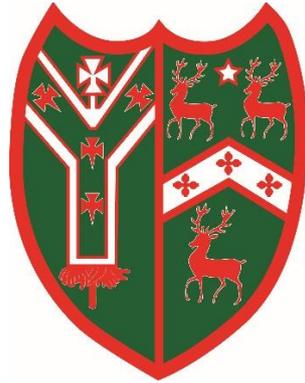


Lisnadill Primary School



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Date Ratified by Board of Governors: January 2022

Date of Review: Jan – Apr 2024

Mission Statement

The governors and staff of Lisnadill Primary School seeks to encourage pupils to become life-long learners who show respect and concern for others in a diverse society. We endeavour to assist our pupils in developing skills to become independent and self-sufficient adults with the ability to succeed and contribute responsibly in a global community.

In Lisnadill Primary School we believe all forms of bullying behaviour are unacceptable and that all pupils have the right to learn in a safe and supported environment.

Context

This policy has been developed taking cognisance of the latest legislation and policy guidance, as detailed below.

The Legislative Context

[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)
- Requires that the policy be updated at least every four years.

[The Education and Libraries Order \(Northern Ireland\) 2003 \(A17-19\)](#)

- Requires the Board of Governors to 'Safeguard and promote the welfare of registered pupils' (A.17).

[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 \(Dept. of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, 2016\)](#)

The International Context

[United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) 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)

It is our ultimate aim that every pupil has the basic right to receive his or her education free from pain, humiliation, fear and abuse whether physical or verbal.

Ethos & Principles

- We are committed to creating an environment which promotes self-esteem and where children and young people can live free and safe from bullying and can openly share their concerns.
- 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 will actively seek, value and respect the views and contributions of children and young people.
- 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.

Section 4 – Consultation and Participation

This policy has been developed following information events and consultation exercises with our stakeholders.

Consultation with **pupils** is carried out in the following ways:

- Formulation of class contracts
- Class-based activities
- Pupil surveys

- Circle Time activities
- School Council

Consultation with **parents** is carried out in the following ways:

- Information events with parents/carers
- Questionnaires distributed to all parents/carers
- Engagement with Parent Teacher Association.

Consultation with **other key stakeholders** includes:

- Regular discussions with staff, teaching and non-teaching
- Engagement activity for all staff, teaching and non-teaching
- Representative members of staff involved in writing anti-bullying policy
- Engagement event for Board of Governors

Section 5 – What is Bullying?

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 provides the following definition:

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.

*** “act” includes omission**

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. We recognise that physical harm intentionally hurts a pupil by causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts whereas emotional harm intentionally causes distress or anxiety by scaring, humiliating or affecting adversely a pupil’s self-esteem.

While repetition is internationally recognised as an important element in establishing bullying behaviour, the “Addressing Bullying in Schools Act 2016” does not require repetition for behaviours to be defined as bullying. The school has the discretion to define one-off acts as bullying behaviour. These decisions will be discussed within the Safeguarding Team and in consultation with EA, as appropriate.

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 our Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy.

Recognising Bullying Behaviour

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
- trying 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 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 is not exhaustive and other behaviours which fit with the definition may be considered bullying behaviour.

Motivations behind Bullying Behaviour

These include, but are not limited to:

- 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 use the following language:

- **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.

Section 6 – Preventative Measures

The focus for all of the school's anti-bullying work will be on prevention and we will ensure that the following actions are encouraged with the aim of preventing bullying and creating a safe learning environment.

These actions include:

- Raising awareness and understanding of the positive behaviour expectations, as set out in the Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy
- Promoting age-appropriate anti-bullying messages through the curriculum and PDMU
- Addressing issues such as the various forms of bullying, including the how and why it can happen
- Involvement in meaningful and supportive shared education projects, supporting pupils to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity
- Actively promoting positive emotional health and wellbeing
- Participating in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities
- Engaging in key national and regional campaigns
- Facilitating the School Council to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messaging within the school
- Developing effective strategies for playground management e.g. training for supervisors, zoning of playgrounds, inclusion of specific resources 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.
- Developing effective strategies for the management of unstructured times
- Provision and promotion of extra- and co-curricular activities, aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks

While many of the measures outlined above will support the development of an anti-bullying culture, we can further build upon this by focusing specifically on the journey to and from school. This includes:

- Developing a culture where pupils take pride in our school and are viewed as ambassadors for our school within the community. This includes regular reminders of the positive behaviour expectations of pupils whilst travelling to and from school.
- Empowering pupils to challenge inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour of their peers during the journey to and from school.
- Appropriate deployment of staff to support the transition from school day to journey home

We will raise awareness of the nature and impact of online bullying and support their pupils to make use of the internet in a safe, responsible and respectful way. This may include:

- Addressing key themes of online behaviour and risk through PDMU, including understanding how to respond to harm and the consequences of inappropriate use.
- Participating in Anti-Bullying Week activities.
- Engaging 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.
- Participating in annual Safer Internet Day and promotion of key messages throughout the year.
- Developing and implementing of robust and appropriate policies in related areas (e.g. Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy)

Given the ever-changing nature of technology, we will continue to monitor our policies and key messages, making changes when necessary.

Section 7 – Responsibility

Everyone in the school community, including pupils, their parents/carers and the staff of the school is 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

Section 8 – Reporting a Bullying Concern

Pupils Reporting a Concern

If a child has a concern about a potential bullying situation, they will have the opportunity to discuss this with a member of staff that they trust. Children can raise concerns with any member of staff, including teaching and non-teaching staff, in the following ways:

- Verbally- talking to a member of staff
- By writing a note to a member of staff
- By sending an email to a member of staff or to a dedicated email address
- By posting a comment in a ‘worry box’

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, 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.

Parents/Carers Reporting a Concern

Parents and carers also have a responsibility to raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour with the school at the earliest opportunity. They should encourage their children to react appropriately to bullying behaviour rather than doing anything to retaliate or to ‘hit back’.

The following process for reporting bullying concerns should be followed:

- 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 by the class teacher to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to 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 usually involves making a formal, written complaint to the Chair of the Board of Governors.

While the majority of reports of bullying concerns will come from pupils and their parents/carers, we are open to receiving concerns from anyone.

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, we will not disclose any information about action taken in relation to a pupil to anyone other than the pupil and his/her parents/carers.

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 school's 'Bullying Concern Assessment Form' (see Appendix 1), the member of staff responsible shall:

- Clarify facts and perceptions
- Check records
- 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
- Track, monitor and record effectiveness of interventions
- Review outcome of interventions
- Select and implement further intentions 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. Again, information regarding any action taken will not be disclosed to anyone other than that pupil and his/her parents/carers.

Section 10 – Recording

As set out in the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016, we are aware of the need to maintain a record of all incidents of bullying and alleged bullying behaviour. 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 are kept in a locked filing cabinet. These records will be restricted and only provided to those members of school staff with a legitimate need to 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 Records Management 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 are committed to ensuring that staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school's ongoing CPD/PRSD provisions. CPD records are kept and updated regularly. The impact of any training given will be reflected in both the policy and its procedures.

We will ensure that opportunities for safeguarding training are afforded to Governors and all staff within the school.

Section 12 – 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 shall be reviewed as required, in consultation with pupils and their parents/carers, on or before December 2024.

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:

- Promoting 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

Appendix

1