



Anti-Bullying Policy

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Sean McAuley	30/09/2024
Chair of Board of Governors	Date
Karen McElroy	30/09/2024
Principal	Date

Rationale

At Creggan PS we are completely opposed to bullying behaviour and will not tolerate it. It is entirely contrary to the values and principles by which we work and live. All members of the school community have a right to work in a secure and caring environment. They also have a responsibility to contribute, in whatever way they can, to the protection and maintenance of such an environment.

DE Circular 2021/ 12 outlines the requirement for all schools to have measures in place to prevent all forms of bullying behaviour amongst pupils and determine policy details in consultation with staff and pupils.

Addressing bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 and the most recent publication from Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF) 'Effective Responses to Bullying behaviour' have shaped this updated policy.

Aims of this policy

This policy aims to: -

- Create a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour
- Promote a 'whole school' approach, where methods to prevent bullying behaviour are in place, signs of bullying behaviour are identified and swift and effective action is taken
- Show commitment to overcoming bullying behaviour by practicing zero tolerance
- Promote a secure and happy environment free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behaviour
- Ensure all school community, pupils and parents have an understanding of what bullying behaviour is, and what they should do if bullying behaviour arises
- Inform children and parents of the school's expectations and to foster a productive partnership, which helps maintain a bully-free environment
- Assure pupils and parents that they will be supported when bullying behaviour is reported
- Assist in the provision of a positive and supportive atmosphere - for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour
- To develop procedures for noting and reporting incidents of bullying behaviour.

Definition of Bullying Behaviour

Following consultation with governors, staff, pupils and parents, the following definition of bullying behaviour has been agreed:

Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship often involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face, physically, verbally or online - cyber bullying.

Discussions between pupils and School Council has led to the following child friendly definition of bullying behaviour:

Bullying is constantly hurting and being unkind to others. Bullying can happen either in person or online by posting pictures, videos and writing things that embarrass and hurt others. Is can also be when someone is being left out or picked on by a group of people.

Northern Ireland Anti Bullying Forum Definition of Bullying:

NIABF defines bullying behaviour as 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.

To avoid labelling individuals, we will strive to report situations as 'alleged bullying behaviour incidents' and perpetrators as 'displaying bullying behaviour'.

The term 'bullying behaviour' refers to a range of harmful behaviour, physical or psychological and usually has the following features

- It is repetitive and persistent.
- It is intentionally harmful.
- It involves an imbalance of power, leaving someone helpless to prevent it or put a stop it.
- It causes distress.

Prevention

Bullying behaviour is a complex and emotive issue and can never be eliminated and no school, however hard staff try, can guarantee that a child in its care will not be subjected to it. Active promotion of the school aims, positive behaviour and Code of Conduct and promotion of a positive and secure ethos can reduce incidents and build resilience in pupils and staff. This school actively promotes well-being and anti-bullying behaviour strategies throughout its curricular and extra-curricular provision. This school will take reasonable steps to minimise incidents of bullying behaviour in a proactive manner.

Forms of Bullying behaviour

PHYSICAL BULLYING BEHAVIOUR–

- hitting; pushing; kicking; tripping; spitting; hair pulling; throwing things;
- interfering with another's property by stealing/hiding/damaging/intruding upon it; extortion/threatening demands for money or other items
- writing or drawing offensive notes/graffiti about another

VERBAL BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

- name calling; insulting or offensive remarks; accusing; taunting; put downs
- ridiculing another's appearance/way of speaking/disability/personal mannerisms/race/colour/religion; humiliating another publicly
- spreading malicious or nasty rumours; threatening; intimidation; mocking; sarcasm

EMOTIONAL BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

- excluding/ shunning others from group activity/ social setting or play;
- belittling another's abilities or achievements; mobbing the individual
- menacing looks, stares; rude signs or gestures; negative body language

CYBER BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

- misuse of e-mails, images, text, blogs, tweets, forums and chat rooms to hurt, embarrass, demean, harass, provoke or humiliate another using perceived anonymity

- misuse of mobile phones by text messaging/ calls or images – again to hurt, embarrass, demean, harass, provoke or humiliate another using perceived anonymity
- unauthorised publication or manipulation of private information; impersonation
- publishing threatening comments pictures or videos online

Links with other school policies

The policy forms part of the overall pastoral care provision in school and therefore links and works with the: -

- Pastoral Care Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Special Needs Policy
- ICT Policy and Acceptable Use of Internet Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- PDMU Policy
- RSE Policy
- Online safety Policy

Participation and consultation process

We in Creggan Primary School have met the requirement to consult with all our stakeholders in the following ways:

- All stake holders will be consulted during the completion of this policy – parents, staff (discussions in staff meetings), pupils (circle time, school councils, PDMU and RSE) and governors (at meetings).
- The policy can be accessed via the school's website. In addition, parents and pupils receive information leaflets stating the school's definition of bullying behaviour and outlining the school's procedures for dealing with it.
- Awareness-raising programmes e.g. Posters in Reception area of school, Newsletters, Involvement in NIABF Anti-Bullying Week annual events, School Council Issues, Website and Facebook page.

