



**SION MILLS**  
**Primary School, Nursery and**  
**Speech & Language Units**

**ANTI-BULLYING**  
**POLICY**

# **SION MILLS PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

The review of our Anti-Bullying policy took place during the 2018-2019 academic year following an increased awareness within society of the importance of enabling children to deal with bullying behaviours and what to do if they are targeted by these.

In Sion Mills P.S. we firmly believe that dealing with bullying behaviour is everybody's business. We believe that the key to successfully dealing with bullying issues is:

- to involve the whole school community
- to reach a shared understanding of what constitutes bullying and how to respond to it
- to ensure that there is consistency in prevention and response.

### **GENERAL RATIONALE**

“We pledge to try and put a smile on people's faces, to communicate better with friends and family, and to be honest in our work and play.”

**Sion Mills P.S. Peace Pledge**

**Agreed by pupils and staff as part of the 'Amazing the Space' Project.**

Our vision in Sion Mills Primary School is that we will work together as a team to develop our children as successful learners, confident children, who are responsible and effective in all they do. We will strive to provide a safe, friendly, positive and inclusive environment which will motivate and challenge our whole school community. We firmly believe in life-long learning for all.

Sion Mills Primary School is committed to providing a safe, positive, inclusive and respectful learning environment for all members of the school community. We also have a responsibility to contribute, in whatever way we can, to the protecting and maintaining such an environment.

The school community at Sion Mills P.S. is completely opposed to bullying behaviour in all its forms. Bullying will not be tolerated. It is entirely contrary to the ethos and principles we work and live by. We strive to create an anti-bullying climate through openness and consultation, where the views of all members of the school community are encouraged and considered.

This policy has been developed consistent with the 2003 Statutory Requirements (Education and Libraries NI Order). Specific articles in the legislation include Article 17- Duty to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Pupils, Article 18 – Child Protection Measures, Article 19 – School Discipline: Measures to prevent Bullying. Reference is also made from the DE Circular 2003/13- Welfare and Protection of Pupils Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003 as well as Pastoral Care in Schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour

(2001) and Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection (1999). As we continue along our Rights Respecting Schools Award journey we reflect the UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) in our processes and practices. Thus this policy is mindful of Article 6, “Every child has the right to life and to be enabled to develop to their full potential.”, and Article 19, “Every child has the right to protection from violence, abuse and neglect.”.



### **STATEMENT OF INTENT**

Our purpose is to provide a safe and secure learning environment for everyone in our school community, one which is conducive to effective teaching and learning, free from intimidation and fear. The school's anti-bullying policy is an integral part of our overall pastoral care provision in school and therefore links and works with the following policies:

- Pastoral Care Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Special Needs Policy
- ICT, E-Safety and Acceptable Use of Internet Policy
- Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy

### **AIMS OF OUR SCHOOL POLICY**

- To develop a positive self-image for all.
- To make our school a happy, safe place for all.
- To create a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To promote a 'whole school' approach, where signs of bullying behaviour are identified and swift and effective action is taken.
- To ensure all within the school community, pupils, staff and parents, have an understanding and agreement of what bullying behaviour is and what to do if it arises. Through this we hope to foster a productive partnership, which will help maintain a bully-free environment.
- To ensure that those affected by bullying behaviour are listened to and supported
- To ensure that those who engage in bullying behaviour are listened to and supported to accept responsibility and change their behaviour.
- To develop procedures for noting and reporting incidents of bullying behaviour.



## **DEFINITION OF BULLYING**

The Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF) defines bullying as:

**“the repeated use of power by one or more persons intentionally to harm, hurt or adversely affect the rights or needs of another or others.”**

The Northern Ireland Parliament (Stormont) defines bullying as:

**‘The repeated and intentional use of physical, verbal, electronic, written or psychological acts, or a combination of these, by one or more pupils against another pupil or group of pupils with the intention of causing hurt, harm, fear, distress or adversely affecting the rights or needs of that pupil or group of pupils.’**

In Sion Mills P.S. we agree with these definitions.

## **FORMS OF BULLYING**

The following are unacceptable behaviours BUT only constitute bullying behaviours when they are recurrent/persistent, targeted with intent and/or where a power imbalance between pupils is evident.

