



ANTI-BULLYING

POLICY

November 2019

In line with new NIABF guidelines

Mission Statement

Our school in co-operation with parents and community members is committed to providing a happy, secure and caring environment where every individual is treated with respect, thus enabling each pupil to become an effective learner and to develop the skills, attitudes and values necessary for life.

Anti-Bullying Policy Statement

From time to time pupils may be victims of bullying, in spite of our caring ethos and positive behaviour policy. They will be unable to learn effectively as a result. If we allow bullying to go unchallenged we are not providing our pupils with the safe and educationally stimulating learning environment they deserve.

Being bullied can result in fear, depression and feelings of worthlessness and anger. The school will promote positive relationships by encouraging pupils to report incidents and to accept responsibility for the welfare of other pupils. All staff, both teachers and ancillary staff should be respected, should manage behaviour positively, be alert to the dangers of bullying and aim to provide positive role models for our pupils.

School Aims and Objectives in relation to Bullying Behaviour.

As a caring school our teachers and support staff will not tolerate bullying in our school. Our aim is to have a school, which is safe, secure and happy. We will act swiftly when a case of bullying occurs. Reported incidents will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated.

Our Definition of Bullying Behaviour

Bullying can be described as being a deliberate act done to cause distress in order to give a feeling of power status or other gratification to the bully.

NIABF define bullying as” repeated use of power by one or more persons intentionally to hurt, harm or adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others”

It can range from a number of things which casts a shadow over a child's life, or a series of such incidents.

1. Emotional bullying – being deliberately unfriendly, excluding an individual from peer group, tormenting, staring out, stealing, writing nasty notes.
2. Physical bullying – hitting, kicking, “horseplay”, stealing, spitting, biting, pinching, scratching, elbowing and tripping also hitting, damaging or destroying personal property.
3. Verbal/Written bullying – verbal threats, taunting, name calling, sectarian or racist remarks or writing, malicious rumours, verbal asides in class, teasing, spoiling games, annoying by interrupting, conning, writing on books or unkind notes.
4. Extortion bullying – demanding money, personal property or homework.
5. Non Verbal bullying – pulling faces, threatening gestures which carry intimidatory messages, being selfish, leaving out of games, giving dirty looks

and talking behind back. Getting people into trouble, spitting, ignoring, irritating and wetting people.

6. Cyber and text bullying-the use of mobile phones to send threatening, offensive or upsetting messages.

NIABF describe bullying behaviour as

- Repetitive and persistent
- Intentionally harmful
- Has an imbalance of power
- Causes distress

Aims

- To clarify for pupils, staff and parents that bullying is always unacceptable and is regarded by the school as a serious offence. In some instances it can have legal consequences.
- To create a feeling of confidence and safety throughout the school.
- To encourage an environment where individuals, can develop without fear and fulfil their true potential.
- To emphasise the importance of and to strengthen communication links between parents and the school.
- To foster an ethos of responsibility and caring among staff and pupils irrespective of race, creed or age.
- To value children's opinions and involve them, where appropriate, in determining school policy and rules.
- To show an awareness of children's individual needs and to make an effort to meet these.
- To involve all members of staff in creating a "listening school".
- The school emphasises the importance of and encourages the earliest possible reporting of bullying by the victim, or fellow pupils to any member of staff.

In Fair Hill staff, parents and children work together to create and maintain a happy, caring, learning environment. Bullying, either verbal, physical or indirect will not be tolerated. It is everyone's responsibility to aim to prevent occurrences of bullying and to deal with any incidents quickly and effectively.

Responding to a bullying concern

Our staff at Fair Hill will adopt a positive mind set when responding to bullying concerns.

They will be prepared with options for how to respond to incidents of bullying in a planned, deliberate and positive way. Confronting pupils who have shown bullying behaviour requires a high amount of self-control as well as preparation to know what to say and do. The following are important factors when managing a bullying situation.

Be calm. It is important to be clear thinking and emotionally in control.

Be positive. Have in mind the importance of maintaining a positive relationship with the pupil. A pupil is much more likely to modify his/her behaviour if he/she perceives that a teacher cares.