- Class based lessons will negotiate and agree a Code of Conduct for Positive behaviours within the class.
- Awareness-raising programmes through our Preventative Curriculum (NSPCC Keeping Safe and Barnados Paths Programmes) and involvement in NI Anti-Bullying Week.
- Consultation with teaching and non-teaching staff
- Awareness-raising training of all staff in October 2022 in understanding what is bullying behaviour, developing the school's definition and levels of intervention in responding to bullying behaviour.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Responsibilities of Staff

Our staff will:

- foster self-confidence, self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others in our pupils;
- demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils;
- discuss bullying behaviour with all classes, so that every pupil learns about the damage it causes to both the child who is a target of bullying behaviour and to the child who is displaying bullying behaviour, and the importance of telling an adult about bullying behaviour when it happens;
- be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying behaviour;
- listen to children who have been a target of bullying behaviour, take what they say seriously, record, and act to support and protect them;
- talk with the child accused of displaying bullying behaviour to determine nature of bullying behaviour;
- deal with observed instances of bullying behaviour promptly and effectively, in accordance with agreed procedures;
- record suspected cases of bullying behaviour and repeated unacceptable behaviour on Creggan Primary School incident report form
- report cases of bullying behaviour to the Principal/ Senior Teacher who will decide if Bullying Concern Assessment form should be completed
- follow up any complaint by a parent about suspected bullying behaviour, and report back promptly and fully on the action which has been taken.

The Responsibilities of Pupils

We expect our pupils to:

- refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying behaviour, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity;
- follow school rules and classroom contract agreements;
- intervene to protect the pupil who is being a target of bullying behaviour, unless it is unsafe to do so;
- report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying behaviour, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances;
- help create a climate where bullying behaviour is not accepted;
- value and respect others;
- help others achieve;
- keep others safe.

Anyone who becomes the target of bullying behaviour should:

- not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out, to put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets.

What Pupils Need to Recognise About Bullying behaviour.

Pupils need to understand:

- that they have a right not be the target of bullying behaviour at school;
- that they are not to blame if they are the target of bullying behaviour;
- that they need to speak out and should trust the teachers to take their concerns seriously and to help them;
- that they are not alone.

The Responsibilities of Parents

We ask parents to support their children and the school by:

- watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children, which might be evidence of bullying behaviour;

- advising their children to report any bullying behaviour to their class teacher and explain the implications of allowing the bullying behaviour to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other pupils;
- advising their children not to retaliate violently to any form of bullying behaviour;
- being sympathetic and supportive towards their children, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken;
- keeping a written record of any reported instances of bullying behaviour;
- informing the school of any suspected bullying behaviour, even if their children are not involved;
- co-operating with the school, if their child/children are accused of displaying bullying behaviour, try to ascertain the truth, and point out the implications of bullying behaviour, both for the children who are targets of bullying behaviour and for those displaying bullying behaviour.

The Responsibilities of All

Everyone should:

- work together to create a safe, happy and anti-bullying behaviour environment within our school.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES TO CREATE AN ANTI-BULLYING BEHAVIOUR ETHOS

Proactive Strategies: -

- Promote School Ethos at all times
- Recognise and Reward Good Behaviour – Class Dojo points, Pupil of the Week Rewards
- School Assemblies – addressing bullying behaviour and providing Anti-Bullying behaviour Strategies, Principal's Awards
- Vigilant supervision - playground / general school environment
- Use of 'Wheel of Choice'
- Consultation with School Council and Ethos council
- Use of Grow in Love programme
- Use of PDMU lessons / Circle Time/ RSE
- Paths Programme

- NSPCC Keeping Safe Programme
- Good Parental Communication- Sway, school website
- Awareness of Anti-Bullying Week (in November each year)
- Use of Outside Agencies – NSPCC, Childline, PSNI, Behaviour Support Team, counsellors
- Consultation with parents, pupils, governors, wider community
- Use of Anti-bullying behaviour cartoons

Intervention Strategies

The aim of any intervention applied is to RESPOND to the alleged incidents, RESOLVE the concern and RESTORE the well-being of all involved. Low level bullying behaviour must never be ignored; early intervention can diminish problems and reduce potential risk.

