



Building  
together  
for our future.



# Braidside Integrated Primary and Nursery School

## Anti-Bullying Policy

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## Vision Statement

We aim to work together to support each child in reaching their personal and academic potential within a culture of mutual respect.

### Section 1 – Introduction and Statement

*At Braidside Integrated 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.*

Bullying can be defined as the persistent, deliberate mistreatment of another person. This mistreatment or behaviour can be physical, mental, verbal in nature or can occur by omission.

At Braidside we set out to ensure that our school is a safe, secure, and happy environment where everyone has respect for themselves and for others. Our school is a caring community, with respect, equality and social responsibility at its core and it is for these reasons that we take bullying seriously.

We are aware that bullying can be a major source of unhappiness for children in schools, and we are committed to being responsive, reflective and proactive in our anti-bullying stance.

Bullying can take a variety of forms. It involves all forms of harassment, may be planned or unintentional but will affect a pupil's ability to achieve in school and can also have longer term effects on school attendance, friendships and pupil progress.

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### Section 2 – Context

This policy has been developed in conjunction with the following legislation:

#### **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 \(UNCRC\)](#)

These pieces of legislation underline the following:

1. The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016:
  - ✓ Provides a legal definition of bullying.
  - ✓ Places a duty on the Board of Governors to put in place measures to prevent bullying behaviour, in consultation with pupils and parents.
  - ✓ Requires schools to record all incidents of bullying behaviour and alleged bullying incidents.
  - ✓ Sets out under which circumstances this policy should be applied, namely:
    - I. In school, during the school day
    - II. While travelling to and from school
    - III. When under control of school staff, but away from school (e.g. school trip)
    - IV. When receiving education organised by school but happening elsewhere (e.g. in another school in the ALC)
    - V. Requires that the policy be updated at least every four years.
2. The Education and Libraries Order (NI) 2003, requires the Board of Governors to:
  - ✓ ‘Safeguard and promote the welfare of registered pupils’ (A.17)
3. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) sets out every child’s right to:
  - ✓ Be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, maltreatment or exploitation. (A.19)
  - ✓ Be protected from discrimination. (A.2)
  - ✓ Express their views, in a supported and accessible way, on issues that affect them, and to have their opinions taken seriously. (A.12)
  - ✓ Education. (A.28)

## **Section 3 – Ethos & Principles**

Braidside Integrated Primary School is founded upon an ethos of inclusivity, respect, equality, parental involvement and social responsibility. As an integrated school we welcome children of all religions and none, cultures, abilities and work to provide a school environment of mutual respect.

- ✓ We are committed to a society where children and young people can live free and safe from bullying.
  - ✓ We believe in a society where bullying is unacceptable and where every child and young person is safe and feels safe from bullying.
  - ✓ We believe 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.
  - ✓ We value the views and contributions of children and young people, 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.
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#### **Section 4 – Consultation and Participation**

This policy has been developed in consultation with governors and staff. It will be shared with pupils and their parents/carers, in compliance with the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016.

In due course review of the policy will occur and while not required by legislation we would aim to consult with all members of the school community through surveys or discussions.

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#### **Section 5 – What is Bullying?**

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. (Addressing Bullying in Schools, Definition of Bullying).

**Addressing Bullying in Schools Definition of “bullying”:**

- (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.

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 the Positive Behaviour Policy.

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

**1. 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

**2. Physical acts**

- ✓ Hitting
- ✓ Kicking
- ✓ Pushing
- ✓ Shoving
- ✓ material harm, such as taking/stealing money or possessions or causing damage to possessions

**3. Omission (Exclusion)**

- ✓ Leaving someone out of a game
- ✓ Refusing to include someone in group work

**4. Electronic Acts**

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

It should however be stressed that this list is not exhaustive and that other behaviours which fit with the definition may be considered bullying behaviour e.g. those related to racism, xenophobia, sexuality, gender, sectarianism or disabilities.

There are various motivations behind bullying, including those named in the Act. 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

### Appropriate Language

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

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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## **Section 6 – Preventative Measures**

The focus of this section is to set out the measures taken by the school to prevent bullying behaviour, as defined in the section above. These measures set out here aim to promote a strong anti-bullying ethos within the school and the wider school community. Under the legislation, the focus for all anti-bullying work should be on prevention.

