**Cill Chluana Parish Nursery and**

**St. Mary’s PS, Granemore**



**Anti-Bullying Policy**

Revised February 2016

**Revised: September 2021**

**Review; September 2022**

**Rationale**

***At St. Mary’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.***

**Vision Statement**

St Mary’s PS is a warm, welcoming and caring school where our Catholic Ethos and Christian values inspire everything we do. We work in partnership with parents, the Church and the wider community to ensure that all our children are the best that they can be. We believe anything is possible.

**Mission Statement**

* At St. Mary’s children are encouraged to become reflective learners and to value their learning experiences. Children’s opinions and contributions are valued and they are involved in decision making through our Student Council.
* We are an inclusive school community where every child’s talents and achievements are celebrated. We embrace diversity and promote equality in everything we do. We equip our children to become fair and tolerant in their thoughts and actions.
* At St. Mary’s we are committed to providing a broad and rich curriculum and to ensure our children are prepared for their futures. We aim to equip them with the necessary skills and capabilities to allow them to achieve their full potential through a caring and supportive environment. A positive pupil/teacher partnership exists and all relationships are valued and nurtured.
* St. Mary’s provides a safe and happy environment where every child feels secure. We work together as a team to develop the self-esteem of our children through a culture of mutual respect and understanding. We promote the importance of a healthy lifestyle and respect for the environment.

**Principles**

* Pupils have a right to learn free from intimidation and fear
* The needs of the child who is being bullied are paramount
* Our school will not tolerate bullying behaviour.
* The child who has been bullied will be listened to.
* Reported incidents will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigates.
* The child displaying the bullying behaviour will be supported in order to prevent the behaviour reoccurring.

**Aims**

**This policy aims to:-**

* Create a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
* Promote a ‘whole school’ approach, where signs of bullying are identified and swift and effective action is taken in line with strategies outlined in ‘*Effective Responses to Bullying’ NIABF.*
* Show commitment to overcoming bullying.
* Promote a secure and happy environment free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behaviour.
* Ensure all school community, pupils and parents have an understanding of what bullying is, and what they should do if bullying arises.
* Inform children and parents of the school’s expectations and to foster a productive partnership, which helps maintain a bully-free environment.
* Assure pupils and parents 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.
* Develop procedures for noting and reporting incidents of bullying behaviour.
* Promote Restorative Strategies in order to achieve the necessary changes in behaviour and to restore relationships between the pupils involved, consistent with the NIABF document.

**Definition of Bullying**

### The definition of bullying our school has adopted comes from the Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF) which defines bullying as **behaviour, that is usually repeated, which is carried out intentionally cause to hurt, harm or to adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others.**

### This definition statement is based on the definition of bullying as laid out in the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016.

***“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 a form of unacceptable behaviour, but not all unacceptable behaviour can be considered bullying. **Any incidents which are not considered bullying behaviour will be addressed under the Positive Behaviour Policy.**

**Bullying Behaviours**

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 spread false rumours about others

try to make other pupils dislike another pupil/s

**Physical acts**

Hitting

Kicking

Pushing

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 (e.g. photographs or videos) online to embarrass someone

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

Bullying is an emotive issue, therefore it is essential that we ensure we use supportive, understanding language when discussion 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 discussion 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.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

**The Responsibilities of Staff**

**Our staff will:**

* Foster in our pupils self-confidence, self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others.
* Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils.
* Discuss bullying with all classes, so that every pupil learns about the damage it causes to both the child who experiences bullying behaviour and to the child who is displaying bullying behaviour.
* Staff will continually reinforce the importance of telling an adult about bullying when it happens.
* Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying.
* Listen to children who report that they have experienced bullying behaviour, take what they say seriously and provide reassurance that appropriate action will be taken.
* Report suspected cases of bullying to the Principal who will record and take appropriate action.
* Follow up any concern 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 effectively, in accordance with agreed procedures.
* Use PATHS, PDMU, RE, Circle time to promote opportunities to discuss issues around bullying.

**The Responsibilities of Pupils**

**We expect our pupils to:**

* Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying behaviour.
* Follow school rules.
* Intervene to protect the pupil who is experiencing bullying by reporting the incident to an adult.
* Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances.
* Value and respect others.
* Help others achieve
* Keep others safe

**What Pupils Need to Recognise about Bullying**.

**Pupils need to understand:**

* That they have a right not to experience bullying at school.
* That they are not to blame if they experience bullying.
* That they need to speak out and should trust the adults to take their concerns seriously and to help them.
* That they are not alone.