The following approach will be adopted when dealing with incidents:

- If bullying behaviour is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached
- Attempts will be made to resolve situation quickly
- Reports will be taken seriously
- Steps will be taken to ensure child who is a target of suspected or confirmed bullying behaviour feels safe and secure
- Significant incidents will involve further investigation and recording- Bullying Concern Assessment form
- A clear account will be reported to class teacher /Senior teacher/ Principal. Significant or repeated incidents will require parents to be informed
- Disciplinary measures / sanctions, which are proportionate, will be explained and used
- Any incidents reported as bullying behaviour will be recorded and stored in Private 2 folder.

Assessing the level of risk an individual pupil faces will help determine the level of severity, as will taking account of the nature, frequency and duration of the bullying behaviour and the perceptions of the child who is a target of bullying behaviour. A pupil may not wish to disclose incidents so staff should be vigilant in observing symptoms such as,

- Deterioration of work
- Spurious (fake) illness and /or erratic attendance
- Isolation/desire to remain with adults

- Problems reported from home (e.g. bed wetting, nightmares)
- Childhood depression/anxiety
- Unexplained damage or loss of property
- Unwillingness to talk about school/friendships
- Unexplained bruises or marks

In selecting an intervention, we will take account of:

- The level of severity, using NIABF 'Effective Responses to Bullying behaviour' as a guide to select appropriate intervention(s).
- The legal status of the act.
- The age and ability of those involved.
- If there is an imbalance of power.
- How often incidents have occurred.
- Whether an individual pupil or a group is involved.
- The level of staff agreement, confidence and competence in adopting a restorative, behaviour changing approach.
- The agreement and support of the parents/carers in adopting a restorative, behaviour changing approach.
- Whether the pupil(s) displaying bullying behaviour acknowledge(s) the unacceptable behaviour and can be enabled to feel empathy for the pupil who is a target of bullying behaviour, and act appropriately.
- The willingness to engage in a group intervention such as the Support Group Method.
- Whether it is realistic to expect that the targeted pupil can be strengthened adequately to deal with the situation.
- Whether or not the targeted pupil has acted provocatively.

Our procedure focuses on assessing the bullying behaviour concern to determine the suitable level of intervention required in aiming to resolve the concern. Bullying Concern Assessment form will be completed by Principal/ Senior teacher and a suitable intervention chosen, if deemed necessary. Proforma for record keeping included in Appendix 1 (NIABF Bullying Concern Assessment Form). Interventions will be applied on a staged basis in line with our Positive Behaviour Policy and in accordance with NIABF intervention tables. (Appendix 2.)

Understanding the Levels of Intervention

Levels suggested within this policy are for guidance only and are derived under guidance from NIABF, we will consider a range of interventions from across all levels. It is important to remember that every bullying behaviour incident should be individually assessed and an intervention chosen which best meets the individual pupils needs.

Level 1 Intervention - Low Level Bullying behaviour

Interventions at Level 1 are to help individuals to recognise/reflect on their unacceptable behaviour and to "get them back on track" while listening to and supporting/strengthening the pupil(s) experiencing bullying behaviour. Low level bullying behaviour should never be ignored.

Staff should;

- Explain the inappropriateness of the behaviour in line with the school's values.
- Identify possible consequences if the bullying behaviour continues.
- Point out the level of distress experienced by the target pupil.
- Talk with the pupil being targeted to explore whether he/she has in any way provoked the bullying behaviour.
- Help the targeted pupil to identify ways in which he/she may be strengthened and supported, e.g. peer support.
- Encourage reparation to be made, if appropriate.
- Monitor the situation carefully.
- Be prepared to intervene with a higher response level if the situation persists or deteriorates.

Level 2 Interventions - Intermediate Level Bullying behaviour

While interventions at Level 2 involve continuing with the above, there is shift from individual support to group interventions.

To be effective small group work needs:

- The consent and involvement of the target pupil.
- To be planned and timetabled, session length dependent on age and ability.
- Parental / carer consent and agreement from participating pupils. Carefully selected group membership.
- To take place in a suitable and comfortable environment.
- To be uninterrupted.
- To be facilitated in a positive manner, ideally by two adults whose roles may alternate allowing one to participate and one to observe.
- Structured and focused activities using active learning approaches to stimulate discussion and debate amongst members and develop group identity.
- Decision and outcomes to be agreed and recorded, e.g. on a flipchart.
- To facilitate the development of empathy amongst pupils.
- A solution focused approach to the situation.
- To provide opportunities for pupils to take responsibility.
- Regular meetings of the group.
- Regular meetings with the target pupil to assess ongoing effectiveness of agreed actions.
- To ensure regular feedback is given on agreed actions.

