

Ballykeel Primary School



Anti-Bullying Policy

Reviewed September 2017

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Definition

Bullying is deliberately repeated behaviour over a period of time by an individual or a group of individuals that causes distress, hurt or undue pressure.

It can take a number of forms: verbal, physical, social and psychological. It involves the use of power in relationships. It involves all forms of harassment (including racist, homophobic, sectarian and the disabled). It can be planned and organised or it may be unintentional. It affects an individual's ability to achieve and can have long-term effects on those engaging in bullying behaviour, those who are the subject of bullying behaviour and the onlookers or bystanders.

Forms of Bullying

- **Verbal** – name calling, teasing, abuse, put downs, insults, threats, sarcasm.
- **Physical** - hitting, pushing, punching, kicking, scratching, biting, tripping, spitting.
- **Social** – ignoring, excluding, alienating, making inappropriate gestures.
- **Psychological** – being unfriendly e.g. spreading rumours, dirty looks, stealing, hiding or damaging possessions, malicious notes of graffiti, ridiculing another pupil's appearance, way of speaking or personal mannerisms.
- **Racist** – racial taunts.
- **Xenophobic** – taunting of foreigners.
- **Sexual** - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.
- **Homophobic** – because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality.
- **Sectarian** – unwanted religious, political differences.
- **Cyber** – unwanted/inappropriate comments in chatrooms, on social networks, emails, texts, tweets and blogs to hurt/embarrass/ demean/harass or humiliate another.

The School's View

Ballykeel Primary School is completely opposed to bullying and will not tolerate it. It is entirely contrary to the values and principles we work and live by. All members of the school community have a right to work in a secure and caring environment. Any

inappropriate behaviour that gets in the way of teaching and learning in the school and interferes with the wellbeing of the pupils cannot be accepted.

Pupils, teachers, ancillary staff, parents and caregivers have a shared responsibility to create a safe, caring and happy environment. They also have a responsibility to contribute in whatever way they can to the protection and maintenance of such an environment.

The Responsibilities of the School

Our school will:

- develop an Anti-Bullying Policy through consultation, which clearly identifies the behaviours that are unacceptable and the strategies for dealing with bullying in the school.
- inform pupils, parents, caregivers, ancillary staff about the school Anti-Bullying Policy.
- provide clear information on strategies that promote appropriate behaviour and the consequences for inappropriate behaviour.
- follow up complaints of bullying, harassment and intimidation.

The Responsibilities of Staff

Our staff will:-

- foster in our pupils self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others.
- model appropriate behaviour.
- closely supervise pupils in all areas of the school and playground.
- discuss bullying with all classes so that every pupil 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 and stop it when it happens.
- listen to children who have been bullied, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them.
- report suspected cases of bullying to the class teacher, the designated teacher for child protection and the principal.

- follow up any complaint by a parent about bullying and report back promptly and fully on the action which has been taken.
- deal with observed instances of bullying promptly and sensitively, in accordance with agreed procedures – **A**ffirm / **A**sk / **A**ct

The Responsibilities of Parents and Caregivers

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

- Making sure they are aware of the school's definition of bullying.
- Supporting their children in all aspects of their learning.
- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children which might be evidence of bullying.
- Being aware of the school Anti-Bullying Policy and assist their children in understanding bullying behaviour.
- Advising their children to report any bullying to their class teacher and/or principal and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other pupils.
- Supporting their children and developing positive responses to incidents of bullying and advising them 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.
- Keeping a written record of any reported instances of bullying.
- Informing the school of any suspected bullying even if their children are not involved.
- 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.
- *see Appendix 1 – Guideline for Parents and Caregivers*

The Responsibilities of Pupils

We expect our pupils to:

- treat each other respectfully
- refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity;
- try to include everyone in play, especially those who are often left out.
- 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.
- support the pupil who is the recipient of hurtful behaviour.

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 All

- work together to combat and, hopefully in time, to eradicate bullying.
- promote positive relationships that respect and accept individual differences and diversity within the whole school community.
- contribute to the development of the Anti-Bullying Policy and support it.

Procedures for Dealing with Incidents of Bullying

1. Dealing with bullying as it happens:

When dealing with instances of bullying witnessed by a member of staff – teaching or non-teaching – staff should:

- a) defuse the situation by separating the target from the bully or bullies;
- b) disperse any bystanders;

- c) act firmly in a measured manner, avoiding any sudden movements which might be construed as aggression. If physical restraint is necessary, it should be applied in accordance with the guidelines set out in Circular 1999/9;
- d) indicate clearly to the bullies that Ballykeel Primary School does not tolerate bullying under any circumstances.
- e) Provide reassurance, support and protection for the pupil who was the target, and set the soonest possible time (if not immediately), for a responsible teacher to discuss with him or her what happened, the background, and to reach agreement on what should now happen to make things better.
- f) Follow procedures laid down in point 3 below ('Following the Incident').

2. Dealing with Bullying whether Suspected, Reported or Witnessed

- a) Discussion at length with the victim. This will require patience and understanding. Remember – listen, believe, act. Provide reassurance, support and protection for the pupil who was the target and discuss with him or her what happened, the background, and reach agreement on what should now happen to make things better.
- b) Identify the bully/bullies. Obtain witnesses if possible. Indicate clearly to the bullies that the school does not tolerate bullying under any circumstances. If they own up follow the procedure outlined below. If they do not own up investigate further. If it is clear they are not telling the truth, continue with the procedure. Children usually own up if presented with all the facts.
- c) Where bullying is reported to the school by parents/caregivers such complaints will be dealt with promptly and thoroughly, and a response from the school will be made within 10 working days.
- d) Follow procedures laid down in point 3 below ('Following the Incident').

