



Anti-Bullying Policy

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1. Introduction

St. Mary's Primary School Cabragh repudiates bullying behaviour of any kind, to any member of the school community, by any member of the school community. A child that is happy and secure is more likely to make progress personally, socially and academically than a child that is anxious. Acceptance, encouragement and support from the school community all help to develop self-esteem and contribute to a child's happiness. The school's pastoral care policy aims to ensure that the pupils will be educated in an environment in which they feel safe and secure. The school actively promotes positive interpersonal relations between all members of the school community.

2. Context

This policy has been developed within the context of current legislation as outlined below. The Anti-Bullying Policy forms part of the suite of safeguarding policies which work together to promote the welfare and well-being of pupils. The school's anti-bullying policy is integral to our pastoral care policy and is set in the context of the positive behaviour policy and is related closely to our child protection policy. In line with guidance, (Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework, (ISEF) ETI, 2017 Pg. 13) the school regularly reviews policies, procedures and reporting arrangements, including those relating to child protection/ safeguarding, anti-bullying and positive behaviour management.

2.1 The Legislative Context:

The school's anti-bullying policy is informed and guided by current legislation and DE Guidance as listed below:

- Health and Safety at Work NI Order 1978 The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 Article 3 – see DE 1998/25
- Welfare and Protection of Pupils Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003
- The Education (2006 Order) (Commencement No2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2007
- The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010
- Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

2.2 Guidance Context: DE/Health/SBNI

DE Guidance:

- Pastoral Care in Schools: PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR DE, 2001
- Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools. A Guide for Schools DE 2017 – in conjunction with the following:

- 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's (SBNI) Policies and Procedures 2017
- Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 Statutory Guidance for Schools and Boards of Governors 2019

2.3 The International Context

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

- 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)

2.4 Key Legislation -

The duties placed on Boards of Governors and School Principal

In line with guidance (*'Every School a Good School 'The Governors' Role: A Guide for Governors, DE, 2017 Pg. 27*), the Board of Governors of St. Mary's are committed to promoting equality, good relations and diversity and to complying with education and employment legislation and anti-discrimination, human rights and equality legislation that affect its statutory duties in relation to the school. The Board of Governors take an active interest in all aspects of school life (the pastoral care system, child protection, pupil behaviour, health and well-being, physical safety and security) and work closely with the School Principal to promote the welfare of all the pupils and staff in our school community.

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.
 - 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 (eg. school trip)

- ✓ When receiving education organised by school but happening elsewhere (eg. in another school in the ALC)
 - Requires that the policy be updated at least every four years.
- **The Education and Libraries Order (NI) 2003**, requires the Board of Governors to:
 - “safeguard and promote the welfare of all registered pupils whether they are on the school premises or elsewhere while in the lawful control or charge of a member of staff of the school” (Article 17: 2)
 - **consult with registered pupils** on the general principles which will be reflected in the school’s discipline policy (Article 19: 13 & 14)
- **The Education and Libraries Order (NI) 2003**, requires that the School Principal should follow the guidelines listed below.
 - when deciding on measures which will be used to encourage good behaviour in the school **must specifically include measures to prevent bullying among pupils** (Article 19:14)
 - before deciding on measures to encourage good behaviour **must consult with pupils registered at the school and their parents**” (Article 19:14)

2.5 Duties relating to pupils attending under Area Learning Community (ALC) arrangements

The school works hard to ensure strong links between St. Mary’s and the wider community. We recognize that there are implications for Area Learning Communities and that the school may host unregistered pupils attending St. Mary’s from other schools. In line with guidance - **The Education (2006 Order) (Commencement No 2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2007**- see **DE circular 2007/20** the Board of Governors will safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils attending St. Mary’s, whether registered or not, when they are on the premises of the school or in the lawful control or charge of a member of staff of the school. (19)

The Board of Governors and principal will ensure that the policies pursued to promote good behaviour and discipline among registered pupils are also extended to cover all pupils attending the school whether registered or not. (20)