### **PHYSICAL BULLYING**

- Hitting, pushing, kicking, tripping, spitting, hair pulling, throwing things or any other physical contact which may include use of weapons
- Interfering with another’s property by stealing/hiding/damaging/intruding upon
- extortion/threatening demands for money or other items
- writing or drawing offensive notes/graffiti about another

### **VERBAL BULLYING**

- name calling, insulting or offensive remarks, accusing, taunting, put downs, ridiculing another’s appearance/way of speaking/disability/personal mannerisms/race/colour/gender/sexual orientation
- humiliating another publicly
- spreading malicious or nasty rumours, threatening, intimidating, mocking, using sarcasm

### **EMOTIONAL (INDIRECT) BULLYING**

- excluding/ shunning others from group activity/ social setting or play
- belittling another’s abilities or achievements, mobbing the individual
- menacing looks, stares, rude signs or gestures, negative body language

## **CYBER BULLYING**

including the misuse of:

- e-mails, on-line gaming, images, text, blogs, tweets, forums and chat rooms; to hurt, embarrass, demean, harass, provoke, threaten, isolate or humiliate another using perceived anonymity
- mobile phones by text messaging/ calls or images – again to hurt, embarrass, demean, harass, provoke, threaten, isolate or humiliate another using perceived anonymity
- unauthorised publication or manipulation of private information; impersonation

The 2003 Statutory Requirements (Education and Libraries NI Order) requires schools to **‘encourage good behaviour and respect for others’** and in particular **‘prevent all forms of bullying’**.

### **Signs of stress in pupils which MAY indicate bullying**

- Child's unwillingness to attend school/ lateness/ erratic attendance.
- Avoidance, hanging back from playground or staying late at school
- Deterioration of work/ 'misaid' books, money, equipment or belongings/ under achievement.
- Spurious illness/ non specific pains, headaches, tummy upsets, withdrawn, loss of appetite
- Nail biting/ flinching/ jumpiness/ forgetfulness/ distractibility/
- Impulsive hitting out/ out of character temper 'flare up' or restlessness/ sudden aggressiveness
- Stresses manifested at home – bed wetting/ insomnia/ nightmares/ restlessness and irritability
- Reluctance to sit beside or near certain pupils/ hesitant to walk home

(NB. Whilst these behaviours may be symptomatic of other problems – **BULLYING** may be one reason!)

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **The Responsibilities of Staff**

Our staff will:

- foster in our pupils, self-confidence, self-esteem, self-respect, a sense of rights and respect for others
- explain the social behaviour we expect of our pupils
- discuss bullying behaviour with all classes, so that every pupil learns about the damage it causes to both the child who is targeted and the pupil who engages with bullying behaviour
- emphasise the importance of telling a trusted adult about bullying behaviour when it happens or is observed
- be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying
- listen to children who have been bullied, take what they say seriously, record as per policy and act to support and protect them
- report suspected cases of bullying to the Principal, Vice Principal or our Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection
- follow up any complaint by a parent/guardian about bullying, record and report back promptly and fully to the parent on the action which has been taken
- respond to bullying behaviour promptly and effectively, in accordance with agreed procedures.

## The Expectations of Pupils

We expect our pupils to:

- help create a climate where bullying behaviour is not accepted
- value and respect others
- help others achieve
- refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying behaviour, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity
- follow school and classroom contract agreements
- intervene to protect the pupil who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so
- report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances
- follow our Behaviour Code:

In Sion Mills P.S. we always:

**Be gentle                      We keep our hands and feet to ourselves.**

**Be kind                        We try to be nice to others.**

**Be honest                    We tell the truth.**

**Work hard                    We use our time well and help others.**

**Listen to people            We allow others time to speak.**

**Play fair                      We play for fun and enjoyment.**

**Show respect for everyone.**



Anyone who becomes the target of bullying behaviour should not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out, to put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets.

### What Pupils Need to Recognise About Bullying.

Pupils need to understand:

- that they have a right not be bullied at school
- that they are not to blame if they are bullied
- that they need to speak out and should trust the staff in school to take their concerns seriously and to help them
- that they are not alone

### The Responsibilities of Parents

We ask parents to support their children and the school by:

- watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children, which might be evidence of bullying
- advising their children to report any bullying to their class teacher and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other pupils
- advising their children not to retaliate violently to any form of bullying
- being sympathetic and supportive towards their children, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken
- informing the school of any suspected bullying, even if their child is not involved
- **co-operating with the school, if their child/children are involved in a bullying concern, try to ascertain the truth and help resolve the difficulty in a way which stops the behaviour recurring and meets the needs of all the children.**

### The Responsibilities Of All

**Everyone should work together to create a safe, happy, anti-bullying environment within our school.**

**BE YOU. BE BRAVE. BE HEARD.**

<sup>8</sup>  
We can stop bullying together



## PREVENTATIVE MEASURES USED IN SCHOOL

In Sion Mills P.S. we place a lot of value in trying to prevent bullying behaviour. Below are some of the strategies we employ.