- ✓ Raising awareness and understanding of the positive behaviour expectations, as set out in the Positive Behaviour Policy
- ✓ Promotion of anti-bullying messages through the curriculum e.g. 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/PD/LLW (e.g. 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 (e.g. Well-being Wednesday activities)
- ✓ Participation in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities

- ✓ Engagement in key national and regional campaigns, e.g. Safer Internet Day, Mental Health awareness days, World Kindness Day, etc.
- ✓ Development of peer-led systems (e.g. School Council, peer mediation) to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messaging within the school
- ✓ Development of effective strategies for playground management, e.g. training for supervisors, zoning of playgrounds, inclusion of specific resources (buddy benches, play bus stops) and provision of a variety of play options 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 (e.g. break time, lunch)
- ✓ All staff remaining alert and responsive to signs of distress in pupils during class and in playground times.
- ✓ Display of school safety net in classrooms, identifying staff that children can speak to on any occasion.
- ✓ Displays around the school advocating for positive behaviour and information on bullying
- ✓ Participation in BullyBuster workshops etc, as facilitated by Women's Aid
- ✓ Circle time for younger classes focusing on anti-bullying messages

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

- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Regular engagement with transport providers (e.g. Translink, EA Transport, 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 (e.g. 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 (e.g. staff duty at school gate/bus stops, where appropriate)

The new legislation gives schools 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. At Braidside we aim 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/PD/LLW, 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. 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, Mobile Phone Policy, etc.)

It is important to remember that the Anti-Bullying Policy is one of a number of policies in the wider pastoral care and safeguarding suite of policies.

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### **Section 7 – Responsibility**

At Braidside IPS, everyone has responsibility for creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all members of the school communities.

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
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## **Section 8 – Reporting a Bullying Concern**

### **Pupils Reporting a Concern**

Children and young people have told NIABF that when they have a concern about a potential bullying situation, they would like the opportunity to discuss this with a member of staff that they trust. At Braidside IPS pupils are encouraged to raise concerns with any member of staff, including teaching and non-teaching staff, who will respond appropriately to concerns shared.

Pupils can report bullying concerns by:

- ✓ Verbally- talking to a member of staff
- ✓ By writing a note to a member of staff (e.g. in a homework diary)
- ✓ By sending an email 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 may seek help whether they are experiencing bullying behaviour or if this is experienced by another.

### **Parents/Carers Reporting a Concern**

It is the responsibility of parents and carers to raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour with the school at the earliest opportunity. Parents/carers should encourage their children to react appropriately to bullying behaviour and to not do anything to retaliate or to ‘hit back’.

The process for parents/carers in reporting bullying concerns will be:

- ✓ 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 Vice-Principal.
- ✓ Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken by the Vice-Principal to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to Principal.
- ✓ Where the parent/carer remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the school’s complaints procedure should be followed. This usually involves making a formal, written complaint, to the Chair of the Board of Governors (Stephanie McMullan). This formal complaint may be posted into the school or presented to the main school office.

While the majority of reports of bullying concerns will come from pupils and their parents/carers, the school is also open to receiving such reports from anyone.

All reports of bullying concerns received from pupils and/or parents/carers will be responded to in line with this policy and that feedback will be made to the person who made the report. However, it must be noted that *no information about action taken in relation to a pupil can be disclosed to anyone other than the pupil and his/her parents/carers.*

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### **Section 9 – Responding to a Bullying Concern**

The processes outlined below provide a framework for how the school will respond to any bullying concerns identified.

Using the NIABF Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource, the member of staff responsible shall...

- ✓ Clarify facts and perceptions
- ✓ Check records
- ✓ Assess the incident against the criteria for bullying behaviour
- ✓ Identify any themes or motivating factors
- ✓ Identify the type of bullying behaviour being displayed
- ✓ Identify intervention level
- ✓ Select and implement appropriate interventions for all pupils involved, including appropriate interventions, consequences and sanctions 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

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.

### **Section 10 – Recording**

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

The 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 securely and confidentially in school in a secure location. 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.

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### **Section 11 – Professional Development of Staff**

Braidside IPS recognises the need for appropriate and adequate training for staff, including teaching and non-teaching school staff. This may include: appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school's ongoing CPD/PRSD provisions, opportunities for safeguarding training afforded to Governors and all staff – teaching and non-teaching. All staff participate in annual safeguarding training during the August Baker Days.

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### **Section 12 – Monitoring and Review of Policy**

It is the responsibility of the Board of Governors, in liaison with the Principal, to monitor the effectiveness of the 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

**This Anti-Bullying Policy shall be reviewed as required, in consultation with pupils and their parents/carers, on or before October 2025.**

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## **Section 12 – Links to Other Policies**

In the development and implementation of this Anti-Bullying Policy, the Board of Governors has been mindful of related policies and well as the vision statement of the school (noted at the start of the policy) 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