



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Gilnahirk Primary School

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RATIONALE

At Gilnahirk Primary School we believe that all forms of bullying behaviour are unacceptable. We believe that all pupils have the right to learn in a safe and supportive environment. We strive at all times to create an environment where there is mutual respect, where each person is valued as an individual and pastoral care is an integral part of education. Each pupil will be encouraged to fulfil his or her moral, intellectual, spiritual, physical, social, aesthetic and emotional potential.

Context

This policy has been developed within the following relevant legislative and policy framework. This includes:

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 key points to note are:

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;
- ✓ Requires that the policy be updated at least every four years.

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 (e.g. school trip);
- ✓ When receiving education organised by school but happening elsewhere (e.g. in another school in the ALC).

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)

Consultation and Participation

This policy has been developed in consultation with the school community, in compliance with the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016.

What is Bullying?

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 provides schools with a legal definition which states;

Addressing Bullying in Schools Definition of "bullying":

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.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), "act" includes omission. (When someone has been left out or excluded, with the aim of causing harm).

***Physical and Emotional Harm**

In determining 'harm' we define:

- 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.

Therefore, in summary, according to the Gilnahirk Primary School Anti-Bullying Policy;

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.

One-off incidents

While bullying is usually repeated behaviour, there are situations when one-off incidents, in line with the legislation, will be considered 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 Behaviour Policy.

What is bullying behaviour?

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 pupils**

Physical acts

- ✓ **hitting**
- ✓ **spitting**
- ✓ **kicking**
- ✓ **pushing**
- ✓ **shoving**
- ✓ **causing material harm, such as taking/stealing money or possessions or causing damage to possessions**
- ✓ **threats of violence**

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**
- ✓ **Using online tools to create fake photographs, videos etc.**

It should be noted that this list is not exhaustive and that other behaviours which fit with the definition may be considered bullying behaviour.

The various motivations behind bullying.

These include, but are not limited to:

- Age
- Appearance
- Breakdown in peer relationships
- Community background
- Political affiliation
- Gender identity
- Sexual orientation
- 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' (but as a child 'displaying bullying behaviours') nor will we refer to a child as 'a victim' (but as a child 'experiencing bullying behaviours'). Instead, we will refer to the child 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 discussing bullying incidents.

Definitions of harm

In determining 'harm' we define:

- ✓ ***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.***

Preventative Measures

Within the school community here at Gilnahirk Primary School we aim to promote a strong anti-bullying ethos.

Below are a number of key actions that will be taken forward, with the aim of preventing bullying and creating a safe learning environment:

- ✓ Raising awareness and understanding of the positive behaviour expectations, as set out in the 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
- ✓ Through the preventative curriculum actively promote positive emotional health and wellbeing (e.g. mindfulness themed days, Five Ways Fridays etc)
- ✓ Participation in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities;
- ✓ Engagement in key national and regional campaigns, eg Safer Internet Day etc.;
- ✓ Development of peer-led systems (such as the school buddy system) to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messaging within the school;
- ✓ Development of effective strategies for playground management, eg. training for supervisors, zoning of playgrounds, 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;
- ✓ Development of effective strategies for the management of unstructured times (eg. break time, lunch);
- ✓ Provision and promotion of extra- and co-curricular activities, aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks. For example, sporting activity, creative arts, leisure and games, etc.;

Preventing bullying behaviour on the way to and from school.

Gilnahirk Primary School also promotes an anti-bullying culture on the journey to and from school. This includes:

- ✓ 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;
- ✓ Promotion of key anti-bullying messages and awareness of behaviour expectations of pupils amongst the school community
- ✓ Appropriate deployment of staff to support the transition from school day to arrival in school/journey home (eg. staff duty at school gate/bus stops, where appropriate).

Online Bullying -

Online bullying can be through the use of hardware such as computers and smartphones, and software such as social media, messaging, texts, websites and other online platforms. Online bullying can happen at any time. It can be in public or in private where it is only known to the target and the person displaying bullying behaviours. The school reserves the right to take steps to prevent bullying behaviour through the use of electronic communication amongst pupils at any time during term time, where that behaviour is likely to have a detrimental effect on a pupil's learning at school.

