Mullaglass Primary School

Addressing Bullying Policy

Date ratified by Board of Governors: August 2021

Date of Next Review: August 2025

At Mullaglass Primary School 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.

This 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)

Our School Vision:

Our school aims to provide our pupils with a high standard of education where the needs of each individual is met. We very much value the kind, caring, 'family' atmosphere we aim to create. We want our pupils to enjoy their time here and help them to create lots of wonderful memories, that will last a 'Lifetime'.

We strive to achieve this vision by:

- Providing a caring, inclusive, safe and stimulating environment for learning
- Promoting tolerance and respect, allowing each individual to develop their talents and strengths whilst encouraging them to achieve their full potential
- Valuing parents/guardians as first educators and continuing to work in partnership with them as we nurture each child preparing them for their present and future role within society
- Ensuring school staff plan, teach and evaluate lessons which inspires each child
- Developing working relationships that endorse pride, respect and an enjoyment of learning
- Providing an enriching programme of extra-curricular activities
- Ensuring the school plays a central role in the life of the community
- Being committed to a society where children and young people can live free and safe from bullying.
- Believing in a society where bullying is unacceptable and where every child and young person is safe and fees safes from bullying.
- Believing 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.
- Valuing the views and contributions of children and young people, we will actively seek these views and we will respect and take them into account.
- Understanding 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.

Consultation and Participation

This policy has been developed in consultation with registered pupils and their parents/carers, in compliance with the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016.

Consultation with pupils took place in several forms including:

- Class-based activities
- Whole school questionnaires distributed to all pupils
- Creation of a reference group of pupils (the School Council)

Consultation with parents/carers took place in several forms, including:

- Information events with parents/carers
- Questionnaires distributed to all parents/carers (online)
- Engagement with parent groups (PTA)

Consultation with other members of the school community took place in several forms including:

- Staff survey for all staff, teaching and non-teaching
- Engagement activity for all staff, teaching and non-teaching (August 2020)

What is Bullying?

Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 provides schools with a legal definition which must be used:

Addressing Bullying in Schools 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.

Bullying is behaviour that is usually repeated, which is carried out intentionally to cause hurt, harm or to adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others.

While bullying is usually repeated behaviour, there are instances of one-off incidents that the school will consider as bullying. When assessing a one-off incident, to make a decision on whether to classify it as bullying, the school shall consider the following criteria:

- severity and significance of the incident
- evidence of pre-meditation
- impact of the incident on individuals (physical/emotional)
- impact of the incidents on wider school community
- previous relationships between those involved
- any previous incidents involving the individuals

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

The following unacceptable behaviours, when repeated, targeted and intentionally hurtful, may be considered a bullying behaviour:

- Verbal or written acts
  - saying mean and hurtful things to, or about, others
  - making fun of others
  - calling another pupil mean and hurtful names
  - telling lies or spread false rumours about others
  - try to make other pupils dislike another pupil/s
- Physical acts
  - Hitting
  - kicking
  - pushing
  - shoving
  - material harm, such as taking/stealing money or possessions or causing damage to possessions
- Omission (Exclusion)
  - Leaving someone out of a game
  - Refusing to include someone in group work
- Electronic Acts

- **Using online platforms or other electronic communication to carry out many of the written acts noted above**
- **Impersonating someone online to cause hurt**
- **Sharing images (eg. photographs or videos) online to embarrass someone**

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

Various motivations behind bullying. These include, but are not limited to:

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

Preventative Measurers

Measures to taken by Mullaglass Primary School to prevent bullying behaviour, as defined in the section above.

The measures set out here aim to promote and strong anti-bullying ethos within our school and the wider school community.

* Raising awareness and understanding of the positive behaviour expectations, as set out in our 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, homophobic, transphobic, 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
- Participation in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities
- Engagement in key national and regional campaigns, eg Safer Internet Day, Good Relations Week, etc.
- Development of peer-led systems (eg. School Council) to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messaging within the school
- Development of effective strategies for playground management, eg. training for supervisors, zoning of playgrounds, inclusion of specific resources (buddy benches) and provision of a variety of play option to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Focused assemblies to raise awareness and promote understanding of key issues related to bullying.
- Development of effective strategies for the management of unstructured times (eg. 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, sport activities, creative arts, leisure and games.