1. Promote the school's anti-bullying ethos at all times.
2. Recognition and reward for good behaviour e.g. Star Pupil each week, stamp card system, Golden Time and individual class incentives.
3. Review of Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy with input from staff, parents and pupils (Sept. 2018).
4. Annual dissemination of Positive Behaviour Policy to all members of staff; teachers, assistants, supervisors etc.
5. Display of Behaviour Code (Agreements) throughout the school.
6. Understanding of Behaviour Contracts and discussion of the school's expectations of positive behaviour and how these can be further transferred into the classroom e.g. classroom charters etc.
7. Participation in Anti-Bullying week and other platforms that encourage the opportunity to discuss and share thoughts and ideas on dealing with bullying behaviour e.g. C2K Cyber Bullying Competition.
8. Using opportunities within the school curriculum to address bullying behaviour/concerns e.g. God's work to highlight the aspect of showing love; acting out situations in literacy/drama that demonstrates how bullying behaviour can be hurtful and what to do if it happens to you; highlight the importance of fair play through P.E., table games, class games etc; working together in peer groups e.g. maths investigations etc.
9. Listen to and investigate all incidents of bullying behaviour, even minor incidents. **'Nip it in the bud'**.
10. Helping pupils be assertive (teaching them to stand up for themselves) within the classroom context and through the curriculum wherever possible e.g. PDMU and PATHS programme.
11. Peer support arrangements for pupils who may be vulnerable to bullying behaviour e.g. buddies, mentors etc.
12. Opportunities to develop positive peer relationships e.g circle time, buddies, monitors and mentors, School Council and Eco-Council.
13. Ensure that all staff have the same viewpoint and are in agreement with all procedures.
14. Encourage the pupils, especially those targeted by bullying behaviour, to speak out.
15. Vigilant supervision - playground / general school environment.
16. Good Parental Communication – Consultation /Questionnaire/letter of feedback (see Appendix 2).
17. Use of Outside Agencies – NSPCC, Childline, PSNI, Social Emotional Behaviour Support Team (SEBD), Children and Young People Services (CYPS), Educational Welfare Support Team etc.
18. Staff Training / Effective Communication.
19. Use of C2K expertise with workshops on E-Safety and Cyber bullying for pupils, parents and teachers (October 2015).

## **REACTIVE STRATEGIES**

The following steps will be taken when dealing with incidents:

- If bullying behaviour is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached
- Attempts will be made to resolve the situation quickly
- Reports will be taken seriously
- Steps will be taken to ensure child feels safe and secure
- Significant incidents will involve further investigation and recording
- A clear account must be reported to the Class Teacher/ Designated Teacher for Child Protection/ Vice Principal/ Principal
- Significant or repeated incidents will require parents being informed
- Disciplinary measures / sanctions, which are proportionate, will be explained and used.

## **But is it bullying?**

Sometimes incidents will occur which are incidents of unacceptable behaviour. These will be dealt with in accordance to our school's Positive Behaviour Policy, in particular the section 'Consequences'.

We will take the utmost care to ensure that the school's definition of bullying is applied when deciding whether incidents are deemed as bullying behaviour or unacceptable behaviour, this will be done using the Assessment of Alleged Bullying Concern form (see Appendix 3).

Incidents of Unacceptable Behaviour will be recorded in Incidents of Pastoral/Parental Concern Sheet (see Appendix 4) which will be completed by the adult who is dealing with the incident and passed onto the Vice Principal/Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection who will keep these on file.





## **PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH ALLEGED BULLYING BEHAVIOUR**

### **STEP 1**

#### **REPORTING OF AN INCIDENT**

(significant/repeated/intentional incidents)

When alleged bullying behaviour is reported, the initial investigation will be carried out by the person informed and the information will be passed on to following people:

- The teacher of any child involved
- The Vice-Principal/ Deputy designated teacher for child protection
- The Principal

This information must be recorded in Record of Pastoral/Parental Concern (see Appendix 4).

### **STEP 2**

#### **INVESTIGATION OF AN INCIDENT**

Gather Information and clarify the facts

- This will normally be carried out by the Vice-Principal/ Deputy Designated Teacher for child protection, in co-operation with the class teacher / adults involved.
- Pupils involved will be interviewed and a record made of their responses.
- At this point we need to check that the behaviour constitutes bullying behaviour as defined in our policy with the Assessment of Alleged Bullying Concern form being used to help inform the way forward (see Appendix 3).
- School records will be checked for any previous incidents.

