



St Patrick's Primary School

Anti-Bullying Policy

Section 1 - Introduction and Statement

We the staff of St. Patrick's Primary School accept that we have a significant role to play in the emotional and personal development of our pupils.

We believe that education should promote understanding, respect for all, kindness and friendship

At St. Patrick's P.S. 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.

We will investigate bullying incidents which occur during the hours in which pupils are in the school care.

REPORTED BUS INCIDENTS. We will inform EA Transport of any alleged bullying incidents and teachers will discuss issues whole class..

Section 2 - Context

Our school community repudiates bullying behaviour of any kind.

Our policy is informed and guided by current legislation and DE guidance listed below:

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 \(UNCRC\)](#)

Section 3 - Ethos & Principles

At St Patrick's P.S. school;

- * We are committed to a society where children and young people can live free and safe from bullying.
- * We believe that every child and young person should be celebrated in their diversity.
- * We are committed to a preventative, responsive and restorative anti-bullying ethos across the whole school.
- * 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.
- * The school participates in anti-bullying week activities.
- * Through consistent implementation of our positive behaviour policy, our school currently sets high standards for behaviour.
- * Carries out regular checks to ensure that these expectations are being met and identify areas of concern i.e hot spots.
- * Active promoting good behaviour and an open and inclusive and a mutually respectful working environment ensuring high levels of pupil participation through promotion of an active school council.
- * Works in partnership with parents and carers through a system of open communication. Implements whole school rewards system which consistent acknowledges, affirms and celebrates positive behaviour and achievement.
- * Promotes confidence, self-reliance, resilience and effective inter personal skills through effective delivery of the PDMU and RE curriculum.
- * Works effectively with appropriate outside agencies to support the welfare of the pupils.
- * Works in conjunction with the SEN and Inclusion policy to identify and meet individual needs.
- * Consults pupils, where possible, in target setting, self-assessment and evaluation of IEPs and action plans.
- * Implements a post incident debriefing / mediation process to help pupils to develop restorative attitudes.

Section 4 - Consultation and Participation

St Patrick's has an ethos of participation and self-reflection.

Our ETI report in 2016 states that our school has 'a highly collegial, consultative approach to whole school improvement'..

St Patrick's Primary School have used a range of methodologies to consult in preparation with this policy:

- * Website consultation with all parents informed via newsletter
- * Discussions with class and school council members
- * Engagement with teachers and Board of Governors

All feedback will be carefully considered in the final draft of this policy.

Section 5 - What is Bullying?

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.

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

REF: ADDRESSING BULLYING IN SCHOOLS ACT (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2016

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 recognise that within schools there is a continuum of socially unacceptable behaviours. These unacceptable socially unacceptable behaviours infringe on everyone's right to be safe. They include the following examples:

1. **Physical** - includes jostling, physical intimidation, punching/kicking, any other physical contact which may include use of weapons
2. **Verbal** - includes name calling, insults, jokes, threats, spreading rumours
3. **Indirect** - includes isolation, refusal to work with/talk to/play with/help others, interfering with personal property and includes cyber-bullying: misuse of mobile phones and internet programmes to humiliate, threaten and/or isolate another.

(This list is not exhaustive and other behaviours which fit the definition may be considered bullying behaviour).

All socially unacceptable behaviours will be dealt with in line with the school's Positive Behaviour Policy and Procedures taking into account the age and pupil capacity to understand the impact of their behaviour on others and any imbalance of power that may exist.

It is important that we are able to differentiate between socially unacceptable behaviours and those which do constitute bullying behaviours. Socially unacceptable behaviours **BECOME BULLYING BEHAVIOURS** when the information gathered clearly demonstrates that the unacceptable behaviour **DOES MEET THE CRITERIA LISTED BELOW** i.e. on the basis of the evidence gathered the behaviour is/was:

- intentional,
- targeted at a specific pupil or group of pupils
- repeated (three or more repetitious incidents involving the same target)
- causing physical or emotional harm
- omission

While bullying is usually repeated behaviour, there are instances of one-off incidents that the school will consider as bullying. The criteria against how this will be judged is listed below;

When assessing a one-off incident, to make a decision on whether to classify it as bullying, we 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.