Preventative measures to prevent bullying behaviour on the way to and from 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.
- Measures to empower pupils to challenge inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour of their peers during the journey to and from school.
- Regular engagement with transport providers (eg. Translink, EA Transport (taxi), etc.) to ensure effective communication and the early identification of any concerns.
- Promotion of key anti-bullying messages and awareness of behaviour expectations of pupils amongst the local community (eg. local shops, cafes, service providers, residents, etc), including information on how to raise any concerns with the school.
- Appropriate deployment of staff to support the transition from school day to journey home (eg. staff duty at school gate)

Steps taken by Mullaglass Primary School to raise awareness of the nature and impact of online bullying and support our pupils to make use of the internet in a safe, responsible and respectful way:

- 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 and Mobile Phone Policy.)

The Anti-Bullying Policy is one of a number of policies in the wider pastoral care and safeguarding suite of policies. The measures set out here, to prevent bullying behaviour through the use of electronic communication, are also included in the school's e-Safety Policy.

Responsibility

Everyone has a responsibility for creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all members of the school community.

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

Everyone has the responsibility to work together to:

- foster positive self-esteem
- behave towards others in a mutually respectful way
- model high standards of personal pro-social behaviour
- be alert to signs of distress* and other possible indications of bullying behaviour
- inform the school of any concerns relating to bullying behaviour
- refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying behaviour, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity.
- refrain from retaliating to any form of bullying behaviour
- intervene to support any person who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so.
- report any concerns or instances of bullying behaviour witnessed or suspected, to a member of staff.
- emphasise the importance of seeking help from a trusted adult about bullying behaviour when it happens or is observed
- explain the implications of allowing the bullying behaviour to continue unchecked, for themselves and/or others.
- listen sensitively to anyone who has been bullied, take what is said seriously, and provide reassurance that appropriate action will be taken
- know how to seek support – internal and external
- resolve difficulties in restorative ways to prevent recurring bullying behaviour and meet the needs of all parties

<u>Reporting a Bullying Concern</u>

How pupils, parents and anyone else with concerns can make these known to the school.

Pupils Reporting a Concern

Pupils are encouraged to raise concerns with any member of staff, including teaching and non-teaching staff.

Pupils can report bullying concerns in various ways including:

- Verbally- talking to a member of staff
- By writing a note to a member of staff (eg. in a homework diary)
- By sending an email/Seesaw message to a member of staff
- By posting a comment in a 'worry box'

ANY pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing this behaviour. All pupils are encouraged to 'get help' if they have a concern about bullying that they experience or is experienced by another.

Parents/Carers Reporting a Concern

Parents and carers must raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour with the school at the earliest opportunity. Parents/carers must encourage their children to react appropriately to bullying behaviour.

- 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 Mr Greenaway

Where the parent/carer remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the school's complaints procedure should be followed. This involves making a formal, written complaint, to the Chair of the Board of Governors.

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

NIABF advocates 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.

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

The legal requirement, as set out in the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016, is to maintain a record of all incidents of bullying and alleged bullying behaviour.

Mullaglass Primary School will centrally record all relevant information related to reports of bullying concerns, including:

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

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

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

Professional Development of Staff

- Mullaglass PS is committed to ensuring that staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school's ongoing CPD and PRSD provisions
- Staff have the opportunity during training to input and make contributions towards both the policy and its procedures - e.g. amendments may be made, inclusions may be added
- Opportunities for safeguarding training are afforded to all Governors and all staff – teaching and non-teaching
- CPD records will be kept and updated regularly

Monitoring and Review of Policy

It is the responsibility of the Board of Governors, in liaison with the Principal, to monitor the effectiveness of this 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*
* *assess the effectiveness of strategies aimed at preventing bullying behaviour*
* *assess the effectiveness of strategies aimed at responding to bullying behaviour*

It is a 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 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 the 31st August 2025.

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