

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY



Signature of Chairperson Board of Governors _____

Signature of Principal _____

Date _____

School's Vision

Our vision is to provide a warm, welcoming, secure environment where children will recognise and achieve their full potential.

School Purpose

We will prepare children to meet the challenge of a changing world and make a positive contribution to society.

School Values

CHRISTIAN

ALL INCLUSIVE

SAFE

TEAMWORK

LEARNING

ENCOURAGEMENT

RESPECT

OPEN HEARTED

ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY

The Anti-Bullying policy reflects the school vision statement with a view to providing a safe and enriched environment where children can learn in a relaxed, secure and happy environment.

Legislation

This policy has been developed in line with the following legislation and policy/guidance materials –

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

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)

Links with other School Policies

Pupil welfare embraces all aspects of pastoral care, including child protection, pupil behaviour, health and well-being and safety and security. Our duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils is addressed through school policies such as Positive Behaviour, Pastoral Care, Child Protection/Safeguarding, PDMU, Health and Safety, E-Safety, Acceptable Use of Internet, RSE, Mobile Phone, Educational Visits, Staff Code of Conduct and SEN and Inclusion Policy.

Principles

Principles and values that our school holds -

- We are committed to a society where children and young people can live free and safe from bullying
- The welfare of all children is paramount and pupils' needs, whether the person who displays bullying behaviour or pupil experiencing bullying behaviour, need to be separated from their behaviour
- We are committed to a preventative, responsive and restorative anti-bullying ethos across the whole school
- When bullying concerns are identified our school will work in a restorative and solution focussed way to achieve the necessary change
- Pupils who are targeted will be listened to and supported
- Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour will be listened to and supported to accept responsibility and change their behaviour
- Parents will be made aware of our school's practice to prevent and to respond to concerns through their active participation in partnership with the school to resolve concerns involving their child

AIMS

The school aims to -

- Assure pupils and parents that they will be supported when bullying behaviours are reported
- Prevent or reduce bullying behaviour in any form
- Adopt a consistent approach to dealing with incidents of bullying.
- Create an emotionally safe environment where positive relationships can develop
- Ensure that all pupils, parents and staff are aware of this policy and their roles and responsibilities in contributing to its success

The Process of Participation and Consultation

- Pupils agree school rules at School Council

- Pupils have input with regards to devising rewards and sanctions for behaviour through Class and School Councils
- Pupils participate in NI Anti-Bullying week and Internet Safety Day
- Bullying awareness programmes are delivered through PDMU
- Parents, staff and pupils are consulted in relation to pastoral issues through regular self-evaluation questionnaires
- Policy will be reviewed and updated at least every four years
- Ongoing Professional Development and support for staff

What is Bullying?

The addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 provides schools with a legal definition which we now must use.

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 (includes omission), 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 groups of pupils.

Statement on the definition of bullying

Bullying is -

“The repeated use of power by one or more persons intentionally to harm, hurt or adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others” Northern Ireland AntiBullying Forum (NIABF) 2005.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. It is entirely contrary to the values and principles we live and work by. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that it will be dealt with promptly, fairly and effectively.

Preventative Measures

We aim to promote a strong anti-bullying ethos within the school and the wider school community. The following measures will be taken by our school to prevent bullying behaviour -

- Formulation and communication of school wide rules concerning good behaviour expectations e.g. school rules/classroom rules displayed in all classrooms, incentives, pupil awards, school assemblies
- Vigilant supervision- playground/general school environment
- Good parental communication
- School curriculum which addresses prejudice, discrimination and social/emotional learning (PDMU)
- Provision and promotion of activities aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks eg. sporting activities, creative arts, leisure and games etc.

