



Anti-Bullying policy

"Learning through Friendship"

Signed _____ Date _____

Mr A Forker

Designated Teacher for Child Protection

Signed _____ Date _____

Mr Tomás Mc Kee

Principal

Signed _____ Date _____

Mr Kevin Curran

Chairperson of Governors

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

The Legislative Context:

- *Health and Safety at Work NI Order 1978 The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995*
- *The Human Rights Act 1998*
- *The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 Article 3 – see DE 1998/25*
- *WELFARE AND PROTECTION OF PUPILS EDUCATION AND LIBRARIES (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 2003*
- *THE EDUCATION (2006 ORDER) (COMMENCEMENT NO.2) ORDER (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2007*
- *The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010*
- *Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016*
- *Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 (the SEND Act)*

DE Guidance:

- *Pastoral Care in Schools: PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR DE, 2001*
- *Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools. A Guide for Schools DE 2017 – to be read in conjunction with the following:*
 - *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's (SBNI) Policies and Procedures 2017*
- *Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 Statutory Guidance for Schools and Boards of Governors 2019*
- *Addressing Bullying in Schools: Responsibilities of Board of Governors and Schools Circular 2021/12*

CONTEXT: KEY LEGISLATION: DUTIES PLACED ON BOARDS OF GOVERNORS

1. Addressing Bullying In Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

- ***Duty of Board of Governors to secure measures to prevent bullying***

Duty to keep a record of incidents of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying involving a registered pupil at the school

2. WELFARE AND PROTECTION OF PUPILS EDUCATION AND LIBRARIES (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 2003 - DE Circular Number 2003/13 - which amends Article 3 of 1998 N.I. Order as follows:

Article 17 DUTY TO SAFEGUARD AND PROMOTE THE WELFARE OF PUPILS

The Board of Governors is required 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)

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

The Principal

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)

Introduction and Aims of this Policy

At Our Lady's Primary School we place high regard on the personal well-being on all members of our learning community. We believe that each pupil's welfare and dignity is paramount, whether pupils displaying bullying behaviour or a pupil who has experienced bullying behaviour and in the inherent worth of each individual.

This Anti-bullying policy reflects the school ethos, culture and practice with a view to providing a safe and secure environment.

The school aims to foster values of tolerance and mutual respect through promoting the self-esteem of all members of the school community.

In Our Lady's Primary School bullying behaviour is contrary to the school ethos where we promote 'Learning through Friendship'.

We recognise that bullying is a concern for all of us, including pupils, teaching, non-teaching staff, parents/carers and governors.

Our Positive Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies contain guidelines which support our ethos and practice to prevent bullying behaviour occurring and informs school community members on how to respond appropriately and effectively to resolve any bullying concerns which may arise.

The aims of this policy are to:

- Prevent or reduce bullying in any form.
- Adopt a consistent approach to dealing with incidents of bullying.
- Create an emotionally safe environment where positive relationships can develop.
- Enhance the self-esteem of all
- To enable pupils to articulate their fears and concerns that they will receive a supportive response from adults with our school community
- Develop and implement appropriate measure and strategies to minimise and reduce incidents of bullying behaviour in all its forms
- Seek to influence outlooks and attitudes toward bullying behaviour, positively, through example and curriculum teaching
- Ensure that all pupils, parents and staff are aware of this policy and their roles and responsibilities in contributing to its success.

Language around Bullying

Bullying is an emotive issue, therefore we feel it is essential that we use appropriate and supportive language when discussing these matters.

In a school we will use the following terms:

- 'child experiencing bullying behaviour' instead of 'victim', 'target' or 'bullied'
- 'child displaying bullying type behaviour' instead of 'perpetrator' or 'bully'

In this way we are avoiding labelling and separating the pupil from their behaviour, emphasising that a pupil's unacceptable, inappropriate and unkind behaviour can change. We encourage all members of staff and our wider school community to use this language when discussing bullying concerns.

Consultation with Stakeholders

This Policy has been developed and revised through a process of consultation involving pupils (particularly the Student Council), parents/carers, school staff and Governors consistent with the legislation and guidance listed above. The school employs a range of consultation measures which are employed and reviewed on a regular basis.

