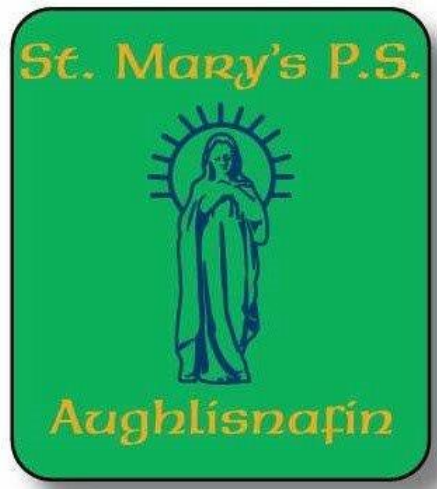


# St. Mary's Primary School.



## A Policy for Anti Bullying

### Introduction

St Mary's Primary School is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and secure environment for all our pupils. Bullying is an unacceptable form of behaviour which can cause profound emotional and physical harm. St Mary's actively promotes positive interpersonal relationships between all members of the school community.

Our school community shares in the responsibility of promoting an anti-bullying culture and in dealing effectively with bullying behaviour when it does occur.

The incidence of bullying behaviour will be much less likely where all members of the school community - teachers, pupils, parents and ancillary staff, co-operate in promoting an atmosphere in which all forms of bullying behaviour are rejected.

The primary aim of this policy is to a) protect the victim and b) change the behaviour of the bully. Bullying behaviour will be dealt with using positive behaviour management, to promote an ethos of harmony and mutual respect, as reflected in our commitment to Christian values.

This policy is closely linked with the school's policies on Pastoral Care, Child Protection, Discipline, Special Needs and Personal Safety, as well as positive behaviour management strategies and rewards.

## **Aims and Objectives in relation to bullying behaviour will focus on:**

- the promotion of a whole-school approach to raising awareness of the dangers of bullying.
- the right of pupils to learn free from intimidation or fear
- the development and implementation of strategies which are strongly preventative in nature, in addressing the issue of bullying.
- the needs of the victim as being paramount
- defining the procedures to be followed by teaching staff, ancillary staff, pupils and parents, in relation to an incident of bullying.
- Reporting and investigating incidents.

## **Defining Bullying Behaviour**

Bullying behaviour is “deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over time, where it may be difficult for the victim to defend him or herself”. DENI, 1999 page 41)

Bullying is defined in the *Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016* as including (but not limited to) the repeated use of

- (a) any verbal, written or electronic communication,
- (b) any other act,
- (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.

## **Methods of Bullying**

**1.— (1) In the Act “bullying” includes (but is not limited to) the repeated use**

**of—**

**(a) any verbal, written or electronic communication,**

These methods can be described as, but are not limited to, saying, writing or using online contact and platforms to:

- say mean and hurtful things to, or about, others
- make fun of others
- call another pupil mean and hurtful names
- tell lies or spread false rumours about others
- try to make other pupils dislike another pupil/s
- extort from, blackmail or exploit another.

The use of electronic communication as a method of bullying behaviour is most commonly identified as cyber bullying. Cyber bullying is an aggressive, intentional act carried out by an individual or group against a target using, for example, electronic forms of contact and online platforms.

**(b) any other act, or**

Other methods of bullying behaviour commonly include physical bullying and can be described as, but are not limited to:

- hitting
- kicking
- pushing
- shoving around
- locking a pupil/s inside a room, locker etc.
- material harm such as taking/stealing money or possessions
- other direct/indirect acts

**(c) any combination of those**

The Act acknowledges that various methods of bullying behaviour can occur separately or together.

## **2) For the purposes of subsection (1), “act” includes omission.**

The Act specifies that methods of bullying behaviour include omission. This includes where a pupil is intentionally left out (e.g. ‘they stopped him playing with them’) and 11

where there is a wilful failure to include a pupil (e.g. ‘they purposefully did not ask him to join the game’). Other examples include a pupil being excluded or left out of:

- a group of friends
- activities
- games
- group work in class

***Bullying is usually repeated behaviour that intentionally hurts, harms or adversely affects the rights and needs of another or others, and it can take many forms:***

### **Emotional -**

Acting spitefully  
Sending to “Coventry”  
Talking behind backs  
Ignoring  
Stealing  
Threatening  
Pulling Faces  
Staring out  
Writing nasty notes/letters/graffiti

### **Verbal (Including Digital)**

Calling names  
Excluding  
Laughing  
Teasing  
Swearing  
Screaming  
Blackmailing  
Spreading rumours  
Spoiling games  
Shouting  
Back chatting  
Being cheeky  
Conning  
Being sarcastic  
Annoying by interrupting  
Making sexual/racial/sectarian remarks  
Writing something nasty  
Telling lies about people

### **Physical**

Kicking

Punching  
Head butting  
Cutting  
Pulling  
Punching  
Hitting  
Pushing  
Spitting  
Biting  
Stealing  
Elbowing  
Stamping  
Tripping  
Scratching  
Thumping

### **Non-Verbal**

Getting people into trouble  
Putting tongue out  
Making rude signs  
Pulling faces  
Staring  
Ignoring  
Being Selfish  
Writing letters  
Leaving out of games  
Giving dirty looks  
Talking behind back  
Annoying people  
Spitting  
Irritating  
Wetting people

**NB** This list of bullying behaviours is non-exhaustive.

The school understands that one off acts or exclusionary behaviour may occur and will endeavour to find a resolution.

