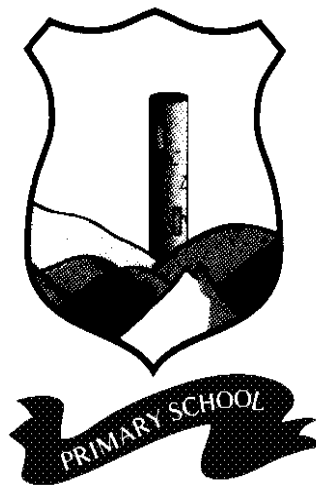


St. Joseph's
Carryduff



ADDRESSING BULLYING POLICY

2021

1. Introduction

The school Mission Statement states that we:

St Joseph's continues the mission of Christ entrusted to the Church to "go and teach" and seeks to foster and promote Christian spirituality within an ethos of inclusivity and pastoral care.

Integral to the vision that underpins all aspects of life in our Catholic school is the dignity of the human person made in the image and likeness of God. It includes a recognition of the self-worth and value of every child and the fostering of the key values of Catholic education. Through the promotion of mutual understanding and respect for all ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, we seek to create an inclusive and supportive environment in which all members of our school community feel valued.

We aim to provide a caring and safe environment in which all children can grow in self-esteem, independence and confidence. Our care for the children enables their holistic development; spiritually, physically, intellectually, morally, emotionally and socially.

Arising from this commitment to develop each individual child, a culture of achievement, improvement and ambition exists which is underpinned by a clear expectation that all pupils can and will achieve to the very best of their ability.

By learning, praying and playing together, we grow as a community in which children, parents, staff and governors demonstrate a commitment to achieving high standards, mutual care and support of each other whilst being constantly invited to rediscover what it is to follow Christ and to give witness to the centrality of Gospel values.

In St Joseph's, 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.

Each member of the school community has the responsibility to contribute to the creation and protection of such an environment. This is a responsibility which is taken seriously and is reflected in a positive and preventative approach to the issue of bullying. At St Joseph's we seek to listen to children and act appropriately on information received. Our school is a 'TELLING' school. Pupils in St Joseph's know that 'telling' someone about inappropriate behaviour is the best way of everyone keeping safe. All incidents of bullying are treated confidentially.

2. Context

This policy has been developed with reference to the legislative framework which has been developed.

The legislative context reflects the requirements of:

- [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 and guidance context reflect the information contained within:

- 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 \(DHSS 2016\)](#)
- [Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland Policies and Procedures \(SBNI 2017\)](#)

The international context reflects the requirements of:

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

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.
- Requires that the policy be updated at least every four years.

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 also sets out the circumstances under which this policy will be applied:

- 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)

The Education and Libraries Order (NI) 2003 requires the Board of Governors to:

- Safeguard and promote the welfare of students

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCHR) sets out every child's right to:

- Be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, maltreatment or exploitation.
- Be protected from discrimination.
- Express their views, in a supported and accessible way, on issues that affect them, and to have their opinions taken seriously.

3. Principles

- 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.
- 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.

4. Consultation and Participation

This policy has been developed following appropriate training by the Education Authority. Consultation with pupils was through discussion with the School Council, class-based activities, assemblies and the completion of an online questionnaire.

The final draft of the policy will be circulated to parents to enable them to make any comments or suggestions they feel might be appropriate.

All staff also had the opportunity to share their views through an online questionnaire and representative staff members were involved in writing the Addressing Bullying Policy.

5. What is Bullying?

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

For the purposes of this definition, “act” includes omission.

Definition- 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

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 spreading false rumours about others
- Trying 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.

The various motivations behind bullying might 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	Religious faith, values and beliefs

Disability / SEN

Ability

Looked After Child status

Young Carer status

Language

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 in the following ways:

- 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.

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.

6. Preventative Measures

The measures set out here aim to promote a strong anti-bullying ethos within the school and the wider school community. The focus for all our anti-bullying work will be on prevention.

Actions aimed at preventing bullying and creating a safe learning environment will include:

- Raising awareness and understanding of the positive behaviour expectations, as set out in the Behaviour Management 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 through PDMU, including the how and why it can happen, (eg. sectarian, racist, homophobic, transphobic, disablist, etc.)
- 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 NI Anti-Bullying Forum's annual Anti-Bullying Week activities
- Engagement in key national and regional campaigns, eg Safer Internet Day, Rights Respecting Schools Award etc.
- 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 playground management, eg. training for supervisors, zoning of playgrounds, inclusion of specific resources (buddy benches) and provision of a variety of play options to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Focused assemblies to raise awareness and promote understanding of key issues related to bullying.
- Development of effective strategies for the management of unstructured times (eg. break time, lunch)
- Provision and promotion of extra- and co-curricular activities, aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks. For example, music, sporting activity, creative arts, environmental activities and games, etc.

The school will build further upon this in relation specifically to the journey to and from school including:

- 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.
- Appropriate deployment of staff to support the transition from school day to journey home (eg. staff duty at school gate/exit doors, where appropriate)

The school will raise awareness of the nature and impact of online bullying and will 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 including understanding how to respond to harm and the consequences of inappropriate use.
- Participation in 'Safeguarding Week', 'Anti-Bullying Week' and 'Keeping Healthy Keeping Safe Week' activities.
- Engagement with key statutory and voluntary sector agencies (eg. C2k, 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. eSafety and Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy including our Mobile Phone Policy, Protocol for Pupils Accessing the Internet via C2K Wireless etc.)

