
OUR LADY OF LOURDES PS ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

This policy is informed and guided by current legislation and DE Guidance listed below:

Health and Safety at Work NI Order 1978

The Human Rights Act 1998

The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995

The Education (Northern Ireland) Order (1998) Article 3 - see DE 1998/25

Welfare and Protection of Pupils Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003, - see DE Circular Number 2003/13

The Education (2006) Order (Commencement No. 2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2007 - see DE 2007/20

The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010

Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection, DE, 1999

Pastoral Care in Schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour, DE, 2001

The Board of Governors and Principal are required to consult with all stakeholders (pupils, parents and staff) regarding positive behaviour and bullying prevention measures which must be in place.

Definition

The legal definition of bullying for Northern Ireland as outlined in the 2016 Act is:

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 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.*

Guiding Principles

At Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School, the problem of bullying will always be treated with the greatest seriousness. Bullying in whatever form it is manifested is totally unacceptable and every effort will be made to resolve any problems that are identified.

- Every pupil has the right to a safe school and the responsibility to help stop bullying.
- Every Parent has the right to have his/her concerns listened to sensitively and taken seriously, and the responsibility to work with the school to resolve the problem.

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- Every teacher has the right to effective support in maintaining safe and supportive classrooms, and the responsibility to ensure that all concerns are acted upon swiftly and effectively.

All members of our school community, pupils, parents and staff:

- have a right to learn and work in a safe and supportive environment, free from intimidation and fear;
- will be mutually respectful of everyone's right to be safe and will behave in ways which keep everyone else both emotionally and physically safe;
- have a responsibility to speak up when there is a bullying concern, safe in the knowledge that their concerns will be listened to and responded to with sensitivity;
- will work together actively to promote and sustain a strong anti-bullying culture within the school; and
- will work collaboratively to promote the welfare and wellbeing of all its members.

When bullying concerns are identified the school will refer to the behaviour and not the pupil. The well-being and welfare needs of the pupils are paramount, whether they are pupils *displaying bullying behaviour* or pupils *experiencing bullying behaviour*. The school will work in a restorative and solution focused way to achieve the necessary change.

Pupils who are targeted will be listened to and pupils who display bullying behaviour will be listened to.

What is Bullying?

If we are to deal with bullying effectively, it is essential that we have a shared understanding of what bullying is.

'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.' (N.I. Anti-Bullying Forum)

Types of Bullying Behaviour

Types of unacceptable anti-social behaviours which infringe everyone's right to be safe include:

1. **physical:** jostling, hitting, pushing, kicking, spitting, (in certain circumstances this may cause injuries such as bruises, broken bones, cuts or burns);
2. **verbal:** name-calling, insults, teasing, belittling abilities or achievements, scaring, humiliating or affecting pupil self-esteem, jokes, threats, racist remarks, ridiculing (appearance, way of speaking, personal mannerisms), spreading rumours, intentionally causing distress or anxiety; and
3. **indirect:** isolation, omission, refusal to work with/talk to/play with/help others, interfering with personal property, writing offensive notes or graffiti, *cyber-bullying.

*Cyber-bullying can be defined as the use of Information and Communications Technology (IT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else. It includes deliberate abuses which happen outside school, but which impinge upon or affect pupils and is likely to have a detrimental effect on pupils' education at the school.

All unacceptable behaviour will be sanctioned in line with the Pastoral Care and Behaviour Policy's procedures.

Anyone may be targeted for bullying; such bullying can be motivated by a range of factors, including: disability; race; religion; culture; gender; or perceived sexual orientation.

All forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying, can be very damaging. Remember, what one person may think is just a joke, may be very upsetting for someone else.

