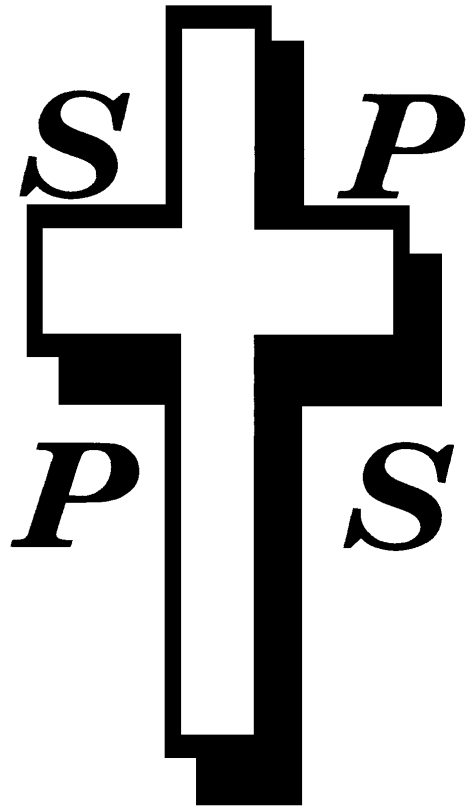# St Patrick's PS



# An Anti-Bullying Policy

## Section 1 – **Aims & Objectives of our anti-bullying policy**

At St Patrick's PS, we believe all forms of bullying behaviour are unacceptable. We believe that all pupils have the right to learn in a safe and supported environment.

We are committed to the provision of a happy and secure environment for every child. We believe in the dignity and worth of each individual pupil. We believe that all our pupils should feel safe, confident and secure in their own personal worth as a member of our school community.

Accordingly, we are proactive in working to create a school environment within which positive relationships are fostered, by consulting, discussing and agreeing with members of our school community how we will promote the development of rights respecting relationships.

We promote those values which will make our pupils caring, responsible citizens. These values are enshrined in our School's 'Golden Rules', which are our 'Positive behaviour Expectations'.

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

We believe that all pupils have the right to learn in an environment which is free from intimidation and fear. Accordingly, we will work to create an environment within which positive relationships will be fostered and violent behaviour of any sort will be unacceptable. Within such an environment, bullying behaviour will not be tolerated.

Should bullying occur, the needs of the person in receipt of bullying behaviour will be paramount and the school will take all reasonable measures to ensure that the situation is resolved and will not reoccur. The school will seek to involve and inform parents in all areas

of its anti-bullying work.

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Section 2 – **Context**

The section sets out context in which the policy has been developed, including the legislative and policy/guidance framework applicable. This includes:

**The Legislative Context:**

- ✳ [The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016](#)
- ✳ [The Education and Libraries Order (Northern Ireland) 2003](#) (A17-19)
- ✳ [The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010](#)
- ✳ [The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995](#)
- ✳ [The Human Rights Act 1998](#)
- ✳ [The Health and Safety at Work Order (Northern Ireland) 1978](#)

**The Policy & Guidance Context**

- ✳ The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 Statutory Guidance for Schools and Boards of Governors (DE, 2019)
- ✳ [Pastoral Care in School: Promoting Positive Behaviour (DE, 2001)](#)
- ✳ [Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: A Guide for Schools (DE, 2017)](#)
  - ○ [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 Policies and Procedures (SBNI, 2017)](#)

**The International Context**

- ✳ [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (UNCRC)

The key points to note are:

- ✳ The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016:
  - ○ Provides a legal definition of bullying.
  - ○ Places a duty on the Board of Governors to put in place measures to prevent bullying behaviour, in consultation with pupils and parents.
  - ○ Requires schools to record all incidents of bullying behaviour and alleged bullying incidents.
  - ○ Sets out under which circumstances this policy should be applied, namely:
    - ❗ In school, during the school day
    - ❗ While travelling to and from school
    - ❗ When under control of school staff, but away from school (eg. school trip)
    - ❗ When receiving education organised by school but happening elsewhere (eg. in another school in the ALC)
  - ○ Requires that the policy be updated at least every four years.

- ✳ The Education and Libraries Order (NI) 2003, requires the Board of Governors to:
  - ⭕ 'Safeguard and promote the welfare of registered pupils' (A.17)
- ✳ The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) sets out every child's right to:
  - ⭕ Be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, maltreatment or exploitation. (A.19)
  - ⭕ Be protected from discrimination. (A.2)
  - ⭕ Express their views, in a supported and accessible way, on issues that affect them, and to have their opinions taken seriously. (A.12)
  - ⭕ Education. (A.28)

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Section 3 – Ethos & Principles

This section allows schools to set out the ethos and principles that underpin the school community. For example, schools may wish to draw upon their social or religious teaching to promote positive behaviour among pupils.

