



St. Oliver Plunkett's Primary School, Ballyhegan.

Anti Bullying Policy

(The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 came into operation on 1 September 2021. This new legislation is to help schools bring renewed focus to this issue and deliver greater consistency and impact in their treatment of all forms of Bullying. The new legislation will provide a common definition of bullying, require all schools to centrally record incidents of bullying, their motivation and their outcome; and require Boards of Governors collectively to take responsibility for the development, implementation, monitoring and periodic review of the school's Anti Bullying policy and procedures.)



NAME:	ROLE:
Mr. Seamus Galvin	Principal
Mr. Michael Lee	Chair of Board of Governors

Date Ratified:	24/01/2023
Date of Review:	Annually / Incidentally

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Section 1 – Introduction

At St. Oliver Plunkett's P.S. Ballyhegan, we believe that all pupils have the right to learn in a safe and supported environment and that all forms of bullying behaviour are unacceptable. Our school community repudiates bullying behaviour of any kind, to any member of the school community, by any member of the school community. Bullying behaviours displayed by any member of the school community will not be tolerated.

Section 2 – The Context - Legislation and Guidance

This policy is informed and guided by the following current legislation and DE Guidance listed below:

The Legislative Context:

- The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016
- The Welfare and Protection of Pupils 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 Education (2006 Order) (Commencement No. 2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2007
- 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, 2017)
- 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)

Duties placed on Board of Governors and Principals as a result of current legislation and guidance:

The '**Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016**' places the following duties on Board of Governors:

- *to secure measures to prevent bullying.*
- *to keep a 'Record of Incidents' of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying involving a registered pupil/s at the school.*

The '**Welfare and Protection of Pupils Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003**' (DE Circular 2003/13 which amends Article 3 of 1998 NI Order as follows: '**Article 17- Duty to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Pupils**' requires the **Board of Governors** to:

- *safeguard and promote the welfare of all registered pupils whether they are on the school premises or elsewhere while in the lawful control or charge of a member of staff of the school (Article 17: 2)*

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- *consult with registered pupils on the general principles which will be reflected in the school's discipline policy (Article 19: 13 & 14)*

and the Principal to:

- *when deciding on measures which will be used to encourage good behaviour in the school must specifically include measures to prevent bullying among pupils (Article 19:14)*
- *before deciding on measures to encourage good behaviour must consult with pupils registered at the school and their parents" (Article 19:14)*
- *All schools will need to be satisfied that their current discipline policy deals with the prevention of bullying among pupils in a sufficiently clear and robust way to satisfy the new legal requirement (Article 19:15)*

'The Education (2006 Order) (Commencement No. 2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2007- DE circular 2007/20' – 'Duty to promote good behaviour, discipline and welfare'

places the following implications for Area Learning Communities:

- *Since schools may expect to have unregistered pupils attending them from other schools, **Boards of Governors must safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils attending their school, whether registered or not, when they are on the premises of the school or in the lawful control or charge of a member of staff of the school.***
- *the responsibilities of Boards of Governors and principals for ensuring that policies are pursued to promote good behaviour and discipline among registered pupils are extended to cover all pupils attending the school whether registered or not.*
- *the punishment of detention after school may be imposed only by the principal of (or an authorised teacher in) the school at which a pupil is registered even if he is attending another school under Article 21 arrangements ... misdemeanours which warrant detention should be reported to the school at which the pupil is registered to enable it to decide on the appropriate action to be taken.*

In considering the above legislation and guidance, the Governors will:

- Secure a preventative, responsive and anti-bullying ethos, in association with other relevant policies, to ensure a safe, inclusive, happy, organised and engaging school environment.
- Have overall responsibility for ensuring the Anti Bullying Policy is in place and updated every four years.
- Keep a 'Record of Incidents' of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying involving a registered pupil/s at the school.
- Support the principal in following the guidelines and practices agreed in the policy.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies promoted in the policy.
- Support the principal in following the guidelines and practices agreed in the policy.
- Consult with the school community on the general principles and practices reflected in the policy.

