

Addressing Bullying Policy

Knocknagoney Primary & Nursery School

Section 1 – Introduction and Statement

At Knocknagoney Primary & Nursery 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 (Articles 3, 28 & 29, UNCRC).

Section 2 – Context

In forming our policy, we have taken into account the following documents and guidance:

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)

The following are the key points for our school to consider:

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:
 - In school, during the school day
 - While travelling to and from school
 - When under control of school staff, but away from school (eg. school trip)
 - When receiving education organised by school but happening elsewhere
 - 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 and Principles

1. We believe in a society where bullying is unacceptable and where every child and young person is safe and feels safe from bullying.
2. We believe that every child and young person should be celebrated in their diversity.
3. We are committed to a preventative, responsive and restorative anti-bullying ethos across the whole school.
4. 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.
5. 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.

Section 4 – Consultation and Participation

This policy will continue to be reviewed and updated in consultation with pupils, parents/carers and all adults working within the school through;

- Pupil Council consultation
- Pupil questionnaires
- Parent questionnaires
- Staff questionnaires and engagement activities

Section 5 - What is Bullying?

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 provides schools with a legal definition as follows:

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

(1a) any verbal, written or electronic communication,

(1b) any other act, or

(1c) 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 (1b), “act” includes omission.

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

Although bullying is usually repeated behaviour, there are instances of one-off incidents that the school will consider as bullying. This decision will be made by the school. To make a decision on whether to classify a one-off incident 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.

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 children as:

- 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.

Definitions of emotional and physical harm which are set out in the DE Guidance are:

- 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.

As recommended by the EA and NIABF, our school takes a restorative approach to any bullying incidents. Parents often request for a child displaying bullying behaviour to be suspended, isolated or expelled, however we feel it is vital to work with all children involved. There are three reasons (NIABF):

1. The majority of children and young people throughout their education have seen, exhibited or been at the receiving end of bullying type behaviour. The 'growing-up' process is about learning what is and is not appropriate. There is no evidence that young people are born 'bullies' or 'victims' – their roles and how they interact with each other change with age, where they are, how their personal life is at that time or who they are with.
2. If schools simply moved the problem onto another school, then others will continue to suffer. We feel it is important to deal with the problem and try to stop this form of behaviour. Sometimes a young person acting in an inappropriate manner is a sign of deeper issues in their lives, and we have a duty of care for them too.
3. There are ways of changing behaviour. Helping young people to understand how their actions make people feel, the effect of their behaviour on others, giving them support to manage the problems they are facing in their own lives – all of these things can change bullying behaviour permanently.

Section 6 – Preventative Measures

We 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 is on prevention.

The following key actions will be taken forward, with the aim of preventing bullying and creating a safe learning environment.

- Raising awareness and understanding of the positive behaviour expectations, as set out in the Positive Behaviour Policy (available to parents on our school website).
- Promotion of anti-bullying messages through the curriculum eg. inclusion of age-appropriate material specific to individual subject areas related to bullying, positive behaviour and inclusion
- Addressing issues such as the various forms of bullying, including the how and why it can happen, through PDMU.
- 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 (eg. Pastoral Care provision, Solutions Focus work, Take 5 at School)
- Participation in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities
- Engagement in key national and regional campaigns
- Development of peer-led systems (eg. School Council) to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messaging within the school

- Development of effective strategies for playground management, eg. training for supervisors, zoning of playgrounds, inclusion of specific resources (buddy benches, Playground Friends and Play Pals) 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.
- Highlighting a key word each year relating to our school mission statement and ethos to encourage mutual respect, understanding and resilience. These words have included Respect, Kindness, Thoughtfulness, Responsibility.
- Development of effective strategies for the management of unstructured times eg. Playground equipment used at lunchtimes.
- Provision and promotion of extra- and co-curricular activities, aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks.

In addition to the above, the school will employ further preventative measures to help prevent bullying behaviour on the immediate journey to and from school. These include:

- 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. This should be reinforced at home by parents/carers.
- Appropriate deployment of staff to support the transition from school day to journey home (eg. staff duty at school gate). A small number of children travel to and from school by bus and staff members may be deployed to the bus stop if deemed necessary.
- Encouraging resilience in our pupils to cope with situations outside of the school grounds, building on the motto and ethos of our school.

If a parent/carer allows a child to walk to or from school on their own, it is the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure the child is mature enough and feels safe and confident to do so, is aware of Stranger Danger, road safety and knows how to behave appropriately on the journey. If a child makes a stop on their journey to or from school, for example at the park, local shops, friend or relative's house, the parent is then responsible for the child.

