



# **St. Mary's Primary School & Nursery Unit, Killyclogher**

## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

Review of Policy	January 2022
Ratification of Policy by the Board of Governors	April 2022
Next Review Date	June 2025

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## Section 1 – Introduction and Statement

***“Children have the right to be protected from all forms of violence. They must be kept from harm and they must be given proper care by those looking after them.”***

*Article 19 UN Convention on the Rights Of the Child 1992*

Our Vision states:

In St. Mary’s Primary School and Nursery Unit, Killyclogher, we strive to develop each child’s full potential in a climate where everyone feels accepted, protected, respected and valued.

In our school, we believe that all forms of bullying behaviour are unacceptable. All members of the school community are completely opposed to bullying behaviour and will not tolerate it. All pupils have the right to learn in a safe and supported environment and we all have a responsibility to contribute, in whatever way we can, to the protection and maintenance of such an environment. This Anti-Bullying Policy aims to create an ethos in which attending school is a positive experience for all pupils.

## Section 2 – Context

At St. Mary’s Primary School and Nursery Unit, we have based our Anti-Bullying Policy on the following legislative and policy 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)

At St. Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit, we take the legal definition of bullying from the 'Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016':

**Definition of "bullying"**

1—(1) 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.

For the purposes of subsection (1), 'act' includes omission.

This Act places a duty on the Board of Governors to put in place measures to prevent bullying behaviour, in consultation with pupils and parents.

The Board of Governors will adhere to the following guidelines from the 'Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016' and will secure measures to prevent bullying as follows:

(a) Ensure that policies designed to prevent bullying involving a registered pupil at the school are pursued at the school;

(b) Determine the measures to be taken at the school (whether by the Board of Governors, the staff of the school or other persons) with a view to preventing bullying involving a registered pupil at the school—

(i) on the premises of the school during the school day;

(ii) while travelling to or from the school during the school term;

(iii) while the pupil is in the lawful control or charge of a member of the staff of the school; or

(iv) while the pupil is receiving educational provision arranged on behalf of the school and provided elsewhere than on the premises of the school;

(c) Review those measures at intervals of no more than 4 years or at such times as the Department of Education may direct.

(d) Before determining or revising those measures, consult (in such manner as appears to it to be appropriate) the principal and the registered pupils at the school and the parents of those pupils;

(e) In determining or reviewing those measures, have due regard to any guidance given by the Department;

(f) Prepare a written statement of such measures and secure that:

(i) a copy of that statement is given or otherwise made available, free of charge and in such form as the Board of Governors considers appropriate, to the parents of all registered pupils at the school and to the staff of the school; and

(ii) copies of the statement are available for inspection at the school at all reasonable times, free of charge and in such form as the Board of Governors considers appropriate; and

(g) secure that such measures are taken.

(2) Consider measures to be taken at the school (whether by the Board of Governors, the staff of the school or other persons) with a view to preventing bullying involving a registered pupil at the school which

(a) involves the use of electronic communication;

(b) takes place in circumstances other than those listed in subsection (1)(b); and

(c) is likely to have a detrimental effect on that pupil's education at the school.

The 'Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016' requires schools to record all incidents of bullying behaviour and alleged bullying incidents.

Duty to keep a record of incidents of bullying

(1) The Board of Governors of a grant-aided school must ensure that a record is kept of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying involving a registered pupil at the school that occur:

(a) on the premises of the school during the school day;

(b) while travelling to or from the school during the school term; **(ultimately parents are responsible for ensuring their children are not engaging in bullying acts/incidents while travelling to or from the school during the school term)**

(c) while the pupil is in the lawful control or charge of a member of the staff of the school; or

(d) while the pupil is receiving educational provision arranged on behalf of the school and provided elsewhere than on the premises of the school.

(2) A record under subsection (1) must:

(a) state what, from all of the circumstances, appears to be the motivation of the incident;

(b) state the methods of bullying,

(c) include information about how the incident was addressed.

(3) For the purposes of subsection (2)(a), motivation may, for example, relate to—

(a) differences of religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, sex, sexual orientation or marital status;

(b) differences between persons with a disability and persons without;

(c) differences between persons with dependants and persons without;

(d) differences between persons based on gender reassignment;

(e) differences between persons based on pregnancy.

### Section 3 – Ethos and Principles

At St. Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit, we have based our Anti-Bullying Policy on our school ethos and principles which underpin everything we do:

- We are committed to a society where children and young people can live free and safe from bullying.
- We believe in a society where bullying is unacceptable and where every child and young person is safe and feels safe from bullying.
- 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.
- 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.
- We are committed to a preventative, responsive and restorative anti-bullying ethos across the whole school.
- We believe that every child and young person should be celebrated in their diversity.