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To ensure the above are carried out effectively the Board of Governors will ensure:

- Anti-bullying will be a standing item on the termly meetings.
- To consider the views/feedback of the school community in relation to anti bullying to inform and guide whole school development planning with regards to targets, success criteria and outcomes.

The Principal will:

- Ensure this policy and associated policies are implemented consistently throughout the school.
- Facilitate any necessary staff development in relation to behaviour management and anti-bullying.

Section 3 – Ethos & Aims

Statement of Ethos

Saint Oliver Plunkett's Primary School is an environment in which pupils, staff and parents are committed to the idea of excellence within a caring, supportive community.

The Catholic Ethos permeates all aspects of school life. It reflects the values, attitudes, beliefs and practices of our Catholic Faith and involves all members of the school community.

Vision

Central is the value, talents, dignity and worth of every child and a respect and understanding for the need to encourage, support and guide them to reach their personal, social, spiritual, emotional and intellectual potential.

We strive for quality relationships within our school community where pupils, teachers, support staff, parents, and governors enjoy a sense of belonging and have an important part to play.

Aims

Providing an excellent education is our highest priority and by implementing the content and skills of the 'Northern Ireland Curriculum' we aim to:

1. Promote a safe, inclusive, happy, organised and engaging environment conducive to all learning styles.
2. Foster caring attitudes which promote and guide to independence, self-respect, self-esteem, self-discipline, confidence, courtesy, good manners and respect for everyone.
3. Provide high standards of pastoral care and child protection in every aspect of school life.
4. Commit to a preventative, responsive and restorative anti-bullying ethos.
5. Develop enquiring minds which have the ability to form their own opinions, ask questions, make informed decisions and get involved.
6. Foster a desire to learn and achieve success and fulfil their unique potential.
7. Provide our pupils with the essential life skills so they can become contributing members of society.
8. Promote a strong school community spirit by working in partnership with the parents, the parish and the local community.
9. Develop an understanding of the world we live in, of the interdependence of people, and respect for other religious beliefs.
10. Create an ethos of participation.

Section 4 – Consultation and Participation

This policy has been developed in consultation with all Stakeholders including the Board of Governors, Staff, registered pupils and their parents/carers, in compliance with the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016.

The processes of how consultation may take place includes;

- Consultative workshop with the School Council
- Class-based activities
- Whole school online questionnaires distributed to pupils in P5/6/7
- Online questionnaires distributed to all parents/carers in Dec. 2022
- Engagement with the PTA
- Engagement with all staff
- Engagement with Board of Governors

Section 5 – Preventative Measures

In St. Oliver Plunkett's P.S. Ballyhegan, the following measures are in place to prevent bullying among pupils:

1. Consistent implementation of the Positive Behaviour Policy which:
 - *upholds everyone's right to be safe, both physically and emotionally, and requires high standards of behaviour and respect at all times from every member of the school community*
 - *promotes early intervention for those young people who experience difficulty in meeting acceptable standards of behaviour*
 - *provides tailored support for those young people who experience difficulty in meeting acceptable standards of behaviour due to their unique circumstances*
 - *acknowledges and affirms positive behaviours*
 - *acknowledges and sanctions inappropriate/unacceptable behaviours*
 - *carries out regular school evaluations to assess the effectiveness of the policy.*
2. Promotion of anti-bullying messages through the curriculum and pastoral e.g. inclusion of age-appropriate material specific to individual subject areas related to bullying, positive behaviour and inclusion.
3. Addressing issues such as the various forms of bullying, including how and why it can happen, through Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU).
4. Involvement in meaningful and supportive shared education projects, supporting pupils to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity.
5. Active promotion of positive emotional health and wellbeing through the pastoral/preventative curriculum.
6. The development of emotional literacy, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills through the pastoral/preventative curriculum, for e.g. participation in circle time, workshops etc.
7. Active whole-school participation in NIABF's Anti-Bullying Week activities.
8. Engagement in key national and regional campaigns, e.g. Safer Internet Day, Child Safety Week, etc.
9. Development of peer-led systems (e.g. School Council, Digital Leaders, Eco-Council) to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messaging within the school in a variety of contexts.
10. Focused assemblies to raise awareness and promote understanding of key issues related to bullying.