Be assertive. Staff should directly and clearly express their thoughts, feelings and expectations concerning the need for the pupil to not only stop bullying, but also make restitution with the child who has been bullied.

Be confident. It is important to trust that you will be successful in implementing practices that can have an impact on the pupil's future behaviour. It is always helpful to focus on the behaviour, not the pupil.

Ensure that the specific behaviour is in fact bullying behaviour which conforms to the school's agreed definition of bullying as identified in the school's current anti-bullying policy.

Assess the situation and its severity level. Determine the appropriate level of response required to manage the situation effectively.

Once the Incident Level has been determined, select one or more appropriate strategies.

Possible Signs

We aim to educate staff and parents about the signs and symptoms of bullying. Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming anxious or nervous, feigning illness, loss of appetite, withdrawn demeanour or become emotionally volatile. They may also show changes in their work patterns, may have damaged clothing or belongings, may lack concentration or even truant from school, may become irritable and aggressive and lose confidence.

We also aim to ascertain from teachers, parents and pupils the extent and nature of perceived problems, to establish clearly understood lines of communication both within the school and from home to school, so that those who are bullied know to whom they can go for assistance.

Teachers will be encouraged to incorporate materials into their teaching which will help pupils think about the problems of bullying. Taking part in Anti-Bullying week to raise awareness each year.

STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH BULLYING

The following is a series of actions available to staff depending on the perceived seriousness of the situation.

The emphasis is always on a caring, listening approach as bullies are often victims too, that may be why they show bullying behaviour.

Fair Hill follows the advice given by the Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying forum (NIABF)

If bullying comes to the attention of any teacher these procedures should be followed:-

- Teacher makes preliminary investigations and gathers all the facts
- Teacher reports incident to Principal, Vice Principal or designated teacher as soon as possible.
- The school checks that the behaviour constitutes bullying as defined in our current policy.
- The school will then fill in the Bullying Concern Assessment Form.
- From the initial assessment the principal will chose the appropriate level of intervention

1. Low level
2. Intermediate level
3. Complex bullying behaviours
4. High Risk bullying behaviours

- A full written report of the incident will be recorded as soon as possible after the event.

Level 1

Interventions at Level 1 are to help individuals to recognise/reflect on their unacceptable behaviour and to “get them back on track” while listening to and supporting/strengthening the pupil(s) experiencing bullying. We **NEVER ignore low level bullying behaviour**.

- Explain the inappropriateness of the behaviour in line with the school’s values.
- Identify possible consequences if the bullying behaviour continues.
- Point out the level of distress experienced by the bullied pupil.
- Talk with the pupil being bullied to explore whether he/she has in any way provoked the bullying behaviour.
- Help the bullied pupil to identify ways in which he/she may be strengthened and supported, e.g. peer support.
- Encourage reparation to be made, if appropriate.
- Monitor the situation carefully.
- Be prepared to intervene with a higher response level if the situation persists or deteriorates.

Some of the techniques we would use at level 1 are

- Rights respecting Script
- Rule Reminder Script
- Expectation Discussion
- Restorative questioning
- Worth a re think (for both parties)
- Shared Control Discussion
- Think Time discussion

Level 2

While interventions at Level 2 involve continuing with the above, there is shift from individual support to group interventions. To be effective small group work needs:

- The consent and involvement of the pupil being bullied.
- To be planned and timetabled, session length dependent on age and ability.
- Parental / carer consent and agreement from participating pupils.
- Carefully selected group membership.
- To take place in a suitable and comfortable environment.
- To be uninterrupted.
- To be facilitated in a positive manner, ideally by two adults whose roles may alternate allowing one to participate and one to observe.
- Structured and focused activities using active learning approaches to stimulate discussion and debate amongst members and develop group identity.
- Decision and outcomes to be agreed and recorded, e.g. on a flipchart.

- To facilitate the development of empathy amongst pupils.
- A solution focused approach to the situation.
- To provide opportunities for pupils to take responsibility.
- Regular meetings of the group.
- Regular meetings with the bullied pupil to assess ongoing effectiveness of agreed actions.
- To ensure regular feedback is given on agreed actions.

