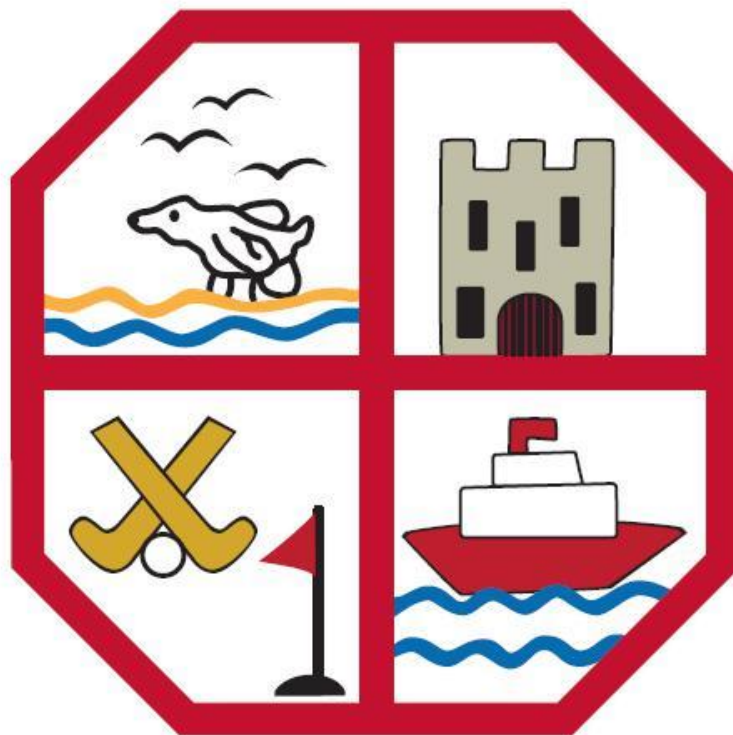


# St. Joseph's Primary School



## Preventative Addressing Bullying Type Behaviour Policy

## PREVENTATIVE ANTI BULLYING POLICY

### *Vision Statement*

*A school at the heart of the community. Community at the heart of the school.*

This policy has been written using the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016. It is also written paying cognisance to The Children's (NI) Order 1995 and The Education and Libraries (NI) order 2003.

Relevant DE Guidance- Pastoral Care in Schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour 2001, Measures to Prevent Bullying in DE Circular 2003/13 and Safeguarding and Child Protection: A guide for schools (2017)

\*It is important to note that we as a school will respond to anti-social behaviour which does not fall within the category of bullying type behaviour through our Positive Behaviour Policy. We will actively educate the children and employ interventions to discourage such behaviours escalating into bullying behaviours\*

### **Definition**

Bullying Type Behaviour includes (but is not limited to) the **repeated** use of

- any verbal, written or electronic communication
- any other act, or
- any combination of those,

by a pupil or 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.

NIABF define bullying as follows: 'Bullying is usually repeated behaviour that intentionally hurts, harms or adversely affects the rights and needs of another or others'.

\*It also includes 'omission'\* Exclusionary bullying behaviours are as serious as other verbal or physical acts.

While repetition is internationally recognised as an important element in establishing bullying type behaviour, The Act does not require repetition for behaviour to be defined as bullying. Repetition does however, help the school in establishing intention to harm, particularly if the bullying behaviours have not stopped after an intervention by the school. Whether a one-off incident should be treated as bullying is a decision for the school alone. When alleged incidents fail to meet the criteria for bullying type behaviour, we will use our Positive Behaviour Policy to address unacceptable or anti-social behaviour.

We will use the criteria set out below to assess whether incidents will be addressed through the Addressing Bullying Type Behaviour Policy or the Positive Behaviour Policy.

- 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.

**TRIP will be utilised by all staff when assessing specific incidents. The indicators are as follows: (Targeted, Repeated, Intended, Psychological/Physical). See Appendix 1. All children will also be educated re: TRIP to help them recognise bullying type behaviours.**

**Duty of Board of Governors to secure measures to prevent bullying type behaviour in our school setting. They must:**

- ensure that policies designed to prevent bullying type behaviour involving a registered pupil at our school are pursued
- determine the measures to be taken in school (whether by the BOG, staff or other person) with a view to preventing bullying type behaviour involving a registered pupil at the school
  - (i) on the premises of the school during the school day (inside school and in the playground)
  - (ii) while travelling to or from school during term time While our pupils are travelling to and from school they must follow the school's code of conduct for positive behaviour.
  - (iii) while the pupil is in the lawful control or charge of a member of staff (trips, external events)
  - (iv) while the pupil is receiving educational provision arranged on behalf of the school and provided elsewhere than on the school premises.

Pupil welfare embraces all aspects of pastoral care, including child protection, pupil behaviour, health & well-being and safety & security. Our duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils is addressed through our other school policies such as Pastoral Care Policy, RRS Positive Behaviour Policy, Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy, Child Protection Policy, Health & Well-being Policy and Drugs Policy.

