



# ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

## AIM

The aim of this anti-bullying policy is to ensure that everyone in Omagh County Primary School - parents, pupils, staff (teaching and non-teaching), Board of Governors and all stakeholders will have the opportunity to work, learn and teach in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse which we do not tolerate. It is made clear to everyone that this is a form of antisocial behaviour contrary to our core value of, "Learning for Life, Together".

We believe that every member of the school community has the right to:

- feel safe and secure;
- be treated with respect and courtesy;
- have equal opportunities, regardless of sex, race, religion or ability;
- be able to learn; and
- be valued as a member of the school community.

Bullying behaviours of any kind are unacceptable within our school. If bullying does occur, everyone and especially pupils should be able to report incidents and feel confident that they will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Omagh County Primary School is a **TELLING** school - anyone (including parents) who feels that bullying, whether alleged or observed is happening, is expected to tell a member of staff as soon as possible and all staff are expected to be vigilant and keep a record of alleged/observed incidents.

## DEFINITION OF BULLYING

The Department of Education defines bullying in its document, 'Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection' as, "deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for the victim to defend him or herself".

(Addressing Bullying in Schools 2016 - Anti-Bullying Act)

The three main types of bullying are:

- **physical (Eg. hitting, theft etc.);**
- **verbal (Eg. name calling, racist remarks etc.); and**
- **indirect (Eg. spreading rumours, excluding someone from social groups).**

The term bullying refers to a range of harmful behaviour, both physical and psychological. Bullying behaviour usually comprises of the following four features.

1. It is repetitive and persistent — though sometimes a single incident can have the precisely the same impact as persistent behaviour over time.
2. It is intentionally harmful — though occasionally the distress it causes is not consciously intended by all of those who are responsible.

3. It involves an imbalance of power, leaving someone feeling helpless to prevent it or put a stop to it.
4. It causes feelings of distress, fear, loneliness and lack of confidence in those who are at the receiving end.

It is important that everyone, pupils, parents/cares, governors and staff in Omagh County Primary School:

- recognise the importance of distinguishing between those behaviours which while undesirable and unacceptable do not constitute bullying from those which are undesirable and unacceptable and do not constitute bullying because they are proven to be deliberate, hurtful, targeted and repeated over a period of time;
- is sensitive to different perspectives.
- understand bullying can take many forms from teasing and spreading rumours, to causing physical harm. It includes name calling and verbal abuse (face to face, in writing, by phone, on-line, by text message or making comments on social networking sites), mocking or taunting, hitting, writing or drawing offensive graffiti, excluding people from groups, and threatening others including demanding money.

### **PROCEDURES IN OMAGH COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

All staff are vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring, and will take immediate steps to stop it happening, to protect and reassure the target and to discipline the pupil/pupils who has/have displayed bullying behaviours. Parents of both victim and bully will be contacted by the school.

Any complaint by a parent that their child is, or may be, being bullied will be fully investigated, and team action will be taken to protect the target should bullying be identified. A parent making a complaint about bullying will have a response from the school normally within one week of making the complaint. This response will indicate the outcome of any investigation and if it was necessary to take action.

The sanctions taken against a pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case, but may include the one or more of the following:

- *being subject to careful monitoring of behaviour/social interaction until staff are satisfied that the problem has stopped;*
- *being kept in at break time and/or lunch time;*
- *losing any privileges or position of responsibility he/she holds in the school;*
- *being placed on report,*
- *being suspended in accordance with Education Authority's procedures;*
- *facing expulsion in accordance with Education Authority's procedures.*

Depending on the needs of the pupils, it may be appropriate to provide staff support beyond that of the child's class teacher in the form of behaviour management programmes such as anger management and solution focused strategies.

Peer mediation may be appropriate when pupils have been trained in peer mediation techniques.

Trained and supervised mediators through early intervention can help pupils resolve difficult situations and build trust between the children concerned. Training may be provided by outside agencies such as Childline, Education Authority, Behaviour Support Team, Education Welfare, the NSPCC and NIABF.

## The Responsibilities of Staff

Our staff will:

- be consistent in approach when dealing with bullying concerns/behaviour;
- foster in our pupils self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others;
- demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils;
- discuss bullying with all classes, so that every child learns about the damage it causes to both the child who is bullied and to the bully, and the importance of telling a teacher about bullying when it happens;
- be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying;
- listen to children who have been bullied, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them;
- deal with observed instances of bullying promptly and effectively.
- keep a record of alleged/observed incidents;
- check all the facts before determining whether or not bullying has taken place;
- keep parents informed;
- use of the curriculum to address issues of bullying and how pupils can deal with it (Circle Time and the Learning Area of Personal Development and Mutual Understanding are particularly relevant in addressing the needs of the children);
- make use of inter-board Anti-Bullying Week materials (NIABF);
- access agencies as required support the school's position in trying to eradicate incidents of bullying. Examples of agencies/organisations that presently support the school in its anti-bullying programme include, PSNI, NSPCC, the Life Education Bus, the Education Welfare Service and 'Gateway'.