Level 3 Interventions - Complex Bullying behaviour

Interventions at Level 3 will often involve the Pastoral/Safeguarding Leader, SENCO, and other senior managers, in collaboration with pupil(s) and parents to determine the way forward in affecting change. Schools may use their individual Risk Assessment procedures which will determine a plan of intervention and risk management that will be communicated to all.

This planning may occur through a multi-agency discussion, involving EA Services and other external support agencies. The manner in which teachers and others are involved in planning and how they are kept informed about the implementation of the plans will vary.

Bullying behaviour at this level often involves complex group dynamics, where a number of roles are evident, such as those displaying bullying behaviour, bystanders and pupils experiencing bullying behaviour. Consequently, interventions may require one-to-one meetings, small group work and whole class involvement. These will often require group interventions and/or the PIKAS method of shared concern- Appendix 3, along with individual support and strength building programmes.

Level 4 Interventions - High Risk Bullying behaviour

Bullying behaviours assessed as Level 4 are severe and involve a significant threat to the safety and welfare of any or all of the pupils involved. Such severe bullying behaviour concerns may be new or may have proved resistant to earlier school interventions and have now been assessed as high risk. Incidents at this level must be assessed in relation to the risk posed to any/all of the pupils involved. As such, the school's Child Protection Policy and safeguarding procedures will need to be invoked. Advice and support will be available to schools through the Child Protection Support Service for Schools.

In addition to safeguarding procedures and practices including referral to external support services, the school's interventions at Level 4 should continue to implement interventions detailed at Level 3 as appropriate.

Sanctions used to combat bullying behaviour

These are necessary for three main reasons:

- to make the particular child aware of the school/teacher disapproval of unacceptable behaviour
- to protect other children
- to protect the authority of teachers should that be threatened

Sanctions should

- be constructive
- be restorative
- be applied with sensitivity, flexibility and without discrimination
- where possible be related to the misdemeanour
- be specific to the child engaging in bullying behaviour and not applied to the whole group

Sanctions will be applied on a 'staged basis' in line with our Positive Behaviour Policy. However, in incidences of bullying behaviour, pending the nature of the behaviour and level (as outlined above), it may be necessary to move to a more advanced stage. This will be determined by Mrs McElroy in conjunction with the Safeguarding Team / Senior Teachers.

Stage 1: Unacceptable Behaviour – Not following school rules

At stage one the teacher will have responsibility for applying sanctions as and when required. These may include

- immediate verbal checking of misbehaviour
- request for an apology
- a minor penalty relevant to the offence e.g.
 - temporary loss of dojo points
 - temporary loss of golden time
 - temporary loss of playtime at break or lunch
 - temporary loss of time during which unacceptable behaviour took place e.g. structured play, P.E etc.
 - temporary removal to another class for short period
- If continuous misbehaviours persist the teacher will refer the pupil to Mrs McElroy who will place the child on to stage 2 of the behavioural stage

Stage 2: Repeated or Unacceptable Behaviour – referral to Mrs McElroy

Stage 2 referral will be made for repeated misbehaviour as in stage 1 and/or use of physical force, disrespect shown to staff members/property or other more serious misbehaviours

- loss of a break/play park/golden time
- temporary removal of a pupil from his/her peers into another class
- temporary or permanent loss of privileges including school council/ Ethos Council/ digital leader/ eco council membership
- removal from a class outing/sporting event etc.
- informal parent consultation (may include phone call/meeting with class teacher/principal)
- Short term placement on an Individual Positive Behaviour Plan.

Stage 3: Repetition of behaviours as at stage 2

- Formal consultation to include child, parent and staff
- Long term placement on an Individual Positive Behaviour Plan
- If required, permanent loss of privileges, council membership, participation at school events/activities and/or attendance at school trips etc.

Stage 4: After Formal Consultation consideration will be given to

- Referral to EA Behaviour Support Team for advice/guidance
- Suspension/Expulsion. Advice will be sought from appropriate CCMS/DENI

Teachers and other relevant school staff should consider themselves responsible at all times for the behaviour of all pupils. Responsibility for the behaviour of all pupils in the school is one which all teachers share.

In all matters relating to the maintenance of discipline in order to deal with bullying behaviours and the applications of sanctions it must be remembered that our aim is to develop self-discipline in our pupils and build and maintain their self-esteem.

Acceptance of admission to the school implies the parent's acceptance of the School's Anti Bullying Policy.

Monitoring and Evaluating

This policy is continually monitored by the school principal. This policy will be reviewed every two years and/or updated when advice is given by DENI. All stake holders will be involved in the review through a consultation process.