**The Responsibilities of Parents**

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

* Advising their child to report any bullying behaviour to their class teacher/adult in school.
* Advising their child not to retaliate to any form of bullying.
* Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken.
* Informing the school of any suspected bullying, even if their child is not involved.
* Co-operating with the school, if their child is displaying bullying behaviour or experiencing bullying behaviour.

**The Responsibilities of All**

**Everyone should:**

* 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

**Preventative Measures**

**The focus for all anti-bullying work should be on preventing bullying behaviour and creating a safe learning environment. In St. Mary’s P.S we do this by:**

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 e.g. 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/PATHS and RE (Alive O Programme)

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

Through the preventative curriculum actively promote positive emotional health and wellbeing (PATHS Programme)

Participation in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities

Engagement in key national and regional campaigns, e.g. Safer Internet Day

Development of peer-led systems (e.g. School Council) to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messaging within the school

Development of effective strategies for playground management, e.g. training for supervisors, zoning of playgrounds, inclusion of specific resources and provision of a variety of play option 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 (e.g. 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.

Procedures for dealing with bullying behaviour

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| 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 people;   The teacher of any child involved  The principal  The designated teacher for child protection |
| Step 2  **Investigation of an incident**   * This will normally be carried out by the Vice-Principal/Principal, in cooperation with the class teacher/adults involved. * Pupils involved will be interviewed and a record made of their responses by their teacher * Parents of all pupils involved will only be informed of the school’s action if deemed necessary. |
| Step 3  **Agreeing a plan for resolution**   * Vice-Principal/Principal will devise a plan for resolution, if the incident is deemed to warrant this. * Acceptable behaviour will be discussed with the pupil, including support measures for ALL pupils concerned. * Any disciplinary action required will use a system of sanctions, as set out in the school’s Positive Behaviour and Discipline Policy. |
| Step 4  **Reviewing the Situation**   * If a plan has been necessary, this will be reviewed within a month. * This will include the Vice-Principal/Principal, teacher and parents. |
| Step 5  **Involvement of other Agencies**   * Where necessary, the school will draw on support of the EWO, Behavioural Management Team, Educational Psychology service and other relevant services. |

**Reporting a Bullying Concern**

**Pupils Reporting a Concern**

Any pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing this behaviour. Our message will focus on ‘getting help’ rather than ‘telling.’ As such all children will be encouraged to, ‘get help’ if they have a concern about bullying that they experience or is experienced by another pupil.

Pupils can report bullying concerns by:

Verbally - talking to a member of staff

By writing a note to a member of staff (e.g. in a homework diary)

By posting a comment in a ‘worry box’

**Parents/Carers Reporting a Concern**

Parents/Carers have a responsibility to raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour with the school at the earliest opportunity. Parents are reminded to encourage their child to react appropriately to bullying behaviour and to not do anything to retaliate or to ‘hit back’.

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 the Vice Principal Mrs Reilly, or Principal, Mrs Casey.

Where the parent/carer remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the school’s complaints procedure should be followed. This usually involves making a formal, written complaint, to the Chair of the Board of Governors. A copy of the School’s complaints procedure can be requested from the school office.

All reports of bullying concerns received from pupils and/or 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 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.

**Responding to a Bullying Concern**

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 sanctions for those displaying bullying behaviour.

As previously stated, information regarding any action taken regarding a pupil cannot be disclosed to anyone other than that pupil and his/her parents/carers.

**Recording**

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**
* **how each incident was addressed by the school**

**Monitoring and Review of Anti-Bullying 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

This Anti-Bullying Policy shall be reviewed as required, in consultation with pupils on or before **September 2023**

**Links with Other School Policies**

This policy forms part of the overall pastoral care provision in our school and therefore links and works alongside the following policies:

* Pastoral Care Policy
* Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
* ICT Policy and Acceptable Use of Internet Policy
* Positive Behaviour and Discipline Policy
* PDMU Policy
* Staff Code of Conduct
* SEN Policy

**Signed:**……Mrs Brenda Casey…(Principal)

**Date**:……Sept 22…

**Signed:**………Mr Joe McGleenan……(Chair of Board of Governors)

**Date of Ratification by Board of Governors**:…Oct 22