

Addressing Bullying Policy

Over the years there has been an increasing degree of attention given to the issue of bullying type behaviours in schools. This high profile of bullying type behaviours has developed, in part, as a result of the increased damaging, long-term impact of serious exposure to bullying type behaviours. It has been given impetus by being linked to wider awareness of related childhood trauma, such as physical and sexual abuse.

Definition:

'Bullying type behaviours may be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, but the three main types are physical, verbal and emotional'.

ACPC, Regional Policies and Procedures

The more recent 'Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland, 2016 further details that bullying type behaviours type behaviours can take place 'on or off-line'

In order to draw up our policy relating to bullying type behaviours, we have made use of the Department of Education's publication: 'Pastoral Care in Schools - Promoting Positive Behaviour', Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools - A Guide for Schools, DENI, 2017 and the 'Addressing Bullying type behaviours in Schools Act' (Northern Ireland) 2016.

Purpose and Scope

This policy has been put in place to ensure that children in our Nursery School are able to learn in a safe, supportive and caring environment without fear of a child experiencing bullying type behaviours. It is only when issues of bullying type behaviours are addressed that children will be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available to them at Nursery School.

Our policy includes incidents which occur:

- on the premises of the school during the school day;
- on any planned Educational Visits outside of the Nursery School environment.

Important Information for Parents

Children in nursery are aged 3 and 4 and are at different stages of social and emotional development.

At this stage, children are still learning how to share, take turns, express feelings and manage their behaviour.

Not all unkind or challenging behaviour is considered bullying type behaviours. Occasional disagreements or impulsive actions are a normal part of early learning and development.

Bullying type behaviours are identified only when behaviours are repeated, intentional, targeted and involve a power imbalance. Staff carefully consider each situation within a developmental and safeguarding context and provide support for all children involved,

Types of Bullying type behaviours

Bullying type behaviours are always a potential risk where groups of children are placed together.

The following are unacceptable behaviours in our Nursery School BUT only constitute bullying type behaviours when they are recurrent/persistent, targeted with intent and where a power imbalance between children is evident.

- Physical bullying type behaviours - includes pushing, physical intimidation, punching/kicking and any other physical contact;
- Verbal bullying type behaviours - includes name calling, insults, jokes, threats, telling untruths about another child;
- Indirect bullying type behaviours - includes isolation, refusal to work with/talk to/play with/help others, interfering with personal property.

Possible Impact of Bullying type behaviours on our Children

"Bullying type behaviours can result in significant problems of low self-esteem, social isolation, anxiety and depression for the children and young people subjected to them."
Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (as updated 2024)

Aims of Addressing Bullying type behaviours in our Nursery School

At Ashgrove Nursery School, we aim to take positive action to prevent bullying type behaviours from occurring, through establishing a clear school policy.

- To show commitment to overcoming bullying type behaviours by practising zero tolerance.
- To make staff aware of their role in cultivating the knowledge, attitudes and strategies which will be required for success.
- To create a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidences of bullying type behaviours.
- To develop procedures for noting and reporting incidents of bullying type behaviours.
- To develop procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying type behaviours.
- To develop a strategy of support for those affected by bullying type behaviours and for those involved in bullying type behaviours.

Procedures

- All reports of bullying type behaviours will be investigated and addressed as appropriate.
- A record will be kept of all incidents of bullying type involving a child at our Nursery School;
- The teacher/assistant will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why, in a calm manner, setting an example of dealing effectively with the incident in a non-aggressive way to set a positive example for the children involved.
- If a group of children are involved, each member of the group will be listened to:
 - individually;
 - then collectively;
 - explain problem;
 - share responsibility as appropriate;
 - encourage solutions (relative to HighScope Approach to Conflict Resolution).
- Staff will facilitate a sensitive, restorative dialogue with both the child experiencing and the child demonstrating bullying-type behaviors, focusing on acknowledging distress and investigating the "what, where, when, who, and why" in a calm, non-aggressive manner to seek a positive solution.
- Listen to the other children involved in the situation;
- Explain the problem - seek solution/compromise;
- Staff will empower children with age-appropriate self-protection and resolution strategies—such as "using their words," walking away, or seeking adult help—to build resilience and prevent recurring incidents of bullying-type behaviour.
- Use curriculum and own personal example to reinforce the ethos of the school e.g. Role Play situations;
- Staff will maintain high levels of vigilance to identify early signs of bullying-type behaviours and ensure all reports are treated with immediate and professional seriousness.
- Endeavour to foster caring, considerate attitudes in all children and seek to facilitate co-operative play;
- Seek opportunities to build self-esteem and develop a positive sense of worth;
- Highlight examples to channel children's natural sympathy for their peer;
- Stress the importance of reporting undesirable incidents through play;

Teachers/Assistants will keep a note of incidents in behaviour concerns through daily observations.

Staff Code of Conduct with reference to Addressing bullying type behaviours amongst our children :

Staff will:

- Acknowledge the distress of the child experiencing bullying type behaviours;
- Use descriptive, objective language during conflict resolution.
- Address the bullying type behaviours clearly;

opportunities, small groups, whole class discussions.

Code of Conduct for our Children

Throughout the curriculum, both hidden and overt, our children will be encouraged to be respectful of others, themselves and resources. Our general child expectations are set out below (see also Positive Behaviour Policy for specific Code of Conduct for children at different times).

- We use our walking feet in Nursery School;
- We sit on the chairs;
- Sand stays in the sand tray;
- Water stays in the water tray;
- We mop or brush up our spills;
- We use our kind hands in Nursery;
- We use kind words when talking to each other;
- We share and work together.

While recognizing that young children are still learning to work and play together, we use daily group activities to foster positive relationships where bullying-type behaviour is not tolerated and children are encouraged to speak out if they or others feel distressed.

Parental Involvement

- All parents/guardians will be made aware of the Nursery School's Safeguarding Policies through our Induction Evening, Monthly news, Website, daily contact and access to policies at all times.
- The policy is sent to all parents in September.

- All parents/guardians will be made aware of the Addressing Bullying type behaviours Policy in operation through a copy of the policy being provided in the Entrance Hallway, by requesting more information online or directly through a member of staff;
- In the event of a bullying type behaviours incident arising, parents/guardians of children displaying bullying type behaviours and their peer/s that are involved will be informed and matters discussed;
- Any situations identified will be dealt with through appropriate action and support;
- Through regular contact, the Principal and Class Teacher will ensure that children, parents and staff are continually aware of the policy in operation.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This Policy will be monitored in an ongoing way within the self-evaluative culture of the school.

See also:

- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- eSafety and Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy
- Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy
- Child Protection/Safeguarding Record Keeping Policy
- Child Protection/Safeguarding Record Retention and Disposal Policy
- Use of Reasonable Force Policy

At Ashgrove Nursery School, we are dedicated to providing a secure, happy, and inclusive environment where every child feels safe, supported, and free from threat or harassment. We believe every child has the right to learn in an atmosphere free from bullying-type behaviours, and we

maintain a culture where such actions are never tolerated. Creating this positive school community is a collective responsibility, and we expect everyone involved in our school to play their part in upholding these values.

This Policy was first adopted by the Governors on 26th June 2017.

It was last reviewed on April 2025 and will continue to be reviewed on an annual basis or prior to this date should the need arise.

It will be reviewed again on April 2027.