### Section 4 – Consultation and Participation

Our Anti-Bullying Policy will be formed in consultation with pupils and their parents/carers, in compliance with the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016.

Pupils will be involved through the following consultation processes:

- Pupil Council
- Consultative workshops with pupils as appropriate by age
- Questionnaires for pupils
- Class-based activities

Parents/guardians will be involved through the following consultation processes:

- Electronic survey
- Information displayed on the school website and via social media channels, for which we will welcome feedback
- Direct engagement with parents/guardians with the opportunity to feed back views and provide input

Staff members will be involved through the following consultation processes:

- Direct feedback and input
- Engagement activity at meetings and on School Development Days
- Electronic survey

## Section 5 – What is Bullying?

At St. Mary’s Primary School and Nursery Unit, we take the legal definition of bullying from the ‘Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016’:

### Definition of “bullying”

1—(1) 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.

For the purposes of subsection (1), ‘act’ includes omission.

In our school, we will, therefore, use the following definition based on the above legal definition:

**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.**

We believe that while bullying is usually repeated behaviour, there are instances of one-off incidents that the school will 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;
- cognitive and special educational needs considerations, imbalance of power, age and size.

Any incidents which are not considered by the school as bullying behaviour will be addressed under the school's 'Promoting Positive Behaviour' Policy.

At St. Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit, Killyclogher, the following unacceptable behaviours on the school premises 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
  - making threats to others
  - calling another pupil mean and hurtful names
  - telling lies or spread false rumours about others
  - trying 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
  - making signs and gestures
- ***Omission (Exclusion)***
  - Leaving someone out of a game, deliberately and repeatedly
  - Refusing to include someone in group work, deliberately and repeatedly
- ***Electronic Acts (ON OUR SCHOOL PREMISES)***
  - 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 online (e.g. photographs or videos) to embarrass someone

Whilst these lists are not exhaustive, behaviours which fit with the definition may be considered bullying behaviour.

At St. Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit, we acknowledge the various motivations behind bullying, including those named in the Act.

These include, but are not limited to:

- Age
- Appearance
- Breakdown in peer relationships
- Social and economic status
- Community background
- Political affiliation
- Gender identity
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy
- Marital status
- Race
- Religion
- Disability / SEN
- Ability
- Looked After Child status
- Young Carer status

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 child by describing the situation surrounding that child, for example:

- A child displaying bullying behaviours;
- A child experiencing bullying behaviours or the target of bullying behaviours.

We encourage all members of the school community to use this language when discussing bullying incidents.

'Harm' within this Policy is defined as:

- Emotional or psychological harm intentionally causing distress or anxiety by scaring, humiliating or affecting adversely a pupil's self-esteem.



- Physical harm intentionally hurting a pupil by causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts.

## **Section 6 – Preventative Measures**

At St. Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit, we aim to promote a strong anti-bullying ethos within the school and the wider school community. Our shared aim is to prevent bullying and create a safe learning environment.

Examples of these preventative strategies include:

- Raising awareness and understanding of our positive behaviour expectations, as set out in the 'Positive Behaviour Policy';
- Promotion of anti-bullying messages through the curriculum e.g. 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, PSNI workshops;
- Involvement in meaningful and supportive Shared Education projects supporting pupils to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity;
- Through the preventative curriculum, actively promoting positive emotional health and wellbeing (e.g. PATHS school-wide programme, NSPCC "Speak out stay safe" programme, Action Mental Health, Tara Counselling);
- Participation in the annual Anti-Bullying Week activities;
- Engagement in key national and regional campaigns, e.g. Safer Internet Day;
- Development of peer-led systems e.g. Pupil Council or Digital Leaders 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, Playground PALS, inclusion of specific resources 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;
- Provision and promotion of extra-curricular activities, aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks. For example, sporting activity, creative arts, leisure and games, etc.
- E-Safety Policy routinely issued to parents and available on the school website.

The above list is not exhaustive.

## **Travelling to and from school**

Ultimately, parents are responsible in ensuring their children behave appropriately on the way to and from school.

Working with parents, we take preventative measures to educate against inappropriate behaviour on the way to and from school. Whilst many of the measures outlined above will support the development of an anti-bullying culture, there are a number of ways we further build upon this including:

- 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 (e.g. staff duty at school gate, where appropriate).

### **Positive use of Electronic Communication by pupils outside school hours**

Ultimately, parents are responsible in ensuring steps to prevent bullying via electronic communication amongst pupils.

As the pupils in our school are under the age of 12, it is the responsibility of parents and guardians to be fully aware of what their child is doing online. Parents are also responsible for the age restrictions that are evident for social media applications. The schools "DUTY OF CARE" will not be used in situations where pupils behave inappropriately on platforms as this is the responsibility of parents.

