BALLYCLARE PRIMARY SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Reviewed September 2022

Section 1 Introductory Statement

At Ballyclare Primary School, we believe that everyone has the right to learn and work in a safe and supported environment free from bullying and the threat of bullying. We believe that all members of the school community are to be valued for their contribution and that each individual should show respect for others and themselves. Ballyclare Primary School believe all forms of bullying are unacceptable. This school repudiates bullying behaviour of any kind, to pupils or staff, by any member of the school community. Ballyclare Primary School is committed to providing a safe, positive and inclusive environment where all members of the school community feel valued. All members of that community have a responsibility to contribute, in whatever way they can, to the protection and maintenance of such an environment. An anti-bullying climate will be created through openness and consultation, where the views of all members of the school community are encouraged and considered.

Section 2 Context

The Legislative Context

This policy is informed and guided by current legislation and DE Guidance listed below:
- Health and Safety at Work Order NI Order 1978 The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Education (Northern Ireland} Order 1998 Article 3 – see DE 1998/25
- Welfare and Protection of Pupils Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003
- The Education (2006 Order) (Commencement No.2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2007

- The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010

- Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

The Policy and Guidance Context

- 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 and Principles

We are committed to a society where children can live free and safe from bullying.

We believe in a society where bullying is unacceptable and where every child is safe and feels safe from bullying.

We believe every child should be celebrated as an individual.

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 we actively seek these views, respect them 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.

We believe that all staff and pupils have the right to work and learn in an environment free from intimidation and fear.

Ballyclare Primary School promotes positive relationships between all members of the school community.

We will work with all parties concerned to resolve any problems that are identified to us.

Section 4 – Consultation and Participation

This policy has been developed in consultation with pupils and their parents/carers, in compliance with the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016. Consultation with pupils has included: pupil surveys, assemblies and class-based learning activities including a whole school Anti Bullying Week held every November.

Consultation with parents/carers involved the completion of a parental online survey which helped inform school of parental views on this matter.

Consultation with teaching staff and governors occurred through discussion and dialogue and guidance provided in our Promoting Positive Relationships document for all staff.

Section 5 Definition: 'What is Bullying?'

Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 provides schools with a legal definition of bullying:

(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.

Bullying is behaviour that is usually repeated, which is carried out intentionally to cause hurt, harm or adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others.

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 decide 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 incident on the 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 school's Positive Behaviour Policy.

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 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**

　　○ **Impersonating someone online to cause hurt**

　　○ **Sharing images (eg. photographs or videos) online to embarrass someone**

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

There may be a variety of motivations behind bullying, including those named in the Act. These include, but are not limited to:

Age

Appearance

Breakdown in peer relationships

Breakdown in family relationships / difficulties at home

Community background

Political affiliation

Gender Identity

Sexual Orientation

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

The focus for all our anti-bullying work in school is on prevention. We list below some of the key actions the school takes with the aim of preventing bullying and creating a safe learning environment.

✳ **Raising awareness and understanding of the positive behaviour expectations, as set out in our 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 Personal Development and Mutual Understanding teaching**

✳ **Involvement in meaningful and supportive shared education projects, supporting pupils to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity**

✳ **Through the preventative curriculum actively promoting positive emotional health and wellbeing**

✳ **Participation in annual Anti-Bullying Week activities**

✳ **Engagement in key national and regional campaigns, eg Safer Internet Day**

✳ **Development of effective strategies for playground management, eg. training for supervisors, zoning of playgrounds 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-curricular activities, aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks. For example, sporting activity, creative arts, leisure and games, etc.

- Promotion of our School Ethos through our school Golden Rules
- Recognising and Rewarding Good Behaviour
- Improved Supervision of "Hot Spots" – Use of School Buddies

We recognise that bullying type behaviours can occur outside the school day when pupils are making their way to and from school. Ballyclare Primary recognises its responsibility that preventative measures are in place to counter this type of behaviour. In addition to our work to create a positive culture in school to promote a safe learning environment, the school works with the children to ensure:

- 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 are in place to empower pupils to challenge inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour of their peers during the journey to and from school.

- Appropriate deployment of staff to support the transition from school day to journey home (eg. staff duty in playground and at school gates in the morning and afternoons).

We recognise that bullying type behaviour can occur using electronic communication amongst pupils at any time during term time which can have a detrimental effect on the pupil's education at school. School works to educate pupils to exercise responsibility when communicating in such a way through:

- ✳ Addressing key themes of online behaviour and risk through PDMU lessons 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, PSNI) 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 Protocols, etc.)

School works to educate parents and pupils on the age guidance for the use of social media platforms which would preclude their use by primary age children. Given the nature of technology, as constantly changing and developing, school will monitor its policy and make any changes as necessary.

Section 7 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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 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

All incidents of bullying must be reported to the Principal or Vice Principal and all such reports will be taken seriously. The school recognises that speed of response is important and wherever possible incidents will be resolved quickly. However, significant incidents will involve investigation and time may be required to reach a resolution. At all times during this, the school will take steps to ensure the safety of the pupil who feels bullied.

