



Woodlawn Primary School

Addressing Bullying in School Policy

Designed: May 2021

Ratified: March 2022

Reviewed and Updated:

At Woodlawn Primary School 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.

This policy has been developed in the context of the following legislative and policy/guidance framework applicable.

The Legislative Context:

- The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016
- The Education and Libraries Order (Northern Ireland) 2003 (A17-19)
- 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

The Policy and 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 Service 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)

Ethos & Principles

- We are committed to a society where bullying is deemed unacceptable and where children can live free and safe from bullying.
- We are committed to a preventative, responsive and restorative anti-bullying ethos across the whole school.
- We celebrate the diversity of our children.
- We encourage children to disclose and discuss incidences of bullying behaviour.
- We understand that everyone in our school community has a role to play in taking a stand against bullying and creating a safe environment for all.
- We understand the need for recording and reporting incidents of unacceptable behaviour and bullying behaviour.
- We understand the importance of having procedures to respond to, resolve and restore relationships when bullying behaviours occur.
- We value the views and contributions of our children, actively seek their views and respect and take them into account.

Consultation and Participation

This policy has been developed in consultation with registered pupils and their parents/carers in compliance with the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016.

- Consultative meetings with Anti-bullying ambassadors
- School council meeting - once per term minimum
- Whole staff meetings
- Questionnaires to children, staff and parents
- Seesaw to communicate with parents/carers
- Consultative workshops with parents/carers
- Engagement with PTA
- Whole staff training in August at least every 2 years
- Safeguarding Team involved in writing Anti-Bullying Policy
- Governors consulted every time policy is reviewed or in light of new guidance/legislation, standing agenda item at BoG meetings
- Safeguarding Team Meeting – once per term minimum
- Notices in school inviting opinions from the whole school community

What is Bullying?

Definition:

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 states that:

In this Act “bullying” includes (but is not limited to) the repeated use of

- Any verbal, written or electronic communication
- Any other act, including omission
- 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.

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.

One-Off Incident -

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 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 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.

The following unacceptable behaviours when repeated, targeted and intentionally hurtful, may be considered as 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, punching, pushing, shoving, nipping
- using implements to cause deliberate injury to another pupil.

- spitting at a pupil.
- material harm, such as taking/stealing money or possessions causing damage to possessions.

Omission (Exclusion)

- leaving someone out of a game
- refusing to include someone in group work

Electronic Acts

- Electronic communication through mobile phone texts, internet and social networking sites – this may include sending anonymous texts, making threats, name calling, giving out personal information that children feel embarrassed about and sending frightening or obscene images with a threat. This could include impersonating someone online to cause hurt. Sharing images online to embarrass someone.

It is important to note that this list is not exhaustive and that other bullying behaviours which fit with the definition may be considered bullying behaviour.

In summary;

Bullying behaviour is behaviour by one or more pupils carried out to intentionally hurt, harm or adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others. It involves an imbalance of power.

There are various motivations behind bullying including (but not limited to):

- Age
- Appearance
- Breakdown in peer relationships
- Community background
- Race
- Religion
- Political affiliation
- Gender identity
- Sexual orientation
- 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.

For further clarification, 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.

Preventative Measures

Our aim is to promote a strong anti-bullying ethos within our school and the wider school community. Key actions taken to prevent bullying and create a safe learning environment are as follows:-

- Whole school awareness and understanding of the positive behaviour expectations, as set out in the Positive Behaviour Policy
- Promotion of anti-bullying messages continually throughout the curriculum
- Addressing issues such as the various forms of bullying, including the how and why it can happen, through PDMU (eg. sectarian, racist, homophobic, transphobic, disablist, etc.)
- Promote positive emotional health and wellbeing (eg. The Daily Mile, Take 5 initiative, yoga, mindfulness etc.)
- Participation in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities, Internet Safety Day, Kindness Week, Children's Mental Health Day.
- Development of anti-bullying ambassadors and Playground Buddies to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messaging within the school
- Focused assemblies to raise awareness and promote understanding of key issues related to bullying
- Provision and promotion of extra- and co-curricular activities, aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks. For example: After-school club, after-school sport.
- Development of effective strategies for playground management, eg. training for supervisors, zoning of playgrounds, inclusion of specific resources (buddy benches) and provision of a variety of play option to meet the needs of all pupils.