Should incidents of online bullying and abuse be reported to our school by a concerned parent, we will advise these parents as to how to report this behaviour to the appropriate authority, i.e. the PSNI.

If evidence of aspects of bullying become integrated into school life, we will play an active role.

### **IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS TO KEEP THEIR CHILD SAFE FROM INTERNET BULLYING WHILST AT HOME.**

In conjunction with this, we at St. Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit, Killyclogher, take preventative measures to educate against online bullying by:

- 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 (e.g. 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. Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy, Mobile Devices Policy etc.)

It is important to remember that our Anti-Bullying Policy is one of a number of policies in the wider pastoral care and safeguarding suite of policies.

We ensure our policies align and provide consistent messages for parents and pupils. The measures set out here, to prevent bullying behaviour through the use of electronic

communication, is also included in our school's E-Safety Policy and Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy.

## **Section 7 – Responsibility**

Everyone in the St. Mary's school community, including pupils, their parents/guardians/carers and the staff of the school are expected to respect the rights of others to be safe.

Everyone has a responsibility to work together to:

- foster positive self-esteem;
- behave towards others in a mutually respectful way;
- model high standards of personal 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 – within school and at home;
- resolve difficulties in restorative ways to prevent recurring bullying behaviour and meet the needs of all parties.

## **Section 8 – Reporting a Bullying Concern**

At St. Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit, we aim to promote a strong anti-bullying ethos within the school and the wider school community. In this climate we ensure pupils, parents - and anyone else with concerns - can make these known to the school. Pupils will be encouraged to raise concerns with any member of staff, including teaching and non-teaching staff.

### **Pupils reporting a concern**

At St. Mary's pupils can raise concerns by:

- talking to a member of staff;
- writing a note to a member of staff;
- or by posting a comment in a 'Worry Box'.

ANY pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing this behaviour. Through the preventative work taken forward under Section 6, this message should focus on 'getting help' rather than 'telling'. As such, all pupils should be encouraged to

'get help' if they have a concern about bullying that they experience, or is experienced by another.

### **Parents/Guardians Reporting a Concern**

At St. Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit, Killyclogher, parents and guardians should raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour with the school at the earliest opportunity.

Parents/guardians are reminded of the need to encourage their children to react appropriately to bullying behaviour and to not do anything to retaliate or to 'hit back'.

Parents/guardians are reminded that, whilst on school premises they should ensure they follow school protocol and NEVER address issues with a child. Please follow the school procedures described below.

The process of parents/guardians raising/reporting bullying concerns:

- In the first instance, all bullying concerns should be reported 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 directly to the Vice-Principal or Principal.
- Where the parent/guardian remains dissatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the school's Complaints Procedure should be followed. (Please refer to the ***Complaints Policy*** available on the school website)

Whilst the majority of reports of bullying concerns will come from pupils and their parents/guardians, our school is open to receiving such reports from anyone.

All reports of bullying concerns received from pupils and/or parents/guardians 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 actions taken in relation to a pupil can be disclosed to anyone other than the pupil and his/her parents/guardians.**

### **Section 9 – Responding to a Bullying Concern**

The processes outlined below provide a framework for how St. Mary's Primary School and Nursery Unit, Killyclogher, will respond to any bullying concerns identified.

Using the Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF) 'Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour' resource, the member of staff responsible will use some/all of the following strategies:

- Clarify facts and perceptions;
- Check records;
- 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;
- Track, monitor and record effectiveness of interventions;

- Review outcome of interventions;
- Select and implement further intentions as necessary.

NIABF advocates a **restorative** approach to responding to bullying behaviour. Interventions suggested in the 'Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour' resource will be adapted when responding to the behaviour, resolving the concern and restoring the well-being of those involved.

*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. Refer to Positive Behaviour Management Policy for consequences used.*

It must be noted that information regarding any action taken regarding a pupil **cannot be disclosed to anyone** other than that pupil and his/her parents/guardians.

## **Section 10 – Recording**

The school will 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.

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 data 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**

At St. Mary's, we recognise the need for appropriate and adequate training for staff, including teaching and non-teaching school staff. This includes:

- appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school's ongoing CPD/PRSD provisions;
- training on both the Policy and its procedures detailing any amendments made, inclusions added etc. and any impact on related policies;
- Safeguarding training for Governors and all teaching and non-teaching staff.

## **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
- Child Protection Policy

- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy
- E-Safety Policy & Acceptable Use of Internet Policy
- Mobile Devices Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers

### **Section 13 - Monitoring and Review of Policy**

At St. Mary's, we monitor the effectiveness of our school's Anti-Bullying Policy. The Board of Governors shall:

- maintain a standing item on the Agenda of each Meeting 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.

This Anti-Bullying Policy shall be reviewed as required, in consultation with all stakeholders, on or before 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025.