



**SAINT EITHNE'S PRIMARY SCHOOL**

# **Addressing- Bullying Policy**

**Date of Review: February 2022**

**Chair of Governors: \_\_\_\_\_**



## **Saint Eithne's Primary School Addressing Bullying Policy**

### **Aim of Policy**

It is our aim at Saint Eithne's to prevent bullying and deal with bullying when it occurs. We seek to provide a safe and secure learning environment and foster a sense of security in each child to develop his / her confidence and independence. One way in which we seek to protect our pupils is by helping them to recognise unwelcome behaviour in others and acquire the confidence and skills they need to keep themselves safe.

Linked to our pastoral care system is the need for discipline throughout the school. We hope to achieve a high standard of discipline but not at the expense of our pupils' own self-esteem. Our behaviour policy has been devised with the rights and feelings of our pupils in mind. Poor behaviour often stems from personal problems or difficulties. It is not our intention to simply punish bad behaviour and ignore the reasons for it.

Our pastoral support principle is that it is better to prevent poor behaviour, rather than merely to react to it with punishments.

These values are reflected in our 3 main school rules.

- Always behave courteously showing good manners and consideration for others;
- Always show respect for your own property as well as the property of others;
- No bullying, no fighting and no rough play in the school at any time.

### **Definition of bullying**

Bullying behaviour is behaviour by one or more pupils carried out intentionally to hurt, harm or adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others.

The term bullying refers to a range of harmful behaviour, both physical and psychological. The list of bullying behaviours is non-exhaustive although bullying behaviour usually has the following four features:

- It is repetitive and persistent.
- It is intentionally harmful.
- It involves an imbalance of power, leaving someone feeling helpless to prevent it or put a stop to it.

### **The Definition of Bullying for Northern Ireland as outlined in the 2016 Act**

- (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 communication of those by a pupil or group of pupils, with the **intention** of causing physical or emotional **harm** to that pupil or group of pupils.
- (2) For the purpose of subsection (1), “act” includes **omission**.

#### **Bullying can be:**

**Emotional:** Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures);

**Physical:** Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence;

**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, telling lies and/or spreading false rumours, teasing, making fun of; extort from, blackmail or exploit another, try to make other pupils dislike another pupil/s

**Cyber:** All areas of internet, such as email, internet chat room misuse, social media, threats by text messaging & calls, misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera & video facilities etc.

**Omission:** Where a pupil is intentionally left out and where there is wilful failure to include a pupil

#### **Bullying behaviours are not limited to repetition.**

While repetition is internationally recognised as an important element in establishing bullying behaviour, repetition is not required for behaviours to be identified as bullying. When bullying behaviours occur through the medium of electronic communications, “repetition” can take place through repeated viewing and sharing of a post even if there is only one post.

A one off cyber bullying incident will be viewed as bullying behaviour.

At Saint Eithne’s Primary School when alleged incidents of bullying behaviour fail to meet the criteria for bullying behaviour, we will use our Positive Behaviour policy to address unacceptable behaviour.

## **Intention to Cause Harm**

At Saint Eithne's Primary School we will determine the intention of the pupil allegedly demonstrating bullying behaviours to cause harm.

The intention to cause harm will be determined by the continuation of identified bullying behaviour after we have implemented interventions to respond to the situation, resolve the concern and restore the relationships.

Discretion will be used in assessing an individual pupil's capacity to understand the impact of their behaviours e.g. due to developmental age, disability or delay.

1. **Emotional or psychological harm** is defined as intentionally causing stress or anxiety by scarring, humiliating or affecting adversely a pupil's self-esteem.
2. **Physical harm** is defined as intentionally hurting a pupil by causing injuries such as bruises or broken bones.

A child who manifests bullying tendencies has his/her own problems – he /she may feel upset or angry or feel that they don't fit in - perhaps they have problems at home. Maybe they get bullied themselves, perhaps by someone in their own family or other adults. They may be scared of getting picked on so they do it first. They want to show off and seem tough. Many children who show these bullying traits don't like themselves and so take it out on someone else.

## **Dealing with Bullying at Saint Eithne's**

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying Behaviour?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to experience bullying behaviour. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who display bullying behaviour need to learn different ways of behaving.

