Donaghmore Primary School
Anti-Bullying Policy

We believe all pupils have the right to learn in a safe and supported environment and that any form of bullying is unacceptable.

This anti-bullying policy is one of a number of pastoral care policies adopted by the school. It is intrinsically linked with the Positive Behaviour Policy and dovetails into the school's existing Child Protection Policy, and E Safety Policy.

CONTEXT

This Policy has been developed in line with the legislative and policy/guidance listed below.

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 Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 provides a legal definition of bullying. It places a duty on the Board of Governors to put in place measures to prevent bullying behaviour, in consultation with pupils and parents. Schools are required to record all incidents of bullying behaviour and alleged bullying incidents, in school (during the school day), while travelling to and from school, when under control of school staff, but away from school (school trip) and when receiving education organised by school but happening elsewhere (in another school). 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)

ETHOS and PRINCIPLES

We aim to provide a warm, welcoming, caring and safe environment for all members of our school community.

We aspire for all our children to become confident, secure, caring individuals who achieve personal success and develop a love of learning.

We will work together as a community to promote the full potential of all by empowering children to develop unique talents and skills through a broad and balanced curriculum within a caring, Christian environment where everyone is respected and valued.

Bullying in any form will not be tolerated at Donaghmore Primary School. Any concerns will be carefully investigated and, if substantiated, taken very seriously and acted upon.

Aims of the Anti-Bullying Policy
- To help all members of the school community understand what constitutes bullying and what procedures are in place to deal with it.
- To develop procedures that produce a consistent response to any bullying incidents which may occur.
- To provide a safe and secure environment where staff and pupils can work and learn without anxiety.
- To develop a school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable.

CONSULTATION

This Policy has been developed in consultation with Governors, Staff, Pupils and Parents. Consultation with Governors took place in November '19. Consultative workshops with staff and KS2 pupils were held during term 1 2019/20. A copy of the Draft Policy was made available on the school website in November '19. Parents were texted regarding the Draft Policy and made aware that feedback would be greatly appreciated.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

The Legal definition of bullying for Northern Ireland as outlined in the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016:

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.

In summary, 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

It is important to note that not all incidents reported will be bullying behaviour and therefore those which are not considered bullying behaviour will be addressed under the Positive Behaviour Policy.

Methods of Bullying

The following unacceptable behaviours, when repeated (but not always), targeted and intentionally hurtful, may be considered a bullying behaviour:

A. 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
- Extort from, blackmail or exploit another

B. Physical acts
- Hitting
- Kicking
- Pushing
- Shoving
- Material harm, such as taking/stealing money or possessions or causing damage to possessions

C. Omission (Exclusion)
- Leaving someone out of a game
- Refusing to include someone in group work

D. 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

It is important to note that the above lists are not exhaustive and other behaviours which fit with the definition may be considered bullying behaviour.

Motivations behind Bullying

These include, but are not limited to
- Age
- Appearance
- Race
- Breakdown in friendship groups
- Religion
- Disability/SEN
- Ability
- Gender

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's behaviours and the general situation surrounding that child. Staff investigating incidents will therefore be sensitive with language and will talk of, 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.

As 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.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

We aim to promote a strong anti-bullying ethos within the school and the wider school community.

Staff will use positive behaviour strategies. This may include the use of classroom reward charts and incentives.

Each week, following assembly, the names of children spotted carrying out acts of kindness, will be read and displayed on the kindness tree notice board.

Teachers will make it clear to children that bullying is unacceptable. Children will be encouraged to inform staff if they feel that they are being bullied and should be assured that their complaint will be taken seriously.

School rules will be stressed, encouraging children to care and look out for each other. 'Reformed' bullies will receive praise and encouragement.

Talking and listening, role-play, social stories, video clips and circle-time will be used to help children empathise with victims and with bullies and to develop skills for resolving conflict.

The older children will be encouraged to play with the younger children and peer mentoring will be introduced if needed.

Engagement in key national and regional campaigns will be encouraged eg. World Mental Health Day, Safer Internet Day

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

- Development of a culture where Donaghmore Primary 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. This may include the implementation of peer monitoring systems on buses and for those walking.
- Regular engagement with EA bus drivers to ensure effective communication and the early identification of any concerns.
- A teacher to accompany the children to the bus at the end of the day to ensure seat belts are used.

We will continue to 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. 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.
- Engagement with key statutory and voluntary sector agencies (eg. C2k, PSNI, NSPCC, Safeguarding Board for NI e-Safety Forum) to support the promotion of key messages.
- Development and implementation of robust and appropriate policies in related areas such as Acceptable Use of the Internet.

RESPONSIBILITY

Everyone in Donaghmore Primary School has responsibility for creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all members of the school communities. All members of 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 if and 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

REPORTING A BULLYING CONCERN

Pupils Reporting a Concern

When a pupil has a concern about a potential bullying situation, they should discuss this with a member of staff they trust. Pupils can report bullying concerns:

- Verbally- talking to a member of staff
- By writing a note to a member of staff

ANY pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing this behaviour. Through the preventative work within 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 need to encourage their child/children to react appropriately to bullying behaviour and to not do anything to retaliate or to 'hit back'.

The process of parents/carers reporting bullying concerns will be as follows:

- 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 Principal.
- Where the parent/carer remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the school's complaints procedure should be followed. (see school website)

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.

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
- 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
- Track, monitor and record effectiveness of interventions
- Review outcome of interventions
- Select and implement further intentions 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.

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

RECORDING
As set out in the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016, all schools must maintain a record of all incidents of bullying and alleged bullying behaviour.

In Donaghmore Primary School, centrally recorded information related to reports of bullying concerns will include:
- 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.

As per guidance form the Department of Education, 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 anti-bullying policy and practice within the school.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF

The Governors recognise the need for appropriate and adequate training for staff, including teaching and non-teaching school staff and are committed to ensure that staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development in this area as part of ongoing CPD/PRSD provisions. We continually note the impact of any training provided on both the policy and its procedures and amend/update as and when necessary. We ensuring opportunities for safeguarding training are afforded to Governors and all staff, teaching and non-teaching and CPD records are kept and updated.

MONITORING AND REVIEW OF 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
- assess the effectiveness of strategies aimed at preventing bullying behaviour
- assess the effectiveness of strategies aimed at responding to bullying behaviour

The Anti-Bullying Policy will be reviewed at intervals of no more than four 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.

This Anti-Bullying Policy shall be reviewed as required, in consultation with pupils and their parents/carers, on or before January 2024.

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

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
- Educational Visits
- Complaints Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

Care must be taken to ensure that all policies are consistent.