The Board of Governors and principal of St. Mary’s understand that *....the punishment of detention after school may be imposed only by the principal of (or an authorised teacher in) the school at which a pupil is registered even if he is attending another school under Article 21 arrangements ... misdemeanours which warrant detention should be reported to the school at which the pupil is registered to enable it to decide on the appropriate action to be taken.* (21)

3. Ethos / Principles

- ❖ **In accordance with our Catholic ethos, everyone in the community of St.Mary's Primary School, Cabragh, has the right to learn play and work, free from intimidation or fear. The following principles underpin our work.**
- We are committed to a society where children and young people can live free and safe from bullying.
- We believe in a society where bullying is unacceptable and where every child and young person is safe and feels 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. When bullying concerns are identified our school will seek to work in a non-punitive, restorative and solution-focused way to help support the necessary behavioural change, ensuring the targeted pupils' safety and the repairing of relationships – which is core to the school's ethos.
- 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 welfare, wellbeing and needs of all children and young people are paramount and pupils' needs, whether a pupil who engages in bullying behaviour or a targeted pupil, need to be separated from their behaviour.
- 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 for their behaviour, acknowledging the impact or harm done, agreeing to change their behaviour and repair relationships.
- Staff will receive awareness-raising training in relation to possible interventions, strategies and skills to be used where bullying behaviour concerns are raised, in order to bring about a positive resolution.
- Should a bullying concern arise, school staff will receive support from senior staff regarding their assessment of this concern and interventions to be implemented.
- Parents will be consulted on how we engage, involve and consult with pupils regarding our School Positive Behaviour Policy and our Anti- Bullying Policy. Consultation will also consider the various processes which may be involved when responding to bullying concerns, such as those informed by the 'Effective 5 Responses to Bullying Behaviour' resource (NIABF, 2013), using restorative practice and solution-focused interventions which help underpin the school's ethos and values.
- Active parental support and appropriate level of participation with the school, is essential to ensure that our principles and values remain central when addressing any concerns in relation to their children.

3.1 Guiding Principles

The general principles which underpin our work are found in the following DE guidance -

- a. **Promoting and sustaining good behaviour in schools: DE Circular 1998/25),**
- b. **Welfare and Protection of Pupils Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003: DE Circular Number 2003/13**

The Board of Governors and school principal will

- ✓ “ensure that policies and procedures designed to promote good behaviour and discipline are pursued at school” (**Article 3**)
- ✓ “safeguard and promote the welfare of all registered pupils whether they are on the school premises or elsewhere while in the lawful control or charge of a member of staff of the school” (**Article 17: 2**)

3.2 Safeguarding

We in St. Mary’s Cabragh, have a responsibility for the pastoral care, general welfare and safety of the children in our care and we will carry out this duty by providing a caring, supportive and safe environment, where each child is valued for his or her unique talents and abilities, and in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. The welfare and safety of the children in our care is paramount.

“Pupil welfare embraces all aspects of pastoral care, child protection, pupil behaviour, health and well-being, safety and security.”

Welfare and Protection of Pupils Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) order 2003: DE Circular Number 2003/13 - Article 17:4

3.3 Promotion of good behaviour

(Maintaining a positive ethos / Guidance and support / Reduction & removal of barriers to learning)

The school is guided by the key principle of **Prevention** and ensures that anti-bullying permeates all activities and functions. The school is committed to the -

- promotion of “good behaviour”
- creation and maintenance of positive relationships
- creation and maintenance of an ethos which promotes aspiration, achievement, and restoration
- promotion of the welfare and wellbeing of pupils
- provision of effective guidance and support
- reduction/removal of behavioural barriers to learning

This policy therefore complements and supports a range of other school policies including the positive behaviour policy. Through the implementation of the positive behaviour policy, St. Mary's

- sets high standards of behaviour
- carries out regular audits to ensure expectations are being met and identify areas for concern e.g. hotspots
- actively promotes an open, inclusive and mutually respectful working environment
- ensures high levels of pupil participation through promotion of an active School Council
- works in partnership with parents/carers through the development of an open system of communication
- implements a whole-school rewards system which consistently acknowledges, affirms and celebrates positive behaviour and achievement
- promotes confidence, self-reliance, resilience and effective interpersonal skills through effective delivery of the taught PDMU curriculum.
- works effectively with appropriate outside agencies to support the care and welfare of the pupils;
- works in conjunction with the SEN policy to identify and meet individual needs
- involves pupils in target setting, self-assessment and evaluation of outcomes re: IEPs
- implements a post-incident debriefing process to help pupils develop restorative attitudes and learn from experience.

