

St Patrick's Primary School Anti-Bullying Policy

Revised May 2022 in accordance with "Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016" after consultation with Board of Governors, staff, parent/guardians and pupils.

Introductory Statement

At St. Patrick's Primary School, we believe that every child has the right to feel safe, welcome and happy.

Our school community repudiates bullying behaviour of any kind, to any member of the school community, by any member of the school community. Bullying behaviour is taken seriously and all incidents are recorded. Prevention concentrates on the positive aim of improving relationships among pupils using all the resources available to the school. Our school's aim is to raise the self-esteem of all our pupils and to create an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Definition of "Bullying"

The primary definition of bullying as set out in the "Addressing Bullying in Schools Act, 2016" states:

"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 (including omission), or**
- c. any combination of those,**

by a pupil or 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".

St Patrick's Primary school will use the definition set out by the Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum.

Definition

Bullying is usually repeated behaviour that intentionally hurts, harms or adversely affects the rights and needs of another or others.

Intention to Cause Harm

Intention to cause harm is a deliberate act carried out with the awareness that the action will result in the harm suffered by the targeted person/persons. Repetition is one way of establishing intention to harm, particularly if the bullying behaviours have not stopped after an intervention by the school. Harm is defined as:

1. Emotional or psychological harm as intentionally causing distress or anxiety by scaring, humiliating or affecting adversely a pupil's self-esteem.
2. Physical harm as intentionally hurting a pupil by causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts.

In determining intent to cause harm, the school will use its discretion in assessing an individual pupil's capacity to understand the impact of their behaviours, taking account of development age, disability or delay.

Where the Anti-Bullying Policy will apply

- On the school premises during the school day
- While travelling directly to school at the start of the day and directly from school to home at the end of the school day during the school term
- When pupils are under the lawful control of school staff (e.g. during a school trip/visit)

Types of Bullying Behaviour

This list is non-exhaustive and allows for new behaviours to be added.

(a) Verbal, written or electronic communication,

These methods can be described as, but are not limited to, saying, writing or using online contact and platforms to:

- say mean and hurtful things to, or about, others
- make fun of others
- call another pupil mean and hurtful names
- tell lies or spread false rumours about others
- try to make other pupils dislike another pupil/s

(b) Any other act (including omission)

Other methods of bullying behaviour commonly include physical bullying and can be described as, but are not limited to:

- hitting
- kicking
- pushing
- shoving around
- taking/stealing money or possessions

and acts which include omission, where a pupil is intentionally left out, examples being

- leaving a pupil out of a game
- excluding a pupil from a group of friends

(c) Any combination of above

Our school acknowledges that various methods of bullying behaviour can occur separately or together.

Criteria used to assess if incidents will be addressed through the Anti-Bullying Policy

Criteria used by school staff will include:

- severity of the incident
- evidence of pre-meditation; intentional
- targeted at a specific pupil or group of pupils
- impact of the incident on individuals (physical/emotional)
- any previous incidents involving the individuals; repeated behaviour

When alleged incidents fail to meet the criteria for bullying behaviour, the school will use its Positive Behaviour Policy to address unacceptable behaviour.

One-off Acts of Bullying Behaviour

While repetition is internationally recognised as an important element in establishing bullying behaviour, in certain circumstances our school will assess one-off acts of bullying behaviour using the same criteria as assessing bullying behaviour involving repetition. The school principal and vice-principals will decide if an intentional one-off incident should be recognised as bullying behaviour, considering factors such as premeditation and whether the incident has caused significant levels of emotional or physical harm to one or more pupils.

Duty of Board of Governors to secure measures to prevent bullying

Governors will have oversight of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and will ensure its effective implementation. They will ensure that measures are taken to prevent and address bullying behaviour and they will be informed about the prevalence of bullying and alleged bullying incidents, as well as the motivation behind these behaviours. Examples of how Governors will demonstrate their oversight of the Anti-Bullying Policy will include:

- A standing item on the agenda of each meeting of the Board of Governors, under safeguarding
- Minutes recording the numbers of recorded incidents of bullying including method, motivation and how the incident was addressed
- A record of how pupils, parents/carers, staff and governors are consulted when and if changes are made to the Anti-Bullying Policy

Measures to Prevent Bullying Behaviour Among Pupils

At St. Patrick's Primary School there will be consistent implementation of the Positive Behaviour Policy to

- uphold everyone's right to be safe both physically and emotionally and requires everyone to behave in ways which keep everyone else safe both physically and emotionally
- maintain high standards of behaviour at all times from every member of the school community
- promote early intervention and provide tailored support for children who experience difficulty in meeting acceptable standards of behaviour
- acknowledge and affirm positive behaviours
- acknowledge and sanction socially unacceptable behaviours
- carry out school audits to assess the effectiveness of the policy

The consistent delivery of our pastoral/preventative curriculum will

- address issues such as bullying behaviours, racism and good relations through PDMU, RSE and CRED
- promote positive emotional health and wellbeing and reduce the likelihood of cyberbullying
- develop emotional literacy, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills through, for example, Circle Time sessions
- build confidence, self-esteem and resilience

There will be ongoing tracking and monitoring of supervision arrangements re canteen, playground, corridors and toilets through, for example

- adequate supervision in the above areas, identifying "hotspots" and auditing supervision needs
- provision of Safe Havens to support vulnerable pupils, e.g. through seating arrangements in classroom and canteen and time out in Nurture Room /Quiet Spaces
- provision of Buddy Benches, playground buddy system, structured playground activities

There will be active involvement and whole-school participation in NIABF's Anti-Bullying week activities. This will include poster competitions and home activities to encourage the

active participation of parents and carers in addressing anti-bullying in St. Patrick's Primary School.

