



Anti-bullying Policy

REVIEW DATE – SPRING 2025

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY STATEMENT

From time-to-time pupils may be victims of bullying, despite our caring ethos and positive behaviour policy. They may 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. 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.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 provides schools with the following legal definition of bullying:

“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.

Our school summary states that:

Bullying is the wilful, conscious desire to hurt or frighten someone else. It is ***often repeated** aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others. Bullying is behaviour that **intentionally** causes distress to others. It may be physical (eg hitting, kicking), verbal (eg name calling), social (eg excluding someone from a group), psychological (eg when it causes an individual to lose self-esteem) or cyber by means of social media/ICT.

Note on ‘often repeated’ / repetition

* While repetition is internationally recognised as an important element in establishing bullying behaviour, the Act does not require repetition for behaviours to be defined as bullying.

For example, when bullying behaviours occur through the medium of electronic communications, 'repetition' can take place through the repeated viewing and sharing of a post even if there is only one post.

A school may also conclude that a one-off act of undesirable behaviour constitutes bullying where there is clear evidence of pre-meditation, intention to hurt, harm or adversely affect the rights of another or where the incident has caused significant emotional and/or physical harm to the target.

ONE-OFF INCIDENTS

When assessing a one-off incident, to decide on whether or not 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 imbalance of power**

Any incidents which are not considered bullying behaviour will be addressed under the Behaviour for Learning Policy.

PREVENTATIVE STEPS

The school will act positively in an endeavour to eliminate bullying in all forms by: -

1. Promoting good discipline both in the classroom and the playground so that children are aware of the consequences of unacceptable behaviour.
2. Encouraging children to speak out and inform a supervisor or teacher if they are aware of, or suffer from, bullying.
3. Promoting inclusion.
4. Encouraging parents to inform the school if any incidents of bullying are known to them.
5. Recording and investigating as quickly as possible all reported cases of bullying (see "Procedures for dealing with bullying.")
6. Giving help, support, and advice to the victim.
7. Ensuring that pupils, parents, and staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the policy on bullying.
8. Involving outside agencies for support and advice where appropriate.
9. Using the Pupils' Worry Box

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
- Challenge negative attitudes towards prejudice and discrimination
- Focus attention, advice and anti-bullying education if required, to individuals, groups, classes or year groups.

PUPIL RESPONSIBILITIES

- Report bullying to their teacher or trusted adult
- Avoid any bullying behaviour
- Pupils should not react aggressively
- Pupils should have respect for themselves and others
- Adhere to rules

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- Discourage a tendency towards bullying behaviour
- Work in partnership with the school
- Report any concerns to the school by contacting the classroom teacher
- Stress to children that retaliation is not helpful
- Resolve difficulties occurring outside school to prevent them continuing inside school
- Parents should understand that ongoing issues or difficulties experienced outside school, within the community, are largely beyond the jurisdiction of the school.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH BULLYING

1. Since we take the problem of bullying seriously, any reported incidents will be dealt with accordingly.
2. The problem may be reported by a child, parent etc. to a teacher or supervisor who will deal initially with the situation.

Teachers should create a digital entry of such incidents on the Behaviour Management Log which is located centrally on the school computer network. This log is password protected.

If deemed serious, the information will be passed on to the Designated Teacher or alternative member of the school's Safeguarding Team.

(Designated Teacher in Newtownards Model Primary School is Mrs E Simpson – Vice Principal)

3. The designated teacher (or deputy) will investigate the incident(s) thoroughly including separate discussions with both the person experiencing the bullying-type behaviour, and the person(s) conducting the bullying-type behaviour. All relevant details will be recorded. Based on the severity of the incident(s), this may include completion of the 'Bullying Concern Assessment Form' (BCAF). The format of the BCAF is extracted directly from the recording tool designed for the purpose and made available to schools via SIMS.

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

The school will centrally record all relevant information related to reports of bullying concerns, including:

- how the bullying-type 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 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.

The outcome of these discussions will be reported to parents.

4. The teacher(s) of the children concerned will also be made aware of what has happened, and any follow-up monitoring required with supervisory staff.
5. It may be necessary under certain circumstances to impose sanctions on the person(s) who are conducting the bullying-type behaviour. These pupils should be made aware that their behaviour will be closely monitored over a stated period of time. Sanctions may include exclusion from the playground. See Behaviour for Learning Policy.
6. The school may seek the advice and support of the Educational Welfare Officer and Educational Psychologist through the Special Needs Code of Practice.
7. The Chair of the Board of Governors will be informed of any suspension of pupils. Whilst the entire Board of Governors will be kept informed of school bullying incidents as a standing item each meeting.

A Flowchart of Response to incidents or allegations of incidents is included in this policy.

LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

This anti-bullying policy should be seen as being closely linked to the school's Safeguarding, SEN and Inclusion and Behaviour for Learning Policies.

MONITORING AND REVIEWING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

To appropriately monitor the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy, the Board of Governors shall:

- Introduce a standing item on the Annual Safeguarding Report in relation to all incidents of alleged bullying
- Through the Principal, identify trends and priorities for action
- Through the Principal, assess the effectiveness of strategies aimed at preventing bullying behaviour
- Through the Principal, assess the effectiveness of strategies aimed at responding to bullying behaviour

This Anti-Bullying Policy shall be reviewed annually.

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.