

Millquarter Primary School

Anti-bullying Policy



September 2021

Section 1 – Introduction and Statement

We believe all forms of bullying behaviour are unacceptable and that all pupils have the right to learn in a safe and supported environment.

Section 2 – Context

The section sets out the context in which this policy has been developed, including the 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 & 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 \(UNCRC\)](#)

The 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:
 - In school, during the school day
 - While travelling to and from school
 - When under control of school staff, but away from school (eg. school trip)
 - When receiving education organised by school but happening elsewhere (eg. in another school in the ASC)
 - 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' (A.17)
- * The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) sets out every child's right to:
 - Be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, maltreatment or exploitation. (A.19)

- Be protected from discrimination. (A.2)
- Express their views, in a supported and accessible way, on issues that affect them, and to have their opinions taken seriously. (A.12)
- Education. (A.28)

Section 3 – Ethos & Principles

- We are committed to a society where children and young people can live free and safe from bullying.
 - 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 every child and young person should be celebrated in their diversity.
 - We are committed to a preventative, responsive and restorative anti-bullying ethos across the whole school.
 - We value the views and contributions of children and young people, we will actively seek these views and we will respect and take them into account.
 - We understand 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.
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Section 4 – Consultation and Participation

In compliance with the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 we have consulted as follows:

Pupil:

- * Focus on positive behaviour at assemblies including School Rules
- * Discussed how to earn positive behaviour points in class
- * Class-based activities – eg PDMU, RE
- * Online Safety Day
- * Celebrating certain international days eg Anti-bullying Week
- * Whole school questionnaires distributed to all pupils
- * The School Council
- * Discussions on how to be a good friend/buddy
- * Anti-bullying Ambassadors
- * Any recent issues are discussed in-class after the event

Parents:

- * Information events with parents/carers eg Parent/Teacher meetings
- * Consultative workshops made available to parents/carers through outside agencies
- * Questionnaires distributed to all parents/carers eg yearly audit
- * Engagement with parent groups, eg. PTA

School community:

- * Staff survey for all staff, teaching and non-teaching eg audits
- * Engagement activity for all staff, teaching and non-teaching eg introduction of this policy
- * Members of staff involved in writing anti-bullying policy
- * Engagement events for those connected to the school (eg. local clergy attending assemblies, external agencies that regularly provide input such as Women's Aid, RSPB, RSPCA, Childline, Fire Service, PSNI, Dairy Council, local sports clubs)

Section 5 – What is Bullying?

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 provides schools with a legal definition which must be used in our policy.

Addressing Bullying in Schools Definition of “bullying”:

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.

A legal definition of bullying:

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.

While bullying is usually repeated behaviour, there are instances of one-off incidents that may be considered as bullying. This policy does NOT list the incidents that will be considered bullying; rather it lists a criterion below.

When assessing a one-off incident, to make a decision on whether to classify it as bullying, we 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
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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 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**
- **shoving**
- **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 activities**

*** 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 (eg. photographs or videos) online or on an electronic device (eg. mobile phone) to embarrass someone**

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

Motivations Behind Bullying Incidents

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

Definitions of emotional and physical harm following DE Guidance.

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.**

Section 6 – Preventative Measures

The measures set out here aim to promote a strong anti-bullying ethos within the school and the wider school community.

Under the legislation, the focus for all anti-bullying work should be on **prevention**. As such, this section is the key lynchpin of the policy document.

Key actions taken with the aim of preventing bullying and creating a safe learning environment:

- 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 eg. 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 (eg.sectarian, racist, homophobic, transphobic, disablist, etc.)
- 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.
- Participation in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities.
- Engagement in key national and regional campaigns, eg Safer Internet Day, Good Relations Week, etc.
- Development of peer-led systems (eg. School Council/) to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messaging within the school.

- Development of effective strategies for playground management, eg. training for supervisors, zoning of playgrounds, inclusion of specific resources (buddies) and provision of a variety of play options 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 (eg. break time, lunch)
- Provision and promotion of extra-curricular activities, aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks. For example, sporting activity, creative arts, leisure and games, etc.