11. Development of effective strategies for playground and canteen management, e.g. training for supervisors, zoning of playgrounds, inclusion of specific resources and provision of a variety of play options to meet the needs of all pupils.
12. Development of effective strategies for the management of unstructured times (e.g. break time, lunch)
13. Ongoing tracking and monitoring of supervision arrangements re canteen, playground, corridors.
14. Provision and promotion of extra- and co-curricular activities, aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks. For e.g. sporting activity, creative arts, leisure and games, etc.

We are also committed to the prevention of bullying behaviour on the way to and from school. Measures include:

1. 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.
2. Measures to empower pupils to challenge inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour of their peers during the journey to and from school.
3. Measure to empower pupils to assist and be aware of the dangers of travelling to and from school both for themselves and their peers, (e.g. by maintaining a register of permission to walk home/be collected from 'front carpark' etc.).
4. Regular engagement with transport providers (eg. EA Transport, etc.) to ensure effective communication and the early identification of any concerns.
5. 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.
6. Appropriate deployment of staff to support the transition from school day to journey home (e.g. staff duty at school gate/bus stops, where appropriate)

The '**Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016**' gives the school 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. As a result, 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.
- Participation in Anti-Bullying Week activities.
- Engagement with key statutory and voluntary sector agencies (e.g. REIM, 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 (e.g. Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy, Filtering and Blocking Policy, Mobile Phone Policy, Connected Devices Policy, etc.)

Please note that the measures above is not an exhaustive list.

Also note that the Act gives schools the explicit power to take appropriate action to prevent cyber/online bullying which is taking place outside school, but which is likely to have an impact on the pupil's education in school. While this gives schools the option to take action, it does not place a duty on schools to do so. **Where the school deems it appropriate, parents/carers of pupils reporting instances of cyber bullying may be advised and directed by the school to contact the appropriate authorities such as the PSNI, NSPCC, Childline and/or Gateway Team Southern Trust.**

Section 6 – Bullying Behaviour Defined

“Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016” - Definition of “bullying”:

1.(1) In this Act “bullying” includes (but is not limited to) the repeated use of;

(a) any verbal, written or electronic communication,

(b) any other act, or

(c) any combination of those, by a pupil or a group of pupils against another pupil or group of pupils, with the intention of causing physical or emotional harm to that pupil or group of pupils.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), “act” includes omission.

In Our St. Oliver Plunkett's P.S. Ballyhegan, we recognise that there is a continuum of inappropriate/unacceptable behaviours which can impact on everyone's right to be safe and happy. These inappropriate/unacceptable behaviours (which are not considered as bullying) will be dealt with in line with the school's Positive Behaviour Policy's procedures.

However, on occasions we will be challenged to differentiate between inappropriate/unacceptable behaviours and those which can clearly be demonstrated to constitute bullying. Bullying is a 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 Principal, in liaison with the Pastoral Care Co-Ordinator and class teacher, will determine if the inappropriate/unacceptable behaviours BECOME BULLYING BEHAVIOURS when the information gathered from investigation clearly demonstrates that the inappropriate/unacceptable behaviours meet the criteria below:

- **intentional**
- **targeted at a specific pupils or group of pupils**
- **repeated***
- **causing physical or emotional harm**
- **omission**

The Principal, in liaison with the Pastoral Care Co-Ordinator and class teacher, will decide at what stage of this Anti Bullying Policy applies to any given incident.

*However, while bullying is usually a repeated behaviour, there remains the possibility that one-off incidents will be considered as bullying. When assessing a one-off incident, to make a decision on whether to classify it as bullying, we 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

The following inappropriate/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 (e.g. photographs or videos) online to embarrass someone*

This not an exhaustive list and other behaviours which fit with the definition may, as determined by the Pastoral Care co-ordinator and/or Principal, be considered bullying behaviour.

Definition 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.

Motivations

The various motivations behind bullying 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 discussing these matters. For that reason, in St. Oliver Plunkett's P.S. Ballyhegan, 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 by 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 a bullying incident.

