

St. Oliver Plunkett Primary School & Nursery Unit



Anti-Bullying Policy

Signed (Chair of the Board of Governors):	Carol Grimes
Signed (Principal):	Páraic Martin
Agree Date:	September 2021
Review Date:	June 2025

1.0 Introductory statement

St Oliver Plunkett Primary School is completely opposed to bullying behaviour in all its forms, to any member of the school community by any member of the school community. We believe that all pupils have the right to learn in a safe and supported environment where every pupil is valued and supported to become confident individuals.

2.0 Context

This policy is 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 \(UNCRC\)](#)

The key points to note are:

- * The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016:
 - Provides a legal definition of bullying.
 - Places a duty on the Board of Governors to put in place measures to prevent bullying behaviour, in consultation with pupils and parents.
 - Requires schools to record all incidents of bullying behaviour and alleged bullying incidents.
 - Sets out under which circumstances 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 (eg. in another school in the ALC)
 - Requires that the policy be updated at least every four years.
- * The Education and Libraries Order (NI) 2003, requires the Board of Governors to:
 - 'Safeguard and promote the welfare of registered pupils' (A.17)
- * 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)

3.0 Ethos and Principles

3.1 Guiding Principles

At St Oliver Plunkett Primary School;

- Pupils have a right to learn in a safe and supportive environment, free from intimidation and fear,
- The welfare/well-being needs of all children and young people are paramount and pupils' needs, whether the pupil displaying bullying behaviours or the targeted pupil, need to be separated from their behaviour,
- When bullying concerns are identified our school will work in a restorative and solution focused way to achieve the necessary change,
- Pupils who are targeted will be listened to and supported,
- Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour will be listened to and supported to accept responsibility and change behaviour,
- Staff will receive awareness-raising training regarding bullying prevention including effective, appropriate strategies for intervention,
- Parents will be consulted and made aware of how we engage and consult with pupils regarding our school positive behaviour expectations, the prevention of bullying behaviour and how we will respond to bullying concerns informed by the 'Effective Interventions' Resource book (NIABF 2013) using 'Restorative Practice' and 'Solution Focused' interventions.

4.0 Consultation and Participation

Under legislation, the Board of Governors and Principal are required to consult with pupils, parents and staff in compliance with the Addressing Anti Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016

In St Oliver Plunkett P.S. the process of consultation took place through:

- Consultative workshops and questionnaires with pupils negotiating an agreed Code of conduct/class charter for positive behaviours,
- Class based activities (circle time, PDMU),
- Involvement in NIABF Anti Bullying week annual events,
- Discussion with school council/assemblies,
- Questionnaires distributed to all parents/carers,
- Consultative work with Board of Governors,
- Information/updates distributed to parents/carers,
- Staff consultation for all staff (teaching and non-teaching),
- Information for parents on website
- Engagement activity/training for all staff teaching and non-teaching staff in August.

5.0 What is Bullying?

5.1 Definition

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 provides schools with a legal definition.

“(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 group of pupils against another pupil or groups 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”

Our Policy Statement is:

“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 others.”

While bullying is usually repeated behaviour, there are occasions of one –off incidents that the school will 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 community,
- Previous relationships between those involved,
- Any previous incidents involving the individuals.

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

Definitions of emotional and physical harm – see updated policy document on web site or in the guidance below.

5.2 The Key Elements Present in Bullying Behaviour

There exists a continuum of socially unacceptable behaviours. These unacceptable behaviours infringe on everyone's right to be safe. They include the following;

1. **Physical**-including jostling, physical intimidation, punching/kicking, any other physical contact which may include the use of weapons,
2. **Verbal**- includes name calling, insults, jokes, threats, spreading rumours,
3. **Indirect**-includes isolation, refusal to work with/talk to/play with/help others, interfering with personal property and includes cyber bullying: misuse of mobile phones and internet programmes to humiliate, threaten and/or isolate another.

Socially unacceptable behaviours BECOME BULLYING BEHAVIOURS when the information gathered clearly demonstrates that the unacceptable behaviour DOES MEET THE CRITERIA LISTED BELOW i.e. on the basis of the evidence gathered the behaviour was/is;

- Intentional - 3 or more repetitious incidents involving the same target/s,
- Targeted at a specific pupil or group of pupils,
- Repeated - the act is not accidental, it is done wilfully, knowingly and with the deliberation to do harm. Repetition of an act will be used to establish intention to harm,
- Causing emotional /psychological harm- intentionally causing distress, anxiety, humiliation and the impact on self-esteem,
- Physical harm – intentionally causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns,
- Omission- intentionally choosing not to mention (failure to act) i.e. wilful omission arising from a desire to cause hurt.

5.3 Indicators of Bullying Behaviour

A child might:

- Not want to go to school,
- Begin truanting or go missing from home,
- Often feel ill especially when time for school,
- Be frightened to walk to or from school,
- Begin to lag in their schoolwork,
- Loose possessions at school,
- Cease to communicate with parents,
- Change their behaviour i.e. become withdrawn, irritable,
- Loose their appetite,
- Have trouble sleeping, nightmares, bed-wetting,
- Ask for money/ steal,
- Bully younger siblings.

