

Anti-Bullying Policy

Section 1 - Introduction and Statement

In Saint Joseph's Nursery School, we believe all forms of bullying behaviour are unacceptable. We believe that all children have the right to learn in a safe, caring, friendly and supported environment.

Saint Joseph's Nursery School's core values are that every child will feel safe, and valued in school so that they can meet their full potential and be the best that they can be.

We aim to provide an environment that allows children to feel happy in school. We want parents/carers to feel confident that their children are safe and cared for and that incidents when they do arise, are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

As a school committed to Rights Respecting values, we work to promote a rights ethos where children are safe, can freely express their opinions and feel valued.

Through our curriculum children will gain an understanding of what bullying is, what it looks like and what they can do if they feel they or others are unsafe. Bullying behaviours and attitudes are addressed through curricular intervention aimed at the prevention of bullying. Anti-bullying is discussed during small group time, welcome and story time, free play and through the development of Personal, Social and Emotional Development curriculum content.

All staff in the nursery are aware they have a responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of all children in the school and will take reasonable care to ensure that the children's welfare and their safety is protected.

Section 2 - Context

This policy was drawn up in consultation with the whole school community with input from staff, governors, parents/carers and children. Saint Joseph's Nursery has developed a positive anti-bullying policy which encourages:

- Children to develop positive behaviour, respecting themselves and others.
- Give children the strategies to deal with difficult situations.

The school is aware of its legal obligations and in line with this, our anti-bullying policy was developed using all the relevant policy/guidance framework and legislative documents.

- [The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2016](#)
- [The Education and Libraries Order \(Northern Ireland\) 2003](#)
- [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
- 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)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 Statutory Guidance for Schools and Boards of Governors (DE, 2019)

Application of this policy

This policy will be applied:

- 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 (eg.when visiting another school)

Saint Joseph's Nursery School endeavours to:

- deal with bullying behaviour through active classroom management.
- create an environment which promotes positive relationships, behaviour and attitudes
- discourage negative behaviour which is or could become bullying in nature and try to pre-empt issues arising

Section 3 - Ethos & Principles

It is the policy of St. Joseph's Nursery School to ensure that pupils have a secure, well ordered school environment which allows for their spiritual, social, emotional, physical and intellectual growth.

The school relies on good relationships between teachers, pupils and the whole school community. The nursery recognises the individuality of children and that they will achieve at different rates based upon experiences, interests and abilities. We expect different levels of behaviour.

"Being fair is not giving children all the same but giving them what they need."

Bill Rodgers

Rules, routines and positive behaviour management procedures in the school are necessary for the safety, well-being and enjoyment of others.

Staff:

- Are committed to a society where children and young people can live free and safe from bullying.
 - believe that every child and young person should be celebrated in their diversity.
 - are committed to a preventative, responsive and restorative anti-bullying ethos across the whole school.
 - 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.
 - 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 re: Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016.

This policy has been developed in consultation with pupils, their parents/carers and wider school community through class-based activities, questionnaires and parent group discussion.

Section 5 - What is Bullying?

Definition of "bullying" - The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

"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."

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.

Staff appreciate that while bullying is usually repeated behaviour, there are instances of one-off incidents that the school will consider as bullying. Staff will assess these one-off incidents, to decide if they should be classified under bullying or unacceptable behaviour. The school will use the following criteria:

- the 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:

- **Verbal:**
 - saying mean and hurtful things to, or about, others
 - making fun of others
 - calling another pupil mean and hurtful names
 - telling lies or spreading 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 equipment or possessions or causing damage to possessions
- **Omission (Exclusion)**
 - Leaving someone out of a game
 - Refusing to include someone in group work
- **Racial**
 - Racial taunts, gestures
- **Sexual**
 - Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments

This list is not exhaustive and other behaviours which fit with the definition may be considered bullying behaviour.

Staff understand that bullying is an emotive issue and will therefore ensure they use supportive, understanding language when discussing matters involving bullying behaviour. Staff will not refer to a child as 'a bully', or to a child as 'a victim'. Instead, staff will refer to the child by describing the situation surrounding that child -

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

All members of the school community will be encouraged to use this language when discussing bullying incidents.

Definitions of emotional and physical harm as set out in the Department of Education Guidance.

'Harm' is defined as:

- *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

Staff actions aim to prevent bullying and to create a safe learning environment for all children.

- Raise awareness and understanding of positive behaviour, as set out in our Positive Behaviour Policy.
- Promote anti-bullying messages through the curriculum e.g through small group discussions, welcome time, story time, when situations arise relating to bullying, positive behaviour and inclusion.
- Talk about what bullying looks like, how and why it can happen.
- Use the curriculum and shared education opportunities to allow children to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity.
- Through our preventative curriculum actively promote positive emotional health and wellbeing (eg. Use of mindfulness, well being, AMBER training)

Preventive approaches staff will use when supporting children:

- Regularly revisiting classroom rules and routines.
 - Listening and talking about stories about bullying, positive relationships and behaviour
 - Recall / have discussions about 'bullying' situations that have arisen in school and outside of school and why they matter.
 - Painting and drawing pictures and talking about them.
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Section 7 - Responsibility

Responsibility of Staff in the Nursery School

Everyone has responsibility for creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all members of the school communities.

