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## **Addressing-Bullying Policy**

### **Context**

This policy sits in the context of and has been developed in line with:

- The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016:
- The Education & Libraries Order (NI) 2003
- Pastoral Care in Schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour 2001
- Measures to Prevent Bullying in DE Circular 2003/13
- Safeguarding and Child Protection: A guide for schools (2017)
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

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
- Mobile Devices and E-Safety Policy and Acceptable Use of Internet Policy
- Educational Visits
- Staff Code of Conduct

### **Distribution, Monitoring and Review**

A copy of the policy is highlighted to the parents/carers of every child as part of the induction progress. The policy can be read online on the school website. A printed copy is available on request from the school office, free of charge. Governors will review the policy in full every four years. Safeguarding & CP is a standing item on the agenda for Board of Governors meetings.

## **Introduction and Statement**

At Shaftesbury Nursery School we believe all forms of bullying behaviour are unacceptable. We aim to create a community in which all pupils and staff feel safe, valued, respected, supported and happy.

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.
- Be protected from discrimination.
- Express their views, in a supported and accessible way, on issues that affect them, and to have their opinions taken seriously.
- Education

## **Ethos and Principles**

The following statements outline the principles underpinning our approach to anti-bullying at Shaftesbury Nursery School.

- We are committed to a society where children can live free and safe from bullying.
- We believe in a society where bullying is unacceptable and where every child is safe and feels safe from bullying.
- We believe that every child 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 parents; 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.

## **What is Bullying?**

Bullying is usually repeated behaviour that intentionally hurts, harms or adversely affects the rights and needs of another or others. 4

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

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

- (a) any verbal, written or electronic communication,
- (b) another 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.”

This is a non-exhaustive definition of ‘bullying’ which applies only to child- to-child bullying, i.e., bullying behaviour by a child or a group of children against another child or group of children. For the avoidance of doubt, bullying behaviours involving or concerning a member or members of staff should be covered within a Staff Code of Conduct.

The definition of bullying includes 3 key elements:

- Non-limitation to Repeated Behaviours
- Methods of Bullying
- Intention to Cause Harm

It is very rare for bullying to take place in the Nursery School context as bullying is **repeated** behaviours by a child **intending** to cause physical or emotional harm to another child. Children in their pre-school year are learning how to behave appropriately in a larger social group, while at times there may be incidents of one pupil harming another, for example hitting or pushing, these rarely are intended to cause harm. Instead, these behaviours may be an immature expression of frustration or an inappropriate method of getting a toy or resource. As children learn to share, turn take and meet social expectations incidents like these behaviours should become less frequent as the children’s sense of empathy and ability to problem-solve / manage conflict grows.

The following (*non-exhaustive*) list of examples of unacceptable behaviours, when repeated, targeted and intentionally hurtful, may be considered bullying behaviours;

**Physical Acts** - such as hitting, kicking, pushing, material harm such as taking/stealing money or possessions.

**Verbal Acts** - such as saying mean and hurtful things, making fun of others, name calling.

**Omission** - leaving someone out of a game, refusing to work with someone in a group.

**Electronic Acts** - using online platforms to carry out the acts noted above, impersonating someone online to cause hurt, sharing images online to embarrass someone.

Some of these acts are more relevant to the Nursery School setting than others.

When assessing a one-off incident or such behaviour, 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 the wider school community
- previous relationships between those involved
- any previous incidents involving the individuals

These factors will be reviewed in line with the child's individual capacity to understand the impact of their behaviours, e.g., due to development, age, disability or delay.

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

### **Recognising Bullying Behaviour**

Bullying is an emotive issue, therefore it is essential that we ensure we use supportive, understanding language when discussing 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 by describing the situation surrounding that child, for example:

- A child displaying bullying behaviours
- A child experiencing bullying behaviours

## *Little Feet Taking Giant Steps*

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.
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### **Preventative Measures**

The first approach taken as part of our Addressing-Bullying Policy are the preventative measures put in place to limit the occurrence of bullying behaviours.

At Shaftesbury Nursery School, we will endeavour to:

1. Pre-empt the issue by discouraging such behaviours before it develops
2. Create an environment in which such behaviour and attitudes do not flourish
3. Watch out for behaviour that is, or could become bullying in nature
4. Actively and effectively intervene, if identified
5. Deal with such behaviour appropriately and in line with the school's Policy

Bullying behaviour and attitudes can be addressed through curricular intervention aimed at the prevention of bullying, both by explicit teaching activities and through the positive behaviour policy approaches used within the class.