Examples include:

- ✳ We are committed to a society where children and young people can live free and safe from bullying.
- ✳ We believe in a society where bullying is unacceptable and where every child and young person is safe and fees safes from bullying.
- ✳ We believe that every child and young person should be celebrated in their diversity.
- ✳ We are committed to a preventative, responsive and restorative anti-bullying ethos across the whole school.
- ✳ We value the views and contributions of children and young people, we will actively seek these views and we will respect and take them into account.
- ✳ We understand that everyone in our school community has a role to play in taking a stand against bullying and creating a safe and welcoming environment for all.

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Section 4 – **Consultation and Participation**

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

This legislation also requires The Board of Governors and Principal to consult with pupils, parents and staff regarding positive behaviour and bullying prevention measures which must be in place.

We in St Patrick's PS, have met this requirement in the following ways;

- Survey/questionnaires distributed to all pupils, parents and whole school staff – June 2022.
- Discussions at parent-teacher meetings/phone calls.
- Awareness raising with parents eg e-safety policy, CP leaflet, Positive Behaviour leaflet, P1 parent induction information booklet and newsletters distributed.
- Class based PDMU and PATHS to negotiate and agree a Code of Conduct for Positive behaviours within the class group based on the Golden Rules.
- Awareness-raising programmes through the curriculum eg RE/PDMU programme, PATHS, Circle-time and involvement in the NIABF Anti-bullying Week annual events.
- Obtaining the views of elected pupil representatives e.g. class council/ school council.
- Suggestion/worry box monitored in the foyer.

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Section 5 – What is Bullying?

**Addressing Bullying in Schools Definition of "bullying":**

**(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.**

A statement on the definition should be included here, to support understanding. This statement must reflect the legal definition, for example:

*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.*

The policy should show that, while bullying is usually repeated behaviour, there are instances of one-off incidents that the school will consider as bullying. The policy should NOT list the incidents that will be considered bullying; rather it should list the criteria which it will judge an incident against. Suggested wording for this is:

*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 policy may also list examples of the types of behaviour that, when repeated, may constitute bullying. For example this section may read:

**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 (eg. photographs or videos) online to embarrass someone*

Where such lists are included in the policy it should be stressed that the list is not exhaustive and that other behaviours which fit with the definition may be considered bullying behaviour.

Schools may also set out, in this section, the various motivations behind bullying, including those named in the Act. These include, but are not limited to:

| | |
|---|---|
| ✳ Age | ✳ Pregnancy |
| ✳ Appearance | ✳ Marital status |
| ✳ Breakdown in peer relationships | ✳ Race |
| | ✳ Religion |
| ✳ Community background | ✳ Disability / SEN |
| ✳ Political affiliation | ✳ Ability |
| ✳ Gender identity | ✳ Looked After Child status |
| ✳ Sexual orientation | ✳ Young Carer status |

*Bullying is an emotive issue, therefore it is essential that we ensure we use supportive, understanding language when discussion 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 b 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 discussion bullying incidents.*

Within this section schools will also need to include the definitions of emotional and physical harm which are set out in the DE Guidance.

*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.

Key actions that will be taken forward, with the aim of preventing bullying and creating a safe learning environment may include:

- A close working relationship with parents/guardians.
- 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 eg. 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 (eg. sectarian, racist, disablist, etc.)
- Involvement in meaningful and supportive shared education projects, supporting pupils to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity.
- Completion of a Pastoral Care diary, documenting daily bullying events if any.
- Supervisory adults will be alerted to observe individuals suspected of being bullied or carrying out bullying behaviour.
- Through the preventative curriculum actively promote positive emotional health and wellbeing
- Participation in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities
- Engagement in key national and regional campaigns, e.g. Safer Internet Day
- 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, Playground buddies, zoning of playgrounds, inclusion of specific resources (e.g. benches).
- Focused assemblies to raise awareness and promote understanding of key issues related to bullying.
- 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. E.g. sporting activity, creative arts, leisure and games, etc.

**The journey to and from school. Preventive strategies may include:**

In order to prevent bullying behaviour to and from school we have in place the following measures:

- A close working relationship with parents/guardians.
- Safety notices in the school newsletter
- Focused assemblies to raise awareness and promote understanding of key issues related to bullying, which include behaviour outside school.
- 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.

- Promotion of key anti-bullying messages and awareness of behaviour expectations of pupils amongst the local community.
- Appropriate deployment of staff to support the transition from school day to journey home (eg. staff duty at school gate/break/lunch time/assembly hall)

The new legislation also gives St Patrick's PS 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. This may include:

- 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 (eg. 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 (eg. Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy, Mobile Phone Policy, Social Media, etc.)