4. The Consultation and Participation Process

St. Mary's Primary School regularly reviews the anti-bullying policy. In line with ETI Guidelines, (**ISEF Primary Pg. 8**), the school leadership team has ensured that there has been meaningful consultation with the school community, during the development of this updated policy. The school uses a range of consultation methods to gather data to inform the development and review of the anti - bullying policy.

Consultation with **pupils** includes:

- Consultative workshops with pupils
- Class-based activities
- Questionnaires distributed to all pupils
- Consultation with the School Council

Consultation with **parents** includes:

- Questionnaires distributed to all parents/carers via Google Forms.

Following consultation, results will be analysed and feedback provided to all participants. The school will, at all times, address any concerns highlighted during the consultation process and work to improve the support provided. Findings from the consultation process will be used to:

- inform and guide amendments to policy and procedures
- identify any Continuing Professional Development requirements
- inform the School Development Plan
- monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school's anti-bullying policy

The student council plays an important role in St. Mary's. The school ensures that the students are given a voice and listen and respond to their views. In line with DE Guidelines, the school encourages and values pupil involvement in discussions and decisions on all aspects of school life (including policy consultation).

The pupils of St. Mary's are involved in the creation and maintenance of the school's anti-bullying culture through participation in the following:

- the annual NIABF Anti-Bullying Week activities
- Pupil Questionnaires
- School Councils
- School Assemblies
- Designing anti-bullying posters
- Making anti-bullying movies
- PDMU lessons

4. Definition of Bullying Behaviour

5.1 Definition of “bullying”

As outlined below, the legal definition of bullying is set out in the **Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016**.

- (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.

St. Mary’s Primary School is committed to using the legal definition of bullying (Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016.) to assist pupils, parents/carers, staff and Governors to recognise bullying behaviour and the school understands that **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.**

The school understands the key elements which enable bullying behaviour to be identified i.e. on the basis of the evidence gathered the behaviour is/was:

- intentional,
- targeted at a specific pupil or group of pupils
- repeated*
- causing physical or emotional harm
- omission

An ‘**imbalance of power**’ is not included in the definition found in the 2016 Act, however, the NIABF’s definition of bullying (Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour, 2013) includes the phrase:

‘Bullying involves an imbalance of power, leaving someone feeling helpless to prevent it or put a stop to it.’

In St. Mary’s we feel that an imbalance of power, is still an important factor to be considered in assessing whether behaviour is to be considered bullying behaviour or not.

5.2 One-off incidents that the school will consider as bullying.

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

When assessing a one-off incident, to make a decision on whether to classify it as bullying, St. Mary’s Primary 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 Positive Behaviour Policy.

5.3 Criteria: The key elements present in Bullying Behaviour

The school recognises the importance of differentiating between socially unacceptable behaviours and those which do constitute bullying behaviours. The school understands that 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*
- causing physical or emotional harm
- omission

5.4 Types / Methods of bullying behaviour

The following unacceptable behaviours, when repeated (3 or more repetitious incidents) 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 pupil/s
- **Physical acts** -intentionally causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns
 - Hitting
 - kicking
 - pushing

- shoving
- material harm, such as taking/stealing money or possessions or causing damage to possessions
- **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
- **Exclusion-** intentionally choosing (acting) to stop someone/others from joining in e.g. from playing football at lunch
 - 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
- **Emotional or psychological harm**
 - intentionally causing distress
 - anxiety
 - humiliation
 - impact on self-esteem

Definitions of emotional and physical harm as set out in the DE Guidance.

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.

This list is non-exhaustive and allows for ‘new’ types/methods to be added.

5.5 Motivations behind bullying.

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
- Young Carer status

5.6 Language to use when discussing bullying behaviour

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, 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.