## **Principles**

St Joseph's is completely opposed to bullying type behaviour and will not tolerate it. It is entirely contrary to the ethos, values and principles we work and live by. Principles and values that our school holds include

- Pupils have a right to learn in a safe and supportive environment, free from intimidation and fear
- The welfare/well-being needs of all children and young people are paramount and pupils' needs, both that of the child/children displaying the bullying behaviour and the targeted pupil(s), need to be separated from their behaviour.
- When bullying behaviour concerns are identified our school will work in a restorative and solution focused way to achieve the necessary change.
- Pupils who are targeted will be listened to and supported.
- Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour will be listened to and supported to accept responsibility and change their behaviour.
- Staff will receive awareness-raising training regarding bullying prevention including effective, appropriate strategies for intervention.

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- Where a concern arises, staff will receive on-going support from the Principal and designated teacher for CP (Mrs McCabe).
- Parents will be made aware of our school's practice to prevent and to respond to concerns through consultation processes and where necessary, their active participation in partnership with the school to resolve concerns involving their child.

### **The Process of Participation & Consultation** includes

- Whole school and class discussion to negotiate and agree a Code of Conduct for Positive Behaviour through our RRS Behaviour Charters.
- Awareness raising programmes through Curriculum and involvement in Anti-Bullying week (usually November) eg our PATHS programme, PDMU curriculum, RSE, Circle Time, HIP Psychology programmes (KS2), Kindness Counts day during Anti-Bullying week etc
- Obtaining the views of elected student representatives e.g Pupil Council members
- Questionnaires distributed to pupils, parents and staff
- Ongoing professional development and support for staff
- Monitoring of our preventative policy – when issues arose how effective were our interventions? What learning is there from these – identify and implement improvements/changes.
- Collect data and maintain/review records to monitor and evaluate effectiveness of policy and intervention strategies.
- Formal review/update of policy (every four years or as required), formally approved by the Board of Governors.

### **Preventative Measures**

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016, requires schools to focus on preventative measures to help reduce bullying type behaviours.

In St Joseph's we scaffold and promote a positive, relational learning environment where all members of our school community feel safe, included and valued. Our preventative measures help avoid bullying type behaviour and contribute to support plans for our pupils.

Everyone should work together to combat and, hopefully in time, to eradicate bullying type behaviour. To this end the school proactively teaches children how to develop healthy relationships and makes them aware of the forms of bullying type behaviour, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to deal with such incidents. This will be done through:

- Whole School Assemblies which will raise awareness of bullying type behaviours and provide a whole school focus for addressing bullying type behaviours.
- Within the curriculum the school will raise the awareness of the nature of bullying type behaviours through inclusion in PATHS, PDMU, RSE, Grow in Love, Circle Time and other subject areas, as appropriate, in an attempt to eradicate such behaviour.
- Use of Restorative Questions by all staff when addressing any incidents which take place- consistency.

Updated March 2025

- Anti Bullying Week (usually November) will focus classes on the issues through discussion, writing, poster design, drama etc
- School wide supervision and effective, consistent behaviour management by all staff.
- TRIP posters and ‘what can I do?’ wheels displayed throughout school.
- Effective use of the Beanstalk Book at weekly assemblies to promote our caring ethos.
- Positive relationships: Staff-Pupil, Pupil-Pupil, Staff-Parents.
- Use of feelings board and worry monsters/boxes in all classrooms.

The following are anti-social behaviours. They only constitute bullying type behaviours when they are recurrent/persistent, targeted with intent and where a power imbalance between pupils is evident. (TRIP)

- Physical violence, such as hitting, pushing or spitting at another pupil;
- Interfering with another pupil’s property, by stealing, hiding or damaging it;
- Using offensive names when addressing another pupil;
- Teasing or spreading rumours about another pupil or his/her family;
- Belittling another pupil’s abilities and achievements;
- Writing offensive notes or graffiti about another pupil
- Excluding another pupil from a group activity;
- Ridiculing another pupil’s appearance, way of speaking, personal mannerisms, religion, race, culture or nationality.
- Cyber bullying – the use of the internet or mobile phones to deliberately upset someone.

\*The Act gives schools the explicit power to take action to prevent cyber bullying which is taking place outside school, but which is likely to have an impact on the pupil’s education in school. While this gives schools the option to take action, it does not place a duty on schools to do so\*

### **Recording Incidents of Bullying**

The Board of Governors must ensure that a record is kept of all incidents of bullying type behaviour or alleged bullying type behaviour involving a registered pupil at the school.

The record must detail:

- a. The motivation behind the behaviour.
- b. The method of bullying (eg. Verbal, physical, etc.)
- c. How the situation was addressed.

\*Incidents will be recorded using SIMS Behaviour Management to Record a Bullying Concern- Guidance for schools 2019\*

## **Responsibilities of all Stakeholders**

**Staff** All staff have received awareness training (Level 1) on The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act and the DT and DDT for Child Protection have received training on how to record incidents electronically on SIMS)

Our DT and Principal/DDT are currently participating in ABSIT Level 3 Training on Addressing Bullying in Schools 'Leadership Training: A Whole School Approach' (Jan-April 2025) and will disseminate and cascade this approach to all staff.

