



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

RATIONALE

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a **TELLING** school. This means that *anyone* who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

We use the NIABF definition of bullying:

"Bullying is the repeated use of power by one or more persons intentionally to hurt, harm or adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others."

At St Patrick's Primary School we see bullying as:

- When a child is repeatedly singled out to be 'picked on' either physically or verbally;
- Where the actions are deliberate and sustained;
- When the focus is on one child;
- When the intention is to hurt, isolate or humiliate an individual;
- When the actions are designed to be kept secret;
- When the actions are unprovoked.

We do not consider bullying to be:

- An isolated incident;
- A falling out;
- A 'one off' disagreement.

We see bullying as a shared problem. We aim to encourage all members of our school community to recognise bullying, acknowledge its unacceptability and report it. We as a school have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying. We therefore do all we can to prevent it, by developing a strong ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable.

AIMS

We aim, as a school, to produce a safe and secure environment where all can learn without anxiety. This policy aims to produce a consistent school response to any bullying incidents that may occur.

We aim to make all those connected with the school aware of our opposition to bullying, and we make clear each person's responsibilities with regard to the eradication of bullying in our school.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of our Anti-bullying Policy are:

- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is;
- All governors and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported;
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises;
- As a school we take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported;
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

PREVENTION

It is the responsibility of all within the school to maintain the ethos and discipline codes, which have been agreed. Pupils need good models from adults, from which they may develop their own self-discipline. We are committed to:

- Focusing on what is going well;
- Giving plenty of praise (but avoid overdoing this - it needs to keep its value);
- Making clear that it is the behaviour we do not want - not the child;
- Drawing attention to good behaviour;
- Giving clear and regular reminders of what is expected;
- Teaching good behaviour / manners through own conduct;
- Setting an example ourselves in dress, manner, courtesy and care.

Similarly, we expect all adults to treat one another with respect so that appropriate models of behaviour are recognised by the children. If an adult feels bullied by another: parent, staff or governor, this should be immediately reported to the Principal.

STRATEGIES FOR PREVENTING BULLYING INCLUDE:

- i) All staff will make pupils aware of the problems that can be caused by bullying. This is to be achieved through:
 - whole class discussion
 - group discussions and
 - talking to individuals.
- ii) The theme of bullying is integrated into Circle Time through the PDMU element of the Revised Curriculum.
- iii) A regular themed week takes place each year to highlight the effects of bullying (Anti-Bullying Week).
- iv) All accessible areas of the school are supervised at the start and end of each day and at the start and end of break times so as to minimise the possibility of bullying occurring.
- v) Class rules are established at the beginning of the school year which promote positive behaviour and agree class expectations. These rules are regularly referred to throughout the year.
- vi) Cyber-bullying is discouraged through our Internet Policy, which states that children should not access the Internet in school without an adult being present. Children are not allowed to be in possession of mobile phones during the school day.

STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH BULLYING

It should be remembered that the whole purpose of any action taken by staff against bullies is to enable all pupils to come to school and to enjoy a happy and secure environment. Parents, pupils and staff should be left in no doubt that bullying, in all its forms, will not be tolerated.

- i) All staff will watch out for early signs of distress. A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:
 - is frightened of walking to or from school;
 - doesn't want to go on the school / public bus;
 - begs to be driven to school;

- changes their usual routine;
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic);
- begins to truant;
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence;
- starts stammering;
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away;
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares;
- feels ill in the morning;
- begins to do poorly in school work;
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged;
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing" ;
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully);
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost";
- has unexplained cuts or bruises;
- comes home starving (money/lunch has been stolen);
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable;
- is bullying other children or siblings;
- stops eating;
- is frightened to say what's wrong;
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above;
- is afraid to use the Internet or mobile phone;
- is nervous and jumpy when a cyber message is received.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

ii) If bullying does occur:

- Pupils are encouraged to find the help of an adult they trust and to stay where there are plenty of other pupils about and where an adult can see them;
- In the first instance, staff will deal with incidents of bullying in the classroom and then report instances of bullying to the Principal / Vice-Principal who will take action where deemed necessary. This may include discussing with the whole staff or an individual teacher, establishing additional strategies to overcome the difficulties caused by bullying and discussion with those pupils involved within a peer group support approach.

iii) Pupils who are bullying will be made aware that their actions are making other pupils unhappy in coming to school and that this goes against our school's mission and the school rules.

- iv) Pupils who have bullied need to know that these actions are not tolerated and should find ways to make amends through negotiation and discussion with the staff of the school.
- v) If bullying persists:
 - The bully, or groups of bullies, will be withdrawn from the playground or classroom for a period of time and their parents will be informed of the action that has been taken;
 - Their behaviour will be monitored for a period of time so as to enable the school and home to work together to overcome problems;
 - Ultimately, an exclusion from school may be given if the bullying behaviour does not stop - in line with the school's Positive Discipline Policy.

THE ROLE OF GOVERNORS

The governing body supports the Principal in all attempts to eliminate bullying from our school. This policy statement makes it very clear that the governing body does not allow bullying to take place in our school, and that any incidents of bullying that do occur are taken very seriously and dealt with appropriately.

The governing body monitors the incidents of bullying that occur, and reviews the effectiveness of the school policy regularly. The governors require the Principal to keep accurate records of all incidents of bullying and to report to the governors on request about the effectiveness of school anti-bullying strategies.

The governing body responds within ten days to any request from a parent to investigate incidents of bullying. In all cases, the governing body notifies the Principal and asks him/her to conduct an investigation into the case and to report back to a representative of the governing body.

THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL

It is the responsibility of the Principal to implement the school's anti-bullying strategy and to ensure that all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the school policy and know how to deal with incidents of bullying. The Principal reports to the governing body about the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy on request.

The Principal ensures that all children know that bullying is wrong, and that it is unacceptable behaviour in this school. The Principal draws the attention of children to this fact at suitable moments.

The Principal sets the school climate of mutual support and praise for success, so making bullying less likely. When children feel they are important and belong to a friendly and welcoming school, bullying is far less likely to be part of their behaviour.

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

Teachers attempt to support all children in their class and to establish a climate of trust and respect for all. By praising, rewarding and celebrating the success of all children, we aim to prevent incidents of bullying.

Classroom staff in our school take all forms of bullying seriously, and intervene to prevent incidents from taking place.

If adults witness an act of bullying, they do all they can to support the child who is being bullied. If a child is being bullied then after consultation with the Principal, the class teacher informs the child's parents.

If adults become aware of any bullying taking place between members of a class, they deal with the issue immediately. This may involve counselling and support for the victim of the bullying and sanctions for the child who has been carrying out the bullying.

We spend time talking to the child who has bullied: we explain why the action of the child was wrong, and we endeavour to help the child change their behaviour in future.

If a child is repeatedly involved in bullying other children, the Principal is informed. The child's parents are invited into school to discuss the situation. In more extreme cases, for example, where these initial discussions have proven ineffective, the Principal may need to contact external support agencies.

THE ROLE OF PARENTS

Parents who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact their child's class teacher immediately.

Parents have a responsibility to support the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and to actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the school.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

We update and ensure that all staff receive sufficient training to be equipped to deal with all incidents of bullying.

MONITORING, REVIEWING AND EVALUATING

This policy is monitored on a day-to-day basis by the Principal, who reports to governors about the effectiveness of the policy on request.