If a parent/carer brings a child to school and collects them from the school, the parent/carer is responsible for the child.

Raising awareness of the nature and impact of online bullying.

We support our pupils to make use of the internet in a safe, responsible and respectful way by using the following methods:

- Address 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 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 including E-Safety Policy, Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy, Safeguarding Policy and internet filtering.

The school has a strict mobile phone policy. Mobile phones are not allowed in school. We understand that some children may have a phone for safety if they are walking to and from school alone. In these exceptional cases, the mobile phone must be switched off on school grounds and then given to the class teacher for safe keeping at the start of the school day. The mobile phone will be returned to the child at the end of the day but must remain switched off until the child leaves the school grounds. If a child is found with a mobile phone during the school day, the phone will be confiscated and parents will be contacted to collect the phone from the school office.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to monitor their child's online activity when outside school and their mobile phone use. It is assumed that parents/carers will have discussed and agreed with their child the appropriate use of mobile phones, how children can stay safe online, which sites are age-appropriate and parents/carers will have the strictest privacy settings to ensure the safety of their child. Parents should be aware of the legal ages for having accounts on certain social media websites eg. 13 years old for Facebook and Instagram.

Cyberbullying can be very serious and can amount to a criminal offence under a range of different laws.

The school will try to provide support and advice for parents with any incidents of online bullying but it is ultimately the responsibility of the parents/carers to monitor and control their child's online activity when not in school.

Further help and advice for parents on all aspects of bullying is available from the NIABF Parent Toolkit via the EA website (www.eani.org.uk).

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
- 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

Section 8 - Reporting a Bullying Concern

Pupils Reporting a Concern

Pupils can report bullying concerns by:

- Verbally- talking to a member of staff, Pastoral Care Teacher or a member of the Safeguarding Team.
- Writing a note to a member of staff or for Mrs Johnston's 'Worry Box'.

ANY pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing this behaviour. Children are encouraged to seek help for themselves or others who may be experiencing bullying behaviour.

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 not do anything to retaliate or to 'hit back' so the school can put appropriate measures in place to support the children involved.

- Stage 1.** In the first instance, all bullying concerns should be reported to the Class Teacher.
- Stage 2.** 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 Head of Key Stage or Vice-Principal, as applicable.
- Stage 3.** Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken by the Head of Key Stage/Vice-Principal to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to Principal.
- Stage 4.** Where the parent/carer remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the school's complaints procedure should be followed. This involves making a formal, written complaint, to the Chair of the Board of Governors at the school address (please refer to our Complaints Policy on our website).

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

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.

Referring to 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 as set out in the EA's BCAF to ascertain what further action is required.

The SEN status of all children and any other relevant background details will be taken into consideration when making any final decisions.

At least 2 members of the school's Safeguarding team will make the decision. If an incident does not meet the criteria for bullying, the school will follow our Positive Behaviour Policy. If an incident fully meets all the criteria for bullying, the school will:

- Identify any themes or motivating factors
- Identify the type of bullying behaviour being displayed
- Identify intervention level as per the NIABF
- 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. Interventions may include identifying a safe adult to talk to, a safe place, change in timetable, pastoral support, Solutions Focus work.
- 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. Any action taken regarding a pupil cannot be disclosed to anyone other than that pupil and his/her parents/carers.

Please note, as stated in section 5, the school takes a restorative approach to bullying as recommended by the EA and NIABF. The school will support the child who is displaying **and** the child who is experiencing bullying behaviour.

Section 10: Recording

The school will centrally record all relevant information related to reports of bullying concerns using a version of the BCAF. These will be confidential and will only be accessible to relevant staff. Information gathered may include:

- 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.

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.

All staff will be given appropriate and adequate training, including teaching and non-teaching school staff.

Section 11: Monitoring and Review of Policy

To appropriately monitor the effectiveness of the Addressing Bullying Policy, the Board of Governors shall:

- When necessary, discuss reports on recorded incidents of bullying at the relevant Governors' meeting
- Assess the effectiveness of strategies aimed at preventing bullying behaviour
- Assess the effectiveness of strategies aimed at responding to bullying behaviour

This Addressing Bullying Policy shall be reviewed as required, in consultation with pupils and their parents/carers, on or before September 2025.

Section 12 - Links to Other Policies

In the development and implementation of this Addressing 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
- E-Safety Policy & Acceptable Use of Internet Policy
- Educational Visits
- Staff Code of Conduct

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