### **STEP 3**

#### **AGREEING A PLAN FOR RESOLUTION**

Assess appropriate interventions and plan with reference to the NIABF Interventions Framework and Guidance Documents- Responding to Alleged Bullying Behaviour.

- Vice-Principal/Deputy Designated Teacher/Principal will devise a plan for resolution of conflict (based on levels 1-4 from NIAMF Framework).
- Any disciplinary action required will use system of sanctions as set out in the school's Positive Behaviour Policy.
- Parents/guardians of pupils involved will be informed of the school's action if the issue is deemed as bullying behaviour and kept informed of subsequent action.

### **STEP 4**

#### **REVIEWING THE SITUATION**

- Situation monitored and formally reviewed within one month of initial report.
- This will involve the vice-principal/ deputy designated teacher, class teacher, staff community, pupils and parents concerned.

### **STEP 5**

#### **INVOLVEMENT OF OTHER AGENCIES**

Where necessary the school will draw on support of the Education Welfare Officer, Behaviour Management Team, Educational Psychology Service, Pupil Person Development Services etc.

## **RESOURCES AND TRAINING**

The staff have received training based on the Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum resource – Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour. The updated policy and training has been disseminated to all members of staff and training will continue as necessary. Some useful resources and contacts are available within the policy (see Appendix 5).

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW OF ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

Implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Principal and Vice-Principal. A report on implementation will be provided annually to the Board of Governors within the overall report on Pastoral Care provision.

This policy will be formally evaluated and reviewed with the whole staff every 2 years or when an incident occurs. Consultation and valuable input will be sought from the whole school community, parents/guardians and pupils within an appropriate time frame.



## **AT ALL TIMES CHILDREN'S CONCERNS ARE OUR CONCERNS**

The school's Positive Behaviour Policy details the behaviour standards set within the school. Pupils are encouraged to express their concerns about themselves and others and to seek help and support whenever they need it. However, children can sometimes be reluctant to seek help so they need a number of other options to get that help.

Assemblies, PATHS lessons and class circle time will be used to reinforce positive anti-bullying messages and to raise issues concerning bullying within the context of a Christian message. Activities across the curriculum and visits from representatives of outside agencies will also be used to develop pupils' understanding of bullying.

Children are taught that each person is unique and to be valued. Differences are to be celebrated and should not be the focus of negative behaviour. In order to build children's resilience and reduce their vulnerability, pupils are coached and guided in developing coping strategies and how to respond positively to hurtful behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to look out for each other and to report their concerns for others.

Pupils who are targets of bullying behaviour will be reassured that they are not in any way to blame (unless there is good reason to think otherwise). Support and protection will be given. A child who has been involved in bullying behaviour will be expected to take ownership of their actions. The reasons for their behaviour will be explored and they will be expected to improve and change with any necessary support required. They will be encouraged to think and talk about the implications of their behaviour on the pupil who has been their target. Discussion will also involve the pupil's parents to identify any relevant background information and to secure their support. It may also be necessary for the involvement of the Special Needs Co-Ordinator to address any behavioural problems through a behavioural programme (see Special Needs Policy). The aim will be to resolve incidents, rebuild relationships and restore a safe environment for all. Incidents will be resolved in age-appropriate ways and any sanctions will be in line with the school's Positive Behaviour Policy.



## Appendix 3

### Alleged Bullying Behaviour Concern Form

<b>Assessment of Alleged Bullying Concern in Sion Mills Primary School</b>				
<b><u>Part 1 Assessment of Concern</u></b>			<b>Date:</b> _____	
Our school's definition of bullying is: 'the repeated use of power by one or more persons intentionally to harm, hurt or adversely affect the rights or needs of another or others'.				
	<b>Name(s)</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>D.O.B.</b>	<b>Year</b>
Person(s) reporting concern		M / F		
Name of targeted pupil(s)		M / F		
Name of pupil(s) involved		M / F		
Does the behaviour involve: <input type="checkbox"/> individual to individual <input type="checkbox"/> individual to group <input type="checkbox"/> group to individual <input type="checkbox"/> group to group				
<b>Type of incident and Theme (if applicable):</b>  <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> <b><u>Physical bullying</u></b>            (includes jostling, physical intimidation, interfering with personal property including stealing, punching/kicking, any other physical contact which may include hair pulling, spitting or use of 'weapons', extortion, writing/drawing offensive notes)         </div> <div style="margin-left: 20px; margin-top: 10px;"> <b><u>Verbal bullying</u></b>            (includes name calling, insults, jokes, threats, spreading malicious rumours, ridicule of another's appearance/disability/personal mannerisms/way of speaking, humiliating another publicly, mocking, sarcasm, intimidation)         </div> <div style="margin-left: 20px; margin-top: 10px;"> <b><u>Emotional (indirect) bullying</u></b>            (includes isolation, refusal to work with/talk to/play with/help others, mobbing the individual, belittling another's abilities, or achievements, menacing looks, stares or rude gestures)         </div> <div style="margin-left: 20px; margin-top: 10px;"> <b><u>Cyber Bullying</u></b>            (through technology such as mobile phones, the internet, online gaming etc)         </div>				