Some of the techniques we would use at level 2 are;

- Quality Circles
- Support group method

Level 3

Interventions at Level 3 will often involve the Pastoral Coordinator, SENCO, and other senior managers, in collaboration with pupil(s) and parents to determine the way forward in affecting change. Schools may use their individual Risk Assessment procedures which will determine a plan of intervention and risk management that will be communicated to all.

This planning may occur through a multi-agency discussion, involving EA Services and other external support agencies. The manner in which teachers and others are involved in planning and how they are kept informed about the implementation of the plans will vary.

Bullying at this level often involves complex group dynamics, where a number of roles are evident, such as those displaying bullying behaviour, bystanders and pupils experiencing bullying. Consequently, interventions may require one-to-one meetings, small group work and whole class involvement. These will often require group interventions as discussed in Level 2 and/or The PIKAS Method of Shared Concern along with individual support and strength building programmes.

Level 4

Bullying behaviours assessed as Level 4 are severe and involve a significant threat to the safety and welfare of any or all of the pupils involved. Such severe bullying concerns may be new or may have proved resistant to earlier school interventions and have now been assessed as high risk. Incidents at this level must be assessed in relation to the risk posed to any/all of the pupils involved. As such, the school's Child Protection policy and safeguarding procedures will need to be invoked. Advice and support will be available to schools through the Child Protection Support Service for Schools.

In addition to safeguarding procedures and practices including referral to external support services, the school's interventions at Level 4 should continue to implement interventions detailed at Level 3 as appropriate.

At this level the techniques we would use are

- Risk Assessments
- Involvement of outside agencies
- Strength building exercises

Other general techniques which may be used are:

- **Discussions with the victim.** This will require patience and understanding. Remember -LISTEN -BELIEVE –ACT.
- **Identify the child with bullying behaviour:** Obtain evidence from witnesses, if possible.
- **Discussions with the child or group.** Confront them with the details and ask them to tell the truth about the situation/incident. Make it clear that any form of bullying is totally unacceptable at Fair Hill.
- **If they own up** follow the procedure outlined below and in the Positive behaviour policy
- **If they do not own up,** investigate further. If it is clear they are lying, continue with the procedure. Children usually own up eventually if presented with all the facts.
- Separate discussions with parents of bully and victim may be initiated at an appropriate stage.
- Sanctions for the child with bullying behaviours will be those outlined in the Positive Behaviour Policy.
- Continue monitoring the situation by observing at playtimes/lunch-times and having discussions with the victim to ensure no repetition.
- As the behaviour improves, then sanctions may be removed and the child should be praised for good behaviour. This will rebuild the child's self-esteem, which may have been damaged after being caught bullying, or may have been low anyhow, hence the bullying.
- Counselling may be recommended.

The Principal must be informed immediately of any serious episode, such as physical violence through which one pupil is hurt by another or any episode in which a group sets upon one pupil.

All of the techniques above are explained in more detail in the NIABF anti bullying file found in the principal's office.

Teachers dealing with these episodes should remain aware that:

- If a pupil has been involved in causing hurt it is vital for the counselling teacher to do everything in their power to help the pupil to acquire a deeper understanding of their motives and attitudes towards people and to become aware of and sensitive to the feelings and needs of others.
- While a pupil has been involved in bullying may appear to have ceased these activities, such behaviour patterns and character traits are hard to eradicate.
- Close but inconspicuous surveillance of the victim should be maintained for some time as trouble can erupt months after the original episode.

IDENTIFICATION

In order to identify incidents of bullying behaviour at Fair Hill, we have agreed to carry out the following strategies:

- All staff watch for early signs of distress in pupils. All staff, listen, believe, act.
- I Have Something to Say/Worry boxes in school where children can put written notes if they feel they cannot speak about their problem.

- Posters in school advertising these measures and dissuading children from bullying. The Childline telephone number to be displayed clearly in school.
- In all cases of confirmed or suspected bullying behaviour the Principal should be informed immediately before any action is taken.