The Process of Participation and on-going Consultation

- As part of the regular development planning process parents, pupils, staff and governors are involved in a survey of school life every third year. The results of these surveys are analysed and feedback is provided to all participants.
- The results of these surveys are used to inform development priorities and identify professional development requirements.
- Pupil's views are sought e.g. members of the combined School and Eco Council.
- Pupils have regular opportunities to participate in class discussion to negotiate and agree a Code of Conduct for positive behaviour.
- Awareness raising programmes such as Curriculum Meetings are held. Newsheets and other publications such as the Prospectus promote an anti-bullying agenda.
- There is a formal review/update of the policy (no more than every four years or as required) which is ratified by the Board of Governors at one of their meetings.

Preventative Measures

The school community works together to prevent bullying occurring by promoting and sustaining a robust anti-bullying culture through effective whole school relationships. Everyone should work together to combat and, hopefully in time, eradicate bullying. To this end the school proactively teaches children how to develop healthy relationships and makes them aware of the forms of bullying, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to deal with such incidents. This will be done through:

- school assemblies which will raise awareness of bullying issues and provide a whole school focus for bullying;
- within the curriculum the school will raise the awareness of the nature of bullying through inclusion in PDMU, Religious Education, **Circle Time and other subject areas, as appropriate, in an attempt to eliminate such behaviour;
- Anti-Bullying Week (usually November) will focus classes on the issues through discussion, writing, drama, poster design, PSHE, etc.;

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- school wide supervision and effective, consistent behaviour management by all staff;
 - supervising pupils leaving the school grounds in the afternoon;
 - supervising pupils while they are in the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff;
 - supervising pupils while they are receiving educational provision arranged on behalf of the school and provided elsewhere than on the premises of the school;
 - anti-bullying code of conduct posters displayed throughout the school;
 - positive relationships developed (teacher-pupil, pupil-pupil and teacher-parents);
 - emphasise the importance that *pupils don't have to be friends but have to be friendly*;
 - a determination that bullying will not be tolerated and that incidents will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly;
 - classroom activities and strategies aimed at creating a climate where bullying becomes unacceptable amongst the children themselves;
 - clear procedures for staff, pupils and parents as to how concerns regarding alleged bullying should be handled;
 - whole school strategies to be employed in dealing with specific bullying incidents;
 - support for children who have experienced bullying behaviour;
 - support for children who are displaying bullying behaviour aimed at helping them to recognise and modify their unacceptable behaviour;
 - robust monitoring and follow up arrangements to assess the effectiveness of any and all interventions; and
 - regular school audits to assess the effectiveness of the current anti-bullying policy.

****Circle Time** is when children sit in a circle with their teacher and engage in a programme of activities to challenge and motivate the class or group to promote positive relationships. Activities include a wide range of co-operative games, rounds, drama strategies and discussions in which children take turns to listen to one another.

Responsibilities of all the Stakeholders

The Board of Governors ensures that the bullying policy is regularly reviewed, that appropriate measures are in place to prevent bullying and that relevant records are kept. To ensure that bullying behaviour is prevented, all members of the school community (i.e. pupils, parents and staff) are expected to play their part.

-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 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;

- be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying;
- listen to children who have been targeted, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them;
- report suspected cases of bullying to a member of SMT;
- listen sensitively to anyone who has experienced bullying behaviours, take what is said seriously, providing reassurance that appropriate action will be taken;
- follow up on any report by a parent about bullying, and report back promptly and fully on the action which has been taken; and
- deal with observed and reported instances of bullying promptly and effectively, in accordance with agreed procedures.

-Pupils

We expect our pupils to:

- refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying behaviour, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity;
- intervene and support any person who is experiencing bullying behaviours, unless it is unsafe to do so;
- report any concerns or instances of bullying, witnessed or suspected, to a member of staff, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances; and
- not suffer in silence if they are someone experiencing bullying behaviour, 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;
- advising their children to report any bullying to their class teacher or another member of staff, and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other pupils;
- advising their children not to retaliate to any form of bullying;
- being sympathetic and supportive towards their children, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken;
- informing the school of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved; and
- co-operating with the school, if their child is involved in a bullying concern, to resolve the difficulty in a way which stops the behaviour recurring and meets the needs of all the children.