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.

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. (See later note regarding responsibilities when reporting incidents.)
- * 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

Section 8 – Reporting a Bullying Concern

When anyone approaches the school to officially report concerns/instances of a bullying or suspected bullying behaviour, they must understand that where they have accused a pupil within the school of exhibiting the bullying behaviour, then if deemed appropriate, the school may choose to contact the parents/guardians of the accused pupil informing them of the source of the accusation. Under no circumstances will an incident be formally investigated or acted upon in the absence of all relevant parent/guardians being informed of the accusation and its origins. It is the responsibility of those reporting bullying behaviours to ensure that their reports are factual, detailed, truthful and, where possible, provided as promptly as possible.

Pupils Reporting a Concern

In St. Oliver Plunkett's P.S. Ballyhegan through our pastoral/preventative work, we continually encourage pupils to raise concerns with any member of staff, including class teachers and other paid or voluntary staff. We also reinforce that ANY pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing the behaviour. Through our preventative work the key message focuses on 'getting help' rather than 'telling'.

Ways of reporting a bullying concern may involve:

- * Verbally - talking to a member of staff or trusted adult (including Safeguarding team)
- * By writing a note to a member of staff (e.g. in a homework diary)
- * By posting a comment in a 'worry box'

Parents/Carers Reporting a Concern

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour with the school at the earliest opportunity in order to allow the school the best chance to adequately investigate the incident/allegation.

We stress the need for parents/carers to encourage their children to react appropriately to bullying behaviour and to not do anything to retaliate or to 'hit back.'

The processes for reporting a bullying concern are:

- * In the first instance, all concerns should be reported to the Class Teacher who will then decide on the best action, (if any) to take moving forward.
- * Where the parent/carer 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 Pastoral Care Co-ordinator – Mr. G. Cullen.
- * Should the parent/carer feel that the incident remains unresolved, then they should arrange to make contact with the Principal.

Where the parent/carer remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to by the Principal, then school's complaints procedure should be reviewed and followed explicitly.

In St. Oliver Plunkett's P.S. Ballyhegan, while the majority of reports of bullying concerns will come from pupils and their parents/carers, the school will be 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.

However, it must be noted that no information about action taken in relation to a pupil can or will be disclosed to anyone other than the pupil and his/her parents/carers. The decision of which intervention/sanction to be applied in any instance is entirely the responsibility of the school and parents/carers of a child experiencing the bullying behaviours should not attempt to influence the school in its decision making process. All decisions taken will be in line with this policy.

Section 9 – Responding to a Bullying Concern (Procedures, Interventions and Sanctions)

The processes outlined below provide a framework for how the school will respond to any bullying concerns identified. In St. Oliver Plunkett's P.S. Ballyhegan staff will respond to bullying concerns promptly and effectively so that when a bullying concern has been reported, everyone involved in the management of the incident, knows what the procedures are and will implement them immediately.

The member of staff responsible will, in consultation with the Pastoral Care co-ordinator, and if necessary the Principal, follow these steps;

- * Gather information, clarify facts and perceptions – this will include notification to parents of all children involved. This process may include identifying to the parents of all children involved the names of the child/ren displaying the bullying type behaviours and/or experiencing the bullying type behaviours.
- * Check existing school records (digital or paper based) for previous incidents and identify behavioural patterns
- * Assess the incident against the criteria for bullying behaviour and on this basis determine whether bullying behaviour has taken place
- * Use the information gathered to complete part 1 of the 'Bullying Concern Assessment Form' (BCAF)

If the teacher/staff member investigating the incident determines, on the basis of the information gathered, that the criteria for bullying behaviour has **not** been met, the inappropriate behaviour will be dealt with under the schools 'Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy.' It will be at the discretion of the staff member investigating the incident, in liaison with the Pastoral Care co-ordinator and/or Principal, to decide at what stage of the 'Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy' the incident will be dealt with.