5.7 Socially unacceptable behaviour

St. Mary’s Primary School will not tolerate any socially unacceptable behaviour. We recognise that these unacceptable anti-social behaviours infringe on everyone’s right to be safe. The following are examples of socially unacceptable behaviours:

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.

All socially unacceptable behaviours will be dealt with in line with the school's Positive Behaviour Policy's procedures.

5. Preventative Measures

The school's key guiding principle of **prevention** is informed and guided by current legislation and DE Guidance including the **Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016, ISEF Primary ETI, 2017 and the Welfare and Protection of Pupils Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003.**

In line with guidance (**Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016**),

The Board of Governors of St. Mary's Primary School will:

- (a) ensure that policies designed to prevent bullying involving a registered pupil at the school are pursued at the school;
- (b) determine the measures to be taken to prevent bullying involving a registered pupil at the school-
 - (i) on the premises during the school day
 - (ii) while travelling to or from school during the school term
 - (iii) while in the lawful control or charge of a member of the staff of the school or
 - (iv) while the pupil is receiving educational provision arranged on behalf of the school and provided elsewhere than on the premises of the school

6.1 Whole School Measures

St. Mary's Primary School is committed to the creation and maintenance of an ethos which actively promotes the **prevention** of bullying behaviour among pupils.

The following measures will be put in place to prevent bullying behaviour among pupils in St. Mary's Primary School and to create a safe learning environment.

✓ **Consistent implementation of the school's Positive Behaviour Policy which:**

- upholds everyone's right to be safe both physically and emotionally
- requires everyone to behave in ways which keep everyone else safe - both physically and emotionally
- requires everyone to treat others in a respectful way at all times
- includes a statement repudiating bullying behaviour e.g. "bullying behaviour of any kind by any member of our school community to any other member of our community is completely unacceptable"
- requires high standards of behaviour at all times from every member of the school community
- promotes early intervention and provides support for those young people who experience difficulty in meeting acceptable standards of behaviour
- acknowledges and affirms positive behaviours
- acknowledges and sanctions socially unacceptable behaviours
- carries out regular school audits to assess the effectiveness of the policy through wellbeing surveys etc.

✓ **Consistent delivery of the Preventative Curriculum which:**

- raises awareness and understanding of the positive behaviour expectations.
- promotes anti-bullying messages and addresses issues, such as the various forms of bullying, through PDMU and RE.
- engages pupils in key national and regional campaigns, eg Safer Internet Day.
- actively promotes positive emotional health and wellbeing and reduce likelihood of ‘cyberbullying’ through the taught PDMU curriculum.
- develops emotional literacy, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills through for example planned Circle Time sessions, ‘Neuronimo’ Programme, Mindfulness/Relax Kids programmes.
- builds confidence, self-esteem and resilience.
- involves pupils in projects, helping them to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity.

As recommended by ETI (**ISEF Primary ETI 2017**) the school will regularly review the PDMU curriculum to evaluate its effectiveness and ensure that it is responsive to the needs of the pupils.

✓ **Ongoing tracking and monitoring of supervision arrangements (canteen, playground, corridors, toilets) through for example:**

- identification of ‘hotspots’ and audit supervision needs.
- supporting vulnerable pupils e.g. through seating arrangements, movement between classes, providing peer support arrangements.
- provision of friendship benches.

✓ **Active whole-school participation in NIABF’s Anti-Bullying Week activities, through for example.**

- anti-bullying assemblies
- designing and creating anti -bullying posters
- using ICT to promote anti-bullying messages (for example, anti-bullying movies)

6.2 The Pupil Voice.

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) says that children and young people should have a say in decisions that affect their lives. The school council provides a meaningful way in which our pupils can voice their opinions and have their views taken into account in decisions which impact upon them.