It is important to remember that the Anti-Bullying Policy is one of a number of policies in the wider pastoral care and safeguarding suite of policies. As such, it is essential that these policies align and provide consistent message. For example, the measures set out here, to prevent bullying behaviour through the use of electronic communication, should also be included in the school's e-Safety Policy and/or Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy.

Given the nature of technology, as constantly changing and developing, it is important that we monitor policy and message and make changes when necessary.

We aim to consider what measures and activities are most likely to bring about the key outcomes of keeping children and young people safe and allowing them to feel safe at school.

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.

**Responsibilities of all our school Community (*From Promoting Positive Behaviour 2001*)**

**School Staff**

Our staff will:
- Foster in our pupils, self-esteem, a sense of their rights and their responsibilities to others.
- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and 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 pupil who is targeted and the pupil who engages in 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 and respond appropriately.
- Follow up any complaint by a parent about bullying, and report back promptly and fully on the action which has been taken.
- Respond to bullying behaviour promptly and effectively, in an assertive and confident manner, with an expectation of change in accordance with agreed procedures.

**Pupils**

We expect our pupils to:
- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying behaviour, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity.
- Intervene to support any pupil who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe for them to do so.
- Report any concerns or instances of bullying witnessed or suspected, to a member of staff to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances.

Anyone who becomes the target of someone displaying bullying behaviours should:
- Have the courage to speak out, to put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets.

**Parents**

We ask our 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 any adult and/or **their class teacher and or the Principal, Mr Torney)** and explain the implications of allowing the bullying behaviour to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other pupils.
- Advising their children not to retaliate violently to any forms of alleged and confirmed bullying behaviour.
- Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken.
- Keeping written records of any reported instances of bullying behaviour.
- Informing the school of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved.

- Co-operating with the school, if their child is involved in a bullying concern, to resolve the difficulty in a restorative way, aiming to stop the behaviour recurring, to meet the needs of all children involved and to restore positive relationships within the group.
- **Closely monitor their children's use of the internet, digital devices and be aware of the age limits surrounding social media usage.**

Section 8 – **Reporting a Bullying Concern**

Pupils Reporting a Concern

Children and young people have told NIABF that when they have a concern about a potential bullying situation, they would like the opportunity to discuss this with a member of staff that they trust. We encourage our children to talk to any member of staff. All of our staff will receive training from Mr Torney / Ms Neill in August Baker days each year in how to appropriately deal with a bullying concern.

Children can raise concerns a variety of ways, including:

- Verbally- talking to a member of staff
- By writing a note to a member of staff (eg. in a homework diary)
- By posting a comment in the foyer 'worry/suggestion box'.

Any pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing this behaviour. Through the preventative work taken forward throughout the school, this message should focus on 'getting help' rather than 'telling'. As such, all pupils should be 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'.

- **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 Principal.

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 complaints policy can be found on the school website.

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

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.

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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/BMM)
- 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 interventions as necessary

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.

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

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. These records will be kept until the child/ren are 26 years of age and this is detailed in our Disposal of Records 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 10 – **Recording a Bullying Concern**

*"*The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016" requires schools to record all incidents of bullying behaviour and alleged bullying incidents.

**Duty to keep a record of incidents of bullying**

(1) Schools must ensure that a record is kept of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying involving a registered pupil at the school that occur:

(a) on the premises of the school during the school day;

(b) while travelling to or from the school during the school term;(**ultimately parents are responsible in ensuring their children are not engaging in bullying acts/incidents while travelling to or from the school during the school term**)

(c) while the pupil is in the lawful control or charge of a member of the staff of the school; or

(d) while the pupil is receiving educational provision arranged on behalf of the school and provided elsewhere than on the premises of the school.

(2) A record under subsection (1) must—

(a) state what, from all of the circumstances, appears to be the motivation of the incident;

(b) state the methods of bullying,

(c) include information about how the incident was addressed.

The school will 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 and access to these records will be restricted and only provided to those members of 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 the  Anti-bullying Policy and practice within the school.

Section 11 – **Professional Development of Staff**

The Leadership of St Patrick's PS recognise the need for appropriate and adequate training for staff, including teaching and non-teaching school staff. This is also inclusive of safeguarding training.  Training completed is recorded within the school.

Section 12 – **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 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 policy will be reviewed every 4 years.  However, the policy should be reviewed following any incident which highlight the need for such a review. It must also be reviewed when directed to by the Department of Education and in light of new guidance.

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Section 12 – **Links to Other Policies**

Any policies which are linked to the Anti-Bullying Policy, or which may have an impact on the Anti-Bullying Policy, should be noted here. For example:

*In the development and implementation of this Anti-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*