



# Ballymacrickett Primary School and Nursery Unit

## Anti-Bullying Policy

*'Happy Together, Learning Forever'*

February 2020

# **Ballymacrickett Primary School and Nursery Unit**

## **OUR VISION**

### **"Happy Together, Learning Forever"**

Ballymacrickett Primary School and Nursery Unit promotes learning for life and high achievement by working with children to:

- practise the Catholic faith in their daily lives;
- have high self esteem - respecting themselves, others, our local community and the world around us;
- recognise their talents and acquire the knowledge and skills to be their individual best;
- become happy, enthusiastic, highly motivated life-long learners;
- be able to work independently and collaboratively;
- gain the necessary skills to equip them for our ever changing world.

We believe that each child will succeed through experiencing quality in:

- a Catholic ethos of support and encouragement, where diversity is embraced and success is celebrated;
- a broad and challenging curriculum, ensuring inclusion and equality of opportunity;
- a learning partnership between school, home, parish and the wider community;
- a safe, healthy, stimulating learning environment;
- innovative teaching and an investigative approach to learning;

We demonstrate our commitment to working as a learning community by:

- continually striving for improvement by working together towards common goals.

## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

*At Ballymacrickett Primary School and Nursery Unit 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*

### **Legislative Context:**

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

The Education and Libraries Order (Northern Ireland) 2003

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

### **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)

### **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:
  1. In school, during the school day
  2. While travelling to and from school
  3. When under control of school staff, but away from school (e.g. school trip)
  4. When receiving education organised by school but happening elsewhere
- ✓ 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'*
- ✓ The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) sets out every child's right to:
  1. *Be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, maltreatment or exploitation.*
  2. *Be protected from discrimination.*
  3. *Express their views, in a supported and accessible way, on issues that affect them, and to have their opinions taken seriously.*
  4. *Education.*

## **Ethos**

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

## **Consultation**

Children from Key Stage 2 completed an online survey. Parents and staff (teaching and support staff) were also consulted by way of an online survey.

The school's safeguarding team drafted the revised policy which was then presented to all staff members for their approval, before being ratified by governors.

## **Definition**

Addressing Bullying in Schools Act 2016:

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.*

Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF):

*'Bullying is the repeated use of power by one or more persons intentionally to hurt, harm or adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others.'*

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.

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.

When discussing bullying behaviours, the terms 'bully' and 'victim' should be avoided. Instead we should refer to the child describing the situation or surrounding that child, as:

- A child displaying behaviours  
or
- A child experiencing bullying behaviours

We encourage all members of the school community to use this language when discussing bullying incidents.

*\*Emotional or psychological harm is defined within DE Guidance as intentionally causing distress or anxiety by scaring, humiliating or affecting adversely a pupil's self-esteem. Physical harm is defined as intentionally hurting a pupil by causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts.*

### **Preventive Measures**

The focus for all anti-bullying work should be on preventing bullying and creating a safe learning environment. In Ballymacrickett we do this by:

- ✓ Raising awareness and understanding of the positive behaviour expectations, as set out in the Positive Behaviour Policy and Classroom Management Plans
- ✓ Promoting 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 and R.E
- ✓ Involvement in meaningful and supportive shared education projects, supporting pupils to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity
- ✓ Through the five steps approach to wellbeing, promote positive physical and emotional health
- ✓ Participation in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities
- ✓ Engagement in key national and regional campaigns, eg Safer Internet Day
- ✓ Development of peer-led systems e.g. Pupil Council and Buddy System 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 to meet the needs of all pupils
- ✓ Focused assemblies to raise awareness and promote understanding of key issues related to bullying

- ✓ Provision and promotion of extra-curricular activities, aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks

Preventing bullying behaviour on the journey to and from school:

- ✓ Development of a culture where pupils take pride in their school and are viewed as ambassadors for Ballymacrickett 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 e.g. peer monitoring systems on buses
- ✓ Regular engagement with transport providers e.g. Translink and EA Transport to ensure effective communication and the early identification of any concerns
- ✓ Appropriate deployment of staff to support the transition from school day to journey home e.g. staff bus duty rota and procedure for safe handover