Participation And Consultation Process

There will be:

- * Awareness raising through policy questionnaires and consultations; distributed to pupils, parents, governors and whole school staff.
- * Obtaining the views of elected student representatives i.e. school's council.
- * Monitoring, evaluation and review.

Definition of Bullying

As a school the definition outlined in the 2016 Addressing Bullying in Schools (NI) act is used to define and assess bullying type behaviours.

In the 2016 Addressing Bullying in Schools (NI) 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, carried out intentionally, causes harm or hurt, and adversely affects the rights and/or needs of another or others. When assessing a one-off incident, to make a decision on whether to classify as bullying, the school shall consider the following criteria:

- Severity and significance
- Evidence of premeditation
- Impact on individuals involved whether physical or emotional
- Impact on school community
- The history of the relationship amongst those involved

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

Bullying can take the following forms:

Bullying can take many different forms and is behaviour that **intentionally** and **persistently** causes distress to others.

- **Gesture bullying:** Whereby a child is threatened by gestures from another/others.
- **Verbal bullying:** Calling a child names and mocking other members of his/her family.
- **Physical bullying:** Gaining power over another by punching, kicking etc.
- **Extortion bullying:** Demanding and taking from another child e.g. money, pens, or other personal belongings.
- **Exclusion bullying:** A group makes sure that a child is excluded.
- **Cyberbullying:** Inappropriate use of mobile phones and other digital technology including the internet (social networking).

Potential Motivations for Bullying:

There are various potential motivations for bullying type behaviours, these may 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 Young person status
- Young Carer status
- Family circumstances,
- Migrant Status,
- Newcomer,
- Socio Economic Circumstances,
- Free School meal recipient.

Signs of bullying:

Signs of bullying could be evident in any aspect of school life and may include *some* of the indicators below.

- Child's unwillingness to attend school / lateness /erratic attendance.
- Avoidance, hanging back from playground or staying late at school.
- Deterioration of work or mislaid books, money, equipment or belongings / under achievement.
- Spurious illness / non-specific pains, headaches, tummy upsets, withdrawn, loss of appetite.
- Nail biting / flinching / jumpiness / forgetfulness / distractibility.
- Impulsive hitting out / out of character temper, flare up or restlessness / sudden aggressiveness.
- Stresses manifested at home – bed wetting / insomnia / nightmares / restlessness and irritability.
- Reluctance to sit beside or near certain pupils / hesitant to walk home.

NB – whilst these may be symptomatic of other problems, they may also be the early signs of bullying.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL STAKEHOLDERS

The Responsibilities of Staff

Staff are expected to respond to bullying behaviour promptly and effectively, in an assertive and confident manner, with an expectation of change being achieved through implementing the procedures set out in the anti-bullying policy and positive behaviour policy

Our staff will aim to:

- ✓ Foster in our pupils' self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others.
- ✓ Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils.
- ✓ Discuss bullying with all classes, so that every pupil learns about the damage it causes to both the child who is bullied and to the child displaying bullying behaviour and the importance of telling a teacher about bullying when it happens.
- ✓ Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying.
- ✓ Listen to children who have been experiencing bullying behaviour, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them.
- ✓ Teacher may wish to record incidents of potential bullying behaviour or reported incidents of alleged bullying behaviour in their own class in their own journal/notebook/diary.
- ✓ Report suspected cases of bullying to our Designated Teacher for Child Protection or Principal, who will record according to protocol described in stage two.
- ✓ Follow up any complaint by a parent about bullying, document, report back promptly and fully on the action which has been taken using either Appendix 1 or 2 as appropriate.
- ✓ Deal with observed instances of bullying promptly and effectively, in accordance with agreed procedures and based on the principles of respond, resolve and restore.