We recognise that there may be various motivations behind bullying, including those named in the Act. These include, but are not limited to:

- * Age
- * Appearance
- * Breakdown in peer relationships
- * Community background

- * Political affiliation
- * Gender identity
- * Sexual orientation
- * Pregnancy
- * Marital status
- * Race
- * Religion
- * Disability / SEN
- * Ability
- * Looked After Child status

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 by 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.

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.*

Section 6 - Preventative Measures

Our school aims to promote a culture of respect and a strong anti-bullying ethos within the school and the wider school community.

The focus for all anti-bullying work is on prevention. The school takes steps to actively promote the types of behaviours we want to see among staff and pupils.

In order to prevent bullying and create a safe learning environment we will;

- * Set high expectations for standards of behaviour throughout the school.
- * Promote a culture of kindness, respect, tolerance and compassion.
- * Promote and support Inclusion within the school.
- * Implement Circle Time throughout the school
- * Raise awareness and understanding of the positive behaviour expectations, as set out in the Positive Behaviour Policy

- * Promote 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
- * Address issues such as the various forms of bullying, including the how and why it can happen, through PDMU and thematic learning (eg. sectarian, racist, homophobic, transphobic, disablist, etc.)
- * Where possible, involve pupils 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 e.g. Well-being workshops, 'Theme' of month e.g. Month of Respect...Mental Health week activities
- * Participate in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities
- * Engage in key national and regional campaigns, eg Safer Internet Day, Catholic Schools Week, etc.
- * Maintain and promote peer-led systems (eg. Class and School Councils) to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messaging within the school
- * Develop effective strategies for playground management, eg. training for supervisors, separate break times, playground pals, zoning of playgrounds, inclusion of specific resources (buddy benches) and provision of a variety of play option to meet the needs of all pupils.
- * Focus assemblies to raise awareness and promote understanding of key issues related to bullying.
- * Develop effective strategies for the management of unstructured times (eg. wet break time, wet lunch routines).
- * Provide and promote of extra- and co-curricular activities, aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks. For example: sporting activities, creative arts, leisure and games, etc.

In order to prevent bullying behaviour on the way to and from school we will:

- * Talk to parents and children about expected behaviours to and from school either by bus, taxi or walking.
- * Promote and maintain 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.
- * Empower pupils to challenge inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour of their peers during the journey to and from school. This may include the implementation of peer monitoring systems on buses and for those walking.
- * Regularly engage with transport providers (eg. Translink, EA Transport, etc.) to ensure effective communication and the early identification of any concerns.
- * Promote key anti-bullying messages and awareness of behaviour expectations among pupils when in the local community (eg. local shops, cafes, service providers, residents, etc).

- * Appropriately deploy staff to support the transition from school day to journey home (eg. Safe departure duty and bus duty).

We take steps to prevent bullying 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 the pupil's education at school. We raise awareness of the nature and impact of online bullying and support pupils, in an age appropriate way, to make use of the internet in a safe, responsible and respectful way. We:

- * Address key themes of online behaviour and risk through PDMU and e-safety workshops and lessons, including understanding how to respond to harm and the consequences of inappropriate use.
- * Participate in Anti-Bullying Week activities.
- * Engage 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.
- * Participate in annual Safer Internet Day, safety advice on website and newsletters, and promotion of key messages throughout the year.
- * Develop and implement robust and appropriate policies in related areas , Mobile Phone Policy, E-Safety Policy, etc.)

Section 7 - 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 for e.g. referring to pupils to appropriate adults within the school such as class teacher or designated teacher for child protection.
- * resolve difficulties in restorative ways to prevent recurring bullying behaviour and meet the needs of all parties

Section 8 - Reporting a Bullying Concern

Staff are expected to inform the Principal and respond to bullying behaviour promptly and effectively, in an assertive and confident manner, with an expectation of change being achieved through implementing the procedures set out in the Positive Behaviour & Anti-Bullying Policies...

When responding to a bullying concern, the Class Teacher will record the concern on the ABCF (saved in AB folder), set a review date (no later than 2 weeks) and begin the Investigation Process.. The class teacher will inform all staff involved in the monitoring and evidence collecting process.