Preventative measures to and from school

- Regular reminders of the positive behaviour expectations of pupils whilst travelling to and from school.
- Promotion of key anti-bullying messages and awareness of behaviour expectations of pupils amongst the local community (eg. local shops, cafes, service providers, residents, etc), including information on how to raise any concerns with the school.
- Appropriate deployment of staff to support the transition from school day to journey home (eg. staff duty at school gate)

Steps to prevent bullying through the use of electronic communication

- Addressing key themes of online behaviour and risk through PDMU, 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, 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.

Responsibility

The Anti-Bullying Policy should make clear that everyone has responsibility for creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all members of the school communities.

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 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

Reporting a Bullying Concern

Pupils Reporting a Concern

It is essential that pupils are encouraged to raise concerns with any member of staff, including teaching and non-teaching staff. ANY pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing this behaviour. The focus is on 'getting help' rather than 'telling'. All pupils should be encouraged to 'get help' if they have a concern about bullying that they experience or is experienced by another.

Ways that pupils can report bullying concerns, including:

- 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 and carers should raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour with the school at the earliest opportunity. Parents/carers need to encourage their children 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 Principal.
- Where the parent/carers 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. This policy is available on the school website or on request at the school office.

Please note all reports of bullying concerns received from pupils and/or parents/carers will be responded to in line with this policy and that feedback will be made to the person who made the report. 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 will respond to any bullying concerns as follows;

Using the NIABF Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource, the member of staff responsible shall...

- Clarify facts and perceptions
- Check pastoral file for any previous incidents

- Complete BCAF part 1
- Assess the incident against the criteria for bullying behaviour
- If criteria is not met refer to Positive Behaviour Policy
- If criteria is met complete BCAF part 2 and identify the type of bullying behaviour being displayed
- Identify intervention level
- Select and implement appropriate interventions for all pupils involved, (record on part 3 of BCAF) including appropriate interventions, consequences and sanctions not listed in the Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource
- Track, monitor and record effectiveness of interventions
- Review outcome of interventions
- Select and implement further intentions as necessary

Woodlawn Primary will use a restorative approach to responding to bullying behaviour as advocated by NIABF. Using the Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource we will focus on responding to the behaviour, resolving the concern and restoring the wellbeing of those involved. Where appropriate, school staff may implement sanctions for those displaying behaviour bullying.

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 on the online SIMS Behaviour Management Module, which is part of the C2k system in schools. Access to these records will be restricted and only provided to those members of school staff with a legitimate need to have access.

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

In Woodlawn we recognise the need for appropriate and adequate training for staff, including teaching and non-teaching school staff. We endeavour to ensure that staff are provided with

appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school's ongoing CPD/PRSD provisions. We recognise the need to note the impact of the training given on both the policy and its procedures e.g. any amendments made, inclusions added. Opportunities for safeguarding training are afforded to Governors and all staff. All such 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 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 will be reviewed at intervals of no more than four years. However, the policy may be reviewed following any incident which highlights the need for such a review. It will also be reviewed when directed to by the Department of Education and in light of new guidance. As part of our policy schedule we aim to review this policy on a biennial basis.

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*
- *Educational Visits*
- *Staff Code of Conduct*

Choosing an Appropriate Intervention

“The main aim of any intervention is to **RESPOND** to the bullying that is taking place, **RESOLVE** the concern and **RESTORE** the well-being of all those involved.”
(NIABF)

To determine level of severity, staff should take account of the following:

The **nature** of the bullying behaviour - for example deliberate teasing, excluding or hitting. There is a tendency among those who have a duty of care to rate some bullying, particularly violence, as more serious than other subtle forms. This can be a mistake and leave us vulnerable to ignoring ‘teasing’ or ‘exclusion’, which includes intentionally choosing to stop someone from joining in or indeed ‘omission’, which is intentionally choosing not to mention e.g. there was football at lunchtime.