The school raises awareness of the nature and impact of online bullying in a number of ways and supports pupils to make use of the internet safely, responsibly and respectfully. This includes:

- Addressing key themes of online behaviour and risk through ICT / 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 (eg. Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy etc).

Given the nature of technology, as constantly changing and developing, it is important that schools monitor policy and message and make changes when necessary.

Responsibility

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

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.
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Reporting a Bullying Concern

Any pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing this behaviour. Pupils will be encouraged to seek help if they have a concern about bullying that they experience or is experienced by another pupil or groups of pupils.

Pupils Reporting a Concern

Pupils can report a bullying concern:

- Verbally- talking to any member of staff; teaching or non-teaching
- By writing a note to a member of staff (eg. in a homework diary);
- By sending a seesaw message or email to a teacher;
- By posting a comment in a class worry box, where appropriate.

Parents/Carers Reporting a Concern

Parents should raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour with the school at the earliest opportunity. The school would remind parents/carers of the need to encourage their children to react appropriately to bullying behaviour and to not do anything to retaliate or to 'hit back'.

The process of reporting bullying concerns is as follows:

- 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 to the Vice-Principal.
- Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken by the Vice-Principal to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to Principal.

Where the parent/carer remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the school's complaints procedure should be followed. This usually involves making a formal, written complaint, to the Chair of the Board of Governors.

F.A.O. Chairman of the Board of Governors
c/o Gilnahirk Primary School
148 Gilnahirk Road
Belfast
BT5 7QQ

While the majority of reports of bullying concerns will come from pupils and their parents/carers, the school must be open to receiving such reports from anyone.

All reports of bullying concerns received from pupils and/or parents/carers will be responded to in line with this policy and that feedback will be made to the person who made the report. 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.

Responding to a Bullying Concern

The processes outlined below provide a framework for how the school will respond to any bullying concerns identified.

Using the NIABF (Northern Ireland Anti Bullying Forum) Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource, the member of staff responsible shall:

- Clarify facts and perceptions;
- Check records (SIMS/Behaviour Management Module);
- 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 in line with guidance provided by NIABF;
<http://www.endbullying.org.uk/effective-responses-to-bullying-behaviour/>;
- Track, monitor and record effectiveness of interventions;
- Review outcome of interventions;
- Select and implement further interventions 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.

As previously explained, information pertaining to any action taken regarding a pupil cannot be disclosed to anyone other than that pupil and his/her parent or carers.

Recording

As set out in the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016, a record of all incidents of bullying and alleged bullying behaviour will be maintained.

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 on the online SIMS Behaviour Management Module & in a Private Folder, which are part of the C2k system in schools. 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.

Professional Development of Staff

As a school, we recognise the need for appropriate and adequate training for staff, including teaching and non-teaching school staff. For example:

- staff will be provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development in this area, as part of the school's ongoing CPD/PRSD provisions;

- following any training it may be necessary to make amendments to the policy;
- opportunities for safeguarding training will be afforded to Governors and all staff – teaching and non-teaching;
- CPD records will be kept and updated regularly.

Monitoring and Review of 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.

This Anti-Bullying Policy will be reviewed every four years. However, the policy will be reviewed following any incident which highlights the need for such a review. It will also be reviewed if directed to by the Department of Education and in light of new guidance.

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/Pastoral Care Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- E-Safety Policy & Acceptable Use of Internet Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Educational Visits
- Staff Code of Conduct

Members of the school safeguarding team:

- ✓ Mr David Corbett (Principal and Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection)
- ✓ Mr Gary Halliday (Vice Principal)
- ✓ Mrs Thelma Johnston (Pastoral Care coordinator and Designated teacher for Child Protection)
- ✓ Mrs Louise McCaffrey (Special Educational Needs Coordinator – SENCo)
- ✓ Mr Alan Morrow (Designated Governor for Child Protection)