THE CLASS TEACHER WILL FORWARD THE COMPLETED FORM TO THE PRINCIPAL AFTER THE INVESTIGATION PROCESS HAS DETERMINED IF THE BULLYING CRITERIA HAS BEEN MET.

Pupils Reporting a Concern

Where children and young people have a concern about a potential bullying situation, they are encouraged to discuss this with a member of staff that they trust. All staff are aware that pupils are encouraged to raise concerns with any member of staff, including teaching and non-teaching staff.

Pupils can report bullying concerns by:

- * Verbally- talking to a member of staff
- * By writing a note to a member of staff (eg. in a homework diary)
- * 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, our message will focus on 'getting help' rather than 'telling'. As such, all pupils will be encouraged to 'get help' if they have a concern about bullying that they experience or is experienced by another.

Parents/Carers Reporting a Concern

Parents and carers have a responsibility to raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour with the school at the earliest opportunity. Parents/carers 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 parents/carers reporting bullying concerns in our school will be:

- * In the first instance, all bullying concerns should be reported to the Class Teacher who will inform the Principal at the earliest opportunity.
- * 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 Principal.
- * Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken the concern can be reported to the Chair of the Board of Governors in line with the school's Compliments and Complaints Policy. See appendix A.

While the majority of reports of bullying concerns will come from pupils and their parents/carers, we are 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 feedback will be made to the person who made the report. No information about action taken in relation to a pupil can be disclosed to anyone other than the pupil and his/her parents/carers.

Section 9 - Responding to a Bullying Concern

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

Using the NIABF Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource, the members of staff responsible shall...

- * Clarify facts and perceptions*
- * Check records held by the Principal*
- * 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 focus on responding to the behaviour, resolving the concern and restoring the wellbeing of those involved. This is the approach taken in our school.

When responding to a bullying concern, the Class Teacher will record the concern on the ABCF (saved in AB folder), set a review date (no later than 2 weeks) and begin the Investigation Process.. The class teacher will inform all staff involved in the monitoring and evidence collecting process.

THE CLASS TEACHER WILL FORWARD THE COMPLETED FORM TO THE PRINCIPAL AFTER THE INVESTIGATION PROCESS HAS DETERMINED IF THE BULLYING CRITERIA HAS BEEN MET.

The class teacher will initiate the NO BLAME APPROACH if applicable.

Step one, meet the target.

Step two, convene a meeting of people involved

Step three, explain the problem.

Step four, share responsibility

Step five, ask group for ideas

Step six, leave it up to them

Step seven, meet them again later

If on the basis of the information gathered **THE CRITERIA FOR BULLYING BEHAVIOUR HAS NOT BEEN MET** socially unacceptable behaviours will be dealt under the school's Positive Behaviour Policy and addressed as appropriate, through the SEN Code of Practice & details recorded in line with school policy.

If on the basis of the information gathered **THE CRITERIA FOR BULLYING BEHAVIOUR HAS BEEN MET** the following process/procedures will be implemented:

The Principal and class teacher will develop agreed Action Plans for BOTH targeted pupil/s AND pupil/s displaying bullying behaviours or Support details of interventions are recorded on the Bullying Concern Assessment Form (Part 3). Both sets of parents will be informed by the Principal.

The class teacher and Principal may access immediate advice through the EA Helpline on 02838314461.

SUPPORT PROVISIONS

Support for targeted pupil/s may involve:

- discussing and agreeing a tailored Code of Practice action plan which would involve pupil/s in: identifying SMARTER (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timely and Evidence Based) target/s; relevant success criteria, outcomes and assessment procedures
- keeping a record of the agreed action plan in Part 3 of the BCAF.
- ongoing dialogue to ensure that the strategies identified and agreed would, when implemented, result for example in: greater resilience; development of new coping skills & the promotion of positive restorative relationships - see interventions contained in NIABF's "Effective responses to bullying behaviour", Pgs. 16-19 and following; for strategies see DE SEN Resource File, "Understanding and Managing Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties" Pgs. 272-279. See Appendix B.
- copies of the agreed plan being shared with key partners to ensure for example- clarity of roles and understanding of specific strategies
- staff and pupils together tracking and monitoring progress to ensure the efficacy of the intervention is maintained and kept under review
- collecting data to evaluate the efficacy of the intervention by considering the following: were appropriate targets identified; did the strategies prove effective; were strategies consistently implemented by staff and pupils; was the success criteria clear; was the success criteria met etc.?
- keeping staff and pupil-self-assessment records progress being regularly reviewed and updated in the BCAF and outcomes shared with key partners - BCAF Part 3