Preventative measures to prevent bullying behaviour on the way to and from school. This includes:

- Development of a culture where pupils take pride in their school and are viewed as ambassadors for their school 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. This may include the implementation of **peer monitoring systems on buses** and for those walking.
- Regular engagement with transport providers (eg. EA Transport, etc.) to ensure effective communication and the early identification of any concerns.
- 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/bus stop, where appropriate)

The new legislation also gives schools the authority to take steps to prevent bullying through the use of electronic communication amongst pupils at any time during term, where that behaviour is likely to have a detrimental effect on the pupil's education at school. We aim to do this by:

- 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 appropriate policies in related areas (eg. Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy, Mobile Phone Policy, Connected Devices Policy, etc.)

This Anti-Bullying Policy is one of a number of policies in the wider Pastoral Care and Safeguarding suite of policies.

Section 7 – Responsibility

Everyone has responsibility for creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all members of our school community.

Everyone in the school community, including pupils, their parents/carers, governors 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
- 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

Section 8 – 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.

Ways that pupils can report bullying concerns:

- Verbally- talking to a member of staff or other adult
- By writing a note to a member of staff or other adult (eg. in a homework diary)

ANY pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing this behaviour. Through the preventative work taken forward under Section 6, our message focuses 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 that is experienced by another.

Parents/Carers Reporting a Concern

Parents and carers should raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour with the school at the earliest opportunity. Parents/carers should encourage their children to react appropriately to bullying behaviour and to not do anything to retaliate or to 'hit back'.

The process:

- ★ 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 Designated Teacher and/or Principal

Where the parent/carer remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the school's complaints procedure should be followed.

This involves making a formal, written complaint, to the Chair of the Board of Governors, C/O, Millquarter PS 139 Crosskeys Road, Toomebridge BT41 3PY

A flow-chart on how a parent can make a complaint is displayed within the school and on the school's website.

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. *Eg. staff can say: 'We have dealt with this within our school and as part of our policy we do not discuss this with parents or the pupils who were involved in the incident'.*

Section 9 – Responding to a Bullying Concern

The processes outlined below provide a framework for how the school will respond to any bullying concerns identified.

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

- Clarify facts and perceptions
- Check records (SIMS)
- Assess the incident against the criteria for bullying behaviour
- Identify any themes or motivating factors

- **Identify the type of bullying behaviour being displayed**
- **Identify intervention level**
- **Select and implement appropriate interventions for all pupils involved, 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**

Millquarter Primary School follows NIABF's restorative approach to responding to bullying behaviour. Interventions suggested in the Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource 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 bullying behaviour. This may include a loss of privileges e.g. Golden Time or missing out on part of break/lunch time play.

We reiterate that information regarding any action taken regarding a pupil cannot be disclosed to anyone other than that pupil and his/her parents/carers.

Section 10 – Recording

There is a legal requirement, as set out in the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016, to maintain a record of all incidents of bullying and alleged bullying behaviour.

These records are kept in the office and maintained by the Designated Teacher and Principal.

Records of all relevant information related to reports of bullying concerns will be kept on file, 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.**

The Department of Education encourages the use of the **SIMS** Behaviour Management Module for record keeping.

Access to these records will be restricted and only provided to those members of school staff with a legitimate need to have access. This includes all teaching 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.

Section 11 – Professional Development of Staff

We recognise the need for appropriate and adequate training for staff, including teaching and non-teaching school staff.

- * We are committed to ensuring that staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school's ongoing CPD/PRSD provisions
- * We will note the impact of the training given on both the policy and its procedures - e.g. any amendments made, inclusions added etc.
- * We aim to ensure that opportunities for safeguarding training are afforded to Governors and all staff – teaching and non-teaching
- * CPD records will be kept and updated regularly

Section 12 – Monitoring and Review of 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**

It is a legal requirement that the Anti-Bullying Policy be reviewed at intervals of no more than **four** years.

However, the policy will 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.

This Anti-Bullying Policy shall be reviewed as required, in consultation with stakeholders, on or before the October 2025.

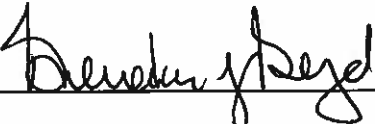
Section 12 – Links to Other Policies

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

Care will be taken to ensure that all policies are consistent.

Signed:  (Chair of Governors) Date: _____
M C M'Namee (Principal) Date: 9.11.21