At Saint Eithne's, we have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in our school. All staff members are vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring, and will take immediate steps to stop it happening, to protect and reassure the victim and to discipline the

bully. Parents of both victim and bully will be personally contacted immediately bullying behaviour is identified.

Any complaint by a parent that their child is, or may be, being bullied will be fully addressed.

- Parents should first approach the class teacher and explain the situation.
- The class teacher will immediately bring the issue to the attention of the Principal (Mr. T. McDowell) who is responsible for whole school discipline or designated teacher for child protection (Mr. Conaghan) who is responsible for Child Protection.
- Necessary steps will be taken to address the issue and the teacher will contact the parent within the space of one week to see if any progress has been made.
- Should the situation continue the Principal or designated teacher for child protection will further consider the matter and appropriate action will be taken.
- Team action will be taken to protect the victim. This will usually include ensuring that another child or small group of children befriends and supports the child being bullied during the school day.
- A parent making a complaint about bullying will have a personal response from the teacher or designated teacher or the principal (whoever is dealing with the issue) within one week of making the complaint, indicating the investigation, which has been carried out, and the action being taken.

NOTE: In all instances the school will deal with bullying issues. However, in some cases it may be found that bullying has not actually taken place. Parents/carers will be given an explanation of the circumstances and we urge you to accept the school's explanation. Nevertheless, the matter will not rest there. The situation will be monitored until the school is satisfied that the child who has stated that he/she felt threatened is safe from bullying.

PARENTS MUST NEVER TAKE MATTERS INTO THEIR OWN HANDS. The sanctions taken against a pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case, but will include the loss of any privileges or position of responsibility he/she holds in the school. His/her behaviour will be carefully monitored until the teacher and/or designated teacher are satisfied that the problem has been resolved. If a pupil's bullying behaviour persists, the second stage will be to instigate child protection procedures and put in place a programme to protect the child in question. At this stage parents of the child who is the known bully will be contacted and asked to assist in remedying the situation. We ask the full support of all parents in these matters with the knowledge that all our parents are willing to take an active role for the good of all our pupils. The final sanction may be considered and used. This is suspension or even expulsion. Please understand if the ultimate sanction of suspension or even expulsion is applied the blemish on the child's record becomes extremely hard to undo.

### **The School Pastoral Team**

The school has a pastoral team which will discuss issues regarding the pastoral aims of the school. The team will consider all cases of bullying, children with pastoral needs and steps needed to manage the needs of these children. Members of the Team: Mr. McDowell

(Principal), Mr. Conaghan (Child Protection and SENCo), Mrs. Devlin and Mrs. Spence. (Deputy Designated Teachers) and Mrs. Harrigan (ICT Co-ordinator)

### **Raising Awareness**

As part of our Bullying Policy we aim to raise awareness through the curriculum and give pupils the opportunities to talk about and deal with bullying in general. Teachers will make their children aware of school rules and routines. As part of the class lessons teachers will also educate their pupils morally and spiritually through the Religious programme dealing with the issue of bullying from time to time. Pupils will be informed who the designated teacher for child protection is and given the opportunity to approach this teacher at any time. Teachers may use the "Advice to Pupils" appended with this policy to help pupils understand about bullies, victims and bullying.

### **1. Responsibility of Teachers**

The teacher's responsibility in the class:

- Be watchful, observe the social relationships between pupils in the class.
- Keep records of any bullying incidents and what you did.  
Inform members of Management Team if necessary.
- Contact parents if need be.
- Draw up a programme of activities on bullying awareness and prevention eg., circle time.

### **Responsibility of Other staff Members**

All our staff members are duty bound to assist in the implementation of our policies within the school. Supervisors, classroom assistants and other non-teaching staff will be watchful at all times that the discipline in the school is maintained according to the rules. Our whole school aims dictate that we should all be caring towards each other and that means making sure that no member of the school community is suffering due to harassment or bullying.

### **Supervision & the School Environment**

Pupils are supervised at all times in Saint Eithne's Primary School. The ratio of adult supervisors to pupils at break-times and lunch times is always above the required averages. Teachers are responsible for pupils in lines and when they go to the toilets. We have taken measures in the construction of our procedures and routines so that it is extremely difficult for children to be physically bullied during the school day. Pupils must always go in pairs when moving about the school on messages or when fulfilling other tasks. Some areas of the school are out of bounds and pupils must not go there unsupervised. At playtime there are no areas where pupils play that are out of sight of supervisors or teachers and supervisors are warned to be watchful of all potential bullying situations.