- School values -
- Awareness raising programmes such as Anti-Bullying week in November each year
- E-Safety lessons throughout the year
- School wide supervision and effective, consistent behaviour management by all staff
- Opportunities for developing positive peer relationships e.g. Class/School Councils, Circle Time and PDMU lessons
- Use of 'Worry Boxes' in classrooms
- Positive Behaviour Policy which sets out a clear code of conduct for the whole school community
- Use of outside agencies such as Childline/NSPCC
- Engagement in key national campaigns such as Safer Internet Day

- Development of effective strategies for playground management e.g. provision of a variety of play resources in each playground
- Involvement in meaningful and supportive Shared Education Projects supporting pupils to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity

Preventative measures in place to prevent bullying behaviour on the way to and from school

- We strive to develop a culture where pupils take pride in their school and are viewed as ambassadors for their school within the community through regular reminders of the positive behaviour expectations of pupils whilst travelling to and from school
- Regular engagement with transport providers (eg. Translink, EA transport, Taxi company) to ensure effective communication and the early identification of any concerns
- Appropriate deployment of staff to support the transition from school day to journey home

Bullying Behaviours

The following are unacceptable behaviours BUT only constitute bullying behaviours when they are recurrent/persistent, targeted with intent and where a power imbalance between pupils is evident.

Type of incident:

Physical bullying

- Hitting, pushing, kicking, tripping, spitting, hair pulling, throwing things, interfering with another's property by stealing/hiding/damaging
- Extortion/threatening demands for money or other items
- Writing or drawing offensive notes/graffiti about another

Verbal Bullying

- Name calling, insulting or offensive remarks, accusing, taunting, put downs

- Ridiculing another's appearance/way of speaking/disability/personal mannerisms/race/colour/religion
- Humiliating another publicly
- Spreading malicious or nasty rumours, threatening, intimidation, mocking, sarcasm

Emotional Bullying

- Exclusion - intentionally choosing(acting) to stop someone/others from joining in e.g football at lunchtime, playground games, chats
- Belittling another's abilities or achievements
- Menacing looks/stares
- Rude signs or gestures
- Omission- intentionally choosing not to mention (failure to act) there was football at lunchtime i.e wilful omission arising from a desire to cause hurt

Online Bullying

- Misuse of e-mails, images, texts, blogs, tweets, forums and chat rooms to hurt/embarrass/demean/ harass/ provoke or humiliate another using perceived anonymity
- Misuse of mobile phones by text messaging/ calls or images –to hurt/embarrass/demean/harass/provoke or humiliate another using perceived anonymity
- Unauthorised publication or manipulation of private information, impersonation
- Sharing images (e.g. photographs or videos) online to embarrass someone

We will raise awareness of the nature and impact of online bullying and support our pupils to make use of the internet in a safe and responsible and respectful way through the following -

- 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 policies in related areas (e.g. ICT and Online Safety Policies and Mobile Phone Policy)

One-Off Incidents

While bullying is usually repeated behaviour, there are instances of one-off incidents that the school will consider as bullying behaviour.

When assessing a one-off incident, to make a decision on whether to classify it as bullying behaviour, the school will 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.

Signs of Stress in Pupils Which May Indicate Bullying Behaviour:

- Child's unwillingness to attend school / lateness / erratic attendance.
- Avoidance, hanging back from playground or staying late at school.
- Deterioration of work or mislaid books, money, equipment or belongings / under achievement.
- Spurious illness / non specific pains, headaches, tummy upsets, withdrawn, loss of appetite.
- Nail biting / flinching / jumpiness / forgetfulness / distractibility.
- Impulsive hitting out / out of character temper, flare up or restlessness / sudden aggressiveness.
- Stresses manifested at home – bed wetting / insomnia / nightmares / restlessness and irritability.
- Reluctance to sit beside or near certain pupils / hesitant to walk home.

(N.B. whilst these behaviours may be symptomatic of other problems – bullying may be one reason)

Language

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

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

Procedures for Dealing with Incidents of Bullying

The main aim of any intervention is to RESPOND to the bullying that is taking place, RESOLVE the concern and RESTORE the well-being of all those involved.

The 2003 Statutory Requirements (Education & Libraries NI Order) requires schools to “encourage good behaviour and respect for others” and in particular prevent all forms of bullying.

When dealing with bullying behaviour the school will aim to:

1. Stop the bullying behaviour.
2. Protect and support the child experiencing bullying behaviours.
3. Change the behaviour and attitude of the child displaying bullying behaviours.

Step 1

Initial reporting of an alleged bullying incident

When an alleged bullying incident is reported, the information will be passed on to the following people

- The teacher of any child involved
- Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher and/or relevant Senior members of staff if deemed necessary

The teacher will carry out an initial investigation. At this stage the parents may be involved. The situation will be monitored and further action may need to be taken. If the situation is not resolved after Step 1 the teacher will proceed to Step 2.