The Responsibilities of Pupils

We expect our pupils to:

- ✓ Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying behaviour, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity.
- ✓ Intervene to protect the pupil who is the pupil experiencing bullying type behaviour, unless it is unsafe to do so. We encourage our students to act as an 'upstander' and not a 'bystander' when it comes to situations of bullying incidents, this may mean challenging directly those people displaying bullying behaviour or telling a close-by adult.
- ✓ Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances of bullying.

Anyone who is experiencing bullying behaviour is encouraged and supported to:

- Not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out*, to put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential students experiencing bullying behaviour.

*Please see the section on 'procedures for dealing with bullying' below

The Responsibilities of Parents

We ask our parents to support their children and the school by:

- ✓ Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children, which might be evidence of bullying behaviour.
- ✓ Advising their children to report any bullying behaviour to their class teacher, Designated Teacher or Principal and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other pupils.
- ✓ Advising their children not to retaliate but to seek help and support from a trusted adult.
- ✓ Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken;
- ✓ Keeping a written record of any reported instances of bullying.
- ✓ Informing the school of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved.
- ✓ Co-operating with the school, if their child(ren) are accused of displaying bullying behaviour, try to ascertain the truth and point out the implications of bullying behaviour, both for child experiencing bullying behaviour and for the child(ren) displaying bullying behaviour.

NB: When raising a concern with school parents are encouraged to in the first instance:

- 1) Contact the class teacher
- 2) If concerns are ongoing or continue; contact a member of the school leadership or safeguarding team about your continued concern.

The Responsibilities Of All

Everyone should:

- ✓ Work together to promote our school ethos, combat and, hopefully, eradicate bullying.
- ✓ Foster the positive development of self-esteem
- ✓ Behave towards others in a mutually respectful way
- ✓ Model high standards of personal behaviour in line with school rules and expectations
- ✓ Be alert to signs of distress and indicators of bullying as highlighted above
- ✓ Inform a member of the school staff/team if there any concerns relating to bullying behaviour
- ✓ Refrain from any form or involvement in bullying behaviour
- ✓ Intervene and support those who are being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so
- ✓ Emphasise the importance of seeking help, support and/or guidance should any issues arise about bullying
- ✓ Listen and empathise to anyone who has experienced bullying behaviour, take it serious and provide reassurance that appropriate action can and will be taken
- ✓ Know how to seek support
- ✓ Remember the focus is on resolving difficulties and challenges through restorative ways to prevent and eradicate the behaviour and meet the needs of all involved.

Preventative Strategies

The focus of this section is to set out the measures taken by Our Lady's to prevent bullying behaviour, as defined in the previous section.

The measures below aim to promote a strong anti-bullying ethos within the wider school community and positive behaviour and relationships amongst everyone. The focus is always on preventative actions and measure we can make as a school.

We aspire to create a safe learning environment and prevention of bullying, and aim to do the following:

- ✓ The encouragement of genuine involvement of all pupils in classroom activity by recognising their different abilities so that pupils regularly achieve success.
- ✓ The recognition and encouragement of children's individuality and the importance of self-esteem.
- ✓ The use of positive rather than negative language to communicate expectations and feedback to pupils.
- ✓ Giving regular praise and encouragement to pupils particularly those pupils displaying challenging behaviours, as soon as acceptable behaviour is observed.
- ✓ Promote anti-bullying messages through whole school implementation of PDMU, embracing the Grow in Love Religious programmes, promoting Anti-Bullying week, participating in Internet Safety workshops and Circle Time whereby all pupils have a voice.
- ✓ Ensuring pupils are clearly aware of class charters, school rules and expectations.
- ✓ Ensure children are adequately supervised at all times.
- ✓ Involve our school community in meaningful and supportive Shared Education Projects with Killylea PS, supporting pupils to appreciate difference and diversity.
- ✓ Through our preventative curriculum approaches we actively promote wellbeing e.g. Movement breaks, Daily Mile, Mindfulness and Breathing Practices, etc.
- ✓ Participate in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week initiative
- ✓ Engage in key preventative curriculum campaigns such as Safer Internet Day and Anti Bullying Week.
- ✓ Develop peer led systems such as Student Council, Eco Committee, Digital Leaders and other Pupil Leadership roles to promote positive messages amongst the student body
- ✓ Have effective playground management such as buddy benches, various play options outside, resources for different skills and talents, zoning of playgrounds and effective application of outdoor supervisors.
- ✓ Hold regular focused assemblies around key areas of wellbeing, positive friendships and anti-bullying messages.
- ✓ Provide a range of extra-curricular activities in response the needs, interests and talents of our community and pupils e.g. sports clubs, creative Arts, Dance, Gaelic games and ICT.

