



# Anti-Bullying Policy

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## **Section 1: Introductory Statement**

Nettlefield Primary School believes the school to be a vital part of the community. Nettlefield is a place to grow, dream big and shine brightly.

Our primary aim is the development of each child's potential through an environment which is caring, challenging and rewarding for all who attend Nettlefield Primary School.

To achieve this primary aim we have subsidiary aims:

- To ensure all members of the school community are aware of this policy
- To create an emotionally safe environment where positive relationships can develop
- To ensure that all pupils, parents and staff are aware of this policy and their roles and responsibilities in contributing to its success
- To prevent, de-escalate and/or stop continuation of harmful behaviour
- To react to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way
- To safeguard the pupil who has experienced bullying and to trigger sources of support for the pupil

## **Section 2: The Context**

This policy is informed by the legislation and guidance listed below:

### **The Legislative Context:**

- [The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2016](#)
- [The Education and Libraries Order \(Northern Ireland\) 2003](#)
- [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 \(UNCRC\)](#)

### **Section 3: Ethos & Principles**

- 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.

### **Section 4: Consultation and Participation**

This policy is subject to consultation which will be carried out in line with whole school development planning consultation to pupils, parents, staff and governors in the form of an online survey on a three-year cycle.

The anti-bullying policy may be subject to interim review if required.

It was last reviewed in June 2021 and is due for review and consultation in Spring 2022 as per our 3-year school development cycle.

Pupil voice will feed into consultation and ongoing anti-bullying messaging through the involvement of the pupil council and through whole school pastoral provision such as PATHS.

This draft copy of the policy will be published on the school website, school stake holders will be send a link via Seesaw and social media and invited to provide comment on the policy ahead of the amendment and approval by the school's board of governors.

## **Section 5: What is Bullying?**

Addressing Bullying in Schools Definition of ‘bullying’:

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 (including omission), 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.

**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.**

When bullying is talked about in school, teachers explain that bullying is when someone means to do it (intentional) and it usually happens over a period of time (sustained) We recognise that bullying is usually repeated behaviour, however, 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:

<p><b>Verbal or written acts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• saying mean and hurtful things to, or about, others</li> <li>• making fun of others</li> <li>• calling another pupil mean and hurtful names</li> <li>• telling lies or spread false rumours about others</li> <li>• try to make other pupils dislike another pupil/s</li> </ul>	<p><b>Physical acts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hitting</li> <li>• kicking</li> <li>• pushing</li> <li>• shoving</li> <li>• material harm, such as taking/stealing money or possessions or causing damage to possessions</li> </ul>
<p><b>Omission (Exclusion)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaving someone out of a game</li> <li>• Refusing to include someone in group work</li> </ul>	<p><b>Electronic Acts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using online platforms or other electronic communication to carry out many of the written acts noted above</li> <li>• Impersonating someone online to cause hurt</li> <li>• Sharing images (eg. photographs or videos) online to embarrass someone</li> </ul>

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

There are various motivations behind bullying, including those named in the Act. 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

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 by 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.

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

We are committed to identifying Bullying preemptively when possible and to promoting and maintaining a listening and telling culture.

In dealing with emotive issues such as bullying we are committed to a child-centered approach to meeting the social and emotional needs of all of our pupils whether they are displaying positive or negative behaviours. Bullying is an emotive issue and an emotive word and its use is not also helpful in resolving what are often, ultimately, complex relationship issues between young people.

We will always do our best to resolve concerns and issues. We will always listen. We ask that as adults concerned with the wellbeing of future generations be measured and considered in our responses to these issues and remember that all of our pupils are children.

Every member of the school community, pupils, parents, carers, staff both teaching and non-teaching, governors may be expected to 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 and take what is said seriously
- 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

Nettlefield Primary School is committed to creating a safe learning environment and preventing bullying.

Examples of these include:

- Raising awareness and understanding of the positive behaviour expectations, as set out in the Positive Behaviour Policy through assemblies and classroom teaching
- Promotion of anti-bullying messages through the curriculum helped by the use of PATHS
- Involvement in meaningful and supportive shared education projects, supporting pupils to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity.
- 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 playground management, eg. training for supervisors, zoning of playgrounds, inclusion of specific resources (buddy benches, play bus stops) and provision of a variety of play option 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: sporting activity, creative arts, leisure and games, etc.

### **Addressing Cyber Bullying**

- Technology has provided us with more and faster ways to communicate on a global basis than has ever been the case in the past.
- We acknowledge the potential for children to be exposed to bullying through written, verbal, image and video exchanges online and we aim to tackle this issue through responding to reports of online abuse with parents and pupils and also proactively through E-Safety education as an aspect of PDMU.
- The school has a specific E-Safety Policy which refers in more detail as to how we deal with cyber bullying.

## **Section 7- Responsibility**

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 and to apply the preventative measures as detailed in Section 6 of this policy.

The school are responsible for responding to concerns of bullying behaviour as outlined in Section 8 of this policy and recording incidents and outcomes as detailed in Section 10.

There is a responsibility on all members of the school community to respond appropriately to bullying concerns as laid out in Section 9 of this policy.

## **Section 8 – Reporting a Bullying Concern**

### **Pupils Reporting a Concern**

Children and young people have told NIABF that when they have a concern about a potential bullying situation, they would like the opportunity to discuss this with a member of staff that they trust. Pupils are therefore encouraged to raise concerns with any member of staff, including teaching and non-teaching.

Any pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing this behaviour. As such, all pupils should be encouraged to ‘get help’ if they have a concern about bullying that they experience or is experience by another.

Pupils can make staff aware of bullying related concerns:

- Verbally- talking to a member of staff
- By writing a note to a member of staff (eg. in a homework diary)
- By sending an email to a member of staff or to a dedicated email address
- By posting a comment in a ‘worry box’

### **Parents/Carers Reporting a Concern**

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 a member of the schools Senior Leadership Team: Head of Key Stage or Vice-Principal, as applicable.

Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken by the Head of Year/Vice-Principal 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.

All reports of bullying concerns received from pupils and/or parents/carers will be responded to in line with this policy and that 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**

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 (SIMS/CPOMS)
- 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 intentions as necessary

In the first instance we will attempt to use a restorative approach to resolve bullying issues. If, through discussion, an agreement and acceptance of responsibility is reached, agreement of a resolution will be sought.

In the event of a situation where a satisfactory restorative resolution is not achieved, or in cases where the severity of behaviour is such that it is felt necessary to take a more consequential approach, interventions may include sanctions such as time out, temporary removal of privileges such as play times or participation in events and other sanctions in line with the school's Behaviour Policy.

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

## **Section 10 – Recording**

Schools are legally required, under the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 (enacted September 2021) 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**

Nettlefield Primary school recognised the need for appropriate training for staff, including teaching and non-teaching school 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/PRSD provisions as recourse and operational capacity allows.

Records of training will be maintained as part of the school's in service training log and training will feed into policy review and procedural development.

## **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.

To appropriately monitor the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy, the Board of Governors shall:

- 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.

It is a legal requirement that the Anti-Bullying Policy be reviewed at intervals of no more than four years or sooner if any incident or external policy change occurs which highlights the need for such a review or if directed to by the Department of Education and in light of new guidance.

As this is a draft policy the next review will take place in the Spring of 2022 if not before.

## **Section 13 – 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
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- E-Safety Policy & Acceptable Use of Internet Policy
- Educational Visits
- Staff Code of Conduct