Bullied pupils will be reassured that they are not in any way to blame (unless there is good reason to think otherwise). Support and protection will be given.

A child who has displayed bullying behaviour will be expected to take responsibility for their actions. The reasons for their behaviour will be explored and they will be expected to improve and change. They will be encouraged to think and talk about the implications of their behaviour for the pupil who was their target. Discussion should also involve the pupils' parents/carers to identify any relevant background information and to secure their support. It may also be necessary for the involvement of the SENCO to address any behavioural problems

through a behavioural programme. The aim will be to resolve incidents, rebuild relationships and restore a safe environment for all. Incidents will be resolved in age-appropriate ways and any sanctions will be in line with the school's Positive Behaviour Policy.

Section 8 Reporting a Concern

Pupils Reporting a Bullying Concern

Children will be encouraged to report suspected cases of bullying to any member of staff in the school with whom they feel comfortable sharing this information with. They can share this information in a variety of ways e.g. verbally, writing a note placed in class or principal's WISH box. Any pupil can inform staff about a concern, whether this relates to themselves or another pupil to attempt to get help for the individual concerned. In general terms, the class teacher may initially discuss and investigate the allegation of bullying and inform the Head of Key Stage and the Vice Principal (VP)/Principal. The VP will directly address and endeavour to resolve the situation.

Parents Reporting a Bullying Concern

Bullying is an emotive subject, particularly for parents, and it is important that parents try to ensure that they do not unfairly apportion blame or label other pupils, nor compound their child's distress by their choice of language or by overly discussing the matter at home. They should instead, reassure their child that they have done the correct thing by informing them about the situation and that they will speak to school about this allegation at the earliest convenience and determine to work with the school to resolve the matter in an appropriate manner. It is important that parents remind their child to react appropriately to bullying type behaviour and to not retaliate or 'hit back'. In the first instance, all bullying concerns should be reported to the class teacher who will investigate along with the involvement of the Vice Principal/Principal. Where the parent/carer does not feel that the concern has been appropriately responded to, the school's complaints procedure should be followed. This involves making a formal, written complaint to the Chair of the Board of Governors. The school's complaint procedure outlines the steps involved in this. While most reports of bullying concerns will come from pupils and their parents/carers, the school may also receive such reports from others. All reports of bullying concerns received from pupils and/or their parents/carers will be responded to in line with this policy and feedback will be made to the person who made the report. However, it must be emphasised that no information about action taken in relation to a pupil can be disclosed to anyone other than to the pupil deemed to have displayed bullying behaviour and his/her parents/carers.

Section 9 Responding to a Bullying Concern

The focus of any intervention must be responding to the bullying concern and restoring the well-being of those involved. As such, any strategy for responding to bullying concerns must concentrate on the prevention of any future incidents. The processes outlined below provide a framework for how the school will respond to any bullying concerns identified. The school shall:
• clarify facts and perceptions
• check records
• assess the incident against the criteria for bullying behaviour
• identify themes or motivating factors
• identify the type of bullying behaviour being displayed
• identify the intervention level
• select and implement appropriate interventions for all pupils involved, including appropriate interventions, consequences and sanctions
• if deemed appropriate, pupils may be offered support through the school's counselling provider
• track, monitor and record effectiveness of intervention
• review outcome of interventions
• select and implement further intentions as necessary. Interventions focus on responding to the behaviour, resolving the concern, and restoring the wellbeing of those involved. It may be appropriate to implement sanctions for those displaying bullying behaviour; however, this will not necessarily happen depending on the nature and extent of the individual circumstance, as the focus is on responding to the behaviour, resolving the concern and restoring the wellbeing of all those involved. Once again, it must be emphasised that no information about action taken in relation to a pupil can be disclosed to anyone other than to that pupil and his/her parents/carers.

Section10 Recording

All incidents of reported bullying must be reported to the Principal/Vice Principal. There is a legal requirement in the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016, for schools 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 (where known)
• how each incident was addressed by the school
• 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

School recognises the need for appropriate and adequate training for staff. This includes:

- **Yearly update training for all staff on positive behaviour and anti-bullying procedures in school including the process for reporting and responding to incidents of bullying type behaviours and other behaviour concerns**
- **Noting the impact of training given on both the policy and procedures eg amendments made, inclusions added etc**
- **Ensuring that opportunities for safeguarding training are afforded to Governors and all staff**
- **Ensuring that a register is kept and maintained of all training afforded to staff**

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. The Board of Governors shall:

• receive a report on recorded incidents of bullying from the Principal

• identify trends and priorities for action as required

• assess the effectiveness of strategies aimed at preventing bullying

• the policy will also be reviewed at intervals of no more than four years; however, it will be reviewed if any incident which highlights the need for such a review arises. In addition, a review will occur if the Department of Education issues new guidance.

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**
- **Health and Safety Policy**
- **Relationships and Sexuality Education**
- **E-Safety Policy & Acceptable Use of Internet Policy**
- **Mobile Phone Policy**
- **Social Media Policy**
- **Educational Visits Guidance**

✳ **Staff 'Promoting Good Practice and Good Relationships' document**

✳ **Complaints procedure**