Designated Teacher For Child Protection: Mrs A Dempsey

Deputy Designated Teacher For Child Protection: Miss J Funston (Principal)

Pastoral Care Co-ordinator: Miss J Funston (Principal)

Deputy Pastoral Care Co-ordinator Mrs E Alcorn

## The Responsibilities of Pupils

We expect our pupils to:

- report concerns of bullying to staff at once or as soon as is practical. This will help staff to investigate concerns quickly and without information potentially being distorted;
- refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity;
- intervene to protect the pupil who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so;
- report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances.

**Anyone who becomes the target of bullies 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.

## The Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

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;
- advising their children to report any concerns to a member of staff as soon as possible. Parents should also explain to their children the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other pupils;
- advising their children not to retaliate violently to any form of bullying;
- being sympathetic and supportive towards their children, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken;
- informing the school of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved;
- checking all the facts - before determining whether bullying has occurred. I.e. the behaviour was deliberate, hurtful, targeted and repeated over a period of time. The target found it difficult to defend him/herself;
- co-operating with the school, if their children are accused of bullying, try to ascertain the truth, and point out the implications of bullying, both for the children who are bullied and for the bullies themselves.

### **The Responsibilities of All**

#### **Everyone should:**

- work together to combat and, hopefully in time, to eradicate bullying.

### **LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES**

This policy is linked with the school's Positive Behaviour Policy, Pastoral Care Policy, Child Protection Policy, Special Needs, ICT, e-Safety and acceptable use of mobile phones and related technologies.

### **MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Senior Management Team and the Board of Governors. The pastoral care co-ordinators will collate and review all documentation relating to bullying issues on a termly basis. This will allow the school to identify trends, Eg., individual/groups of pupils displaying bullying behaviour or hotspots where bullying behaviour is more likely to occur. This will allow the SMT to provide feedback to the Board of Governors regarding changes in procedures, sanctions, supervision levels, the effectiveness of the definition of bullying etc.

Staff, pupils and parents will be consulted yearly and will complete baseline audits every three years to provide a snapshot of the effectiveness of the school's anti-bullying policy and positive behaviour policy.

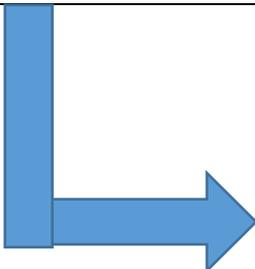
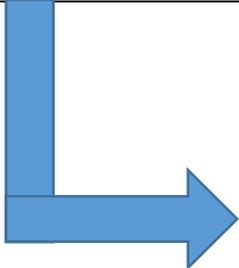
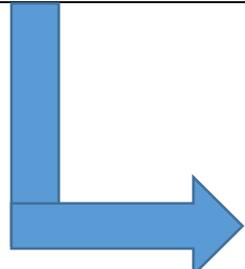
The School Council provides children with an opportunity to highlight concerns and collaborate with adults when discussing how bullying can be reduced or dealt with. This is a valuable monitoring and evaluating mechanism. Discussions will take place on a termly basis.

Teachers will highlight issues brought to their attention by pupils or parents and address these in class or in assemblies etc.

This policy was reviewed by representatives of Governors, parents/carers, teaching and non-teaching staff and pupils in line with DE recommendations (Pastoral Care in Schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour, 2001), (Addressing Bullying in Schools 2016 - Anti-Bullying Act)

This policy will be reviewed to assess its implementation and effectiveness in **2018**.

## If your child is being bullied

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
|   | <p>Talk to your child, keep a record of events and agree together on the action you will take.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>  |  |
|   | <p>Speak to your child's teacher about your concerns.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>   |  |
| NO  | <p>Check with your child, is the issue resolved?</p>   | YES  |
|    | <p>Make an appointment to meet any member of the school's safeguarding team.<br/>(Mrs Dempsey, Mrs Alcorn or Miss Funston)<br/>Agree appropriate action and request a reasonable timescale for resolution.</p>           | <br>This is good news but remember to check in regularly as bullying behaviour is often repeated. |
|   |   |  |
| NO  | <p>Has the issue been resolved?</p>  | YES  |
|  | <p>Consider following the school's complaints process.</p> <p>Chairman of the Board of Governors is Mr N Hagan</p>   |  |
|   |   |  |
| NO  | <p>Has the issue been resolved?</p>  | YES  |
|  | <p>Remember bullying is a child protection issue, you can talk to a social worker at the Gateway Team (Western Trust) Tel: 02871314090 or the PSNI at Central Referral Unit Tel: 999 (Emergency) or 101 (Non-Urgent)</p> |  |

