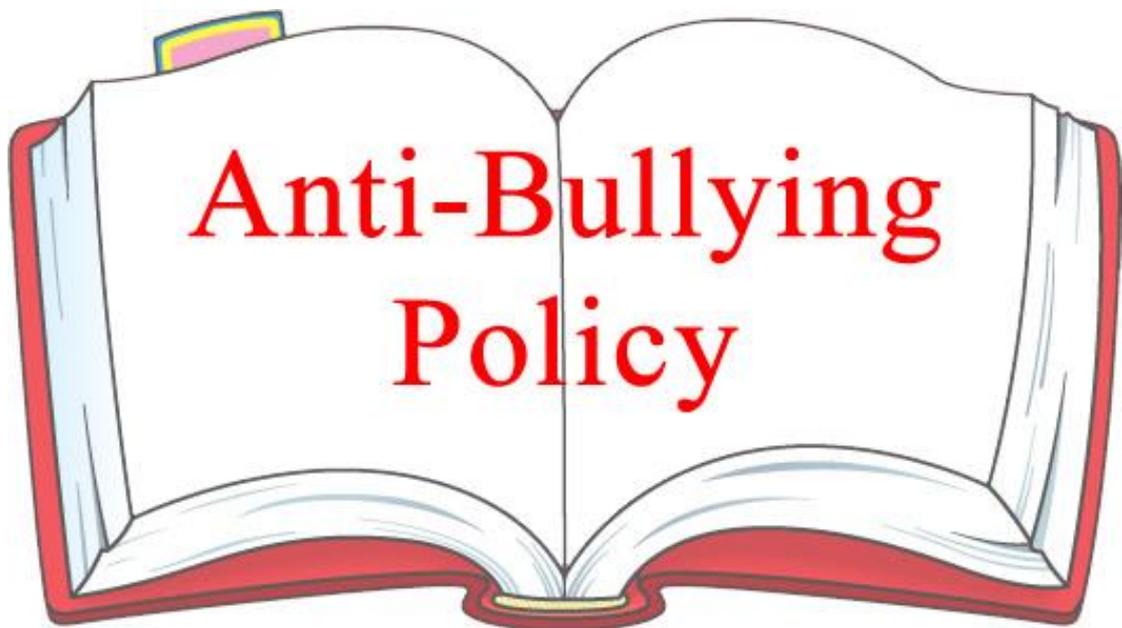




# Macosquin Primary School



## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The school has a clear policy on equality of opportunity based on the shared belief within the school community that everyone is of equal worth and have equal rights and responsibilities towards each other. This policy reflects our school ethos where all pupils are valued and nurtured in a safe, positive learning environment. The purpose of this anti-bullying policy is to ensure that the basic rights of each member of our school community are protected so that each one can fulfil his/her potential in a safe and secure environment.

Bullying is not tolerated in our school and the school community understands the shared responsibility to ensure our school premises are free of such behaviour.

This policy is part of the suite of Safeguarding Policies in place as listed in “Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools”, DE April 2017 10.1 and adheres to The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI 2016).

This policy will apply:

- ✓ On school premises, during the school day
- ✓ While travelling to and from school
- ✓ When pupils are under the lawful control of staff (e.g. during a school event/ visit/ trip)
- ✓ When pupils are receiving education, arranged by the school, but delivered away from the school premises (e.g. at another venue or school premises)

## **2. WHAT IS BULLYING?**

### **2.1 Primary Definition**

The school notes and follows the legislative primary definition below as according to the ‘Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI 2016)’.

#### **Definition of “bullying”**

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.

*Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI 2016)*

'NIABF defines bullying as the repeated use of power by one or more persons intentionally to hurt, harm or adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others.' *NIABF*

Our School Council in consultation with all class councils agree that bullying behaviour is when someone is hurt physically or mentally and is usually repeated. They recognise that such bullying behaviour can make you feel sad and scared.

Bullying involves the use of power in relationships. It can take a number of forms: verbal, physical, social and psychological. It involves all forms of harassment (including sectarian, racist, and homophobic and the disabled). It affects an individual's ability to achieve and can have long-term effects on those engaging in bullying behaviour, those who are the subject of bullying and the onlookers or bystanders. Not all anti-social behaviours are bullying behaviours, but when they are repeated, targeted and intentional they become so. See Appendix 1. (Forms/ Motivation of Bullying) Appendix 2. (Possible signs and Symptoms) for more detail.