Support for pupil/s displaying bullying behaviour may involve:

- discussing and agreeing a tailored Code of Practice action plan which would involve pupil/s in: SMARTER target/s, success criteria, outcomes and assessment procedures - see BCAF Part 3
- keeping a record of the agreed plan in Part 3 of the BCAF.
- ongoing dialogue to ensure that the interventions/strategies identified and agreed would, when implemented, result for example in: reduction/removal of unacceptable bullying behaviour/s; an enhanced ability to empathise and the restoration of relationships - see interventions contained in NIABF's "Effective responses to bullying behaviour", Pgs. 16-19 and following; for strategies see DE SEN Resource File, "Understanding and Managing Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties" Pgs. 272-279

- copies of the agreed plan being shared with key partners to ensure for example clarity of roles and understanding of specific strategies,
- staff and pupils together tracking and monitoring progress to ensure the efficacy of the intervention is maintained and kept under review
- collecting data to evaluate the efficacy of the intervention by considering the following: were appropriate targets identified; did the strategies prove effective; were strategies consistently implemented by staff and pupils; was the success criteria clear; was the success criteria met etc.?
- keeping staff and pupil-self-assessment records
- progress being regularly reviewed and updated in the BCAF and outcomes shared with key partners BCAF Part 4

Follow-up procedures

- report back promptly to parents/carers informing them fully of actions taken/to be taken and outcomes achieved
- provide regular opportunities for post-incident learning (debriefing sessions) for both target/s and pupil/s displaying bullying behaviour e.g. using Worth a Rethink (Pg22) ; Think Time Discussion Sheet (Pg24-27). Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour NIABF.
- acknowledge, affirm and celebrate success

In addition,

- We respond to the parents as soon as possible and agree a suitable time frame to allow for an investigation into any claims.
- If the criteria for bullying has been met, the pastoral, safeguarding and SEN team would all be involved in the development of action plans and risk reduction plans.
- Information will be gathered and recorded by the class teacher and the principal. The records will be kept by the principal when they have been collated.
- Where support interventions by the school have failed, the school will immediately consider support from external advisors such as Education and Welfare Service, Behaviour Support and Provisions, Educational Psychology, Autism Advisory & Intervention Service, Child Protection Support Services, Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service, Dept of Health and Social Services and CCMS.

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

Section 10 - Recording

As set out in the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016, we have a legal requirement to maintain a record of all incidents of bullying and alleged bullying behaviour.

These records will be maintained and kept by the Principal with a view to ensuring that all allegations have been appropriately recorded and addressed and for the purposes of monitoring the success of interventions and having evidence of any repeated behaviour within a 6 month period.

Each report of bullying concern will include:

- * 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 in a central file in the Principal's office along with securely held Child Protection information. 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.

Section 11 - Professional Development of Staff

We recognise the need for appropriate and adequate training for staff, including teaching and non-teaching school staff:

- * We are committed to ensuring that staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school's ongoing CPD/PRSD provisions
- * We note the impact of the training given on both the policy and its procedures - e.g. any amendments made, inclusions added etc.
- * We ensure that opportunities for safeguarding training are afforded to Governors and all staff - teaching and non-teaching
- * CPD records are kept and updated annually

Section 12 - Monitoring and Review of 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 will:

- * maintain a standing item on the agenda of each meeting of the Board under Child Protection and Safeguarding, 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. The policy will be reviewed following any incident which highlights the need for such a review. It will also be reviewed when directed to by the Department of Education and in light of new guidance.

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

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
- * Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- * Special Educational Needs and Inclusion 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

Signed Chair of the Board of Governors:

Date:

Signed Principal:

Date-