Records will be kept of one-off acts (these may be informal notes)

Re-occurrent acts will have an official note. Should it continue, parents will be contacted.

Through discussion with the children involved, having discussed the issues with the parties involved, the child who is identified as having wronged the other will be made aware of the issue, and the behaviour will be managed through the Positive Behaviour Policy. If the behaviour were to persist, the school will view this as bullying and deal with it in accordance with this Anti Bullying policy.

The terms 'bully' and 'victim' will be used for the purposes of this policy, but it is unhelpful to use these labels directly to any children involved, as it can promote a negative self-image.

## **Curriculum**

Preventative strategies have a high priority in minimising bullying. The theme of bullying will be specifically addressed across a number of subject areas.

- In Religious Education through Assemblies (on Cybernet Safety, Anti Bullying Week etc) dealing with respect for others and Christian values
- in English through the use of stories, plays and poems, in Drama through the use of role play,
- in Art through reflective illustrations,
- in Personal Development Mutual Understanding, by learning to respect differences.
- Circle Time will be used in all classes to enhance and encourage co-operation among children and to provide a safe and secure atmosphere in which children can raise issues of concern
- In our delivery of Emotional Intelligence, addressing feelings and emotions.

## **Reluctance to Report Bullying**

It is important to appreciate that many pupils are reluctant to make an immediate report of an incident of bullying. This may be due to a number of reasons, such as fear of reprisals, feelings of low self-esteem, guilt, embarrassment or fear of not being believed. It is therefore essential that all members of the school community take responsibility for raising awareness.

Worry Boxes and a Digital Worry Box are available for children in St Mary's. These may be used to report incidences of bullying.

## **Our Pupils' Entitlement and Responsibility**

St Mary's is a community made up of different groups of people each of whom has a particular entitlement, and associated with the entitlements are certain responsibilities.

St Mary's will endeavour to build a safe and caring environment in which our children feel secure, are valued, are actively involved in forming our rules and policy - with active involvement of our class and school pupil councils - and whose needs are recognised.

Within our school pupils are required:

- To treat other pupils and all staff with respect
- Behave correctly throughout the day
- Respect all property
- Follow school rules
- Refuse to engage in bullying and act against bullying by reporting such an incident or intervene to prevent it.

When a child is suspected of being bullied or claims to have been bullied he/she is entitled to:

- Be listened to
- Be taken seriously
- Be informed of actions that are possible to address their concerns
- Be reassured that all possible steps will be taken to ensure their safety
- Know that the school will contact parents if appropriate
- Know that the situation will be monitored

When a child is suspected of bullying of other children he/she is entitled to:

- Be listened to
- Be taken seriously
- Be informed of what action the school will take to address the situation and ensure there is no re-occurrence
- Be informed of the timescale of any investigation
- Know that the school will contact parents
- Know that the situation will be monitored.



## **Our Parents' Entitlement and Responsibility**

Parents are entitled to expect that:

- Their child will be educated in an atmosphere which is safe and caring and not characterised by violence and intimidation
- They will be informed promptly of any incident of bullying regarding their child and that this will be dealt with confidentially
- The school will take all reasonable steps to prevent bullying occurring
- Any bullying incident which is reported will be investigated according to the school's guidelines
- Any bullying incident that is found to have taken place will be dealt with in line with the school's guidelines.

## **Parents have primary responsibility for incidences of bullying that are not connected to school (e.g. Cyberbullying)**

### **Parents of our pupils are responsible for:**

- Ensuring that their child respects and co-operates with teachers, ancillary staff and other pupils
- Seeing that their child uphold the rules of the school
- Contacting the school to report any concerns over bullying behaviour
- Supporting all aspects of the school ethos.
- Being vigilant in looking for signs that their child may be a victim of bullying

### **Parents of bullied children and parents of children who bully are entitled to:**

- Know what the schools anti-bullying policy is
- Know what action the school will take when bullying is reported
- Be included in discussions that outline appropriate action on the part of the parent
- Know that the situation will be monitored.