## **2.2 Criteria to assess one-off Incidents**

Whilst bullying is usually repeated behaviour, as a school community we recognise that there can be instances of one-off incidents. 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; and
- any previous incidents involving the individuals.

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

Not all unacceptable behaviour is bullying behaviour. Behaviours such as name-calling, being hit and being excluded are unacceptable and, when not assessed as bullying behaviour are addressed through the school's Positive Behaviour Policy.

## **3. PRINCIPLES**

At Macosquin Primary School we believe that:

- Pupils have a right to learn in a safe and supportive environment, free from bullying.
- Every child and young person should be celebrated in their diversity.
- The welfare/well-being needs of all children and young people are paramount and pupils' needs (whether bully or targeted pupil) need to be separated from their behaviour.
- Our school community is committed to a preventative, responsive and restorative anti-bullying ethos across the whole school.
- When bullying concerns are identified our school will act promptly and 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 encouraged to accept responsibility and change their behaviour.

#### **4. LANGUAGE/ DEFINITIONS**

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
- A child experiencing bullying behaviours

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

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.

#### **5. PREVENTATIVE STRATEGIES**

This section is the lynchpin of our policy. Our school builds a strong preventative anti-bullying curriculum promoting pro-active strategies for life and creating a safe learning environment for all.

- Promote the School Ethos at all times.
- 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 (e.g. 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.
- Development of peer-led systems (e.g. School Council) to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messaging within the school.
- Development of effective strategies for playground management, e.g. Training for supervisors, zoning of playgrounds, inclusion of specific resources (buddy benches, friendship stops) and provision of a variety of play options to meet the needs of all pupils.

Development of effective strategies for the management of unstructured times (e.g. break time, lunch).

- 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.
- All staff are vigilant for early signs of distress in pupils while in the playground or the general school environment.
- We are a listening school and all staff listen, believe and act.
- A Helping Hands Board is displayed at all times with details of the Safeguarding Team and other agency contact details.
- Paths Programme by Barnardo's.
- PDMU/Circle time is used effectively to reinforce positive friendship and dealing with problems that arise. Anti-Bullying lessons take place throughout the school year in all classes.
- Outside agency support is utilised -NSPCC, Childline, PSNI, Behaviour Support Team.
- Worry Boxes are in place in each class thanks to our School Council.
- Posters in school displaying positive messages.
- Anti-Bullying Week is highlighted yearly in our school and pupils are encouraged to be a 'Bucket Filler' and take part in Blue day (Be Loving and Understanding to Everyone).
- Awareness raising is in place for the whole school community from Year 1 Induction, Weekly Updates and our School website.
- All staff are available for any child should they wish to speak to them. The Designated Teacher and the Principal are available at lunch.
- Staff will receive awareness-raising training regarding bullying prevention including effective, appropriate strategies for intervention.
- 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.
- Raise awareness of the nature and impact of online bullying and support pupils to make use of the internet in a safe, responsible and respectful way through teaching of ESafety Scheme, 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 and participation in annual Safer Internet Day and promotion of key messages throughout the year.

## **6. RESPONSIBILITIES OF OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY**

**All members of the school community have a key role and responsibility** in promoting, implementing and supporting our Anti-Bullying Policy. Our school has a collaborative approach to creating an anti-bullying environment and working together to combat incidents of bullying behaviour. 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.

## **7. REPORTING A BULLYING CONCERN**

All reports of bullying concerns received from pupils and/or parents/carers 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/carers. 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 within the school community.

It must be also noted that should a bullying concern be reported which has taken place outside of the school, the school is not required within law to take action, however should there be an impact on the pupil's education, this will be responded to.

### **7.1 Pupils Reporting a Concern**

All pupils should in line with the school ethos and aims, treat each other respectfully, value others by including them in our work and play. Pupils should refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying and avoid inappropriate behaviour that might be considered as such. Pupils are encouraged to report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying (TELL SOMEONE) and are to intervene to protect the pupil who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so.

Pupils who have a concern about a potential bullying situation can approach any staff member available; their teacher, classroom assistant, Safeguarding Officer/ head of Pastoral Care and or the School Principal.

Pupils can report bullying concerns in the following ways:

- 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 and get help, not just the pupil who is experiencing this behaviour.

## 7.2 Parents/Carers Reporting a Concern

It is the responsibilities of parents and carers to work in partnership with the school and support their children in all aspects of their learning.