The School Council is involved for example in the development of:

- pupil agreed codes of behaviour such as e-safety contracts and bus contracts.
- ‘keeping safe’ messages
- emotional wellbeing audits

6.3 Creation and maintenance of a listening and telling culture

Every member of the community of St. Mary's Primary School (pupils, parents, carers, teaching/non-teaching staff and Governors) will work collaboratively together to:

- foster positive self-esteem; respect the right of others to be safe
- 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 behaviours
- 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 telling a trusted person 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

6.4 Preventing bullying behaviour on the journey to and from school.

In line with new legislation, St. Mary's Primary School will put preventative measures in place to prevent bullying behaviour **on the way to and from school**. While many of the measures outlined above will support the development of an anti-bullying culture, there are a number of ways St. Mary's will build upon this, related specifically 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.
- Measures to 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. (Bus Prefects)
- Regular engagement with transport providers (eg. EA Transport, etc.) 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 (eg. staff on duty at school gates and procedures for safe handover)

6.5 Preventing bullying behaviour through the use of electronic communication.

St. Mary's Primary School prioritises online safety within the school's preventative education curriculum and will take steps to prevent **bullying through the use of electronic communication amongst pupils**. Through e-safety lessons, assemblies and workshops the school will raise awareness of the nature and impact of online bullying and support the pupils to make use of the internet in a safe, responsible and respectful way.

This will include:

- Addressing key themes of online behaviour and risk through PDMU lessons 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. PSNI, REIM) 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 E-Safety Policy, etc.)

7. Responsibility

In St. Mary's Primary School, everyone has responsibility for creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all members of the school communities. 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, self-respect and respect for others
- behave towards others in a mutually respectful way
- model high standards of personal and 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 experiencing 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 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 experienced 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

Responsibilities of Staff

- Staff will foster in our pupils, self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others.
- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect in our pupils.
- Discuss bullying with all classes so that every pupil learns about the hurt it causes to both the child who experiences bullying behaviour and to the child who is displaying bullying behaviour.
- Staff will continually reinforce the importance of telling a trusted member of staff about bullying when it happens.
- Be alert to signs of distress and other indications of bullying.
- Listen to children who report that they have experienced bullying behaviour, take what they say seriously and provide reassurance that appropriate action will be taken.
- Follow up any concern by a parent about bullying and report back promptly and fully on the action that has been taken.
- Report suspected cases of bullying to a member of the Safeguarding Team who will record and take appropriate action.
- Fully engage in activities and competitions organised during Anti-Bullying Week.
- Use circle time, PDMU lessons, RE lessons, school assemblies etc. to promote opportunities to discuss the subject.

Responsibilities of Support Staff and all other adults connected with the school for Clubs and Activities

- All staff and adults working with pupils (including sports coaches and adults leading after-school activities) should be vigilant in looking for signs of bullying.
- They should report any incident of bullying or suspected bullying to the class teacher or in the absence of the teacher, a member of the Safeguarding Team.
- During lunch times, supervisory staff will assist with playground games and help maximise the use children make of the play equipment and playground markings. They will closely monitor children's involvement in activities.

Responsibilities of our Pupils

We expect our pupils to:

- Tell an adult if they are experiencing bullying behaviour.
- Refrain from becoming involved in any form of bullying.
- Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying.
- Intervene to protect any pupil who is experiencing bullying behaviour by reporting the incident to an adult.

Responsibilities of our Parents

We ask our parents to support us by:

- Advising their children to report any incidents of bullying to their teacher or any other staff member.
- Informing the school of any suspected bullying behaviour.
- Advising their child not to retaliate to any form of bullying.
- Co-operate with the school in matters of bullying - if their child is experiencing bullying behaviour or if their child is displaying bullying behaviour

8. Reporting a Bullying Concern

Outlined below are the ways in which pupils, parents and anyone else with concerns can make these known to St. Mary's Primary School.

Pupils Reporting a Concern

Children in St. Mary's Primary School are encouraged to raise concerns with any member of staff, including teaching and non-teaching staff.

Listed below are ways that pupils can report bullying concerns:

- Verbally- talking to a member of staff
- By writing a note to a member of staff (eg. in a worry box)
- By posting a comment in the 'Keeping Safe Box'

All pupils are encouraged to raise any concerns about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing this behaviour. Through the preventative work taken forward under Section 6, this 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 are encouraged to raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour with the school at the earliest opportunity. Parents and carers should 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 is outlined below:

- 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 designated teacher (Miss Lauren Cush) /deputy designated teacher (Mrs Donna Quinn) for Child Protection.
- Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken by the designated/deputy designated teacher for Child Protection. to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to the school Principal (Mrs Louise Quinn).