6.0 Preventative Measures

The focus for all anti-bullying work is prevention. St Oliver Plunkett Primary School has established and will maintain the following strategies which aim to promote a strong anti-bullying ethos within the school and the wider school community.

Proactive Preventative Strategies for use in school:

- Raising awareness and understanding of the positive behaviour expectations, as set out in the Positive Behaviour Policy,
- Promotion of 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 and other areas such as Shared Education (eg. sectarian, racist, disablist, etc.),
- Involvement in meaningful and supportive shared education projects, supporting pupils to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity,
- Through the preventative curriculum actively promote positive emotional health and wellbeing (e.g. mindfulness),
- Use of creative learning to enhance social and emotional skills,
- Participation in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities,
- Engagement in key national and regional campaigns, eg Safer Internet Day etc.
- Use of peer-led systems (eg. Shared Education and Student Council) to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messaging within the school,
- Vigilant supervision and effective playground management, eg. training for supervisors, use of peer mediation/buddy system and provision of a variety of play options to meet the needs of all pupils,
- Ensure that all staff (teaching and non-teaching), parents and pupils and all members of the school community are aware of the school's Positive Behaviour Policy,
- Use of effective strategies for the management of unstructured times e.g. games organised by supervisors for playtime etc.
- Provision and promotion of extra- and co-curricular activities, aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks. For example sporting activities/teams, creative arts etc.

Preventative strategies for travelling to and from school:

- In St Oliver Plunkett we foster and promote a culture and ethos 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.
- Bus monitors who challenge inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour of their peers during the journey to and from school,
- Regular contact with transport providers (EANI),
- Appropriate deployment of staff to support the transition from school day to journey home, by ensuring pupils are on the bus and seated and belted securely.

Preventative Strategies for cyber bullying:

- UICT lessons on Internet Safety, 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 (eg. C2k, PSNI, Public Health Agency, Safeguarding Board for NI e-Safety Forum) 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 (eg. Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy, Social Media Policy, etc.)

7.0 Responsibility

Everyone in the school community has a responsibility for creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all its members. Pupils, parents and the staff of 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 being 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 instance 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.

8.0 Reporting a Bullying Concern

All reports of bullying behaviour 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 parents/carers.

8.1 Pupils Reporting a Bullying Concern

In St Oliver Plunkett P.S., pupils are encouraged to raise concerns with any member of staff, including teaching and non-teaching. Pupils can report bullying concerns:

- Verbally-talking to a member of staff
- By writing a note to a member of staff (e.g. in a homework diary)
- By sending an email to a member of staff
- By posting a comment on our “worry box”

Any pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing bullying behaviour. Through the preventative curriculum we focus on the “getting help” message rather than “telling”. As such pupils are encouraged to “get help” if they have a concern about bullying that they experience or is experienced by another.

8.2 Parent/Carers Reporting a Bullying Concern

Parents and carers have the responsibility to raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour with the school at the earliest opportunity. Parents and carers should also encourage their children to act appropriately to bullying behaviour and to not do anything to retaliate or ‘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 the Principal,

- Where the parent remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the school's complaint procedure should be followed.

9.0 Responding to a Bullying Concern

Staff in St Oliver Plunkett P.S. will respond to bullying behaviour promptly and effectively, in an assertive and confident manner, with an expectation of change being achieved through implementing the procedures set out in our Positive Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies.

The following process will be followed;

- The BCAF is a recording mechanism. You do not need to state that you will complete each part. Just state that it will be recorded following Guidance. But it's up to you.
- Record an initial Bullying Concern incident in SIMS and create the Bullying Concern Assessment Form (BCAF). In every case a BCAF is initiated and attached as a linked document in SIMS at the end of the process,
- Gather information, clarify facts and perceptions,
- Use the SIMS Behaviour Management Module to check for previous incidents and identify any themes or motivating factors,
- Identify the type of bullying behaviour being displayed,
- Part 1 of the BCAF will be completed by an appropriate pastoral team member (Principal/Designated Teacher of Child Protection) and saved to a private folder,
- The information gathered will be checked against the legal definition of bullying in this policy and will be determined whether bullying has taken place.

9.1 Procedures to follow when the criteria for bullying behaviour has NOT been met

- Parents/carers are engaged and kept informed,
- Update SIMS Bullying Concern status, attach the BCAF with part 1 completed,
- Proceed to Positive Behaviour Policy and record the behaviour incident in SIMS,
- Select and record appropriate intervention(s) and actions – update BMM/SIMS,
- Tailored interventions will be implemented in order to reduce the level of unacceptable, anti-social behaviour(s) to ensure behaviour does not move into bullying behaviour-update BMM/SIMS,
- Together staff and pupils, as part of the Code of Practice, track, monitor and assess progress to determine, on the information generated, the efficacy of the intervention(s) and outcomes,
- Continue review cycle until agreed outcomes are achieved,
- Review and record outcomes on BMM/SIMS.