Parents/ Carers should be aware of the school Anti-Bullying Policy and assist their children in understanding bullying behaviour. They should advise their children to report any bullying behaviour and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other pupils. Parents/ Carers should be sympathetic and supportive towards their children and reassure them that appropriate action will be taken.

Parents/ Carers also need to encourage their children to react appropriately to bullying behaviour and to not do anything to retaliate or to 'hit back'. Parents/ Carers should co-operate with the school if their children are accused of bullying behaviour, try to ascertain the truth and point out the implications of bullying both for the children who are bullied and for the children displaying bullying behaviour.

Should Parents/ Carers have a concern about alleged bullying behaviour, this should be raised with the school at the earliest opportunity in line with the school's communication chart:

- Class Teacher: In the first instance, all bullying concerns should be reported to the Class Teacher.  
Tel/ email: 02870344317 [info@macosquinps.coleraine.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@macosquinps.coleraine.ni.sch.uk)
- Leadership Team: 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 a member of the Leadership Team, as applicable.  
Tel/ email: 02870344317 [info@macosquinps.coleraine.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@macosquinps.coleraine.ni.sch.uk)
- The Senior Teacher/ Pastoral Care Coordinator: Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken by the Leadership Team to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to The Senior Teacher/ Pastoral Care Coordinator.  
Tel/ email: 02870344317 [info@macosquinps.coleraine.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@macosquinps.coleraine.ni.sch.uk)
- The Principal: Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken by the Senior Teacher/ Pastoral Care Coordinator to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to Principal.  
Tel/ email: 02870344317 [info@macosquinps.coleraine.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@macosquinps.coleraine.ni.sch.uk)

Where the parent/carer remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the school's complaints procedure should be followed. The school's complaint procedures can be accessed from the school website under the 'Parents Section'.

## **8. RESPONDING TO A BULLYING CONCERN**

This section states how all reports of alleged bullying behaviour, or any concerns identified will be responded to by the school.

When dealing with bullying behaviour the school will aim to; Stop the bullying behaviour, protect and support the targeted pupil and change the attitude of the child displaying the bullying behaviour. The school adopts a restorative approach to responding to bullying behaviour. Interventions suggested in the Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource focus on 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.

The processes outlined below provide a framework for how the school will respond to any bullying concerns identified. The school reiterates that information regarding any action taken regarding a pupil cannot be disclosed to anyone other than that pupil and his/her parents/carers.

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

1. Gather and clarify facts/ perceptions.
2. Check previous records.
3. Assess the incident against the criteria for bullying behaviour.
4. Identify any themes or motivating factors.
5. Identify the type of bullying behaviour being displayed.
6. Identify NIABF intervention level.
7. Select and implement appropriate interventions for all pupils involved (NIABF Resource).
8. Track, monitor and record effectiveness of interventions.
9. Consideration will be made for the need of: parental involvement, SENCO involvement, Risk Assessment and External Agency involvement e.g. Child Protection service, Education Welfare Officer, Behaviour Support Team or PSNI.
10. Record actions taken and outcomes achieved using the school recording system.
11. Review outcome of interventions to determine if further action is required and progress accordingly
12. Implementing this process will provide opportunities for self-reflection, development and learning, resulting in more positive behaviour and effective management of bullying incidents.

## **9. RECORDING**

In line with the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 and Department of Education, the school maintains a record of all incidents of bullying and alleged bullying behaviour.

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; and
- the outcome of the interventions employed.

These records are kept in the school's secure C2k computer system. Access to these records will be restricted and only provided to those members of school staff with a legitimate need to have access.

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.

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.

## **10. POLICY TRAINING AND RESOURCES**

### **10.1 Professional Development of Staff**

All teaching and non-teaching staff are expected to acquaint themselves fully with the Anti-Bullying Policy. The school is committed to the professional development of staff providing regular opportunities for appropriate CPD. New staff appointed are trained immediately and our whole school staff (teaching and non-teaching) receive yearly training in delivery of this policy along with Safeguarding. Governors also receive appropriate training. Any outcomes from training may impact amendments to the policy.

### **10.2 Resources**

This policy is based on advice and strategies from Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour by NIABF.

## **11. MONITORING AND REVIEW**

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; and
- assess the effectiveness of strategies aimed at preventing bullying behaviour.