3. Following the Incident

Actions subsequent to the incident, (consistent with the SEN Code of practice), will include:

- a) Sanctions will be administered in line with the school's Positive Behaviour Policy. Sanctions for the bully may include being given a black ball,

withdrawal from favoured activities, detention, loss of playtimes, exclusion from school during lunchtimes, exclusion from school, depending on the perceived severity of the incident(s).

- b) In addition to administering sanctions to those responsible in accordance with agreed procedures, the instigation of Stage 1, or, with the SENCO, Stage 2 of the Code may be appropriate. In either case, this should include the appropriate teacher (for example, class teacher, Head of Key Stage, Principal), talking through with the bully or bullies the nature and implications of their behaviour, and encouraging them not to take part in any form of bullying in the future.
- c) Arranging for pastoral support from a sympathetic teacher, the school welfare support teacher or family worker to be provided for the pupil who was the target, and for the bully (if they so wish).
- d) In serious cases, offering the target pupil and the bully counselling, either from a trained teacher, the family worker or from an outside body.
- e) Consulting with parents (of both the bullied pupil and the bully) and informing them of any action taken or contemplated.
- f) Compiling a brief report of the incident, the action taken and its outcomes, and any follow-up activity undertaken.
- g) Continue monitoring the situation by observing and having discussions with the victim to ensure no repetition.
- h) As the behaviour of the bully (hopefully) improves, then favoured activities, etc. can be reinstated, and the child should be praised for good behaviour. This will rebuild the child's self-esteem, which may have been damaged after being caught bullying, or could have been low anyway, hence the bullying.

4. Unsuitable Responses to Bullying

When confronted with evidence of bullying, staff should not:

- a) Minimise its importance or ignore it.
- b) Assume the matter will resolve itself in time.
- c) Allow or encourage the pupils to attempt to sort things out by themselves.
- d) Challenge or threaten the bully with physical violence.
- e) Act in a manner which might appear aggressive and escalate the situation.

f) **5. Pro-active Strategies**

In order to minimise incidents of bullying, at Ballykeel Primary School we have agreed that some of the following pro-active strategies will be used:

- All staff are vigilant for early signs of distress in pupils on the playground and general school environment.
- All staff listen, believe, act.
- A “Helping Hands” information board to is clearly displayed at all times with details of the safeguarding team in school and other agency contact details that the children may find useful.
- The designated and deputy designated teachers for child protection are clearly displayed on signs throughout the school.
- Posters in school advertising these measures and dissuading children from bullying.
- Inclusion of school rule cards with an anti bullying message to all children.
- Times set aside, at lunchtime, for children to talk with the ‘Talk to me’ teacher by self referral using the “Talk to me” red box. Individual sessions with the family worker which can be made as a referral from staff, the child or parents.
- Inclusion of anti-bullying lessons into the PDMU programme.
- Special events held such as Be Loving and Understanding to Everyone day (BLUE day), special confidence boosting club for P.4s and outside agencies such as Childline, P.S.N.I and Women’s Aid delivering “Bully busters” to classes.
- Close links are very much encouraged between school and home to ensure good parental communication.
- Circle time is regularly used in every class throughout the school.
- The Childline telephone number is displayed clearly around the school.
- The School Council used as an open forum for the sharing of ideas or concerns.
- A wide range of rewards to promote positive behaviour is firmly established within our school e.g. pupil of the week/month and golden class.

- Cyber Bullying awareness workshops.
- School Assemblies – addressing bullying and providing anti-bullying strategies.
- Promotion of playground friends/ buddy bus stop areas.
- Awareness raising e.g. P.1 parent induction, school policies, newsletters, Bugle, website.
- Awareness of anti-bullying week in November.

Links with other policies

Ballykeel Primary School's Anti Bullying policy is set in the context of our Pastoral Care programme and reflects our mission statement. It links with other policies such as;

Safeguarding & Child Protection Pastoral Care Attendance P.D.M.U.
 Special Educational Needs Health & Safety ICT (in particular Internet Safety)
 Positive Behaviour

Useful websites & telephone numbers

Department of Education	www.deni.gov.uk
Northern Ireland Anti Bullying Forum	www.niabf.org.uk www.thinkuknow.org
Childline NI	0800 1111
NSPCC (Fullstop) campaign	0808 800 5000

Appendix 1

Guidelines for Parents and Caregivers

Bullying is an issue throughout the community. To prevent bullying we must help our young children to build the skills to manage the situation.

Bullying is deliberately repeated behaviour over a period of time by an individual or a group of individuals that causes distress, hurt or undue pressure.

It can be **physical** (like hitting, pinching, pushing or taking things), **verbal** (like teasing, name calling, insulting or threatening) or **emotional / social** (like leaving individuals out, ignoring, stopping others befriending etc).

Below are some suggestions on how to help you and your child be able to recognise and know how to deal with 'bullying' situations.

- Ask what they think bullying is.
- Explain the different behaviours a bully can use.
- Talk about how bullies affect others, and how important it is to care for other peoples feelings.
- Look out for any signs your own child is being bullied (not wanting to go to school, or mix with others)
- Talk about ways to show confidence, (through body language, like standing tall, shoulders back, and head up) and that confident people are less likely to be bullied.
- Go through the following strategy, in case they are bullied or see other people being bullied.
 - Take a deep breath, stand up tall, look strong and confident.
 - Tell the 'bully' to stop at once.
 - Shout 'NO' and get away to a safe place.
 - Go to an adult they can trust (teacher, supervisor, parent).
 - Tell the adult the truth about what has happened.
 - Making sure your child is not bullying others is just as important.