9.2 Procedures to follow the criteria for bullying behaviour HAS been met

- Parents/carers are engaged and kept informed,
- Complete Part 2 BCAF -update SIMS Bullying Concern status,
- Continue with Anti Bullying policy,
- Select and record appropriate interventions and actions (See NIABF Effective responses to Bullying Behaviour (ERBB)(2013) -update BCAF Part 3,
- Interventions implemented to;
 - (a) strengthen target(s) resilience,
 - (b) reduce unacceptable bullying behaviours.
- Update BCAF Part 3,
- Together staff and pupils, as part of the Code of Practice, track, monitor and assess progress to determine, on the information generated, the efficacy of the intervention(s) and outcomes,
- Review and record outcomes on BCAF. Complete Part 4, update the SIMS Bullying Concern and attach the BCAF as a linked document.

10.0 Support Provisions

In St Oliver Plunkett P.S., bullying behaviour, when appropriate, will be addressed through the 3 stages of the Code of Practice.

The school will follow guidance in the NIABF's (2013) "Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour". When the criteria for bullying behaviour has been met, the pastoral team will identify the intervention level and act

accordingly to protect and support the child/targeted pupil and to change the attitude and behaviour of the pupil who is displaying bullying behaviour.

10.1 Support for Targeted Pupil(s)

Support for the targeted pupil(s) may involve;

- Discussing and agreeing a tailored Code of Practice action plan which would involve pupil(s) in agreeing SMARTER target(s), relevant success criteria, outcomes and assessment procedures,
- Keeping a record of the agreed action plan in part 3 of the BCAF,
- The school will take account of the interventions contained in NIABF's "Effective Responses to Bullying" pgs.16-19 (see appendix 4) and the strategies in DE SEN Resource File "Understanding and Managing Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties" pgs. 272-279,
- Ongoing dialogue to ensure that the strategies identified and agreed result in greater resilience, development of coping skills and promotion of positive relationships,
- Copies of agreed plan being shared with key parties,
- Staff and pupils together tracking and monitoring progress to ensure the efficacy of the interventions is maintained and kept under review,
- Progress being regularly reviewed and updated in the BCAF and outcomes shared with key partners- BCAF Part 4.

10.2 Support for pupils(s) Displaying Bullying Behaviour

Support for the pupil(s) displaying bullying behaviour may involve ;

- Discussing and agreeing a tailored Code of Practice action plan which would involve pupil(s) in agreeing SMARTER target(s), relevant success criteria, outcomes and assessment procedures- BCAF Part 3,
- Keeping a record of the agreed plan in Part 3 of the BCAF,
- Following initial assessment and confirmation of bullying behaviour an appropriate intervention will be chosen from the NIABF's Intervention Levels. [See Appendix 4 for levels],
- The school will take account of the strategies in DE SEN Resource File "Understanding and Managing Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties" pgs. 272-279,
- Risk assessment,
- External agency involvement,
- Ongoing dialogue to ensure that the interventions/strategies identified and agreed result in the reduction/removal of unacceptable behaviour(s), the enhanced ability to empathise and the restoration of relationships.
- Copies of agreed plan being shared with key parties,
- Staff and pupils together tracking and monitoring progress to ensure the efficacy of the interventions is maintained and kept under review,
- Progress being regularly reviewed and updated in the BCAF and outcomes shared with key partners- BCAF Part 4.

11.0 Recording

The Board of Governors must ensure a record is kept of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying involving a registered pupil at the school (Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016).

St Oliver Plunkett P.S. will centrally record all relevant information related to reports of bullying concerns, including;

- How the bullying behaviour was displayed (the method),
- The motivation of 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 school C2k system. Access will be restricted 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 schools 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.

12.0 Professional Development of Staff

St Oliver Plunkett P.S. is committed to ensuring that staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school ongoing CPD provision.

13.0 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 policy will be reviewed at intervals of no more than 4 years. However, the policy will be reviewed following any incident which highlights the need for review and/or when directed by DE in light of new guidance. Amendments may be made in response to issues arising from a current situation or from data generated to identify existing behavioural patterns and trends.

This Anti Bullying Policy shall be reviewed as required, in consultation with pupils and their parents/carers, on or before June 2025.

14.0 Links to other Policies.

In the development and implementation of this Anti-Bullying Policy, the Board of Governors has been mindful that the school has a duty to ensure that safeguarding permeates all activities and functions;

- All socially unacceptable behaviours are managed under the **Positive Behaviour Policy**,
- Code of Practice action plans are drawn up, tracked, monitored, assessed and reviewed through the implementation of the **Special Needs (SEN) Policy**-see current school SEN policy for further details regarding procedures,
- Should physical restraint prove necessary it will be undertaken in compliance with the school's **Safe Handling/reasonable force Policy**-see current policy for further details,
- Incidents relating to e-safety will be managed with reference to the schools **E-safety Policy** requirements-see current policy for further details,
- Further details relating to the preventative curriculum can be found in the **PDMU Policy**, which highlights how the school gives specific attention to the pupils' emotional wellbeing, health and safety, relationships and the development of as moral thinking and value system.