The school notes the legal requirement that the Anti-Bullying Policy be reviewed at intervals of no more than four years. However, the policy will be reviewed following any incident which highlights the need for such a review. It will also be reviewed when directed by the Department of Education and in light of new guidance.

This Anti-Bullying Policy shall be reviewed as required, in consultation with pupils and their parents/carers, on or before 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025.

## **12. PARTICIPATION AND CONSULTATION**

This policy has been created in consultation and participation with:

- Each Class and School Council;
- School Governors and staff; and
- Parents/Carers.

Data has been collated through questionnaires and class councils.

The following areas were collated by each class council and collated by the school council:

1. Playground-corner near alphabet caterpillar  
-back door near assembly hall
2. Coat Store in Mobile
3. Football Area
4. Online

To ensure these areas in our playground are monitored all classroom assistants are assigned to specific areas in the playground. Our Playground Pals are also trained to monitor these areas.

## **13. ONLINE/ E- SAFETY**

The school adopts a proactive approach to teaching pupils about being safe when on-line and communicating appropriately when engaged with social media/on-line gaming, etc through pastoral assemblies, PDMU lessons and Safer Internet Day. Pupils are taught how to recognise bullying behaviour online and what steps to take to get help.

## **14. POLICY LINKS/ LEGISLATION**

The policy has been developed in accordance with the following relevant NI legislation and Department of Education guidance:

- Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 Statutory Guidance 9<sup>th</sup> March 2021
- Pastoral Care in schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour (2001)
- Measures to Prevent Bullying in DE Circular 2003/13
- Safeguarding and Child protection: A guide for schools (2017)
- United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- Children (NI) Order (1995)
- Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (Dept. of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, 2016)
- The Education (NI) Order (1998) – Articles 3&4
- Human Rights Act (1998) – came into force in NI in 2000

- DE Circular Welfare and Protection of pupils-2003/13
- On-line safety Circular (2016/7), (2016/26) and (2016/27)
- Education and Libraries (NI) Order (2003)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability (NI) Order (2005)
- Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum – [www.NIABF.org.uk](http://www.NIABF.org.uk)
- Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order (1978)

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Pastoral Care Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Safe Handling Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Well-being Policy

## **15. USEFUL WEBSITES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

D.E.N.I            [www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk)  
 N.I.A. B.F        [www.niabf.org.uk](http://www.niabf.org.uk)  
                       [www.thinkuknow.org](http://www.thinkuknow.org)

Childline NI    08001111  
 NSPCC (Fullstop Campaign) 0808 800 5000

## **APPENDIX 1 FORMS/ MOTIVATIONS OF BULLYING**

### **1.1 Forms of Bullying**

There are various forms of bullying, all of which need to be counteracted and dealt with:

- **Physical:** hitting, pushing, punching, kicking, scratching, biting, tripping and spitting.
- **Verbal:** name calling, teasing, and abuse, put downs, insults, threats and sarcasm.

- **Social:** ignoring, excluding, alienating, extortion, making inappropriate gestures.
- **Psychological:** spreading rumours, dirty looks, stealing, hiding and damaging possessions, malicious notes, ridiculing another child's appearance, mannerisms and way of speaking.
- **Cyber/ Electronic:** unwanted/inappropriate comments/ images in chatrooms, on social networks, emails, texts, tweets, blogs to hurt/embarrass/demean/harass or humiliate another and impersonating someone online to cause hurt.
- **Racist:** racial taunts.
- **Sectarian:** unwanted religious, political differences.
- **Homophobic:** because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality.
- **Xenophobic:** taunting of foreigners.

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

## 1.2 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 / SEN
- Ability
- Looked After Child status
- Young Carer status

## **APPENDIX 2. POSSIBLE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS**

- Early signs of distress – mainly changes in behaviour and classroom performance – unable to concentrate when normally could, seeking adult company during break or trying to avoid it altogether.
- Nail biting, flinching, forgetfulness and distractibility.
- Wetting (particularly with younger children).
- Underachievement.
- Personality change – snappy, withdrawn, tired, weepiness, loss of appetite.
- Refusal to go to school.
- Hesitant to walk home.
- Wish to change routine – route, school bus.
- Lack of confidence.
- Temper flare-ups, abusive language, impulsive hitting out.
- Late for school, hanging back after school.
- Deterioration of work, mislaid books, equipment and belongings.
- Bruises and cuts.
- Avoidance of specific lessons or days e.g. swimming.
- Psychosomatic illness – non-specific pains, headaches, tummy upsets.