The Pupil Voice

Pupils will be involved in drawing up class rules through the PATHS programme. Our school council will be actively involved in the development of

- pupil agreed codes of behaviour
- "keeping safe" messages
- buddy systems
- safe havens and quiet spaces at lunch time
- disseminating minutes of meetings and outcomes to all the classes in the school
- displaying minutes of meetings in school corridor

Maintaining a Listening and Telling Culture

At St. Patrick's Primary School, every member of our school community (Pupils, Parents/Carers, Teaching/Non-Teaching Staff and Governors) should strive to work collaboratively to:

- foster positive self-esteem and respect the right of others to be safe
- behave towards others in a mutually respectful way
- model high standards of behaviour
- be alert to possible indications of 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 the target of bullying behaviour, 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 telling a trusted person about bullying behaviour when it happens or is observed and the implications of not telling
- listen sensitively to anyone who has been the target of bullying behaviour, 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

Procedures and the School's Response to pupils experiencing and demonstrating bullying behaviours

Staff are expected to 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 and Anti-Bullying Policies.

- All staff or supervisors are to report any concerns about possible bullying behaviour to a senior member of staff.
- Pupils will be encouraged to report any concerns about bullying behaviour to a member of staff.

- For all alleged bullying incidents, the school will gather information from all parties involved and parents will be contacted.
- Accurate records are kept of all alleged bullying incidents, including the motivation behind the behaviour, the method of bullying and how the situation was addressed.
- The school will use a range of sanctions and, if necessary, consult with other agencies when a case of bullying behaviour has been confirmed.
- The school will make expected standards clear to pupils and involve them in making decisions about rules and appropriate ways of behaving.
- Advice will be given to support the child who has been the target of bullying behaviour, and to the person who displays bullying behaviour.

The school's response to each case of bullying will depend on the circumstances of each incident.

Support Provisions

Support for pupils who have experienced bullying behaviour will include:

- discussing and agreeing an individual action plan, identifying targets and success criteria
- keeping a record of the agreed action plan
- ongoing dialogue to ensure the strategies identified and agreed result in, for example, greater resilience, development of new coping skills and the promotion of positive restorative relationships
- tracking and monitoring progress to ensure efficacy of the intervention is maintained and kept under review

Support for pupils who have displayed bullying behaviour will include:

- discussing and agreeing an individual action plan, identifying targets and success criteria
- keeping a record of the agreed plan
- ongoing dialogue to ensure the interventions and strategies identified and agreed would result in reduction/removal of unacceptable behaviour/s, an enhanced ability to empathise and the restoration of relationships
- tracking and monitoring progress to ensure efficacy of the intervention is maintained and kept under review

Follow-up procedures

After an allegation of bullying behaviour has been investigated, the principal or one of the vice-principals will:

- 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 for both target/s and pupil/s displaying bullying behaviour
- acknowledge, affirm and celebrate success

Promoting Awareness of the Anti-Bullying Policy

The Anti-Bullying Policy will be made available, free of charge, to the parents/carers of all pupils registered at the school and to all staff of the school. A hard copy will be given to all

new pupils registering in the school. A pupil-friendly version will be given to all pupils and will be discussed in class as well as encouraging parent/carers to discuss at home. This will be done:

- At the beginning of each new school year
- During Anti-Bullying Week
- As part of our PATHS programme
- Incidentally, when needed

Posters promoting Anti –Bullying will be displayed in the school, class and home activities, role playing and assemblies will also be used to raise awareness.

Links with other School Policies

The school's anti-bullying policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies: Pastoral Care Policy, Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy, Positive Behaviour Policy, E-safety Policy, Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy and Safe Handling Policy.

Monitoring, Evaluating and Review

The Anti-Bullying Policy will be reviewed at intervals of no more than 4 years. From time to time additional policy amendments will be made as a result of feedback from audits and if changes to legislation occur. To inform the review, Governors, the school principal and vice-principals will review the records of alleged bullying incidents and consult with staff, pupils and parents/carers. Consultation will include:

- Engaging with parents, e.g. via our Parent Teacher Association (Friends of St. Patrick's)
- Engaging with pupils, e.g. via the School Council
- Circulating a discussion paper with parents/carers re amendments to the policy

Signed: Mr Manus Doherty Mr Eamonn Devlin
(Chairperson of Board of Governors) (Principal)

Date: June 2022