

# **St Malachy's Primary School Armagh**



## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

# **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

## **(Revised 2018/19 to include Cyber Bullying)**

### **Compliant with Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016**

#### **Anti-bullying policy**

##### **1. Introduction**

***At St Malachy's 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.***

St. Malachy's Primary School aims to provide a working, caring and happy environment in which the potential of every child can be realised. We wish to promote in all our pupils such values as will make them caring, responsible citizens. We believe in the dignity and worth of each individual and in the development of the whole person. All members of staff share these values and work to ensure a pupil-centred approach in which caring is a shared responsibility of all staff. These values underpin and shape all our school policies.

#### **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 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 (eg. in another school in the ALC)
- Requires that the policy be updated at least every four years.
- \* The Education and Libraries Order (NI) 2003, requires the Board of Governors to:
  - 'Safeguard and promote the welfare of registered pupils' (A.17)
- \* 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)

## 2. Aims and objectives of our anti-bullying policy

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

We believe that all pupils have the right to learn in an environment which is free from intimidation and fear. Accordingly, we will work to create an environment within which positive relationships will be fostered and violent behaviour of any sort will be unacceptable. Within such an environment, bullying behaviour will not be tolerated.

Should bullying occur, the needs of the person in receipt of bullying behaviour will be paramount and the school will take all reasonable measures to ensure that the situation is resolved and will not reoccur. The school will seek to involve and inform parents in all areas of its anti-bullying work.

### **3. Links with other school policies**

This anti-bullying policy forms part of the school's overall Pastoral Care policy. It links with the child protection policy in which the school outlines the steps it will take to protect children from harm and develop their personal safety strategies. It links with the discipline policy in which the school outlines the types of behaviour which are considered appropriate and inappropriate, together with the sanctions which will be used as part of the disciplinary process. It also links with the E Safety Policy and the Acceptable Use of Internet and Digital Technologies guidelines.

### **4. Agreed definition of bullying behaviour**

Following consultation with governors, teachers, pupils, parents and ancillary staff, the following definition of bullying behaviour has been agreed:

***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.***

While bullying is usually repeated behaviour, there are instances of one-off incidents that we may consider as bullying. ***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.***

Examples of the types of behaviour that, when repeated, may constitute bullying:

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

\* ***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***

\* ***Physical acts***

- ***Hitting***
- ***kicking***
- ***pushing***
- ***shoving***
- ***material harm, such as taking/stealing money or possessions or causing damage to possessions***

\* ***Omission (Exclusion)***

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

\* ***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***

***Bullying is an emotive issue, therefore it is essential that we ensure we use supportive, understanding language when discussion 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 b 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 discussion bullying incidents.***

## 5. Preventive strategies

Under the legislation, the focus for all anti-bullying work should be on prevention.

Key actions that will be taken forward, with the aim of preventing bullying and creating a safe learning environment may include:

- \* 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 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 (eg. 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
- \* Participation in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities
- \* Engagement in key national and regional campaigns, e.g. Safer Internet Day
- \* Development of peer-led systems (e.g. School Council) 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 (e.g. benches).
- \* 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)
- \* Provision and promotion of extra- and co-curricular activities, aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks. E.g. sporting activity, creative arts, leisure and games, etc.

### **The journey to and from school. Preventive strategies may 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.
- \* Measures to empower pupils to challenge inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour of their peers during the journey to and from school.
- \* 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

The new legislation also gives St Malachy's PS 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. This may include:

- \* Addressing 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 (eg. 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. E Safety Policy)

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. As such, it is essential that these policies align and provide consistent message. For example, the measures set out here, to prevent bullying behaviour through the use of electronic communication, should also be included in the school's e-Safety Policy and/or Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy.

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## 6. Responding to a Bullying Concern

The focus of any intervention must be on responding to the bullying concern and restoring the wellbeing of those involved. As such, any strategy for responding to bullying concerns must concentrate on the prevention of any further incidents.

***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 (CPOMS)
- \* 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.

Information regarding any action taken regarding a pupil cannot be disclosed to anyone other than that pupil and his/her parents/carers.

## **7. Recording**

The legal requirement, as set out in the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016, is 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 using CPOMS. 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.

## **8. Professional Development of Staff**

In St Malachy's Primary School we recognise the need for appropriate and adequate training for staff, including teaching and non-teaching school staff. We will

- \* ensure that opportunities for safeguarding training are afforded to Governors and all staff – teaching and non-teaching
- \* ensure that CPD records will be kept and updated regularly

## **9. Monitoring and review of the anti-bullying 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***

It is a legal requirement that the Anti-Bullying Policy be reviewed at intervals of no more than four years. However, the policy will be reviewed following any incident which may highlight the need for such a review. It must also be reviewed when directed to by the Department of Education and in light of new guidance. As such, the policy should indicate a timeline for the review of policy, for example:

***This Anti-Bullying Policy shall be reviewed as required, in consultation with pupils and their parents/carers, on or before April 2023***