ST MALACHY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL BALLYMOYER

Anti-Bullying Policy

Ratified:		
	Date Agreed:	June 2021
	Chair of Governors:	Pat O' Hanlon
	Principal:	Justin Toner

1.0 Introduction

St Malachy's 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:

2.1 The Legislative Context:

- Health and Safety at Work NI Order 1978 The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 Article 3 – see De 1998/25
- Welfare and Protection of Pupils Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2007
- The Education (2006 order) (Commencement No.2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2007
- The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010
- Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

2.2 The Policy and Guidance Context

- Pastoral Care in Schools: PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR DE, 2001
- Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools. A guide for Schools DE 2017-to be read in conjunction with the following:
  Cooperating to safeguard children and young people in Northern Ireland,
  Dept. of Health, Social Services and Public Safety 2016
- Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 Statutory Guidance for schools and Board of Governors 2019

International Context:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

3.0 Ethos and Principles

3.1 Mission Statement

St Malachy's Primary School aims to foster an ethos of respect throughout our school community, so that our children feel secure and well cared for at all times. We believe it is important to foster an ethos of mutual respect amongst all stakeholders, so that our school continues to be an environment in which every person feels welcomed and cared for. We recognise that bullying is a concern for all of us, including pupils, teaching, non-teaching staff, parents/carers and governors. **The aims of this policy are to:**

➢ Prevent or reduce bullying in any form
➢ Adopt a consistent approach to dealing with incidents of bullying
➢ Create an emotionally safe environment where positive relationships can develop
➢ Ensure that all pupils, parents and staff are aware of this policy and their roles and responsibilities in contributing to its success

3.2 Guiding Principles

At St Malachy's 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 Malachy's P.S. the process of consultation took place through:

- Class based activities and discussions with pupils (during Circle time, PDMU lessons)
- Involvement in and promotion of Anti Bullying week
- Online Classroom Surveys were completed by pupils
- Questionnaires distributed to all parents/carers
- Online Consultation with PTA members
- Consultative workshop with Board of Governors
- Staff survey for all staff (teaching and non-teaching)
- Information/training for parents at curriculum meetings in Sept/Oct
- Anti-Bullying Training for all members of 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 which must be used. We at St Malachy's PS, therefore are dedicated to this definition and use it as our criteria when investigating allegations of a bullying nature. The definition states:

"(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 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"

"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 'one off' incidents that St. Malachy'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.

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).

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/shoving, physical intimidation, punching/kicking, any other physical contact which may include the use of weapons, stealing from others, damaging their money/possessions;
2. **Verbal** includes: calling others hurtful names, insults, jokes, threats, spreading rumours about others;
3. **Exclusion/Omission** – incudes: isolating others, refusal to work with/talk to/play with/help others;
4. **Indirect/Online Behaviours**: includes: interfering with personal property and includes Cyber bullying eg. misuse of mobile phones and internet programmes to humiliate, tease, threaten and/or isolate another.

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

- Intentional - 3 or more repetitive 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.

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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. Our 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 training);
- Use of creative learning to enhance social and emotional skills;
- Participation in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities;
- Engagement in campaigns, eg. Internet Safety Day, Good Relations Week, etc.

- Use of peer-led systems (eg. School, Eco, Shared Education and Rights Respecting 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;

- At St Malachy's PS 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 Outside agencies (eg. C2k, PSNI, Public Health Agency, Safeguarding Board for NI e-Safety Forum) to support the promotion of key messages,
- Participation in Internet Safety Day and promotion of safe use throughout the year,
- Development and implementation of robust and appropriate policies in related areas (eg. Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy).

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 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 Malachy's P.S. pupils are encouraged to raise concerns with Mr Toner and Mrs Smith (Safeguarding Team) or any member of staff. 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 posting a note in our "Suggestion or Feelings boxes"

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'.

1. In the first instance, all bullying concerns should be reported to the class teacher,
2. 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,
3. 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 Malachy's P.S. will respond to bullying behaviour promptly and effectively, 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:

- A paper Alleged Bullying Incident Form will be used to record information initially taking note of: **the motivation** behind the bullying behaviour, **methods used**, **action taken by the school** to address it, and **the outcomes achieved**.
- 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 Mr Toner or Mrs Smith (Safeguarding Teachers) 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 Malachy's P.S bullying behaviour will be addressed through the 5 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 SMARTE 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 Malachy's 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 Malachy's 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:

- 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 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 **PD&MU 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.

USEFUL WEBSITES & TELEPHONE NUMBERS

- **Department of Education**   **www.deni.gov.uk**
- **Northern Ireland Anti Bullying Forum**   **www.niabf.org.uk**

                                www.thinkuknow.org

- **Childline NI**   **0800 1111**
- **NSPCC (FullStop) campaign**   **0808 800 5000**