Procedures for staff dealing with suspected Bullying

1. Each member of staff, whether teacher, supervisor, ancillary or administrative, has a duty of care to the children. Consequently, if a child, parent or other individual makes an allegation of bullying it must be taken seriously.

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2. Involving bystanders is a very important aspect of tackling bullying because there are always people who know what is going on. Children will be made aware that **Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School is a 'telling school'**; pupils are encouraged to report incidents so that even if the children who have experienced bullying behaviour are too frightened to say anything the child who is displaying bullying behaviour will know he/she cannot get away with abusive behaviour.
 3. At Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School, we use a two-stage process. All problems should be reported to the class teacher who will decide whether a Stage One or Stage Two approach will be most appropriate:

Stage One

This approach is best suited for those issues that can best be resolved informally by the class teacher. They are usually single, one-off incidents. However, we are aware that bullying can happen anywhere, and we strongly believe that wherever pupils are they have the right to be safe.

If teacher is dealing with an incident, which is believed to be a one-off and not classed as bullying the teacher should:

- talk to the children involved;
- talk with their parents, if appropriate;
- discuss the incident with the Principal; and
- keep a simple written record in the class file.

Stage Two

This approach is best suited for more serious one-off, pre-meditated or persistent issues. Such incidents will be investigated and resolved by the Principal, SENCO, or senior member of staff. The member of staff should:

- talk to the children;
- on the basis of evidence, complete page 1 of the 'Bullying Concern Assessment Form' (Appendix 1) to determine:
 - whether bullying behaviour has or has not occurred;
 - the type of bullying;
 - the motivation behind the bullying; and
 - the details of what happened.
- use the "effective responses to bullying" outlined on pages 8 and 9 of this policy or in the NIABF's guidance document "Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour" to identify appropriate support interventions for resolving issues and repairing relationships;
- talk with the children's parents;
- monitor the situation and contact the parents two weeks later to ensure the matter is resolved; and
- keep a written record of the incident, investigation and outcomes using the 'Bullying Concern Assessment Form'; a copy passed to the Principal to be held in the anti-bullying file. The contents of this file will be confidential and the file will be stored securely.

If the incident is being dealt with by the Principal or other senior member of staff, the class teachers of any children directly involved must be informed of the issue and how it is being handled.

It should be recognised that bullying may be going on without the person who is being bullied reporting it to those in authority. Members of staff should therefore be on the lookout for specific behaviour patterns that might indicate that bullying is occurring.

Signs of bullying might include:

- unwillingness to come to school;
- withdrawn, isolated behaviour;
- persistently complaining about missing possessions;
- refusal to talk about the problem;
- being easily distressed;
- standard of work falling;
- rate of progress much less than expected;
- reluctance to talk about problems;
- bedwetting; or
- damaged or incomplete work.

Staff dealing with a bullying incident should:

- acknowledge that the bullying is now out in the open and can be dealt with;
- support the pupil being bullied;
- identify what has happened;
- stop the immediate bullying;
- avoid recriminations;
- help the child who is engaging in bullying behaviours to change his or her behaviour; and
- if appropriate, make the peer group aware and ask them to help the child being bullied. This would need to be handled with great sensitivity.

The staff at Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School will:

- endeavour to notice when a pupil is isolated and sad;
- look for the reasons for this;
- never see it as just play-fighting, name-calling, a bit of fun or part of growing up;
- not tell the victim to ignore it, to sort it out themselves or to hit back;
- work with the perpetrator to stop the offending behaviour; and
- model appropriate behaviour ourselves.

Incidents of persistent or significant bullying should be discussed with the teacher receiving the class the following year; it is important that teachers are aware of previous incidents, in order to inform future judgements.