New legislation also gives schools the authority to take appropriate steps to prevent bullying using electronic communication amongst pupils at any time during term, where the school believes that behaviour is likely to have a detrimental effect on pupil's education at school. Considering this, Our Lady's will take the following preventative strategies:

- Raise awareness of the nature and impact of online bullying
- Address key themes of online behaviour and risk through PDMU and UICT Lessons including responding to harm and consequences of inappropriate use
- Participate in NIABF Anti-Bullying Week as a whole school preventative curriculum initiative
- Engage with statutory and external agencies to aid in facilitating the staying safe online messages
- Participate in Safer Internet Day and promote key E-Safety Messages throughout the year
- Develop robust and appropriate policies that encourage partnerships in areas related to online bullying e.g. Acceptable Use Policy, Positive Behaviour Policy, and E-Safety Policy.

Teaching About Bullying

Teaching about bullying will be delivered and reinforced through various areas of the curriculum:

In Foundation and Key Stage 1 classes (P1-P4) children will be taught to be aware of different forms of bullying and how to develop personal strategies to resist unwanted behaviour.

This message will be reinforced in Key Stage 2 classes (P5-P7) when children will be encouraged to recognise, discuss and understand the nature of bullying and the harm that can result from it.

Resources For The Prevention Of Bullying

We encourage a 'whole-school approach' in which children and adults work together to create an environment where everybody gets a clear message that bullying is wrong and will not be tolerated, that bullying behaviour of all kinds must be challenged.

- All school staff, teaching and non-teaching, will be familiar with the Anti-Bullying Policy and procedures for dealing with reports of bullying.
- Awareness raising posters are displayed in our school and on notice boards.
- Appropriate leaflets and literature will be provided for the children.
- Children will be encouraged to understand their roles in preventing bullying using, for example, drama; role-play and novels. Children will be guided to understand the feelings of a child who has been bullied and to practise the skills they need to avoid bullying.
- Parents will be aware of procedures to use if they are concerned that their child is being bullied or does not feel safe to learn.

Responsive Strategies

The following steps will be taken when dealing with incidents:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached.
- Attempts will be made to resolve the situation quickly.
- Reports will be taken seriously.
- Steps will be taken to ensure the child feels safe and secure.
- Significant incidents will involve further clarifying and recording. A clear account reported to the appropriate members of staff i.e. class teacher / head of Key Stage / Vice Principal / Principal / Designated Teacher for Child Protection.
- Significant or repeated incidents will require parents to be informed.
- Additional follow up measures, perhaps including consequences of behaviour actions or disciplinary measures which are proportionate and clearly set out in the Positive Behaviour Policy, will be explained and used.

Procedures For Dealing With Bullying

98.5% of pupils have highlighted in the 'Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Questionnaire' consultation that they know who to speak to if they have a problem at school, and feel safe in school. Over 90% of respondents also reported that they would 'tell a trusted adult' or 'speak out' if they were experiencing bullying behaviour (see Appendix 3) if they experience an incident or witness an incident of bullying.



Mr Aidan Forker Designated Teacher
/ Vice-Principal



Mrs Karina O'Hara Deputy
Designated Teacher



Mr Tomás McKee School Principal

Bullying behaviour is identified as a safeguarding concern and as such the key staff involved in leading specific supports and intervention are Mr Tomás McKee, Mr Aidan Forker and Mrs Karina O'Hara. However, we also make known to all pupils that it is essential that they raise any concerns with any member of staff they feel comfortable with, teaching or non-teaching. The key message here being that they should never delay, they should always 'reach out' if they have a concern about bullying that they experience or witness i.e.