## **Signs of bullying (seen at home) – (can include but not exhaustive to)**

- . Being frightened to walk to and from school
- . Asking to be taken to school
- . Changing their usual route to school
- . Developing a pattern of headaches, stomach aches etc
- . Having possessions go missing
- . Damaged clothing
- . Unexplained bruising or cuts
- . Asking for/beginning to steal money
- . Crying themselves to sleep
- . Start wetting the bed
- . Having nightmares
- . Attempting self harm

Parents/guardians should tell their child **not to retaliate** but to report any incident to a member of the teaching or ancillary staff, or to their own parent/guardian.

Parents/guardians should inform the school immediately of any incident of bullying or suspected bullying.

## **Teachers' Entitlement and Responsibility**

All teachers and other adults in the school community have the right to:

- Work in a positive environment where there is respect and fairness at all times
- Truthfulness and honesty from pupils
- Equal treatment from all staff and pupils
- Co-operation from pupils and parents.

### **They also have the right to advice and support from:**

- The Department of Education (statutory guidance)
- Education Authority
- Council for Catholic Maintained Schools

### **Teachers have a responsibility to ensure:**

- The well-being of all the children in their care including:
  - Making them feel secure
  - Bringing out their best qualities
  - Treating them impartially
- The rules of the school are implemented consistently, fairly and reasonably.

Teachers act as role models for pupils. They have the potential to influence pupil behaviour in a positive direction. They can promote relationships characterised by respect, tolerance, friendship and co-operation, among and between pupils and staff.

Teachers should be vigilant in looking for signs of distress both within the classroom and while on supervision duty in the playground.

## **Signs of bullying (seen in school) -**

- Increased absences from school
- Deterioration in school work
- Becoming withdrawn
- Starting to stammer
- Starting to hit other children
- Refusal to say what is wrong

When teachers suspect an incident of bullying or an incident has been reported to them by a pupil, parent or ancillary staff, they should act immediately to protect the victim, **without placing the victim at further risk.**

## **All Staff-**

### **How to React and What to Do**

- **Listen**
- **Believe**
- **Reassure**
- **Explain**
- **Act Immediately**
- **Record**
- **Get Support**

Teachers should record incidents of actual or alleged bullying. (See Appendix)  
A photocopy of the record should be given to the Principal.

Parents/guardians should be willing to attend interviews with the class teacher or principal if their child is involved in any incident of bullying - either as the victim or alleged bully.

## **Responsibilities of Ancillary Staff**

Ancillary staff should be vigilant in looking for signs of bullying.

They should report any incident of bullying or suspected bullying to the class teacher or principal immediately.

Ancillary staff should make a written report of any incident of bullying or suspected bullying.

## **Positive Behaviour Management**

In keeping with the school's commitment to positive behaviour management, the intended outcome after an incident of bullying should be:

- to protect the victim and stop the bullying
- to change the behaviour of the bully

The intervention of a teacher will aim at acknowledging the distress of the victim, reassure and support the victim and increase their self-esteem.

If the bullying behaviour persists, sanctions will be considered in accordance with the school's discipline policy and positive behaviour strategies will continue. If, after the use of positive behaviour strategies and sanctions, the bullying behaviour continues, then the Child Protection strategies will be implemented.

All incidents of bullying must be recorded; one copy forwarded to and Principal and a copy retained in the Class. Incidences of bullying will be recorded on the sims system in accordance with the 2016 Act.

## **Conclusion**

### **Monitoring and Evaluating the Effectiveness of the policy.**

The procedures in this policy will be monitored for effectiveness and the policy will be reviewed annually by staff and Governors.

**Reviewed March 2022**

## Report on Incident of Alleged Bullying

**Child's Name** ..... **Date** .....  
**Class** ..... **Teacher** .....  
**Teacher/Support Staff reporting the incident** .....  
**Where did the incident occur?** .....

Behaviour displayed: <b>Bullying</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Being bullied</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Physical bullying</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Hitting, punching <input type="checkbox"/> Pinching, scratching <input type="checkbox"/> Kicking, pushing tripping <input type="checkbox"/> Spitting <input type="checkbox"/> Damaging/stealing property <input type="checkbox"/> Throwing objects at someone <input type="checkbox"/> Hiding/taking belongings <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<b>Verbal bullying</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Teasing/name calling <input type="checkbox"/> Making offensive remarks <input type="checkbox"/> Making discriminatory remarks <input type="checkbox"/> Insulting someone <input type="checkbox"/> Threatening someone <input type="checkbox"/> Repeated teasing <input type="checkbox"/> Intimidating someone <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<b>Emotional/social bullying</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Leaving people out <input type="checkbox"/> Spreading rumours <input type="checkbox"/> Excluding someone <input type="checkbox"/> Ignoring someone <input type="checkbox"/> Making fun of someone <input type="checkbox"/> Stopping people from befriending someone <input type="checkbox"/> Other

**Comments:**

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**Actions taken after the incident:**

**Parents informed:**    Yes     No     **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Follow up:**

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

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**Teacher Signature** \_\_\_\_\_