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

While we recognise that the majority of reports of bullying concerns will come from pupils and their parents/carers, St. Mary's Primary School is 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. 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.

9. 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 Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource, the member of staff responsible shall...

- Clarify facts and perceptions
- Check records
- 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 for all pupils involved.
- Track, monitor and record effectiveness of interventions
- Review outcome of interventions
- Select and implement further interventions as necessary

In line with NIABF guidance, St. Mary's Primary School will employ a restorative approach to responding to bullying behaviour. 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.

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

9.1 Responding

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 & Anti-Bullying Policies

9.2 Procedures

When dealing with an allegation of bullying, everyone involved in the management of the incident will follow the procedures outlined below and implement them immediately.

The Process:

- gather information-clarify facts and perceptions
- check for previous incidents and identify behavioural patterns
- use the information gathered to complete part 1 of the 'Bullying Concern Assessment Form' (BCAF)
- **check the information gathered against the legal definition's criteria** and on this basis determine whether bullying behaviour has taken place.

9.3 Determining if the criteria for bullying behaviour has been met

When dealing with an allegation of bullying everyone involved in the management of the incident will **check the information gathered against the legal definition's criteria** and on this basis determine whether bullying behaviour has taken place.

9.4 Taking Action

- ✓ If on the basis of the information gathered **THE CRITERIA FOR BULLYING BEHAVIOUR HAS NOT BEEN MET**, socially unacceptable behaviours will be:
 - dealt with under the school's Positive Behaviour Policy
 - addressed as appropriate, through the SEN Code of Practice and details recorded in SIMS Behaviour Management Module (BMM)

("Bullying behaviour should be treated in the same way as any other form of behavioural difficulty, and addressed through the 5 stages of the Code of Practice" **REF: Pastoral Care in Schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour, DE 2001**)

- ✓ If on the basis of the information gathered **THE CRITERIA FOR BULLYING BEHAVIOUR HAS BEEN MET** the following process/procedures will be followed:
 - the Code of Practice will be used to develop agreed Action Plans for BOTH targeted pupil/s AND pupil/s displaying bullying behaviours.
 - Support details will be recorded on the Bullying Concern Assessment Form (Part 3)

("Effective interventions and support are in place to meet the additional education and other needs of pupils and to help them overcome barriers to learning." **REF: "Every School a Good School" DENI, 2009**)

9.5 Support Provisions

"As well as ensuring that pupils who are bullying are dealt with in accordance with accepted school policy (consequences) and procedures, it will be necessary to work with these pupils to try to help them change their unacceptable behaviour" **REF: Pastoral Care in Schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour, DE 2001**

Bullying Concern Assessment Form (Part 3) - Supporting targeted pupil/s

Support for targeted pupil/s in St. Mary's would involve:

- discussing and agreeing a tailored Code of Practice action plan which would involve pupil/s in: identifying SMARTE (Specific, Measureable, 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
 - promotion of positive restorative relationships-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

Bullying Concern Assessment Form (Part 4) - Review outcomes

Progress will be regularly reviewed and updated in the BCAF and outcomes shared with key partners - BCAF Part 4.

Bullying Concern Assessment Form (Part 3) - Supporting pupil/s displaying bullying behaviours

Support for pupil/s displaying bullying behaviour in St. Mary's would involve:

- discussing and agreeing a tailored Code of Practice action plan which would involve pupil/s in: SMARTE 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.(When devising action plans, St. Mary's will refer to the interventions contained in NIABF's "**Effective responses to bullying behaviour**", Pgs. 16-19 and the appropriate strategies in the 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

Bullying Concern Assessment Form (Part 4) – Review outcomes

Progress will be regularly reviewed and updated in the BCAF and outcomes shared with key partners – BCAF Part 4.

