**St. Mary’s Primary School, Fivemiletown**

**Anti- Bullying Policy**

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Policy adopted by Board of Governors: May 2017

Policy review date: May 2019

In St. Mary’s Primary School we are committed to providing a safe, positive, inclusive and respectful learning environment for all members of the school community.

All members of the school community have a right to work and learn in a secure and caring environment without fear of being bullied. We also have a responsibility to contribute in whatever way we can to the protection and maintenance of such an environment.

The school community in St. Mary’s P.S. is completely opposed to bullying in all its forms. It is contrary to the values and principles we work and live by. An anti – bullying climate will be created through openness and consultation, where all stakeholders are encouraged and considered.

*“St. Mary’s Primary School accepts and shares the responsibility of nurturing in our children the values, attitudes, beliefs and practices of our Catholic faith. We wish to promote a way of life inspired by the life and teachings of Christ. We work as a team to provide a stimulating environment, in which each child can feel safe, secure, happy and cared for. A “child centred” approach is adopted in all issues. Excellent relationships and effective communication with all partners involved in the education of our pupils is viewed as central to achieving our vision and aims.*

*The Board of Governors, Principal and all members of staff embrace these ideas, values and beliefs and are firmly committed to the aims of Catholic education.”*

This policy has been developed and is compliant with:

**The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003**

**DE Circular 2003/13 – WELFARE AND PROTECTION OF PUPILS EDUCATION AND LIBRARIES (Northern Ireland) 2003**

**ARTICLE 17 – DUTY TO SAFEGUARD AND PROMOTE THE WELFARE OF PUPILS**

**ARTICLE 18 – CHILD PROTECTION MEASURES**

**ARTICLE 19 – SCHOOL DISCIPLINE: MEASURES TO PREVENT BULLYING**

“Pastoral Care in Schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour” (2001)

“Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection” (1999)

Pupil welfare embraces all aspects of pastoral care, including child protection, pupil behaviour, health and well - being, safety and security. Our duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils is addressed through our other school policies such as Positive Behaviour, Pastoral care, Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy, Child Protection, E – Safety, Toileting and Intimate Care, Use of Reasonable Force and Mobile Phone Policy.

**Aims**

This policy aims to:

* Create a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
* Promote a consistent, “whole school” approach, where signs of bullying are identified and swift and effective action is taken.
* To promote in St. Mary’s a secure and happy environment for both pupils and staff free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behaviour.
* Whole school commitment to overcome bullying by practising zero tolerance.
* To ensure that all stakeholders, pupils, staff, parents, visitors to the school and Governors have an understanding of what bullying is and what they should do if bullying arises.
* Inform all stakeholders of the school’s expectations and to foster a productive partnership, which maintains a bully free environment.
* Assure pupils, parents, staff members and visitors to the school that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
* Assist in the provision of a positive and supportive atmosphere for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
* To develop procedures for noting and reporting incidents of bullying behaviour.

**Definition of Bullying**

“Bullying is defined as “Deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for the victim to defend themselves…”DENI 1999 (Page 41), “Pastoral Care in Schools: “Promoting Positive Behaviour” (2001)

The Northern Ireland Anti-bullying Forum (NIABF 2005) defines bullying as “… The repeated uses of power by one or more persons intentionally to harm, hurt or adversely affect the rights or needs of another or others…”

(NB not all unkind, unacceptable behaviour is bullying behaviour)

* Bullying can take place between pupils, between pupils and staff, between staff, by individuals or groups, face to face, indirectly or using a range of cyber bullying methods. It includes actions that cause physical, emotional, or mental hurt to the victim and actions that violate another person’s freedom and rights.
* Bullying is an abuse of power where the person/persons being bullied find it difficult to reject or deal with the offending behaviour or those involved in the bullying behaviour have power over the victim. Some power imbalances can be subtle or build up over time, but more common examples include:
* Bigger/stronger/older/more intelligent have more friends, are more established in the school, or simply care less about the feelings of others and the consequences of their actions.
* Bullying thrives on secrecy, the reluctance of the target to talk about it and the neglect of responsible adults to acknowledge its existence.

**Principles**

At St. Mary’s Primary School:

* Pupils have a right to learn in a safe and supportive environment, free from intimidation and fear.
* The welfare/well-being needs of all children and young people are paramount and pupils’ needs, whether bully or targeted pupil, need to be separated from their behaviour.
* When bullying concerns are identified our school will work in a restorative and solution focussed way to achieve the necessary change.
* Pupils who are targeted will be listened to and supported.
* Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour will be listened to and supported to accept responsibility and change behaviour.
* Staff will receive awareness-raising training regarding bullying prevention including effective, appropriate strategies for intervention.
* Parents will be made aware of our school’s practice to prevent and to respond to concerns through the consultation process and where necessary, their active participation in partnership with the school to resolve concerns involving their child.