The School's Response

- Staff, pupils and parents have a shared responsibility in any proactive strategy for counteracting bullying.
- Prevention and action taken in cases of reported bullying are two strands in the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Various means are taken to help prevent the occurrence of bullying.
- The academic as well as the pastoral curriculum is used to raise awareness of and to develop anti-bullying attitudes, values and skills among the pupils – in poetry, prose, drama, role play, surveys, etc.
- The pastoral programme includes work to help improve their self-esteem and social skills and to encourage them to have self-confidence to reject bullying behaviour by other people.
- Peer-group pressure is used to discourage bullying and pupils are helped to become more assertive without using threats and violence.
- All adults in the school play a vital role as role models, as reflected in their treatment of pupils and in their behaviour to each other.
- The school makes the expected standards and appropriate ways of behaving clear to pupils.
- The school premises are monitored regularly.

ADVICE TO PUPILS WHO FEEL THEY ARE BEING BULLIED

When you are being bullied:

- Be firm and clear -look them in the eye and tell them to stop.
- Get away from the situation as quickly as possible.
- Tell an adult what has happened straight away.

After you have been bullied:

- Tell a teacher or adult in your school.
- Tell your family.
- If you are afraid to tell an adult on your own take a friend with you.
- Keep on speaking until someone listens.
- Don't blame yourself for what has happened.

When you are talking to an adult about bullying be clear about:

- What has happened to you?
- How often it has happened?
- Who was involved?
- Who saw what was happening?
- Where it happened?
- What you have done about it already?

Individual Responsibilities

The issue of bullying is a matter of partnership including all pupils, staff and parents.

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

- To provide a safe environment for all children
- Promote an ethos of respect for the individual
- Encourage pupils to tell
- Take all aspects of bullying seriously
- Log all incidents
- Celebrate and promote good behaviour

Procedures for Dealing with incidents of Bullying Behaviour

- 1 Children will know who to talk to in the first instance. This will usually be their class teacher, but it could also be
 - Principal or Vice-Principal
 - A lunchtime Supervisory Assistant

The children must be given every opportunity to report the bullying in the first instance, but it will be the class teacher who will follow up allegations. Therefore, any other adult in a position of responsibility should feed back to the class teacher as soon as possible.

- 2 The class teacher takes steps to discuss the problem with the bullies to understand the situation, establish the facts and talk through any issues. An early resolution is sought using these tactics.
- 3 Both bullied and bullying parties are informed that the situation is being monitored by the class teacher/s concerned.
- 4 If there is no improvement, or further bullying behaviour occurs, the parents of the child bullying will be contacted in order to come into school to discuss the problem. During this discussion it will be clarified and reinforced that:
 - A zero tolerance policy is being adhered to.
 - If further bullying takes place, there is a real risk that the child with bullying behaviour will be suspended for a specified period of time in the first instance.
 - It is the behaviour that is not accepted, not the child
- 5 At the conclusion of the discussion clear expectations are laid down as to:
 - Expected behaviours and attitudes
 - Who they should report to and when
 - Who they should keep away from
 - What are the arrangements for daily routines
- 6 Individual circumstances will determine the precise arrangements to be made.
- 7 Support will be given to the child with bullying behaviour to raise their self-esteem and develop appropriate social skills.

The school will reserve the right to enlist the help of outside agencies such as EWO or Educational Psychology, Child Protection Team.

In extreme cases the use of child protection procedures will be considered.

PUPILS' ENTITLEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITY

"Children have the right to be protected from all forms of violence (physical and Mental). They must be kept from harm and they must be given proper care by those looking after them." (Article 19 UN Convention of the Rights of the Child 1992.)

In order to realise this, children need to be educated in an environment which:

- Is safe and caring;
- Provides challenges and is non-threatening;
- Encourages children to feel secure;
- Values children's opinions and involves them, where appropriate, in determining school policy and rules;
- Shows an awareness of children's individual needs and makes an effort to meet these.

Where schools create this ethos, pupils have a responsibility to:

- Treat all pupils, teachers and other staff with respect; behave correctly at all times during the day;
- Respect school property and the property of other pupils; follow the rules of the school;
- Refuse to engage in any bullying situation; if present when bullying occurs should:
 - ❖ Where appropriate, take some form of preventative action;
 - ❖ Report the incident or suspected incident.
 - ❖ Help break the code of secrecy which surrounds bullying.

