Anti-Bullying Policy

Framework

This policy has been drafted with reference to the Policy Framework from EA.

Section 1 – Introduction and Statement

At St. John's P.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.

Section 2 – Context

This policy has been developed in line with the following Legislative, Policy & Guidance and International contexts.

The Legislative Context:
* 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 & 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)

The key points to note are:

* 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.
  * Sets out under which circumstances this policy should be applied, namely:
    * 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 in the ALC)
  * Requires that the policy be updated at least every four years.
* The Education and Libraries Order (NI) 2003, requires the Board of Governors to:
  * 'Safeguard and promote the welfare of registered pupils' (A.17)
* The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) sets out every child's right to:
  * Be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, maltreatment or exploitation. (A.19)
  * Be protected from discrimination. (A.2)
  * Express their views, in a supported and accessible way, on issues that affect them, and to have their opinions taken seriously. (A.12)
  * Education. (A.28)

Section 3 – Ethos & Principles

St. John's P.S. is a catholic school with a strong Catholic ethos underpinning all our work. We desire good discipline in which effective learning can take place.

We are a nurturing school, where the pupil and his/her well-being is paramount.

We can best nurture when we...

* Are committed to a society where children and young people can live free and safe from bullying.
* Believe in a society where bullying is unacceptable and where every child and young person is safe and feels safes from bullying.
* Believe that every child and young person should be celebrated in their diversity.
* Are committed to a preventative, responsive and restorative anti-bullying ethos across the whole school.

- ✳ Value the views and contributions of children and young people and will actively seek these views and we will respect and take them into account.
- ✳ 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 has been developed in consultation with staff, pupils, parents and Governors in compliance with the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016. We used:

Discussions with the Class Councils from Y4 to Y7

Staff Survey

Invitation to parents to make suggestions/amendments via email.

At a Governor meeting.

Prior class and parental survey outcomes.

A PSG Focus group meeting.

Section 5 – What is Bullying?

Addressing Bullying in Schools Definition of "bullying":

1.—(1) 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, 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.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), "act" includes omission.

In other words...

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, through what is said, what is written, what is done.

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*

Any incidents which are not considered bullying behaviour will be addressed under the Positive Behaviour Policy.

There are some types of behaviour that, when repeated, may constitute bullying.

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*
  - ○ *try 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, or exclusion.*
  - ○ *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.

Motivations behind bullying should be considered. 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

These aim to promote and encourage strong anti-bullying ethos within the school and the wider school community.

Under the legislation, our focus for all anti-bullying work should be on prevention. This work is key to having an effective policy in action. In St. John's we will work on...

- Raising awareness and understanding of the positive behaviour expectations, as set out in the Positive Behaviour 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, including the how and why it can happen, through PDMU/PD/LLW (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.
- The preventative curriculum actively promoting positive emotional health and wellbeing (eg. mindfulness training)
- Participation in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities
- Engagement in key campaigns, eg Safer Internet Day, Good Relations Week, etc.
- Development of peer-led systems (eg. School or Class Councils) 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 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 sporting activity, creative arts, leisure and games, etc.

- Bullying can take place on the way to and from school, even when we have a culture of anti-bullying in school. Cognisant of this we will employ further measures to include...

- 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. This may include the implementation of peer monitoring systems on buses and for those walking.
- Regular engagement with transport providers (eg. Translink, EA Transport, etc.) to ensure effective communication and the early identification of any concerns.
- Promotion of key anti-bullying messages and awareness of behaviour expectations of pupils amongst the local community (eg. local shops, residents, etc), including information on how to raise any concerns with the school.
- Appropriate deployment of staff to support the transition from school day to journey home (eg. staff duty at school gate/bus stops, where appropriate)

We have the authority to take steps to prevent bullying through the use of electronic communication amongst pupils at any time during term, where that behaviour is likely to have a detrimental effect on the pupil's education at school. St. John's will raise awareness of the nature and impact of online bullying and support pupils to make use of the internet in a safe, responsible and respectful way by...

- ✳ Addressing key themes of online behaviour and risk through RE, PDMU, ICT and Literacy including understanding how to respond to harm and the consequences of inappropriate use.
- ✳ Participation in Anti-Bullying Week activities.
- ✳ Engagement with key statutory and voluntary sector agencies (eg. C2k, Public Health Agency, Safeguarding Board for NI e-Safety Forum, Digital Schools Award) 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. Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy, Mobile Phone Policy, etc.)

This policy should be considered in hand with related policies of Safeguarding, Positive Behaviour, E-Safety.

Section 7 – Responsibility

In St. John's everyone has responsibility for creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all members of the school communities.

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.

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 indications 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

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. In St. John's pupils are encouraged to talk to Mrs McCullagh, Mrs Kearney, Mrs Coyle or Mrs Blaney or ANY adult, if they have a worry or a concern.

Pupils can report bullying concerns in many ways...

- ✳ Verbally- talking to a member of staff
- ✳ By writing a note to a member of staff (eg. in a homework diary, the Worry Box)

We encourage all pupils to let us know of a bullying concern, even if they are not the person experiencing the bulllying actions.

Parents/Carers Reporting a Concern

Parents have a duty to encourage their children to react appropriately to bullying behaviour and to not do anything to retaliate or to 'hit back'. This can seem hard for some parents but it

is vital that families follow the guidelines set out in this policy. Experience shows us that when a parent tells a child to retaliate, the problem of bullying becomes worse and that your child too becomes someone carrying out bullying actions.

So what should parents do?

- ✳ 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 Principal.

Where the parent/carer remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the school's complaints procedure should be followed. This policy is available to all families on the school website. This means making a formal, written complaint, to the Chair of the Board of Governors.

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

Using the NIABF Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource, the member of staff responsible shall…

- ✳ ***Clarify facts and perceptions***
- ✳ ***Check records (SIMS)***
- ✳ ***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***

NIABF and our Catholic ethos advocate a restorative approach to responding to bullying behaviour. Interventions suggested in the Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource focus on responding to the behaviour, resolving the concern and restoring the wellbeing of those involved.

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 agreed sanctions for those displaying bullying behaviour.

Parents are reminded that 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

The legal requirement, as set out in the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016, is for schools to maintain a record of all incidents of bullying and alleged bullying behaviour.

St. John's 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

In St. John's we will ensure that all staff (both teaching and support), are provided with appropriate and adequate training as part of their professional development.

This training will reflect current legislation and developments and will influence any adaptations required to the policy and practice.

Opportunities for safeguarding training are afforded to Governors and all staff – teaching and non-teaching

CPD records for Safeguarding and Anti-Bullying training will be kept and updated regularly

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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. However, the policy shall be reviewed following any incident which highlights the need for such a review. It shall also be reviewed when we are directed to by the Department of Education and in light of new guidance.

This Anti-Bullying Policy shall be reviewed as required, in consultation with pupils and their parents/carers, on or before April 2025

Section 12 – 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*
* *Health and Safety Policy*
* *Relationships and Sexuality Education*
* *E-Safety Policy & Acceptable Use of Internet Policy*

- ✳ *Mobile Phone Policy*
- ✳ *Educational Visits*
- ✳ *Staff Code of Conduct*