If the teacher/staff member investigating the incident determines, on the basis of the information gathered, that the criteria for bullying behaviour **has been** met, the following processes will be followed:

- * Complete the rest of the BCAF form and implement
- * Identify any themes or motivating factors
- * Identify the type of bullying behaviour being displayed
- * Continue to update and liaise with parents of all children involved

When all investigations have been completed the school will decide what interventions and/or sanctions may need to be applied. There will be a paralleled approach to interventions and sanctions.

Where the investigating staff member has determined that sanctions are merited, the parents of the pupil(s) involved will be informed of these and the reason why they are being applied. The parent/carer will be afforded an opportunity to discuss these with their son/daughter and provide any further information back to the school that they feel is relevant to the situation. However, it is entirely at the discretion of the school to determine whether a proposed sanction should remain in place or be altered based on the information gathered.

We may implement the following interventions as outlined in the Northern Ireland Anti Bullying Forum Document, *Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour.*'

Level 1 Intervention - Low Level Bullying Behaviour

- * Interventions at Level 1 are to help individuals to recognise/reflect on their unacceptable behaviour and to "get them back on track" while listening to and supporting/strengthening the pupil(s) experiencing bullying. NEVER ignore low level bullying behaviour.
- * Explain the inappropriateness of the behaviour in line with the school's values.
- * Identify possible consequences if the bullying behaviour continues.
- * Point out the level of distress experienced by the bullied pupil.
- * Talk with the pupil being bullied to explore whether he/she has in any way provoked the bullying behaviour.
- * Help the pupil experiencing the bullying behaviour to identify ways in which he/she may be strengthened and supported, e.g. peer support.
- * Encourage reparation to be made, if appropriate.
- * Monitor the situation carefully.
- * Intervene with a higher response level if the situation persists or deteriorates.

Level 2 Interventions - Intermediate Level Bullying Behaviour

- * While interventions at Level 2 involve continuing with the above, there is shift from individual support to group interventions. To be effective small group work needs:
- * The consent and involvement of the pupil experiencing bullying behaviours.
- * To be planned and timetabled, session length dependent on age and ability.
- * Parental / carer consent and agreement from participating pupils.
- * Carefully selected group membership.
- * To take place in a suitable and comfortable environment.
- * To be uninterrupted.
- * To be facilitated in a positive manner, ideally by two adults whose roles may alternate allowing one to participate and one to observe.
- * Structured and focused activities using active learning approaches to stimulate discussion and debate amongst members and develop group identity.
- * Decision and outcomes to be agreed and recorded, e.g. on a flipchart.
- * To facilitate the development of empathy amongst pupils.
- * A solution focused approach to the situation.
- * To provide opportunities for pupils to take responsibility.
- * Regular meetings of the group.
- * Regular meetings with the pupil experiencing bullying behaviours to assess ongoing effectiveness of agreed actions.
- * To ensure regular feedback is given on agreed actions.

Level 3 Interventions - Complex Bullying Behaviour

Interventions at Level 3 will be led by the Pastoral Care co-ordinator and/or Principal, in collaboration with pupil(s) and parents to determine the way forward in affecting change. We may use individual Risk Assessment procedures which will determine a plan of intervention and risk management that will be communicated to all.

This planning may occur through a multi-agency discussion, involving EA Services and other external support agencies. The manner in which teachers and others are involved in planning and how they are kept informed about the implementation of the plans will vary.

Bullying at this level often involves complex group dynamics, where a number of roles are evident, such as those displaying bullying behaviour, bystanders and pupils experiencing bullying. Consequently, interventions may require one-to-one meetings, small group work and whole class involvement.

Level 4 Interventions - High Risk Bullying Behaviour

Bullying behaviours assessed as Level 4 are severe and involve a significant threat to the safety and welfare of any or all of the pupils involved. Such severe bullying concerns may be new or may have proved resistant to earlier school interventions and have now been assessed as high risk. Incidents at this level will be assessed in relation to the risk posed to any/all of the pupils involved. As such, the school's Child Protection policy and safeguarding procedures will need to be invoked. Advice and support will be available to schools through the Child Protection Support Service for Schools.

In addition to safeguarding procedures and practices including referral to external support services, the school's interventions at Level 4 should continue to implement interventions detailed at Level 3 as appropriate.

