

BELLAGHY PRIMARY SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

SCHOOL ETHOS AND MISSION STATEMENT

Bellaghy Primary School strives to provide, in partnership with parents, a broad quality education so that all the pupils can reach their full potential within a caring, secure environment promoting self-discipline, motivation and individuality.

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 and resolved. As a school, we are committed to a preventative, responsive and restorative anti-bullying ethos and we believe that it is everyone's role to take a stand against bullying and therefore help to create a safe and welcoming environment for all.

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 ethos 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 as stated above:

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.

THE LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

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

POLICY AND 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)
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 provides a legal definition of bullying.

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.

"act" includes omission.

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)

SCHOOL'S DEFINITION OF BULLYING (as agreed by governors and staff)

Bullying is a repeated* behaviour (which can be online) which has the intention of causing harm** to another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim. Bullying can be carried out by an individual or a group, and can affect an individual or a group

*While bullying is usually repeated behaviour, there are instances of one-off incidents that we may consider as bullying. When assessing a one-off incident, to make a decision on whether to classify it as bullying, the school will 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

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

Bullying can be:

- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, isolation, nasty looks
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Damage to property – damage to personal property e.g. 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 e.g. being clever or at the other extreme being weak, using a demeaning tone of voice
- 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 (ONLINE BULLYING) 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/media, 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)

Please note the above lists are not exhaustive.

**In determining 'harm', we define:

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

MOTIVATIONS BEHIND BULLYING

At our school, we recognise that there are various motivations behind bullying, including those named in the Act. These include, but are not limited to:

- Age
- Appearance
- Breakdown in peer relationships/friendships
- Jealousy
- Community background
- Political affiliation
- Gender identity
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy
- Marital status
- Race
- Religion
- Disability / SEN
- Ability
- Looked after child status
- Young Carers status

USE OF LANGUAGE

Bullying is an emotive issue, therefore it is essential that 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 staff to use this language when discussing bullying incidents.

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.

PROMOTING AN ANTI-BULLYING CULTURE

This section is the key lynchpin of this policy document.

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, efficiently and appropriately.

THE PREVENTATIVE 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
- Emotional health and well-being
- E Safety

Many curricular subject areas can provide opportunities for exploring issues related to bullying e.g. Literacy, Art, Drama, Music, R.E., World Around Us. Drama is used extensively in Key Stage Two to address and discuss bullying behaviours and reaction to bullying.

OTHER STRATEGIES

- Raising awareness and understanding of what behaviour is expected in school through setting of class rules etc.
- Assemblies
- Participation in N.I.A.B.F. Anti-Bullying week
- Circle Time
- Participation in peer led systems e.g. School Council to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messages
- Pastoral Notice Board – Our ‘Ten Bees’ of Good Behaviour
- Worry Bag, worry monster, post box – various strategies used by each teacher
- Participation in Safer Internet Day
- Shared Education activities which explore diversity and difference
- Emotional health and well-being activities
- Effective playground management – use of specific resources e.g. Buddy Bench
- Regular reminders in Assembly of behaviour expectation
- Engagement with relevant agencies e.g. C2K, P.S.N.I., Safer Schools etc.
- Provision and promotion of extra-curricular activities aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships
- Appropriate signage and posters around school
- Addressing key themes of online behaviour and risk through P.D.M.U., including understanding how to respond to harm and the consequences of inappropriate use
- Development and implementation of robust and appropriate policies in related areas, e.g. E Safety, Mobile Phone etc.

TRAVELLING TO AND FROM SCHOOL

We aim to develop a culture where children take pride in their school and are proud to wear the Bellaghy PS uniform. To this end, we encourage our children to be ambassadors for our school and show exemplary behaviour when outside school, for example, when in local shops, cafes etc.

It is important to remember that this Anti-Bullying Policy is one of a number of policies in the wider pastoral care and safeguarding suite of policies. As such, it is essential that these policies align and provide a consistent message.

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 anyway
- Using any gesture or expression of a threatening or intimidatory nature, or any form of degrading physical contact

RESPONSIBILITY

Everyone within our school community, including children, their parents/carers and the staff of the school 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 behaviour
- Be alert to signs of distress or indications of bullying behaviour
- Inform the school of any concerns
- Refrain from becoming involved in any bullying behaviour
- 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 behaviours 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

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

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 schoolwork
- 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 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. This is not an exhaustive list.

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 e.g. 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 media/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.

REPORTING A BULLYING CONCERN

PUPILS REPORTING A CONCERN

Any child can report a concern to any member of staff. The children are made aware of this frequently during Assembly and during P.D.M.U. lessons and at other times incidentally throughout the school year. There are also posters around the school indicating who I can speak to if I have a worry or concern. The Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers are photographed on these posters. Children are reminded that they can speak to any trusted adult.

Note – any child can report a concern, not just the child experiencing the bullying behaviour. Children are reminded that this is 'getting help,' rather than 'telling on.'

Children can report any concerns:

- Verbally
- By writing a note to a member of staff – worry bag, post box etc. Each class has its own system.

PARENT/CARER REPORTING A CONCERN

1. The bullying concern should be reported to the class teacher.
2. Where the parent/carer is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken to prevent a further incident or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to the Principal.
3. Where the parent/carer remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately resolved, the school's Complaints Policy should be followed.

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

No information about action taken in relation to a pupil can be disclosed to anyone other than the pupil and his/her parent/carer.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH A BULLYING INCIDENT

(See Appendix 1)

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.

The focus of any intervention must be on responding to the bullying concern and restoring the wellbeing of those involved. As such, any strategy for responding to bullying concerns must concentrate on the prevention of any further incidents. Where appropriate, staff may implement sanctions for those displaying bullying behaviour in accordance with the Positive Behaviour Policy.

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

Using the NI Anti-Bullying Forum 'Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour' resource, the member of staff responsible will:

- Clarify facts and perceptions
- Check records
- Assess the incident against the criteria for bullying behaviour
- 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 not listed in the Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource
- Track, monitor and record effectiveness of interventions
- Review outcome of interventions

- Select and implement further intentions as necessary

No information about action taken in relation to a pupil can be disclosed to anyone other than the pupil and his/her parent/carer.

RECORDING

The legal requirement, as set out in the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016, is to maintain a record of all incidents of bullying and alleged bullying behaviour.

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 centrally. 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.

POSSIBLE OUTCOMES FOLLOWING INVESTIGATION

- 1) The bully will 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 has/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
- Special Educational Needs
- R.S.E.
- E Safety
- Mobile Phone
- Educational Visits
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Health and Well-Being
- Health and Safety

MONITORING AND REVIEWING OF POLICY

This policy will be reviewed annually (and immediately following an incident of bullying) by the Principal and staff and brought before the Board of Governors.

POLICY UPDATED – November 2021 MLR

APPENDIX 1

PROCEDURE

1. INCIDENT REPORTED
2. RECORD DETAILS (who, what, where, when, why, how)
3. ACTION TAKEN (Ref: Effective Responses to Bullying Incident NIABF)
4. SUPPORT CHILDREN INVOLVED WHILE INCIDENT IS BEING RESOLVED
5. EVALUATE ACTION
6. MONITOR SUBSEQUENT BEHAVIOUR OF CHILDREN INVOLVED

PARENTS INFORMED DURING ALL PARTS OF PROCEDURE

MAINTAIN RECORD KEEPING DURING ALL PARTS OF PROCEDURE

APPENDIX 2

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 properly 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 pupil is present when bullying of another pupil 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)