**The Process of Participation and Consultation**

Under legislation, the Board of Governors and Principal are required to consult with pupils, parents and staff regarding Positive Behaviour and bullying prevention measures which must be in place. We have met this requirement through the following ways;

* Negotiating and agreeing a Code of Conduct for Positive Behaviour (Class Rules/Dining Hall Rules) within our two composite class arrangements
* Awareness raising programmes through Curriculum and involvement in N.I. Anti – bullying Week
* Survey/questionnaires distributed to pupils and parents. (June 2016)
* On-going Professional Development and support for staff
* Monitoring effectiveness of our preventative policy
* Formal review/update of policy (every 2 years or as required), formally adopted by Board of Governors, signed and dated.

**STRATEGIES TO PREVENT OR REDUCE BULLYING**

St. Mary’s Primary School has established and will maintain the following strategies to prevent and reduce bullying behaviour:

**Proactive Strategies to ensure awareness is raised.**

* Promote School Ethos at all times (as regards Bullying – be a TELLING / LISTENING / RESPONDING school).
* Awareness of Rights and Responsibilities.
* Recognise and reward good behaviour.
* Use of creative learning to enhance social and emotional skills.
* Ensure that all staff (teaching and non-teaching), parents and pupils and all members of the school community are aware of the school code of conduct as set out in the Positive Behaviour Policy.
* School assemblies – addressing Bullying and providing Anti-Bullying Strategies.
* Vigilant supervision – playground / general school environment.
* Consultation with Class Council.
* Use of PDMU lessons / Circle time.
* Use of Alive-O and Grow in Love programmes.
* Promotion of Playground Friends / Buddy Bus Stop (Specified area in the playground).
* Questionnaires.
* Good parental communication.
* Awareness raising eg P1 Parent Induction meetings, class information meetings, School Policies, newsletters, website.
* Awareness of national Anti-Bullying Week (in November each year).
* Use of outside agencies – NSPCC, Childline, PSNI, Behaviour Support Team & Women’s Aid.
* Staff training / effective communication.

**Reactive Strategies**

The following steps will be taken when dealing with incidents:

* If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached.
* Attempts will be made to resolve the situation quickly.
* Reports will be taken seriously.
* Steps will be taken to ensure the child feels safe and secure.
* Significant incidents will involve further investigation and recording. A clear account reported to the appropriate members of staff i.e. class teacher/ Principal / Designated Teacher for Child Protection.
* Significant or repeated incidents will require parents to be informed.
* Disciplinary measures / sanctions, which are proportionate and clearly set out in the Positive Behaviour Policy, will be explained and used.

**Bullying Behaviours**

The following are unacceptable behaviours **BUT** only constitute bullying behaviours when they are recurrent/persistent, targeted with intent and where a power imbalance between pupils is evident.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Physical Bullying** | Includes: Hitting, pushing, kicking, tripping, spitting, hair pulling, throwing things, interfering with another’s property by stealing, hiding, damaging, intruding. Writing or drawing offensive notes/graffiti about another. |
| **Verbal Bullying** | Includes: Name calling, insulting or offensive remarks, accusing, taunting, put downs, ridiculing another’s appearance,/way of speaking/disability/personal mannerisms/race/colour/religion, humiliating another in public, spreading rumours nasty or malicious, threatening, intimidation, mocking and sarcasm. |
| **Emotional Bullying** | Includes: shunning others from group activity/social setting or play, belittling another’s ability or achievements, mobbing the individual, menacing looks, stares, rude signs or gestures, negative body language. |
| **Cyber Bullying** | Includes: misuse of e-mails, images, text, blogs, tweets, forums, and chat rooms to hurt, embarrass, demean, harass, provoke or humiliate another using perceived anonymity.  Unauthorised publication manipulation of private information, impersonation. |

**Responsibilities of all Stakeholders**

**The Principal**

The Principal should lead by good example, treating everyone equally and with respect.

* The Principal will investigate the incident by speaking to both the victim and bully and follow up by filling in the necessary forms as appropriate.
* Follow up any complaint by a parent about bullying promptly and effectively, in accordance with the agreed procedures.
* Carry out a follow up report on progress within the month.

**The Responsibilities of Staff (including Classroom Assistants/Others)**

Our staff will:

* Foster in our pupils self-esteem, a sense of their rights and their responsibilities to others
* Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils
* Discuss bullying behaviour with all classes so that every pupil learns about the damage it causes to both the pupil who is targeted and the pupil who engages in bullying behaviour
* Emphasise the importance of telling a trusted adult about bullying behaviour when it happens or is observed
* 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 respond appropriately
* Follow up any complaint by a parent about bullying, and report back promptly and effectively, in an assertive and confident manner, with an expectation of change in accordance with agreed procedures
* Report suspected cases of bullying to the Principal as soon as possible, if the Principal is not available report to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Miss Mc Rory.

**The Responsibilities of Pupils**

We expect our pupils to:

* Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying behaviour, even at risk of incurring temporary unpopularity.
* Intervene to support any child who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe for them to do so.
* Report any concerns or instances of bullying witnessed or suspected, to a member of staff to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances.

Anyone who becomes the target of bullies should:

Have the courage to speak out, to put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets.

