympathetically and appropriately. Pupils should be able to enjoy their time in school and have educational experiences that are academically and socially fulfilling.

Bullying behaviour affects not only those closely involved but also everyone in the classroom and in the school community. All members of the school community have a right to work in a secure and caring environment. They also have a responsibility to contribute in whatever way they can, to ensure the protection and maintenance of such a secure and caring environment.

It is for this reason, therefore, that a whole school Anti-Bullying Policy has been formulated in co-operation with the school staff, both teaching and non-teaching under the leadership of the Principal and in consultation with parents and pupils.

This policy will form the basis for developing effective school based strategies for dealing with the issue of bullying.

This policy reflects the school's Mission Statement:

The mission of Bellaghy Primary School is to provide in partnership with parents, a broad quality education, so that all pupils can reach their full potential within a caring, secure environment which promotes self-discipline, motivation and individuality.

## PROMOTING AN ANTI-BULLYING CULTURE

Our primary aim is to establish a culture which minimises the likelihood of bullying taking place.

As noted above, the process of establishing this anti-bullying culture will be facilitated through general and consistent attitudes, reactions, support and an overall teaching and learning environment in which pupils feel secure, are free from emotional and physical harm, have their opinions valued and their concerns dealt with sympathetically and appropriately.

### THROUGH THE CURRICULUM

The culture will also be promoted through a well-planned Personal Development and Mutual Understanding programme (P.D.M.U.) which will consider e.g.:

- Anger management
- Conflict resolution
- Relationships
- Feelings and emotions
- Communication
- Personal Safety

Many curricular subject areas can provide opportunities for exploring issues related to bullying e.g. Art, Drama, Music, R.E.

### OTHER STRATEGIES

- Assemblies
- Circle Time
- External agencies to support class teaching
- Pastoral Notice Board – Our ‘Ten Bees’ of Good Behaviour
- Thoughts’ Box
- Anti-Bullying week to highlight the issue

### ROLE of STAFF in PROMOTING this CULTURE

All staff, teaching and non-teaching must avoid:

- Using sarcasm or other insulting or demeaning form of language

- Making negative comments about a child's appearance or background
- Humiliating a pupil who is academically weak or outstanding or vulnerable in any way
- Using any gesture or expression of a threatening or intimidatory nature, or any form of degrading physical contact

## A DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, isolation
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Damage to property – damage to personal property eg damage to school books, clothing. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic - because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing about eg being clever or at the other extreme being weak
- Extortion – Demands for money often accompanied by threats
- Cyber - All areas of internet ,such as email & internet chat room misuse.  
Mobile threats by text messaging & calls  
Misuse of associated technology , i.e. camera & video facilities

## OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY

- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a school we take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

## SIGNS AND SYMPTONS

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go on the school / public bus
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or " go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home hungry (money / lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating or loses weight
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone

- is nervous & jumpy when a cyber message is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

## COMMON LOCATIONS FOR BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Research has indicated that the following locations are the most common areas for bullying in schools. As a school community, it is important that we are aware of these areas

### PLAYGROUND

Bullying in school frequently takes place in the playground. Many school playgrounds with hidden areas may provide an environment conducive to bullying. At Bellaghy Primary School, all children know they must be visible by supervisory staff at all times. Wrestling and other forms of 'rough' play are disallowed and other games eg football are closely monitored. We have found with the introduction of playground equipment at lunch time, the children are usually actively engaged in appropriate co-operative play.

### TOILETS AND CLOAKROOM AREAS

These areas are often the scene of verbal, psychological and physical harassment. In Bellaghy Primary School, these areas are visible from the classroom and open to the corridor. We also have specific 'bathroom times.'

### IN CLASS

Bullying can also take place within the classroom setting through subtle glances, looks and sniggers. This type of behaviour is unacceptable at our school and through P.D.M.U., we consistently encourage positive affirmation of self and others.

### OUTSIDE SCHOOL

The area immediately outside school, (ie the local shop, the neighbourhood or on the bus) are often scenes of bullying behaviour. The vast majority of our children live in the surrounding rural area and therefore are collected at the gate so this issue does not commonly arise. We have no school bus. Any pupil whose parent has been delayed remains in school until their parent arrives.

## PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH A BULLYING INCIDENT

(A summary flow chart is included)

### RESPONSE TO A BULLYING INCIDENT

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. Schools have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

1. Report bullying incident to a member of staff
2. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly
3. In all cases of bullying, the incidents will be recorded by staff in our school 'Incident Book.'
4. In serious cases parents of both parties should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem, this incident will be recorded in the Child Protection file as a 'Record of Concern.'
5. Plans will be drawn up to try and resolve the problem and appropriate action taken
6. A determined attempt will be made to help the bully change his/her behaviour, and appropriate support will be provided for the victim.
7. The bully's and victim's consequent behaviour will be closely monitored and reviewed. Parents kept informed.
8. At any time, other agencies may be involved in provision of advice or support.

## POSSIBLE OUTCOMES FOLLOWING INVESTIGATION

- 1) The bully may be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences may take place in accordance with the school's Positive Behaviour Policy.
- 2) In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion will be considered.
- 3) If possible, the pupils will be reconciled.
- 4) After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored and reviewed to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

## STAFF TRAINING

All staff will be made aware of this policy and its implications through in-school training sessions annually.

## LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

The policies listed below share the goal of creating an environment where children feel secure and confident in the knowledge that their concerns will be listened to and dealt with by members of staff in a sympathetic manner:

- Pastoral Care
- Child Protection
- Positive Behaviour
- Health and Safety
- Special Educational Needs
- R.S.E.

## MONITORING AND REVIEWING OF POLICY

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Principal and staff and brought before the Board of Governors.

POLICY REVIEWED – ANNUALLY  
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