

# 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, including cyberbullying 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.) 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
- Worry Bag
- 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 - Online bullying such as email & internet chat room misuse.  
Mobile threats by text messaging, calls and gaming.  
Misuse of associated technology , i.e. camera & video facilities

CYBERBULLYING includes:

- Sending threatening or abusive text messages
- Creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos
- 'Trolling' - the sending of menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
- Excluding children from online games, activities or friendship groups
- Setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child
- Encouraging children to self-harm
- Voting for or against someone in an abusive poll
- Creating fake accounts, causing trouble using another child's name, hijacking another child's account
- Sending explicit messages, known as 'sexting'
- Pressuring children into sending sexual images or engaging in sexual conversations

(Source - NSPCC)

## **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
- ie obsessive about using the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous & jumpy when an online 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.

### ONLINE

Cyberbullying is an increasingly common form of bullying behaviour which happens on social networks, games and mobile phones. Cyberbullying can include spreading rumours about someone or posting nasty or embarrassing messages, images or videos. Children may know who is bullying them online - it may be an extension of offline peer bullying, or they may be targeted by someone using a

fake or anonymous account. It's easy to be anonymous online and this may increase the likelihood of engaging in bullying behaviour. Cyberbullying can happen anytime or anywhere - a child can be bullied when they are alone in their bedroom, so it can feel like there is no escape.

## **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
- P.D.M.U.

## **MONITORING AND REVIEWING OF POLICY**

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

**POLICY UPDATED - Sept 2016 MLR**

# **PROCEDURES**

**INCIDENT REPORTED**

**RECORD DETAILS**

**Who What Where When Why How  
ACTION TAKEN**

**PARENTS INFORMED**

**SUPPORT WHILE THE ISSUE  
IS BEING RESOLVED  
Who How**

**RECORD KEEPING**

**PARENTS UPDATED**

**EVALUATE ACTION**

Exemplars of the entitlement and responsibilities of teachers, pupils and parents are included below.

### **Entitlement of teachers within a whole-school anti-bullying policy**

- To teach without harassment or unwarranted disruption;
- To expect co-operation;
- To be consulted, be informed and be treated courteously;
- To have agreed rules and regulations obeyed by pupils.

### **Responsibilities of teachers within a whole-school anti-bullying policy**

- Teachers should act as role models for pupils. They have the potential to influence pupils' behaviours in a positive direction by promoting relationships that are characterised by respect, tolerance and a spirit of friendship and co-operations - among and between pupils and staff.
- Teachers should be aware of signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying, both within the classroom/teaching area and while on supervision duty around the school.
- By arriving at class punctually and in moving promptly between lessons teachers can reduce the possibility of bullying behaviour.
- In dealing with a particular incident of bullying, teachers should take steps to help the victim and remove sources of distress without placing the victim at further risk.
- Teachers should, at the earliest opportunity, report suspected or actual incidents of bullying to the appropriate members of staff who will initiate necessary follow-up action.

### **Entitlement of pupils within a whole-school anti-bullying policy**

- A communication right: the right to express oneself, share ideas, ask questions and be listened to.
- A treatment right: the right to respect from others, to be treated and equally.
- A safety right: the right to be free from intimidation in school and classroom, to be safe and secure and to be property protected.
- A problem-solving right: the right to expect rational settlement of problems and to be able to tell their sides of the story in a dispute.
- A learning right: the right to learn, without interference, to the level of their own ability in a secure working environment.

### **Responsibilities of pupils within a whole-school anti-bullying policy**

- Pupils should be aware of the serious effect which bullying can have on a victim and should refuse to become involved in any bullying action.
- If a pupils is present when bullying of another pupils occurs he should report the incident to any member of the teaching staff.
- A pupil who is being bullied should either -
  - (a) Report the matter to any member of teaching staff.
  - (b) Report the matter to his parent/guardian who should then contact a member of the teaching staff.

### **Entitlement of parents within a whole-school anti-bullying policy**

- To be made aware of the school's policy and procedures for minimising bullying in school.
- To expect that the school will take all reasonable steps to reduce the likelihood of bullying within the school.
- To be confident that the school will support any pupil who is being bullied.
- To expect to be consulted by the school in its procedures for dealing with any incident of bullying in which their child is either victim or bully.

### **Responsibilities of parents/guardians within a whole-school anti-bullying policy.**

- Parents/guardians should watch for common signs of bullying in their child, e.g. losing interest in school and becoming unwilling to attend school, a pattern of headaches, missing equipment, requests for extra money, damaged clothing, bruising, repeated requests to come home for lunch, changing usual route to school or asking to be taken to school and unexplained secretiveness, sullenness or unusual outbursts of temper.
- Parents/guardians should take an active interest in their child's social life and should know his/her's company.
- Parents/Guardians should strongly advise their child **not to retaliate** but to report any incident of bullying to either a member of the teaching staff or to the parent/guardian as a **matter of urgency**.
- Parents/Guardians should inform the school of any cases of suspected bullying of which they are aware, **even if their own child is not directly involved**.

- Parents/Guardians should be willing to co-operate with the school authorities if their child is involved in any incident of bullying - either as victim or alleged bully.

As taken from *Promoting Positive Behaviour (DE) PP 87-89*

***POLICY REVIEWED - MARCH 2018 MLR***