As well as putting in place an intervention programme it may also be necessary to apply sanctions to the child/ren who are displaying bullying type behaviours.

These are necessary for three main reasons:

- to make the particular child aware of the school/teacher disapproval of unacceptable behaviour
- to protect other children
- to protect the authority of teachers should that be threatened

Sanctions should

- be constructive
- be applied with sensitivity, flexibility and discrimination
- where possible be related to the misdemeanour and be specific to the child displaying bullying behaviours

Sanctions will be applied on a 'staged basis'. **However, in some instances, pending the nature of the behaviours displayed it may be necessary to move to a more advanced stage. This will be determined by the Pastoral Care co-ordinator and/or Principal in conjunction with the class teacher.**

Stage 1:

- immediate verbal checking of misbehaviour
- a minor penalty relevant to the offence, e.g. an apology and/or temporary loss of merit, or temporary loss of smiley face, or loss of break, or removal to another class for short period

- If the child continues to display bullying behaviours the teacher will inform the child that their name may be recorded in the 'Class Pastoral Care' book. The child's behaviour will be monitored closely for an appropriate period of time, determined by the school, and if the behaviours continue the child will be moved to stage 2.
- The class teacher may contact the parents of pupils involved to inform them of the situation.

Stage 2:

- parent consultation (may include phone call/meeting with class teacher/principal)
- loss of a break/play/park/golden time/play rota for a limited period of time
- temporary removal of a pupil from his/her peers into another class/quiet room
- temporary or permanent loss of privileges - Captaincy, Committee Members, Golden Time, access to After School Clubs, etc.
- removal from a class or after-school activity/outing/sports event etc. as decided by the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator and/or Principal
- Short term placement on an Individual Positive Behaviour Plan

Stage 3: Repetition of behaviours as at stage 2

- Extended placement on an Individual Positive Behaviour Plan
- Loss of privileges including captaincy, committee membership, participation at school events/activities and/or attendance at school trips etc as decided by the Principal.
- Prior to the issuance of a formal Suspension/Expulsion, the school reserves the right to contact a parent/carer to request that they temporarily remove the pupil from school to provide for a 'cool-off' period. This will only occur where the parents'/carers' consent is received.
- The school may seek advice and support from the EA or other external support agency at this stage.

Stage 4: After Formal Consultation, consideration will be given to

- Referral to EA Behaviour Support Team for advice/guidance
- The commencement of a formal Suspension or Expulsion process. The school will liaise with the CCMS/DENI and/or EA at this stage.

Please note that at any of the stages above, a Risk Assessment may be carried out in relation to any individual pupil or group of pupils' participation in a school activity/event/outing/trip etc. It is entirely at the discretion of the school Principal to revoke permission for the pupil/pupils in question to attend the activity/outing/event/trip etc. and the decision of the school will be final. The sanctions suggested above do not constitute an exhaustive list and the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator and/or Principal may apply other sanctions that they deem appropriate to the situation.

Section 10 – Recording

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

St. Oliver Plunkett's P.S. Ballyhegan 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 in paper or digital form. 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.

Section 11 – Professional Development of Staff

In St. Oliver Plunkett's P.S. Ballyhegan we recognise the need for appropriate and adequate training for staff, including teaching and non-teaching school staff. This will include:

- * appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school's ongoing CPD/PRSD provisions
- * noting the impact of the training given on both the policy and its procedures - e.g. any amendments made, inclusions added etc.
- * ensuring that opportunities for safeguarding training are afforded to Governors and all staff – teaching and non-teaching
- * stating that CPD records will be kept and updated regularly

Section 12 – 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
- * monitor regularly and assess the effectiveness of strategies aimed at preventing bullying behaviour
- * monitor regularly and assess the effectiveness of strategies aimed at responding to bullying behaviour

This Anti-Bullying Policy shall be formally reviewed every three years to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and most up-to-date departmental guidance. The school reserves the right to make amendments to the policy following a review process in response to incidents as they occur. All changes will be promptly shared with the Board of Governors.

Section 13 – 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
- * Staff Code of Conduct
- * Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures (Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff)