

Section 1 – Introduction and Statement

At Dromore Primary School we believe all forms of bullying behaviour are unacceptable. We believe that all pupils have the right to learn in a safe and supported environment.

Section 2 – Context

This policy has been developed in line with the school's mission statement stating that everyone matters and the legislative and policy/guidance framework applicable.

The Legislative Context:

- * The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016
- * The Education and Libraries Order (Northern Ireland) 2003 (A17-19)
- * The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010
- * The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- * The Human Rights Act 1998
- * The Health and Safety at Work Order (Northern Ireland) 1978

The Policy & Guidance Context

- * The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016
Statutory Guidance for Schools and Boards of Governors (DE, 2019)
- * Pastoral Care in School: Promoting Positive Behaviour (DE, 2001)
- * Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: A Guide for Schools (DE, 2017)

Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (Dept. of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, 2016)

- Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland Policies and Procedures (SBNI, 2017)

The International Context

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

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 registered pupils' (A.17)
- * 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)

Section 3 - Ethos & Principles

At Dromore Primary School we foster mutual respect for each other through our daily teaching and learning. Positive behaviour is always encouraged. Lessons in Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) and Religious Education (RE) help promote a positive ethos.

Section 4 – Consultation and Participation

Teaching and non-teaching staff have been consulted about this policy as well as parents, the school council and the Board of Governors.

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.

We value the views and contributions of our stakeholders and will actively seek these views, respect them and take them into account.

Section 5 – What is Bullying?

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 provides schools with a legal definition of bullying.

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Definition of “bullying”:

1.— (1) In this Act “bullying” includes (but is not limited to) the repeated use of —

(a) any verbal, written or electronic communication,

(b) any other act, or

(c) any combination of those, by a pupil or a group of pupils against another pupil or group of pupils, with the intention of causing physical or emotional harm to that pupil or group of pupils.

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

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.

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, 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 incidents which are not considered bullying behaviour will be addressed under the Positive Behaviour Policy.

The following unacceptable behaviours, when repeated, 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
 - hitting
 - kicking
 - pushing
 - shoving
 - material harm, such as taking/stealing money or possessions or causing damage to possessions
- * Omission (Exclusion)

- 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

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

Some motivations behind bullying, including those named in the Act, include, but are not limited to:

- * Age
- * Appearance
- * Breakdown in peer relationships
- * Community background
- * Political affiliation
- * Race
- * Religion
- * Disability / SEN
- * Ability
- * Looked After Child status

Bullying is an emotive issue; therefore, it is essential that we ensure we use supportive, understanding language when 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.

Definitions of emotional and physical harm which are 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.

Section 6 – Preventative Measures

Measures are taken to prevent bullying behaviour, as defined in the section above. We aim to promote a strong anti-bullying ethos within the school and the wider school community.

Key actions that will be taken forward, with the aim of preventing bullying and creating a safe learning environment include:

- * Raising awareness and understanding of the positive behaviour expectations, as set out in the Positive Behaviour Policy
- * Promotion of anti-bullying messages through the curriculum eg. inclusion of age-appropriate material specific to individual subject areas related to bullying, positive behaviour and inclusion
- * Addressing issues such as the various forms of bullying, including the how and why it can happen, through PDMU.
- * Involvement in meaningful and supportive shared education projects, supporting pupils to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity.

- * Through the preventative curriculum actively promote positive emotional health and wellbeing (eg. mindfulness training).
- * Participation in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities
- * Engagement in key national and regional campaigns, eg Safer Internet Day.
- * Development of peer-led systems (eg. School Council) to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messaging within the school.
- * Development of effective strategies for the management of unstructured times (eg. break time, lunch)
- * Provision and promotion of extra-curricular activities, aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships, for example, sporting activity.

We recognise that bullying may occur during the journey to and from school.

To help prevent this happening we aim to:

- * Develop a culture where pupils take pride in their school and are viewed as ambassadors for their school within the community. This includes regular reminders of the positive behaviour expectations of pupils whilst travelling to and from school.
- * Empower pupils to recognise and report inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour of their peers during the journey to and from school.
- * Engage with transport providers (eg. EA Transport) to ensure effective communication and the early identification of any concerns.
- * Promote key anti-bullying messages and awareness of behaviour expectations of pupils.

We recognise that online bullying can be an issue and we support our pupils to make use of the internet in a safe, responsible and respectful way. This includes:

- * 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. 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 robust and appropriate policies in related areas (eg. Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy).

Section 7 – Responsibility

Everyone in the school community, including pupils, parents/carers and the staff of the school are expected to respect the rights of others to be safe.

Everyone has the responsibility to work together to:

- * foster positive self-esteem
- * behave towards others in a mutually respectful way
- * model high standards of personal pro-social behaviour
- * be alert to signs of distress* and other possible indications of bullying behaviour
- * inform the school of any concerns relating to bullying behaviour
- * refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying behaviour, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity.
- * refrain from retaliating to any form of bullying behaviour
- * intervene to support any person who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so.
- * report any concerns or instances of bullying behaviour witnessed or suspected, to a member of staff.
- * emphasise the importance of seeking help from a trusted adult about bullying behaviour when it happens or is observed
- * explain the implications of allowing the bullying behaviour to continue unchecked, for themselves and/or others.
- * listen sensitively to anyone who has been bullied, take what is said seriously and provide reassurance that appropriate action will be taken
- * know how to seek support – internal and external
- * resolve difficulties in restorative ways to prevent recurring bullying behaviour and meet the needs of all parties

Section 8 – Reporting a Bullying Concern

Below is an outline of the various ways in which pupils, parents and anyone else with concerns can make these known to the school.

Pupils Reporting a Concern

Pupils are encouraged to raise concerns with any trusted adult in school, teaching or non-teaching staff.

They may do this:

- * Verbally- talking to a member of staff
- * By writing a note to a member of staff
- * By posting a comment in a 'worry box'

Any pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing this behaviour. The focus should be on 'getting help' rather than 'telling'. All pupils are 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. They should encourage their children to react appropriately to bullying behaviour and to not do anything to retaliate or to 'hit back'.

The process for parents/carers to report bullying concerns:

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 Principal.

Where the parent/carer remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the school's complaints procedure should be followed. This usually involves making a formal, written complaint, to the Chair of the Board of Governors. The policy is available from the school office.

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.

Section 9 – Responding to a Bullying Concern

All reports of alleged bullying behaviour, or any concerns identified, will be responded to by the school.

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, consequences and sanctions not listed in the Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource
- * Track, monitor and record effectiveness of interventions
- * Review outcome of interventions
- * Select and implement further interventions as necessary

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.

Section 10 – Recording

There is 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 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.

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.

Section 11 – Professional Development of Staff

The school is committed to ensuring that staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school's ongoing CPD provisions.

After training, the policy and its procedures will be reviewed and any necessary amendments made.

Opportunities for safeguarding training are afforded to Governors and all staff - teaching and non-teaching.

CPD records will be kept and updated regularly.

Section 12 – Monitoring and Review of Policy

It is the responsibility of the Board of Governors, in liaison with the Principal, to monitor the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy.

As necessary to appropriately monitor the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy, the Board of Governors shall:

- * maintain a standing item on the agenda of meetings 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

This Anti-Bullying Policy shall be reviewed as required, in consultation with pupils and their parents/carers, on or before 31st December 2027.

Section 12 – Links to Other Policies

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

- * Positive Behaviour Policy
- * Pastoral Care Policy
- * Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- * Special Educational Needs Policy
- * Health and Safety Policy
- * Relationships and Sexuality Education
- * E-Safety Policy & Acceptable Use of Internet Policy
- * Staff Code of Conduct

Signed: _____ (Chairman) Date: _____