9.6 Follow-up procedures

The school 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 (debriefing sessions) for both target/s and pupil/s displaying bullying behaviour.
- acknowledge, affirm and celebrate success

10. Record Keeping

10.1 Recording

In line with guidance, (**Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016**) St. Mary's Primary School will keep a central record of ALL bullying or alleged bullying incidents that occur while:

- (a) on the premises of the school during the school day
- (b) travelling to or from the school during the school term;
- (c) the pupil is in the lawful control or charge of a member of the staff of the school; or
- (d) the pupil is receiving educational provision arranged on behalf of the school and provided elsewhere than on the premises of the school.

St. Mary's Primary 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

10.2 Bullying Concern Assessment Form

When dealing with allegations of bullying behaviour St. Mary's Primary School will use the Bullying Concern Assessment Form (BCAF) to record details which include:

- information gathered e.g. from those involved, key bystanders
- what from the information gathered and all of the circumstances, appears to be the **motivation or underlying theme** behind the behaviour e.g. gender, disability, race, Looked After Status (LAC) etc.
- the **method/s of bullying** e.g. exclusion, verbal, electronic, physical etc.
- details about how the incident was addressed i.e. interventions selected, action taken and support provided for both target/s and the pupil/s displaying bullying behaviour/s; any external support provided together with outcomes achieved

Records will be kept on the online SIMS Behaviour Management Module, which is 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.

11. Professional Development of Staff

- St. Mary's Primary School is committed to ensuring that all staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school's ongoing CPD/PRSD provisions.
- Each member of staff will receive general training on policy and procedures with some members of staff receiving more specialist training in line with their roles and responsibilities.
- All teaching/non-teaching staff will receive annual Child Protection refresher training. The Principal/Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher, Chair of the Board of Governors and Designated Governor for Child Protection will also attend relevant child protection training courses provided by the Child Protection Support service for Schools.
- When new staff or volunteers start at the school they are briefed on the school's Child Protection Policy and Code of Conduct and given copies of these policies.
- CPD records are kept and updated regularly

12. Tracking, Monitoring and Policy Review

12.1 Assessing the Effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying 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 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

12.2 Policy Review

it is a legal requirement that the Anti-Bullying Policy be reviewed at intervals of no more than four years. The school's Anti-Bullying Policy will be kept under review to ensure its effectiveness. The review process will involve the following:

- the preventative measures will be reviewed by the Board of Governors at intervals of no more than 4 years
- from time to time additional policy amendments will be made following any incident which highlight the need for such a review

- the policy will be reviewed when directed to by the Department of Education and in light of new guidance
- amendments may be made in response to: issues arising from a current situation

This Anti-Bullying Policy will be reviewed, in consultation with pupils and their parents/carers, on or before October 2025.

13. Linked Safeguarding Policies

The school has a duty to ensure that safeguarding permeates all activities and functions. This policy therefore complements and supports a range of other school policies as outlined below.

In the development and implementation of this Anti-Bullying Policy, the Board of Governors has been mindful of related policies, including:

- Attendance Policy.
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Safe guarding and Child Protection Policy
- Pastoral Care.
- Safe Handling.
- Special Educational Needs.
- First Aid and Administration of Medicines.
- Health and Safety Policy.
- Relationships and Sexuality Education.
- Intimate Care.
- E-Safety Policy.
- Educational Visits.
- Staff Code of Conduct.

Links with Safeguarding Policies

- All socially unacceptable behaviours are managed under the **Positive Behaviour Policy** procedures – see current school policy for further details
- Code of Practice action plans are drawn up, tracked, monitored, assessed and reviewed through the implementation of the **Special Educational Needs (SEN)** policy - see current school SEN policy for further details regarding procedures etc.
- Should physical restraint prove necessary it will be undertaken in compliance with the school's **Safe Handling Policy** - see current policy for further details
- Incidents relating to e-safety will be managed with reference to the school's **E-safety Policy** requirements – see current policy for further details
- Further details relating to the “preventative curriculum” can be found in the **PDMU curriculum/pastoral care policy** where specific attention is given to pupils’ emotional wellbeing, health and safety, relationships, and the development of a moral thinking and value system.