- The frequency of the bullying behaviour: daily, weekly or less often. This can help indicate intention. When considering repetition, 3 or more repetitious incidents involving the same target may be criterion used to assess. However, this may be viewed differently with electronic communication as if, for example, 1 post has been shared repeatedly.
- The duration of the bullying behaviour: whether over a short or prolonged period of time.
- The perceptions of the child being bullied. Staff may also take into consideration the resilience of the child/ren involved and the impact caused whilst contemplating any imbalance of power/specifically targeted behaviour.

In selecting an intervention school will take account of:

- The level of severity, using this as a guide to select appropriate intervention(s).
- The legal status of the act e.g. assault.
- The age and ability of those involved.
- Whether an individual pupil or a group is involved
- The level of staff agreement, confidence and competence in adopting a restorative, behaviour changing approach.
- The agreement and support of the parents/carers in adopting a restorative, behaviour changing approach.
- Whether the pupil(s) displaying bullying behaviour acknowledge(s) the unacceptable behaviour and can be enabled to feel empathy for the pupil experiencing bullying, and act appropriately.
- The willingness to engage in a group intervention such as the Support Group Method.
- Whether it is realistic to expect that the bullied pupil can be strengthened adequately to deal with the situation.
- Whether or not the pupil experiencing bullying has acted provocatively.

See Appendix 1 - Bullying Concern Assessment Form

There are four main levels of intervention (See Appendix 2 Intervention Tables):

Level 1 Intervention – Low Level Bullying Behaviour

Interventions at Level 1 are to help individuals to recognise/reflect on their unacceptable behaviour and to get “back on track” while listening to and supporting/strengthening the pupil(s) experiencing bullying. Staff should:

- Explain the inappropriateness of the behaviour in line with the school’s values.
- Identify possible consequences if the bullying behaviour continues.
- Point out the level of distress experienced by the bullied pupil.
- Talk with the pupil being bullied to explore whether he/she has in any way provoked the bullying behaviour.
- Help the bullied pupil to identify ways in which he/she may be strengthened and supported, e.g. peer support.
- Encourage reparation to be made, if appropriate.
- Monitor the situation carefully.
- Be prepared to intervene with a higher response level if the situation persists or deteriorates.

Level 2 Intervention – Intermediate Level Bullying Behaviour

If bullying behaviour continues and/or is considered more severe, small group and/or class circle time intervention may be appropriate and the pupil displaying bullying behaviour may need an Individual Behaviour Support Plan. To be effective small group work needs:

- The consent and involvement of the pupil being bullied.
- To be planned and timetabled, session length dependent on age and ability.
- Parental / carer consent and agreement from participating pupils.
- Carefully selected group membership.
- To take place in a suitable and comfortable environment.
- To be uninterrupted.
- To be facilitated in a positive manner, ideally by two adults whose roles may alternate allowing one to participate and one to observe.
- Structured and focused activities using active learning approaches to stimulate discussion and debate amongst members and develop group identity.
- Decision and outcomes to be agreed and recorded, e.g. on a flipchart.
- To facilitate the development of empathy amongst pupils.
- A solution focused approach to the situation.
- To provide opportunities for pupils to take responsibility.
- Regular meetings of the group.
- Regular meetings with the bullied pupil to assess ongoing effectiveness of agreed actions.
- To ensure regular feedback is given on agreed actions.

Level 3 Intervention – Complex Bullying behaviour

Bullying at this level often involves complex group dynamics, where a number of roles are evident, such as those displaying bullying behaviour, bystanders and pupils experiencing bullying. Parents will have been informed and will work in partnership with the school and/or external agencies to effect change. An Individual Behaviour Plan will be put in place, there will be a whole-class approach to explore the issues around bullying and identify possible solutions in a non-threatening way.

Level 4 Intervention – High Risk Bullying Behaviour

Bullying behaviours assessed as Level 4 are severe and involve a significant threat to the safety and welfare of any or all of the pupils involved. Incidents at this level must be assessed in relation to the risk posed to any/all of the pupils involved. The Child Protection Policy and safeguarding procedures will need to be invoked. Advice will be available through the Child protection Service for Schools. In addition to Level 3 Interventions it may be necessary to refer to a relevant investigative agency i.e. PSNI, Health and Social Care Trust or Gateway Teams.