PARENTS'/CARER'S ENTITLEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITY

Role of Parents/Carers

Parents are expected to work in partnership with the school in order to achieve better relationships between pupils:-

- Ensuring that their child respects and co-operates with teachers, ancillary staff and other pupils.
- Seeing that their child upholds the rules of the school.
- Contacting the school to report any concerns over bullying behaviour or suspicion of bullying behaviour as soon as that are aware of it.
- Support all aspects of the school ethos.
- Should regularly take time to listen to their child, to talk to them about what is happening from day to day and be aware of any suspicion that the pupil is being bullied. If there is any evidence of bullying contact the Principal immediately.
- All such disclosures will be acknowledged quickly and dealt with firmly but sensitively.
- In cases of serious bullying parents of the bully will be asked to take part in discussions about which strategies should be used and to support the action being taken by the school.

Parents/Carers are entitled to expect that:

- Their child will be educated in an atmosphere which is safe and caring and not characterised by violence and intimidation;
- They will be informed promptly of any incident of bullying regarding their child and that this will be dealt with confidentially;
- The school will take all reasonable steps to prevent bullying occurring;
- Any bullying incident which is reported will be investigated according to the school's guidelines;
- Any bullying incident that is found to have taken place will be dealt with in line with the school's guidelines;

Working in Partnership with Parents/Carers

Bullying is often reported to schools by parents/carers. Such complaints will be met openly and sympathetically.

Parents/carers participate in the development of the school's anti-bullying policy through Questionnaires and suggestion boxes

Parents/carers occasionally will express concern about their child's involvement in a bullying incident/situation, particularly if their child had been bullied. Fair Hill will take immediate action based on our policy when a concern is raised.

The school will often request a meeting with parents/carers regarding a bullying incident/ situation especially if it considers it above level 1.

Fair Hill will consider the following when meeting with the parents/carers of pupils bullying others:

Staff will acknowledge that the parent/carer may be under stress as a result of having to come into school to discuss an incident with a member of staff. A lot of sympathy will; have to be shown

We will remain understanding but firm if the parent/carer expresses anger directed at the school.

We will try to get clear facts from the parent/carer.

We will ensure that we have already gathered as much reliable information as possible and be clear with the parent/carer that the behaviour does represent bullying.

We will also ensure that the parents/carers understand how their child's behaviour conforms to the school's agreed definition of bullying.

We will also share our concern about what has been happening to the child experiencing bullying.

It is very important to avoid suggesting that it is the character of their child that is at fault. We will emphasise that it is aspects of their child's behaviour that must change and we will refer to their child's positive qualities.

We will be understanding but firm.

We must make it clear that we care about both parties and we will do what we can and will act in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy.

In the first instance we will tell the parent/carer that time will be required (be specific) to gather information and that we will keep them informed.

It is imperative that we avoid getting into an argument and do not blame the parent/carer for their child's behaviour.

TEACHERS' ENTITLEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITY

All teachers and other adults in the school community have the right to:

- Work in a positive environment where there is respect and fairness at all times;
- Truthfulness and honesty from pupils;
- Equal treatment from all staff and pupils;
- Co-operation from pupils and parents.

Teachers have a responsibility to ensure:

- The well-being of all the children in their care including:
- Making them feel secure;
- Bringing out their best qualities;
- Treating them impartially;
- The rules of the school are implemented consistently, fairly and reasonably.
- They help children to acquire the knowledge, skills and values that contribute to the development of non-bullying behaviour.

Links with other Policies

This anti-bullying policy should be seen as being closely linked to the school's Pastoral Care, Positive Behaviour/ Discipline and Child Protection Policies.

Monitoring and Reviewing the Effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy

The policy in general will be reviewed annually. The reported incidents will be reviewed over the same period with a view to establishing any potential pattern. The ultimate responsibility for the introduction and implementation of the policy remains with the Board of Governors. However, it is important to remember that staff, pupils and parents have an active part to play in the evolution, development and maintenance of this Policy.