- Co-operative work and non-aggressive behaviour should be praised
- Empathy should be encouraged through role play activities and conflict resolution strategies
- Language and communication work should cover the theme of how other people feel
- Circle time should be used to explore children's feelings and attitudes.

### **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 the 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

### **Reporting a Bullying Concern**

In most cases concerns around behaviour or incidents occurring in school will be dealt with by the class teacher. Parents can speak to their child's teacher when they are bringing their child to/from school or contact them through the school office.

However, if a parent, child or member of staff needs to report a concern of bullying they should contact the Principal, Mrs Gillespie, directly through the school office. This can be done by telephone, email or an arranged a face-to-face meeting.

All concerns reported with be taken seriously and recorded accordingly.

### **Recording Bullying Concerns**

All details of bullying/alleged bullying involving a child registered at the school that occur in the school during the school day, on the way to/from the school during term time or while the pupil is in the charge of a member of staff at the school must be recorded. The record will be made in line with the latest Department of Education guidance.

In order to protect the identity of children involved, only the Principal, Mrs Gillespie, will have access to these records within the school, making a redacted version available to the Board of Governors so they may fulfil their obligations under the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (2016).

The record of Bullying/Alleged Bullying will include:

- the motivation of the bullying e.g. appearance, race, religion, disability, gender identity
- the method of bullying
- information about how it was addressed

As part of this record the school will record whether the alleged incident of bullying is confirmed and responded to through the Anti-Bullying Policy, or if the alleged incident is responded to under another policy.

### **Responding to a Bullying Concern**

Shaftesbury Nursery School acknowledges that despite all efforts to prevent it, bullying behaviour can occur on occasion. Should such incidents occur, the staff will respond in accordance with the following principles:

- We address incidents quickly, thoroughly and sensitively
- We intervene to stop the child who using bullying behaviours from harming others
- We give comfort and reassurance to the child, or children, who have experienced bullying behaviour
- We show the child who has experienced bullying behaviour that we are able to listen to their concerns and act upon them
- We explain to the child using bullying behaviour why her/his behaviour is not acceptable
- We help the child using bullying behaviours to recognise the impact of their actions
- We support the individual who has experienced bullying behaviours, keeping them under close supervision and checking their welfare regularly
- We make sure that children using bullying behaviour are encouraged to behave more appropriately by receiving positive feedback for considerate behaviour
- We recognise that all behaviour is communication. Children using bullying behaviours may be experiencing bullying themselves or be subject to other circumstances causing them to express their anger in negative ways.
- We recognise that children using bullying behaviours are often unable to empathise with others and for this reason we do not insist that they say sorry. Instead we encourage them to help “put it right” and fix the situation or offer comfort to the child they have hurt/upset (the other child is not obligated to accept this comfort if it is offered)
- We discuss what has happened with the parents of the child using bullying behaviour and work out, with them, a plan for handling the child’s behaviour, (using Calm Plan)

AND

- We share what has happened with the parents of the child who has experienced bullying behaviour, explaining that the child displaying the behaviour is being helped to adopt more acceptable ways of behaving

If bullying behaviour persists, more serious actions may have to be taken, such as increased adult supervision, implementation of an individual behaviour plan, reduction in opportunities to display bullying behaviour (implementation of individual timetable).

The Principal will review the Nursery's procedures in respect of bullying, to ensure that practices are relevant and effective.

### **Professional Development of Staff**

Staff will receive annual training on the school's Addressing Anti-Bullying policy and procedure alongside the annual Safeguarding and Child Protection training. These will be carried out at the beginning of the school year. Any staff who join school mid-year will receive this training as part of their staff induction.

**Monitoring and Review of Policy**

This policy will be monitored by the governors through inclusion of Anti-Bullying as a standing item on the Board of Governors Meeting Agenda.

It will be subject to a full review every four years. The Board of Governors may choose to review this policy at shorter intervals for example:

- if there has been a serious incident of bullying behaviour
- when reviewing other associated policies e.g Safeguarding Policy / Positive Behaviour Policy
- in response to a recommendation by the Education and Training Inspectorate

Policy ratified:

Signed by Principal: .....

Signed by Chair of Governors: .....

Policy reviewed: October 2025

