

Anti-Bullying Policy

St. Teresa's Primary School, Tullyherron

Aims and Objectives

In St. Teresa's Primary School, Tullyherron we believe that all pupils have the right to learn in an environment which is free from intimidation and fear. The welfare needs of all pupils are paramount and based on this premise, we believe that pupils' needs, whether the person displaying bullying behaviour or target pupil, need to be separate from their behaviour.

When bullying concerns are identified our school will work in a restorative and solution focussed way to achieve the necessary change. Pupils who are targeted will be listened to and supported. Similarly, pupils who engage in bullying behaviour will be listened to and supported to accept responsibility and change their behaviour.

Where a concern arises, staff will receive ongoing support from the Principal and Designated Teacher with Pastoral Responsibility. The Principal has received awareness-raising training regarding bullying prevention (based on NIABF resource file as well as Addressing Bullying in Schools Act 2016) including effective, appropriate strategies for intervention.

Parents will be made aware of our school's practice to prevent and to respond to concerns through parental consultation, related information documentation and their active participation in partnership with our school to resolve concerns involving their child.

Context

The school community of St. Teresa's Primary, Tullyherron, repudiates bullying behaviour of any kind, to any member of the school community, by any member of the school community.

This policy has been informed and guided by current legislation and DE guidance listed below:

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](#)

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

- * [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#)

Ethos & Principles

School Mission Statement

St. Teresa's Primary school aims to provide a caring, working and happy environment in which the potential of every child can be realised.

We are a catholic school and as such we have a distinct ethos, Catholic Education is rooted in the gospel values of respect for life, solidarity, truth and justice; it aims to harmonise faith and culture, build a better society and pursue the common good.

Christ's commandment to love God and neighbour inspires a caring ethos which is expressed in relationships throughout our school community.

The education in our school is person centred. It promotes the dignity, self-esteem and full development of each person who is made in God's image and uniquely loved by God.

We believe in the dignity and worth of each individual and in the development of the whole person. Together we aim to provide high quality rounded education for all our children so that they develop their full uniqueness and potential.

All members of St. Teresa's staff share these values and work to ensure a pupil-centred approach in which caring is a shared responsibility of all staff. These values underpin and shape all our school policies.

At St. Teresa's 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 views and contributions of children and young people, we will actively seek these views and we will respect and take them into account. 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.

What is Bullying?

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 provides schools with a legal definition which must be used. The Act contains a non-exhaustive definition which applies only to pupil to pupil bullying i.e. bullying behaviours by a pupil or a group of pupils against another pupil or group of pupils.

The definition includes 3 key elements:

- Non-limitation to repeated behaviours
- Methods of bullying
- Intention to cause harm

We, at St. Teresa's, therefore are dedicated to this definition and use it as our criteria when investigating allegations of a bullying nature. The definition states:

1.— (1) “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.

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 'one off' incidents that St. Teresa's Primary School will consider as bullying – this will be limited to cyber bullying which has been shared outside of our close school community. Advice from PSNI and outside agencies will be gained should incidents such as this occur. Following consultation with parents and staff these 'one off' incidents will be dealt with singularly, in context, using 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 Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy.

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

* ***Verbal or written acts***

- *saying mean and hurtful things to, or about, others*
- *making fun of others*
- *calling another pupil mean and hurtful names*
- *telling lies or spreading false rumours about others*
- *trying to make other pupils dislike another pupil/s*

* ***Physical acts***

- *Hitting*
- *kicking*
- *pushing*
- *shoving*
- *material harm, such as taking/stealing money or possessions or causing damage to possessions*

* ***Omission (Exclusion)***

- *Leaving someone out of a game*
- *Refusing to include someone in group work*

* ***Electronic Acts***

- *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*

It should be noted that this list is not exhaustive and that other behaviours which fit with the definition may be considered bullying behaviour.

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, at St. Teresa's 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 this language when discussing bullying incidents.

Based on DE Guidance, 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.*

Preventative Measures

We believe that the implementation of preventative measures will help to reduce the incidence of bullying behaviour.

At St. Teresa's Primary School we will take the following steps:

Ethos and Pastoral Care

We will seek to be a "listening school", in which pupils are encouraged to express their feelings, fears and concerns. This will be facilitated through Activities/Teaching and Learning such as Circle Time, NSPCC Keeping Safe Programme, PDMU and Grow in Love lessons. We will endeavour to raise awareness and understanding of the positive behaviour expectations as set out in our Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy. We believe that high expectations of behaviour coupled with a culture of mutual respect amongst all staff and children enables our school community to work and play harmoniously.

We will promote and reward positive behaviour through measures such as awards for caring and friendliness as well as through a whole school and class system of reward, "Pupil of the Week".

We work hard in St. Teresa's to develop peer-led systems to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messaging within the school, enabling children within our school environment to lead us by both message and example.

Focused assemblies take place to raise awareness and promote understanding of key issues related to bullying. These occur specifically during Anti Bullying Week but can also occur if need arises throughout the school year.

We ensure the 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.

Curriculum

Within the confines of the N.I. Curriculum we will help children to develop a range of skills including assertiveness, resilience and communication. Focused lessons relating to PDMU, Grow in Love, NSPCC Keeping Safe, will aim to provide children with the skills to recognise inappropriate behaviour and to know where to go to seek help. We promote 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.

We seek to address issues such as the various forms of bullying, including the how and why it can happen, through PDMU and NSPCC Keeping Safe.

Through our preventative curriculum we actively promote positive emotional health and wellbeing (e.g. mindfulness training – in whole school programmes i.e. Healthy Kidz. We also participate in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities.

Our ICT Co-ordinator, Mrs Duffy aims to share information with all pupils specifically regarding internet safety and appropriate use of the internet/social media with a view to stamping out cyber/electronic bullying. This will involve our engagement in Safer Internet Day.

Outside agencies are welcomed into school annually to reiterate and support school messages e.g. REIM

Playtime provision

Teachers and Classroom Assistants have been provided with training in the promotion of positive play and strategies for dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour. There is constant communication among all staff in relation to behavioural concerns stemming from the playground. These incidents are dealt with by class teacher and/or reported to Principal. Development of effective strategies for playground management, zoning/timetabling of playground areas, inclusion of specific resources and provision of a variety of play options to meet the needs of all pupils.

Responsibility of our school community

As part of our preventative work we place responsibility on all stakeholders to play their part in ensuring our school is a place of friendship.

Pupils:

We expect our pupils to:

- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying behaviour.

- Intervene to support any pupil who is being targeted, unless it is unsafe for them to do so.
- Report any concerns or instances of bullying behaviour to a member of staff to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances.

Anyone who becomes a target for bullies should:

- Have the courage to speak out, to put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets.

Staff:

Our staff will:

- Foster in our pupils, self-esteem, a sense of their rights and their responsibilities to others.
- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect from our pupils.
- Discuss bullying behaviour with all classes, so that every pupil learns about the damage it causes to both the pupil who is targeted and the pupil who engages in bullying behaviour.
- Emphasise the importance of telling a trusted adult about bullying behaviour.
- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indicators of bullying.
- Listen to children who have been bullied, take what they say seriously and respond appropriately.
- Follow up any complaint by a parent about bullying, report back promptly and fully on action which has been taken and document the complaint and follow up.
- Teachers will record any incidents reported to them by other staff members/parents so as to build a 'yearly' and 'year on year' picture of situations of antagonistic relationships in class.
- Respond to bullying behaviour promptly and effectively.
- Have an entitlement to work in an environment which is characterised by respect and caring for all.

Parents:

We ask our parents to support their children and our school by:

- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children, which might be evidence of 'bullying'.
- Advising their children to report any bullying **to their class teacher (as a first port of call) Mrs Mc Court (Principal)**.
- Advising their children not to retaliate to any forms of bullying behaviour.
- Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken.
- Informing the school of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved.

- Co-operating with the school, if their child is involved in a bullying concern, to resolve the difficulty in a way which stops the behaviour recurring and meets the needs of all the children.
- Trusting the school to have the needs of the child at the centre of all they do.
- Allowing school to deal with the issue without bringing it outside of the school policies and procedures.

Prevention of Bullying behaviour while travelling to and from school.

At St. Teresa's we recognise our shared responsibility to ensure that our children feel safe and secure in the journey to and from school. In an effort to ensure this our preventative curriculum ensures that:

- * We develop 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.
- * We deploy measures to empower pupils to challenge inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour of their peers during the journey to and from school through the implementation of an informal system of peer monitoring.
- * We regularly engage with our transport providers, EA Transport, to ensure effective communication and the early identification of any concerns.
- * Teachers supervise children from and onto the school bus and at school gate at the beginning and end of the school day. This is to support the transition to and from school to home.

Prevention of bullying through the use of electronic communication

At St. Teresa's we recognise the impact which electronic communication has on our pupils. Whilst this form of communication (through social media for example) takes place at home (and we expect parents to take responsibility for their child's usage of appropriate apps and websites) we also recognise how inappropriate use can have repercussions in our classrooms and school environment. Therefore, we put measures in place to teach our children about their digital footprint and the impact which their behaviour online may have on others. We do this by:

- * Addressing key themes of online behaviour and risk through PDMU/NSPCC Keeping Safe, including understanding how to respond to harm and the consequences of inappropriate use.
- * Participating in Anti-Bullying Week activities.
- * Engaging with key statutory and voluntary sector agencies (eg. C2k, Public Health Agency, Safeguarding Board for NI e-Safety Forum, REIM) to support the promotion of key messages.
- * Participating in annual Safer Internet Day and promotion of key messages throughout the year.

- * Developing and implementing robust and appropriate policies in related areas (e.g. Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy-incorporating Mobile phone policy, Filtering and Blocking Policy, Connected Devices Policy, etc. Securus software)

Given the nature of technology, as constantly changing and developing, we will endeavour to monitor our policy and message and make changes when necessary.

Responsibility

As stated previously, everyone in our school community has responsibility for creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all members of the school communities. Everyone in the school community, including pupils, their parents 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 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

Reporting a Bullying Concern

When an alleged bullying incident is reported, the information will be passed on to the following people:

The teacher of any child involved

The Principal, Mrs Mc Court

If the case is of a child protection nature, then the **Designated Teacher for Child Protection**, Mrs Kelly will be informed immediately.

Pupils Reporting a Concern

The pupils in St. Teresa's will be encouraged to speak to any member of staff regarding an issue of a Bullying nature. Through our preventative work the children will be aware that the focus is on getting help rather than telling. They can do this in a variety of ways:

- * Verbally- talking to a member of staff
- * By writing a note to a member of staff (e.g. in a homework diary)

Parents/Carers Reporting a Concern

The parents of St. Teresa's will be urged to undertake a responsibility to raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour with the school at the earliest opportunity. Parents are reminded of the need to encourage their children to react appropriately to bullying behaviour and to not do anything to retaliate or to 'hit back'.

- * 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 Mrs Mc Court

Where the parent remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the school's complaints procedure should be followed. This policy is available in our school office.

All reports of bullying concerns received from pupils and or parents 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.

Responding to a Bullying Concern

Using the NIABF Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource, the member of staff responsible shall...

- * Clarify facts and perceptions
- * Check records from record books held by class teacher and Mrs Mc Court
- * Assess the incident against the criteria for bullying behaviour
- * Identify any themes or motivating factors
- * Identify the type of bullying behaviour being displayed, if criteria has been met.
- * 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

When responding to a bullying concern, St. Teresa's staff shall implement interventions based on the NIABF resource file aimed at responding to the behaviour, resolving the concern and restoring the wellbeing of those involved. Where appropriate, our school may implement sanctions for those displaying bullying behaviour. These sanctions will be decided by Principal in consultation with the parents involved.

It should be noted that information regarding any action taken regarding a pupil cannot be disclosed to anyone other than that pupil and his/her parents. The utmost care will be taken by all staff members to deal with the issue sensitively.

Recording

The school will 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.

These records will be noted in the School Pastoral Concerns Book. These records will be held until the child/children reach the age of 21.

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.

Professional Development of Staff

As a school we are committed to ensuring staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school's ongoing CPD/PRSD provisions. CPD records will be kept. All staff, including BOG, will receive Child Protection and Safeguarding training.

Monitoring and Review of Policy

In St. Teresa's we recognise that it is the responsibility of the Board of Governors, in liaison with the Principal, to monitor the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy. This will be done by:

- * maintaining a standing item on the agenda of each meeting of the Board where a report on recorded incidents of bullying will be noted
- * identifying trends and priorities for action
- * assessing the effectiveness of strategies aimed at preventing bullying behaviour
- * assessing 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 September 2024. However, the policy will be reviewed following any incident which highlights the need for such a review. It will also be reviewed when directed to by the Department of Education and in light of new guidance.

Links to Other Policies

In the development and implementation of this Anti-Bullying Policy, school staff and the Board of Governors have been mindful of related policies, including:

- * Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy
- * Pastoral Care Policy
- * Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- * Special Educational Needs Policy
- * Health and Safety Policy
- * Relationships and Sexuality Education
- * E-Safety Policy & Acceptable Use of Internet Policy (incorporating our policy on the use of mobile phones)
- * Educational Visits/School Trips Policy
- * Staff Code of Conduct