We raise children's awareness of the nature and impact of online bullying and support our pupils to make use of the internet in a safe, responsible and respectful way. We do this by:

- ✓ Addressing key themes of online behaviour and risk through PDMU, R.E and ICT, 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 e.g. C2k, PSNI, Public Health Agency, Safeguarding Board for NI e-Safety Forum 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 e.g. Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy, E-Safety Policy and Mobile Phone Policy

## **Responsibilities of Staff**

- Staff will foster in our pupils, self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others.
- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect in our pupils.
- Discuss bullying with all classes so that every pupil learns about the hurt 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 a trusted member of staff about bullying when it happens.
- Be alert to signs of distress and other indications of bullying.
- Listen to children who reports that they have experienced bullying behaviour, take what they say seriously and provide reassurance that appropriate action will be taken.
- Follow up any concern by a parent about bullying and report back promptly and fully on the action that has been taken.
- Report suspected cases of bullying to a member of the Safeguarding Team who will record and take appropriate action.
- Fully engage in activities and competitions organised during Anti-Bullying Week.
- Use circle time, PDMU lessons, RE lessons, school assemblies etc. to promote opportunities to discuss the subject.

## **Responsibilities of Support Staff and all other adults connected with the school for Clubs and Activities**

- All staff and adults working with pupils (includes sports coaches and adults leading after-school activities) should be vigilant in looking for signs of bullying.
- They should report any incident of bullying or suspected bullying to the class teacher or in the absence of the teacher, a member of the Safeguarding Team.
- During lunch times, supervisory staff will assist with playground games and help maximise the use children make of the play equipment and playground markings. They will closely monitor children's involvement in activities.

## **Responsibilities of our Pupils**

We expect our pupils to:

- Tell an adult if they are experiencing bullying behaviour.
- Refrain from becoming involved in any form of bullying.
- Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying.
- Intervene to protect any pupil who is experiencing bullying behaviour by reporting the incident to an adult.

## **Responsibilities of our Parents**

We ask our parents to support us by:

- Advising their children to report any incidents of bullying to their teacher or any other staff member.
- Informing the school of any suspected bullying behaviour.
- Advising their child not to retaliate to any form of bullying.
- Co-operate with the school in matters of bullying - if their child is experiencing bullying behaviour or if their child is displaying bullying behaviour.

**Parents must not approach another child about a behaviour matter or an incident of suspected bullying at Ballymacrickett. All concerns must be brought directly to school staff in line with school policy.**

## **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. Through the preventative work as previously listed, this message should focus on 'getting help' rather than 'telling'. As such, all pupils should 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 (eg. in a homework diary)
- By posting a comment in a 'worry box'.

### **Parents/ Carers reporting a Concern**

Parents / carers can report bullying concerns by:

- 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, Mr Eastwood
- Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken by the Vice-Principal to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to Principal, Mr Mulholland
- 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

While a report of a bullying concern is most likely to come from pupils or their parents/carers, the school will be open to receiving such reports from others not directly involved with the school.



Any report of a bullying concern 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**

The school's process outlined below provides a framework for how we will respond to any bullying concerns identified.

- Clarify facts and perceptions
- Check records
- Assess the incident against the criteria for bullying behaviour

If bullying behaviour has been identified:

- Identify any themes or motivating factors
- Identify the type of bullying behaviour being displayed
- Identify intervention level for pupil displaying/ experiencing bullying behaviour
- Select and implement appropriate interventions for all pupils involved
- Track, monitor and record effectiveness of interventions
- Review outcome of interventions
- Select and implement further interventions as necessary

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, no information about action taken in relation to a pupil can be disclosed to anyone other than the 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
- the outcome of the interventions employed

Records will be kept securely. Access to these records will be restricted and only provided to appropriate members of school staff.

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.

## **Professional Development of Staff**

We are committed to ensuring that staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school's ongoing Continued Professional Development (CPD) provisions. CPD records will be kept and updated regularly.

## **Monitoring and Review of Policy**

To appropriately monitor the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy, the Board of Governors will:

- 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 will be reviewed, in consultation with pupils and their parents/carers, on or before October 2023.

## **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