**The Responsibilities of Parents**

We ask our 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 bullying to Mrs. Cullinan-Keown (P5-7 class teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection) or Miss Mc Rory (P1 -4 teacher & Designated Child Protection Officer) and explain the implications of allowing the bullying behaviour to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other pupils.
* Advising their children not to retaliate violently to any forms of bullying behaviour.
* Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken
* Keeping written records of any reported instances of bullying
* Informing the school of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved
* Co-operation with the school, if their child is involved in a bullying concern, to resolve the difficulty in a way which stops the behaviour recurring and meets the needs of all children.

**Procedures for Dealing with Bullying**

The 2003 Statutory Requirements (Education & Libraries NI Order) requires schools to “encourage **good behaviour and respect for others**” and in particular **prevent** all forms of bullying**.**

When dealing with bullying behaviour the school will aim to:

1. Stop the bullying behaviour.
2. Protect and support the bullied pupil.
3. Change the attitude and behaviour of the bully.

Every child can make mistakes and can behave in ways that are hurtful to others. In most cases a quiet word and an explanation of how others feel is sufficient to make a difference. Children can and do learn over time how to care for themselves and for others. We believe that learning from mistakes and being genuinely sorry for them is part of growing up to be a socially well-adjusted person. We believe much can be achieved by talking with the perpetrator and the victim to achieve a resolution and reconciliation. In some cases, however, talking things through will not make enough of a difference and in these cases we reserve the right to apply a range of sanctions.

|  |
| --- |
| **Step 1**  Reporting of an incident  (significant/repeated/intentional/ incidents or serious one-off incident)  When such a bullying incident is reported, the information will be passed on to the following:  The Principal, (Mrs. Keown) / Deputy Designated Teacher or Miss Mc Rory, Designated Teacher for Child Protection  (Both are class teachers) |
| **Step 2**  Clarification of an incident  This will normally be carried out by the Principal/ Deputy Designated Teacher in cooperation with the class teacher/ Designated Teacher for Child Protection.  Pupils involved will be interviewed and a record made of their responses using the school’s incident report form.  Parents of all pupils involved will be informed of the school’s action up to this point and kept informed of subsequent action. |
| **Step 3**  Agreeing a plan for resolution.  Principal will devise a plan for resolution of conflict.  Targets for acceptable behaviour will be set out including support measures for all pupils concerned.  Any disciplinary action required will use a system of sanctions as set out in the school’s Promoting Positive Behaviour policy. |
| **Step 4**  Reviewing the situation  The situation will be monitored and formally reviewed within one month of initial report.  This will involve Principal, class teacher, classroom assistance as appropriate, pupils and parents. |
| **Step 5**  Involvement of other agencies  Where necessary the school will draw on the support of the Education Welfare Officer SELB, Behaviour Management Team, Educational Psychology Services, Pupil Personal Development Team, Child Protection Support Services etc. |
| **Step 6**  In severe cases and where all other intervention strategies have failed to assist the bully towards rehabilitation, the Board of Governors will be informed and steps may be taken to suspend or expel a child from the school. |

**Professional Development of Staff**

The Principal and Board of Governors will ensure that all staff are familiar with this policy and that training for staff is arranged and updated as necessary. Budget for this will be one of the school’s top priorities such is the importance given to it. Material resources will be budgeted for accordingly.

**Monitoring and Review of Policy**

Implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Principal/Designated Teacher for Child Protection. A report on implementation will be provided annually to the Board of Governors.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Designated Teacher)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Principal)

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*LAST FULL POLICY REVIEW: May 2017*

*FULL POLICY REVIEW DATE: May 2019*

**Appendix 1:**

** Alleged Bullying Incident Form **

(i.e. significant / repeated / or serious one-off incident)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Name (s) | Gender | Class/Room |
| Complainant(s) |  |  |  |
| Alleged child / children who have been bullied (if different from above) |  |  |  |
| Alleged child/ children who have displayed bullying behaviour |  |  |  |
| Date of incident: | | | |
| Location of incident: | | | |
| **Type of incident: Please tick/circle appropriate types**  **Physical Bullying** (includes jostling, physical intimidation, interfering with personal property (stealing, damaging, intruding upon it) punching/kicking, any other physical contact which may include hair pulling, spitting or use of ‘weapon’, extortion, writing/drawing offensive notes.)  **Verbal Bullying** (includes name calling, insults, jokes, threats, spreading malicious rumours, ridicule of another’s appearance/disability/personal mannerisms/way of speaking, humiliating another publicly, mocking, sarcasm, intimidation)  **Emotional Bullying** (includes isolation, refusal to work with/talk to/play with/help others, mobbing the individual, belittling another’s abilities, or achievements, menacing looks, stares or rude gestures)  **Cyber Bullying**  (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **Details of Incident**  Action/support for child(ren) who has/have been bullied i.e. on-going support / monitoring from staff (including time frame of follow up action required)  Parental involvement (please specify e.g. dates and details of information received) | | | |

Name of staff member involved:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_