Pupils on occasion may be threatened or bullied on the way home from school. We cannot be responsible for what happens to our children outside the school after school hours. However, we do feel it is our responsibility to notify parents of victims and those who perpetrate such acts and assisting those who are victims as best we can for their safety of all

our children. We believe that all our parents understand this point of view and will willingly help us resolve any problems of this nature.

## **2. Advice to Pupils**

### **What does it feel like to be bullied?**

Bullying hurts. It makes you scared and upset. It can make you so worried that you can't work well at school. Some children have told us they have skipped school to get away from it. It can make you feel that you are no good, that there is something wrong with you. Bullies can make you feel that it's your fault.

## **3. Helping a friend**

Maybe you're not being bullied, but you know someone who is - perhaps that person is not even a good friend, but a classmate or someone from another class? Have you ever stood around and noticed that someone was being bullied, but weren't sure what, if anything, you could do? Or thought that nothing you could do, would make a difference? Don't ignore bullying. **You can help.** Don't let the bullies get away with thinking no one will do anything. Here are a few things you can do, and a couple that you can't:

- Don't rush over and take them on - it might not be safe and you don't want other people to think you are a bully.
- Let a teacher or another adult know what's happening.
- Try to be a friend to the person being bullied.
- Refuse to join in.
- Sometimes you can't sort it out yourself. Ask an adult for help.

### **How to stop the bullying**

If you are being bullied, you can do something about it. **You** can make a difference!

- **TELL, TELL, TELL.**
- Practise what you want to say.
- Keep a note or diary of what is happening.
- Don't give up.
- Ask your parents to visit the school.
- Talk over what to do with a friend, a teacher, your mum or dad or someone you trust.
- Remember that teachers have to listen carefully when a child tells them about being bullied.

**Remember** - it's right to tell an adult that you are being bullied and to ask for their help. But you don't have to let them take over. You can talk with them about what you would like to happen.

### **Children get bullied.....**

- At school - in the playground, in class or in the toilets.
- On their way to and from school.
- On the bus.
- In the park.

## **4. Some people say.....**

**"Only victims get bullied..."**

It is not true that some people are more likely to be bullied than others. Although some people are bullied because they may be different in some way (they have a disability, are from another country, or speak with a different accent), many other children are bullied without any obvious reason. Don't forget that bullies have sometimes been bullied themselves.

**Some people say.....**

**"If you hit back, you won't get bullied again..."**

**Don't believe it. It may work sometimes, but it is just as likely to make things worse.**

ChildLine can help. ChildLine is the free telephone helpline for children and young people. You can ring any time of day, any day of the year. It's free and it's confidential - that means that no one else will know about the conversation unless you decide to tell him or her. The call will not show up on the family phone bill, although it may if you use a mobile or cable phone. Sometimes it's hard to get through, because the lines are all busy. But keep trying, you will get through eventually. Many children call ChildLine to talk about bullying. Last year, over 10,000 children called. If you want to talk to someone, you can speak to one of our counsellors. **Just ring 0800 1111.** Or you can write to Freepost 1111, London N1 0BR. You don't have to use a stamp.

### **Books to read about bullying**

***The Camera Obscura*** by Hugh Scott

(published by Walker)

For fluent readers.

***Bully*** by David Hughes

(published by Walker)

For younger readers.

***Taking the Cat's Way Home*** by Jan Mark

(published by Walker)

For younger readers.

***Bully*** by Yvonne Coppard

(published by Red Fox)

For fluent readers.

***Beat the Bullies*** by Michele Elliot

(published by Macmillan)

For younger readers.

***The Bailey Game*** by Celia Rees

(published by Piper)

For fluent readers.

***The Angel of Nitshill Road*** by Anne Fine

(published by Methuen)

For younger readers.

***Bad Girls*** by Jacqueline Wilson  
(published by Double Day)  
For fluent readers

***The Nubbler*** by Pam Ayres  
(published by Orion)  
For fluent readers.

**Where can you go for help and information?**

**ChildLine**

Helpline 0800 1111 (open 24 hours a day, every day)

**Kidscape**

Helpline - 0171 730 3300 (open Mon and Wed 9.30am - 5pm).

Kidscape produce leaflets and booklets about bullying.