7. Responsibility

Everyone has responsibility for creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all members of the school community. Pupils, parents and staff 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 indicators 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

8. Reporting a Bullying Concern

Pupils reporting a concern

Children are encouraged to raise concerns with any member of staff, including teaching and non-teaching staff. The ways in which pupils can raise concerns include:

- Talking to a member of staff
- Writing a note to a member of staff e.g. in a homework diary
- Posting a comment in a 'prayer' or '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'. As such, all pupils should be encouraged to 'get help' if they have a concern about bullying behaviour that they have experienced or is being experienced by another.

Parents Reporting a Concern

Parents 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 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 Vice-Principal or the Designated Teacher for Child Protection.
- Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken by the Vice-Principal or Designated Teacher for Child Protection to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to Principal.

Where the parent/carer remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the school's complaints procedure should be followed.

While the majority of reports of bullying concerns will come from pupils and their parents the school will be open to receiving such reports from anyone.

Reports of bullying concerns received from pupils or parents will be responded to in line with this policy. 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.

9. Responding to a Bullying Concern

The focus of our intervention will be on responding to the bullying concern and restoring the wellbeing of those involved. Our strategy for responding to bullying concerns will concentrate on the prevention of any further incidents. The school will also make use of NI Anti-Bullying Forum's 'Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour' resource, as appropriate, in making its response to any bullying concerns raised.

The member of staff responsible shall:

- Clarify facts and perceptions
- Check records
- Assess the incident against the criteria for bullying behaviour
- Identify any motivating factors
- Identify the type of bullying behaviour being displayed
- Identify intervention level
- Select and implement appropriate interventions for all pupils involved, including as appropriate, interventions, consequences and sanctions listed in NIABF's 'Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour' resource
- Track, monitor and record effectiveness of interventions
- Review the outcome of interventions
- Select and implement further interventions as necessary

The school advocates 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.

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

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. These are kept in secure storage.

Reports of bullying concerns include:

- 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 within the C2K 'Private folders' with access restricted to the Principal and Designated/Deputy Designated Teachers. 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

The school recognises the need for appropriate and adequate training for staff, including teaching and non-teaching staff. The school is committed to ensuring staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school's ongoing CPD provisions.

The school will amend its policy and procedures in light of any new information or guidance received during training. Opportunities for safeguarding training will be provided to Governors as part of the EA's Training Programme for Boards of Governors. All staff receive refresher training in safeguarding and child protection annually. Records of all CPD undertaken will be kept and updated regularly.

12. Monitoring and Review of the Policy

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

Child Protection and Safeguarding, including measures undertaken to address bullying, will continue to be a standing item on the agenda for each Board of Governors' meeting to enable the Governors to:

- 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 Addressing Bullying Policy will be reviewed, as required, on or before 1 September 2024.

13. Links with Other Policies

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

- Behaviour Management 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
- Educational Visits
- Staff Code of Conduct

Appendix 1

Northern Ireland's Anti-Bullying Forum's Effective Responses to Bullying: Levels of Intervention

The aim of the intervention is to stop the bullying. The most effective way this can happen is to ensure that the child who is bullying others is helped to change his or her behaviour. This may involve a restorative approach where the focus is on restoring healthy and supportive relationships within the class/school community.

The levels set out in this section provide a guide for the school's response and the school may implement a range of interventions from across all levels. Every bullying incident will be individually assessed and an intervention chosen which best meets the individual pupil 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. Low level bullying behaviour will not be ignored.

Staff will:

- 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 pupil experiencing bullying behaviour
- Talk with the pupil experiencing bullying behaviour to explore whether he/she has in any way provoked the bullying behaviour
- Help the pupil who has experienced the bullying behaviour 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

Interventions at Level 2 require the full agreement of the child experiencing the bullying behaviour and his/her parents. Whilst interventions at Level 2 involve continuing with the above, there is shift from individual support to group interventions. This will involve:

- Use of some of the resources included in NIABF's Effective Responses to Bullying
- Structured and focused discussion about the bullying behaviour and its impact on the child/children experiencing the bullying behaviour in order to develop empathy amongst pupils
- Decisions and outcomes agreed by the group and recorded, e.g. on a flipchart.
- Pupils will take responsibility for devising a solution to the situation.
- Regular meetings with the bullied pupil to assess ongoing effectiveness of agreed actions
- Feedback is given to the group on the outcomes of agreed actions.

Level 3 Interventions - Complex Bullying Behaviour

Interventions at Level 3 will often involve the Pastoral Care Coordinator, SENCO, and Principal/Vice-Principal, in collaboration with pupil(s) and parents to determine the way forward in affecting change. An individual Risk Assessment may be conducted to help determine a plan of intervention and risk management. This will be communicated to all.

This planning may involve a multi-agency discussion, involving EA Services and other external support agencies.

Bullying 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. Consequently, interventions may require one-to-one meetings, small group work and whole class involvement. NIABF support materials will be used to scaffold the school's response to bullying behaviour at this level.

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 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 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 will continue to implement interventions detailed at Level 3 as appropriate.

Appendix Two

Synopsis of our effective response to bullying behaviour...