Our 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 of our pupils
- discuss bullying type behaviour with all classes, so that every pupil learns about the damage it causes to both the child who is targeted and to the child displaying bullying behaviours, and the importance of telling a teacher about bullying behaviour when it happens or use the "Worry Box".
- Use restorative questioning (Key questions on staff lanyards as prompt)
- be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying type behaviour;
- listen to children who have been targeted, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them;
- report suspected cases of bullying type behaviour to the class teacher in the first instance then to the principal/Designated Teacher. The BoG will also be involved in the monitoring of instances of bullying type behaviour.
- follow up any complaint made by a parent about bullying, and report back promptly and fully on the action which has been taken
- deal with observed and reported instances of bullying type behaviour promptly and effectively, in accordance with agreed procedures.
- from time to time carry out an audit of incidents to identify frequency and patterns (by principal in liaison with the Designated Teacher)
- the designated teacher will also hold focus groups of random samples of children to ascertain that they feel safe and know what to do if bullying type behaviours occur.
- inform parents of our policy and give advice on how they can help their children deal with bullying type behaviour.

## **Pupils**

We expect our pupils to:

- refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying type behaviours, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity;
- intervene to protect the pupil who is being targeted, unless it is unsafe to do so;
- report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying type behaviours, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances.

Updated March 2025

Anyone who becomes the target of bullying type behaviours should:

- not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out, to put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets.

## **Parents**

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

- watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children, which might be evidence of bullying type behaviour.
- advising their children to report any bullying type behaviour to their class teacher or another key member of staff, and explain the implications of allowing the bullying type behaviour to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other pupils.
- advising their children not to retaliate to any form of bullying type behaviour.
- being sympathetic and supportive towards their children and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken.
- informing the school of any suspected bullying type behaviour, even if their children are not involved.
- co-operating with the school, if their child is involved in a bullying type behaviour concern, to resolve the difficulty in a way which stops the behaviour recurring and meets the needs of all children.

## **Procedures for dealing with reports of bullying**

We are aware that bullying type behaviour can happen anywhere, but we strongly believe that wherever pupils are they have the right to be safe. Nobody has the right to make anyone unhappy.

### **When an expression of concern comes from a parent**

The school will take it seriously, be reassuring and not defensive. Gain as much information as possible and record it. Inform the Principal and arrange to contact the parents with an update.

In consultation with the Principal, investigate the incident, take action and arrange to contact the parent. Monitor the situation and contact the parent two weeks later to ensure the matter is resolved. Record the details on SIMS as a Bullying Concern and in the Bullying Incident book- alongside records of incidents when safe handling and reasonable force was used.

*(A hard back Bullying Incident Book is locked away with the CP documentation)*

### **When a child expresses a concern**

The school will treat their complaint seriously and be aware that the problem may be a symptom of something greater. If appropriate alert the Principal/DT and they will record the child's concerns in the Bullying Book.

Investigate further and if appropriate, after consultation with the principal/DT, contact the child's parents, both those being targeted and the child exhibiting the bullying type behaviour. The principal will support staff to identify appropriate strategies ensuring teachers make a record of incidents in their diary and follow up at intervals to check if the situation remains improved.

**Pupils who have been targeted will be supported by:**

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a teacher
- Reassuring the pupil
- Offering continuous support
- Restoring self-esteem and confidence
- Praise the pupil for following school rules by reporting the bullying type behaviour

**Pupils who have been suspected of displaying bullying type behaviour will be supported by:**

- Try to gain the child's confidence and find out why they are behaving this way
- Be calm in discussions and explain why the behaviour is unacceptable and makes others unhappy
- Give them the choice to change the behaviour – it is **their** behaviour.
- Discuss strategies for ensuring that they have friendly ways to join in activities with other children.
- At this stage there may not be a sanction as the purpose is to prevent the behaviour recurring. However, teachers should be aware of the possibility of the targeted child being approached by the child displaying bullying type behaviours about reporting the incident and if necessary, make it clear this is not acceptable.
- Give praise and encouragement when the child is kind to others.
- Use circle time to discuss general issues.

**Inform both the parents of the child who has been targeted and the child who is displaying the bullying type behaviour.**

If a bullying type behaviour concern is reported teachers should inform the Principal and/or DT for Child Protection immediately. Criteria will be used to determine whether it is bullying behaviour or anti-social behaviour (using TRIP). When a decision has been made, the school will contact the parents of the child involved in a bullying type behaviour concern to enlist their support in dealing with the situation. The concern will be recorded formally on SIMS and in our school's Bullying Incidents Book which is kept in a secure place and reported to the Board of Governors annually.

For your information:

What is SIMS? It is a student information system i.e. a school management information system, currently developed by Capita. It stores all pupils' data electronically.

**This Policy will be kept under review (every four years formally) and amended from time to time.**