

Donegall Road Primary School



Addressing Bullying Policy

Date Ratified By Board of Governors: *October 2024*

Date of Review: *October 2028*

Staff Member Responsible: *Mr. Massey (Principal)*

SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

In Donegall Road Primary School, we do not accept bullying behaviour of any kind, to any member of the school community, by any member of the community.

SECTION 2 - CONTEXT

The Legislative Context

This policy is informed and guided by current legislation and DE Guidance listed below:

- 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 2003
- 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

The Policy & Guidance Context

- Pastoral Care in Schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour, DE, 2001
- Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools. A Guide for School, DE, 2017 – to be read in conjunction with:
 - 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's (SBNI) Policies and Procedures 2017.
- Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 Statutory Guidance for Schools and Boards of Governors 2019

SECTION 3 – ETHOS & PRINCIPLES

Ethos Statement

In Donegall Road Primary School, all children are valued, nurtured and celebrated in a safe environment, where they are encouraged to succeed to the best of their ability and develop as citizens of the community.

School Rules

Be Ready. Be Respectful. Be Safe.

Our school's addressing bullying policy reflects the view that we aim to provide a safe, secure and happy environment for all members of our school community. Our school promotes the value of

respect, encouraging and modelling self-respect, respect for others and respect for the world around us.

Aims

- To have a consistent approach for dealing with incidents of bullying.
- To create a safe and secure environment for all.
- To create the social conditions in which bullying is not accepted.
- To reduce and prevent bullying and attempt to eradicate bullying behaviour.
- To create an emotionally and physically safe environment where positive relationships can develop.
- To ensure that all members of our school community are aware of this policy and their role and responsibilities in contributing to its success.

SECTION 4 – CONSULTATION AND PARTICIPATION

As part of the regular school development planning arrangements, parents, pupils, staff and governors are involved in a school survey every three years. The results of these surveys are analysed, and feedback is provided to all participants.

The results of these surveys are used to inform school development priorities and identify professional development requirements. Pupils have regular opportunities to participate in the decision-making process through the School Council and class discussions.

SECTION 5 – WHAT IS BULLYING?

Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 defines “bullying” as

1.— (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 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.

To help understand this further:

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 instances 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 school community.
- Previous relationships between those involved.
- Any previous incidents involving the individuals.

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

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 spread false rumours about others.
- Try 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.

This list is not exhaustive and that other behaviours which fit with the definition may be considered bullying behaviour.

Motivations Behind Bullying

There are also various motivations behind bullying. These include, but are not limited to:

Age	Appearance	Breakdown in Peer Relationships	Community Background	Political Affiliation
Gender Identity	Sexual Orientation	Pregnancy	Marital Status	Race

Religion	Disability or SEN	Ability	Children Looked After	Young Carer Status
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Language to be Used

The use of the terms ‘bully’ and ‘victim’ should be avoided.

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 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 describing the situation surrounding that child, for example:

“A child displaying bullying behaviours” or “A child experiencing bullying behaviours.”

We encourage all members of the school community to use this language when discussing bullying incidents.

What is Harm?

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.

SECTION 6 – PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

Under the legislation, the focus for all anti-bullying work should be on prevention.

To prevent bullying and create a safe learning environment, the school will:

- Raise awareness and understanding of the positive behaviour expectations, as set out in the Positive Behaviour Policy.
- 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.
- Address issues such as the various forms of bullying, including the how and why it can happen, through PDMU (e.g., sectarian, racist, homophobic, transphobic, disablist, etc.)
- Be involved in meaningful and supportive shared education projects, supporting pupils to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity.
- Actively promote positive emotional health and wellbeing (e.g., mindfulness training) through the teaching of a preventative curriculum.
- Participate in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities.
- Engage in key national and regional campaigns, e.g., Safer Internet Day, Good Relations Week, etc.
- Develop peer-led systems (e.g., School Council) to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messaging within the school.

- Develop effective strategies for playground management, e.g., training for supervisors, zoning of playgrounds, inclusion of specific resources (buddy benches) and provision of a variety of play options to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Provide focused assemblies to raise awareness and promote understanding of key issues related to bullying.
- Develop effective strategies for the management of unstructured times (e.g., break time, lunch).
- Provide and promote 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.

While many of the measures outlined above will support the development of an anti-bullying culture, there are several ways schools can further build upon this related specifically on the journey to and from school. This includes:

- Development of 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.
- Measures to empower pupils to challenge inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour of their peers during the journey to and from school.
- Promotion of key anti-bullying messages and awareness of behaviour expectations of pupils amongst the local community (e.g., local shops, cafes, service providers, residents, etc), including information on how to raise any concerns with the school.
- Appropriate deployment of staff to support the transition from school day to journey home (e.g., staff duty at school gate, where appropriate)

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 gives schools the authority to take steps to prevent bullying through the use of electronic communication amongst pupils at any time during term, where that behaviour is likely to have a detrimental effect on the pupil's education at school. We will raise awareness of the nature and impact of online bullying and support our pupils to make use of the internet in a safe, responsible and respectful way. This includes:

- Addressing key themes of online behaviour and risk through PDMU, 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 (e.g., 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 (e.g., Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy, Filtering and Blocking Policy, Mobile Phone Policy, Connected Devices Policy, etc.).