IT DOESN'T MATTER WHO OR WHY – IT JUST MATTERS TO 'REACH OUT'!

Pupils can raise concerns, communicate with staff and can report bullying concerns in any way they find appropriate, including verbally talking to a staff member or writing a note to a staff member e.g. on a homework book.

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

When dealing with bullying behaviour the school will aim to:

1. Protect and support the child who has been the target of bullying behaviour (**Respond**).
2. Stop the bullying behaviour (**Resolve**).
3. Change the attitude and behaviour of the child displaying bullying behaviour (**Restore**).

All people can make mistakes and can behave in ways that are hurtful to others. In most cases a quiet word and an explanation of how others feel is sufficient to make a difference. Children can and do learn over time how to care for themselves and for others. We believe that learning from mistakes and being genuinely sorry for them is part of learning and growing up. We believe much can be achieved by talking with the child who is displaying bullying behaviour and the child who has been bullied to achieve a resolution and reconciliation. In some cases, however, talking things through will not make enough of a difference and in these cases we reserve the right to apply a variety of responses as outlined by the levels of response in the guidance Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour and the school's positive behaviour policy.

Stage System in response to Reports of Bullying

In Our Lady's Primary School if any type of bullying is highlighted, the following strategies will be implemented by staff in two stages. Using the NIABF Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource as a basis for the below process, which recommends a restorative approach, staff will implement the following two stage process when dealing with incidents of bullying. Advice may be sought from any member of the Senior Management Team prior to implementing strategies.

STAGE 1 – All staff will: -

- Listen to concerns when reported.
- Identify those involved in the bullying incident.
- Give each pupil the opportunity to talk. The discussion will focus on finding a solution and stopping the bullying from recurring (**respond, resolve and restore**).
- Staff will remain neutral, avoid direct, closed questions and ensure restitution.
- The pupils are helped to find their own solution to their personal disagreement and discuss how their proposals will be put into action.
- Other appropriate members of staff will be informed as appropriate i.e. class teacher, non-teaching staff, head of Key Stage, Vice-Principal, Principal. Incidents will be recorded as appropriate (Appendix 1)
- A follow-up meeting/discussion is useful to find out whether the solution has been effective or not.

STAGE 2 - If the problem is not resolved staff will:

1. Implement procedures within the hierarchy of follow ups as outlined in the Positive Behaviour Policy.
2. Continue to monitor the situation and follow procedures as agreed.
3. Seek advice from the Designated Teacher for Child Protection (Mr Aidan Forker) or Principal (Mr Tomás Mc Kee) who staff will assist to complete an Alleged Bullying Incident Form (i.e. Principal or Vice-Principal will be responsible for the completion of Appendix 2).
4. Principal/Vice-Principal will record details as appropriate (See Appendix 2 – Bullying Concern Assessment Form – significant/repeated/or serious one-off incidents). This will include record of support and interventions used to support individuals involved (parts 3a & 3b).
5. Contact parents if necessary at any stage of the procedures, depending on the seriousness of the bullying e.g. phone call, letter or request for interview by class teacher / Head of Key Stage / Vice Principal / Principal.
6. Contact outside network of support at any stage of the procedures e.g. Education Welfare Officer, Education Psychology, Behaviour Support Team, Social Services and PSNI. Records are kept in line with relevant data protection legislation and guidance.
7. The Principal/Vice-Principal will report all Stage Two incidents of Bullying behaviour at Board of Governor meetings.

Other Information

Links with other school policies

Our Anti-Bullying policy is set in context with our Pastoral Care and Safeguarding policies, including:

- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- SEN Policy
- RSE Policy
- E-Safety and Acceptable Use of Internet Policy
- Educational Visits
- Staff Code of Conduct

This is our suite of policies dedicated to the wellbeing and welfare of the pupils in our care in Our Lady's.

Continuous Professional development of staff

All staff will be trained regularly through our Pastoral Care and Safeguarding programme including Child Protection and Positive Behaviour as appropriate.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed within the Pastoral review cycle or as necessary.