All members of staff will be responsible for all the children in the setting. The Principal has over-all day to day responsibility with the support of the Board of Governors whose responsibility is to "Safeguard and promote the welfare of registered pupils". (The Education and Libraries Order (NI) 2003)

Together they will put in place measures to prevent bullying behaviour, in consultation with pupils and parents. In line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) each child has the 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.

Everyone in the whole school community, including pupils, their parents/carers and the staff 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
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Section 8 - Reporting a Bullying Concern

Pupils Reporting a Concern

Through daily discussions children will be reminded of our 'rainbow rules' and positive behaviour. Children will also be made aware that if they are upset, feeling sad or have a concern they can talk to their 'teachers' (teaching and non-teaching staff) and/or use the helping hand symbol to alert staff that they need help.

Children will also be encouraged to speak to a member of staff if they have noticed another child is upset or have observed bullying behaviour, Through preventative work (Section 6), children will understand the importance of getting help.

Parents/Carers Reporting a Concern

Parents/carers are reminded of their responsibility to raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour at the earliest opportunity. Parents are also reminded to encourage their children to react appropriately to bullying behaviour by speaking to the teacher and not do anything to retaliate or 'hit back'.

Parents:

- In the first instance, should report all bullying concerns 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 Principal, Mrs Maguire.

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, Mr Raymond Flanagan.

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 complaint. All reports of bullying will be investigated by the designated teacher for child protection and will be responded to within one week of making the complaint. 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.

Section 9 - Responding to a Bullying Concern

When responding to a bullying concern, staff will implement interventions aimed at responding to the behaviour, resolving the concern and restoring the wellbeing of those involved. When appropriate, staff may implement sanctions for those displaying bullying behaviour.

The school will respond to any bullying concerns identified as follows:

- Clarify the facts and records of the situation
- Assess the incident against the criteria for bullying behaviour
- Identify why the incident occurred - any themes or motivating factors
- Identify the type of bullying behaviour being displayed
- Implement appropriate interventions for all pupils involved, including appropriate interventions, consequences and sanctions
- Track, monitor and record effectiveness of interventions
- Review outcome of interventions
- Select and implement further intentions as necessary

Staff response to incidents or reports of bullying behaviour:

- Take incidents or reports of any incidents seriously.
- Promptly intervene when bullying behaviour/situations arise and deal with such behaviour appropriately.
- Record incidents of bullying behaviour and alleged bullying incidents.
- Monitor the child displaying bullying behaviours until they are satisfied that the problem has stopped. If bullying behaviour persists the second stage will be to instigate child protection procedures.

Staff actions and procedures when dealing with an incident:

- Staff will remain calm and deal with the incident discreetly and sensitively.
- Staff will talk to the child experiencing bullying behaviours and the child displaying bullying behaviours.
- Staff will firstly reassure the child experiencing bullying behaviours by offering them help and support. The child will have opportunities to discuss what happened. The child will be reassured that school and home will help with this matter. Staff will continue to support the child and will help them to develop better self-help strategies.
- Staff will then talk to the child displaying bullying behaviours about what has happened and help them to see and begin to understand how the other child is feeling. They will also be reminded of our 'Rainbow rules'.

Consequences of bullying behaviour

- Consequences for the bullying behaviour will be immediate, of short duration and without humiliation for the child. It will relate to the act of bullying and will be consistently applied and maintained. Staff will fully and clearly explain the sanction and why it is being given. Consequences may include:
 - Explanation of the behaviour and why it is unacceptable
 - Time to consider their actions by sitting on the thinking mat
 - Given a reminder of classroom rules and routines
 - Reminded of choices - positive choices
 - Redirect the child to another activity
 - Reminded of future consequences if behaviour continues
 - Use of individual reward charts, stickers...
 - Depriving/rewarding use of activities, equipment
- All bullying incidents will be recorded and reported.
- Inform the class teacher and Principal (when appropriate), who will inform the parents/carers of the children involved. In serious cases parents will be informed and asked to come to a meeting to discuss the problem. This may be considered as a child protection matter.
- When appropriate, information will be shared with colleagues so they can be vigilant and monitor the situation and also learn from the situation. Staff will consider the incident and will plan how to prevent a recurrence of the bullying incident.

It is important to note information regarding any action taken regarding a pupil will not be disclosed to anyone other than that pupil and his/her parents/carers.

Section 10 - Recording

In accordance with Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016, staff will 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 placed in the Behaviour Management File. Access to these records will be restricted and will only be provided to members of school staff when appropriate.

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

The school recognises the need for appropriate and adequate training including safeguarding training for Governors and staff, including teaching and non-teaching school staff.

It is committed to ensuring staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school's ongoing CPD/PRSD provisions when available.

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 including:

- Positive Behaviour Policy
 - Pastoral Care Policy
 - Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
 - Special Educational Needs Policy
 - Health and Safety Policy
 - Educational Visits
 - Staff Code of Conduct
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Monitoring and evaluation

This policy will be reviewed and monitored in line with the school's policy review schedule.