The measures set out here, to prevent bullying behaviour through the use of electronic communication, is included in the school's Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy.

Given the nature of technology, as constantly changing and developing, the school will monitor policy and messages, making changes when necessary.

SECTION 7 – RESPONSIBILITY

Everyone in the school community, including pupils, their parents/carers and the staff of the school are expected to respect the rights of others to be safe.

Everyone has the responsibility to work together to:

- foster positive self-esteem.
- behave towards others in a mutually respectful way.
- model high standards of 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.

SECTION 8 – REPORTING A BULLYING CONCERN

Pupils Reporting a Concern

It is essential that pupils are encouraged to raise concerns with any member of staff, including teaching and non-teaching staff.

Pupils can raise concerns with staff in a number of ways, including:

- 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 comment in a ‘worry box’.

Any pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing this behaviour. The focus should be on ‘getting help’ rather than ‘telling’. All pupils are encouraged to ‘get help’ if they have a concern about bullying that they experience or is experienced by another.

Parents/Carers Reporting a Concern

Parents and carers should raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour with the school at the earliest opportunity. Parents/carers should encourage their children to react appropriately to bullying behaviour and to not do anything to retaliate or to 'hit back'.

Parents/carers should follow the following process when reporting a concern about bullying behaviour to the school:

- 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 Vice-Principal.
- Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken by the Vice-Principal to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to Principal.

Where the parent/carer remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the school's complaints procedure should be followed. A copy of the Complaints Procedure can be accessed on our school website (www.donegallroadps.com) or by phoning the school office.

While the majority of reports of bullying concerns will come from pupils and their parents/carers, the school is open to receiving such reports from anyone.

All reports of bullying concerns received from pupils and/or parents/carers will be responded to in line with this policy and that 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/carers.

SECTION 9 – RESPONDING TO A BULLYING CONCERN

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

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

- Clarify facts and perceptions.
- Check records (SIMS/Behaviour Record Books/CPOMS).
- Assess the incident against the criteria for bullying behaviour.
- Identify any themes or motivating factors.
- Identify the type of bullying behaviour being displayed.
- Identify intervention level.
- Select and implement appropriate interventions for all pupils involved, including appropriate interventions, consequences and sanctions not listed in the Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource.
- Track, monitor and record effectiveness of interventions.
- Review outcome of interventions.
- Select and implement further intentions as necessary.

In Donegall Road Primary School, we believe that relationships are key and that pupils respond better to adults who show care and empathy and are willing to make a connection before any correction. We recognise that sometimes our pupils struggle to cope with big emotions, and this affects how they relate to others around them, often causing them to display bullying behaviours. We understand the need to demonstrate a calm approach in resolving the concern, aiming to restore relationships and the wellbeing of those involved.

When responding to a bullying concern, school staff shall implement interventions aimed at responding to the behaviour, resolving the concern and restoring the wellbeing of those involved. Where appropriate, school staff may implement sanctions for those displaying bullying behaviour.

Information regarding any action taken regarding a pupil cannot be disclosed to anyone other than that pupil and his/her parents/carers.

SECTION 10 – RECORDING

The school will centrally record all relevant information related to reports of bullying concerns, including:

- how the bullying behaviour was displayed (the method).
- the motivation for the behaviour.
- how each incident was addressed by the school.
- the outcome of the interventions employed.

Records will be kept on the online SIMS Behaviour Management Module, which is part of the C2k system in schools. Access to these records will be restricted and only provided to those members of school staff with a legitimate need to have access.

All records will be maintained in line with relevant data protection legislation and guidance and will be disposed of in line with the school's Retention and Disposal of Documents Policy. Collated information regarding incidents of bullying and alleged bullying behaviour will be used to inform the future development of addressing bullying policy and practice within the school.

SECTION 11 – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF

In Donegall Road Primary School, we recognise the need for appropriate and adequate training for staff, including teaching and non-teaching school staff. This includes:

- a commitment to ensuring that staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school's ongoing CPD/PRSD provisions.
- the impact of the training given on both the policy and its procedures - e.g. any amendments made, inclusions added etc.
- ensuring that opportunities for safeguarding training are afforded to Governors and all staff – teaching and non-teaching.
- that CPD records will be kept and updated regularly.

SECTION 12 – MONITORING AND REVIEW OF POLICY

To appropriately monitor the effectiveness of the Addressing 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 Addressing Bullying Policy shall be reviewed as required, in consultation with pupils and their parents/carers, on or before October 2028. However, the policy will also 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.

SECTION 13 – LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

In the development and implementation of this Addressing Bullying Policy, the Board of Governors has been mindful of related policies, including:

- 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
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Educational Visits
- Staff Code of Conduct