Step 2

Investigation of an alleged bullying incident

- The investigation will initially be carried out by the class teacher and the situation will be monitored. The Principal/Vice Principal will be informed in line with the school’s Positive Behaviour Policy
- Pupils involved will be interviewed and a record made of their responses using the school’s Alleged Bullying Incident Form (see appendix 1)
- Parents of all pupils involved will be informed of the school’s action up to this point and kept informed of subsequent action

Step 3

Agreeing a plan for resolution

- A plan for resolution of conflict will be devised by the class teacher in collaboration with relevant senior members of staff
- Targets for acceptable behaviour will be set out including support measures for ALL pupils concerned
- Any disciplinary action required will be in line with the system of sanctions as set out in the Positive Behaviour Policy

Step 4

Reviewing the situation

- Situation monitored and formally reviewed within one month of initial report
- This will involve class teacher, pupils and parents/carers involved

Step 5

Involvement of other agencies

- Where necessary the school will draw on the support of external agencies such as the Education Psychology Service, Behavioural Outreach Services, Education Welfare Officer

Recording

We have a legal requirement, as 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 record all relevant information related to reports of bullying concerns, including:

- How the bullying behaviour was displayed (the method)
- The motivation for the behaviour
- Details of the incident(s)
- How each incident was addressed by the school
- The outcome of the interventions employed

These records will be held by the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator. Access to these records will be restricted and only provided to those members of school staff with a legitimate need to have access.

Individual Responsibilities

All members of the school community have a key role in promoting, implementing and supporting the Anti-Bullying policy of Castleroe Primary School. It is important that there is a collaborative whole school approach to address any difficulties which may be encountered. Everyone should work together to create a safe, happy and antibullying environment.

The Responsibilities of Staff

Our staff will -

- Foster in our pupils, self-esteem, a sense of their rights and their responsibilities to others
- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils
- Discuss bullying behaviour with all classes, so that every pupil learns about the damage such behaviour causes to both the pupil who is targeted and the pupil who engages in bullying behaviour
- Emphasise the importance of telling a trusted adult about bullying behaviour when it happens or is observed
- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying behaviour
- Listen to children who have experienced bullying behaviour, take what they say seriously and respond appropriately

- Follow up any complaint by a parent about bullying behaviour, and report back promptly and fully on the action which has been taken
- Respond to bullying behaviour promptly and effectively, in an assertive and confident manner, with an expectation of change in accordance with agreed procedures

The Responsibilities of Pupils

We expect our pupils to -

- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying behaviour, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity
- Intervene to support any pupil who is experiencing bullying behaviour, unless it is unsafe for them to do so
- Report any concerns or instances of bullying behaviour witnessed or suspected, to a member of staff to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances

Pupils can report concerns about bullying behaviour in the following ways

- Verbally talking to a member of staff
- Writing a note to a member of staff
- Post a note in the worry box

The Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

We ask our parents/carers to support their children and the school by –

- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children, which might be evidence of bullying behaviour
- Advising their children to report any bullying behaviour (to their class teacher/any other trusted adult in school or Mr McMillan/Mrs Williams) and explain the implications of allowing the bullying behaviour to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other pupils
- Advising their children not to retaliate violently to any forms of bullying behaviour
- Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken
- Keeping written records of any reported instances of bullying behaviour.
- Informing the school of any suspected bullying behaviour, even if their children are not involved
- Co-operating with the school, if their child is involved in a bullying concern, to resolve the difficulty in a way which stops the behaviour recurring and meets the needs of all children

Where the parent/carer remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the school's Complaints Procedure should be followed.

The Complaints Procedure Policy is available for all parents on the school app/website and in the school office.

All reports of bullying concerns received from pupils and/or parents 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.

Professional Development of Staff

All school staff will be involved in any training relating to pupil behaviour management at School Development days. Relevant teaching staff will also attend other training provided by the Education Authority or external agencies such as the NIABF. This will ensure that our policies and practices are current and in line with Government guidelines.

Monitoring and Review of Policy

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored and kept under review by the Board of Governors and Principal. The policy will be reviewed as and when necessary, but at least every four years.