**Theme (if applicable):**

- ☐ Disability (related to perceived or actual disability)
- ☐ Homophobic (related to perceived or actual sexual orientation)
- ☐ Racist (related to skin colour, culture and religion)
- ☐ Sectarian (related to religious belief and/or political opinion)
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Is there persistence/recurrence of this behaviour? Yes/No

Is it targeted behaviour? Yes/No

Is there a power imbalance? Yes/No

Is it intentionally hurtful behaviour? Yes/No

Does this incident meet our school's agreed definition of bullying? Yes/No  
(discussion with Safeguarding Team if necessary)

Are there any records of previously recorded incidents? (give details if relevant)

Outline of incident(s): *attach all written accounts/drawings of incidents(s) completed by targeted pupil, witnesses (other pupils, staff), SIMS record etc.*

## **Part 2 – Details of interventions**

Name of action/support for pupil(s) who has been targeted: (please tick all that apply)

- ☐ Discussion of the incident with peers/class
- ☐ Defined on- going support/monitoring from staff
- ☐ Parents involved/informed (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Counselling (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Referral to other agencies (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Any other details (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

*(refer to NIABF level 1-4 interventions if necessary)*

Name of action/support for pupil(s) who has been displaying bullying behaviour: (please tick all that apply)

- ☐ Discussion of the incident with peers/class
- ☐ Defined on- going support/monitoring from staff
- ☐ Parents involved/informed (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Counselling (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Referral to other agencies (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Any other details (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

*(refer to NIABF level 1-4 interventions if necessary)*

- ☐ Suspension
- ☐ Expulsion
- ☐ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_



**Part 3 – On-going Record of Support and Interventions***(refer to NIABF level 1-4 interventions if necessary)*

Date	Details of Intervention	Action required/taken

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Designation: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part 4 – Status of Concern**

This concern is now resolved: Yes/No

**If yes** form to be filed.☐ (interventions complete, issue resolved, record maintained).**If no** (tick as appropriate):

- ☐ Further intervention required
- ☐ Review information and action to date
- ☐ Refer/discuss with Safeguarding Team
- ☐ Re-assess level of interventions/implement other strategies as appropriate
- ☐ Record and completed part 2 and part 3 again

Name of person completing form: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Designation: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 4**

**Record of Pastoral/Parental Concern Reported to a Member of Staff**

**Teacher's Name:**

**Child's Name:**

**Year:**

DATE	ISSUE	REPORTED BY	ACTION TAKEN	MONITORING	OUTCOME

**Signed:**\_\_\_\_\_ **Position:**\_\_\_\_\_ **Date:**\_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 5**

### **INFORMATION, WEB SITES AND PHONE HELP LINES**

#### **DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

The Education Authority regards bullying, in whatever form and for whatever reason, as having no place in our schools.

It guides parents, teachers, pupils and the whole school community to the following contacts:

#### **1) NIABF Northern Ireland Anti Bullying Forum**

The Education Authority helps fund and is a member of the Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF). This forum is hosted and chaired by Save The Children.

The NIABF has information and links regarding bullying for the whole school community and parents and can be got at <http://www.niabf.org.uk>.

#### **2) Anti-Bullying Helpline**

The Department funds CHILDLINE NI (0800 1111)

This is a free and dedicated anti-bullying helpline for pupils and young people who have concerns about bullying.

It is available 24 hours / 7 days a week.

#### **3) NSPCC**

To help those who have suffered child abuse/ bullying and to advise children about bullying concerns (0808 800 5000)

#### **4) Cyber Bullying**

We also use CEOP's [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk) site to help children become aware of the problem of cyber bullying and what to do should this happen.

Signed: Peter M. Hult (Chair of  
Board of Governors)

Donagh McNeelis (Principal)

Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov. 2020