Effective Responses to Bullying

A number of different strategies will be used depending upon the nature of the concern. Appropriate Intervention strategies will be chosen from the Intervention Tables within the NIABF guidance document "Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour" and from the following approaches traditionally used effectively at Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School:

a) **The No Punishment/Robust Monitoring Approach.** This will be used only at the early stages. The aim is to sort out the problem for the pupil experiencing bullying behaviour rather than to punish the pupil displaying bullying behaviour. This overcomes the typical bullying cycle where a pupil is further targeted for getting the pupil displaying bullying behaviour into trouble. Regular reviews of the situation are inbuilt, and the targeted pupil is given a simple and unobtrusive means of reporting to the teacher/ Principal regarding progress.

This can be a successful method in the majority of cases as in most cases the pupils displaying bullying behaviour do not appreciate the effect their behaviour is having and once this is understood, or indeed once they see that the situation is being taken seriously and regularly monitored, the problem stops.

b) **Involving Parents.** In all but the most minor of cases parents will be informed immediately if their child is experiencing bullying behaviour or involved in displaying bullying behaviour. Parents are asked to remember that even serious bullying issues can sound trivial when reported; what one person may think is just a joke, may be very upsetting for someone else.

If the problem persists the parents of the pupil displaying bullying behaviour will be asked to be involved in discussing the problem with school staff and in particular in agreeing a planned approach, setting out strategies, possible sanctions, and dates for review.

c) **Peer Support.** This involves identifying a small circle of friends who will be supportive to the pupil experiencing bullying behaviour and who will discreetly inform the class teacher if the pupil continues to be targeted. This strategy will not be appropriate in all incidents and will in any event only be used after the parents of the targeted pupil have given their consent. The targeted pupil will be centrally involved in identifying children who might be part of the circle of friends.

d) **Redirection:** Identifying activities, where possible, to redirect the energies of the pupil, displaying bullying behaviour, to more productive and social activities.

e) **External Support.** Involving the Education Welfare Officer, CIDS Team or other support services in working directly with the pupil displaying bullying behaviour and his/her family.

f) **Temporary Exclusion.** This would be used when other strategies had been tried or where the severity and significance of the incident was deemed to merit this robust approach.

g) **Permanent Exclusion.** Permanent exclusion would be used as an action of last resort. All other approaches would have had to have been exhausted, any previous incidents would be taken into account or the incident would have to be considered to have been extreme, resulting in considerable impact on individuals and warranting such an action.

Classroom Strategies

All teachers should be aware of the problem of bullying and of their role in cultivating a climate where bullying will not be tolerated by on looking children. To this end a number of classroom activities can be employed as part of the ongoing work in PDMU. This might include:

drama and role-play; debate; Circle Time (for general discussion of bullying, not to be used for dealing with specific incidents); video and discussion; literature; social stories; poetry and art.

In the playground

Playground buddies are available in the playground. Playground rules are displayed and all staff and children will be encouraged to look out for anyone on their own and to include them in their activities.

Advice for pupils who are experiencing bullying behaviour or who have witnessed someone experiencing bullying behaviour is to: tell parents; tell a teacher or other member of staff; tell the Principal or Vice-Principal; tell a friend and/or tell a playground buddy.

Never stay quiet and make sure someone knows.

In Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School, it is:

Cool to Tell.

If you see anyone else being bullied at school, please tell someone about it.

Cool to Include.

People who are being bullied often feel alone so if you can help someone who is so unhappy please do so.

Not Cool to Bully.

We take bullying seriously. It will be sorted out.

Advice to Parents

If you feel your child is being bullied:

DON'T - Panic or ignore the problem and hope it will go away.

DO - Tell the class teacher or Principal. Be prepared to work with the school to resolve the problem. Keep the school informed if the bullying does not immediately stop or if at a later date it begins again.

Appendix 1

Bullying Concern Assessment Form	
<p>Part 1: Assessment of Concern. Date: _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Bullying is the repeated (but not limited to) use of power by one or more pupils intentionally to hurt, harm or adversely affect the rights and needs of another individual pupil or group of pupils.</i></p>	
<p>Pupil(s) alleged to be experiencing bullying</p>	<p>Pupil(s) alleged to have displayed bullying behaviour</p>
<p>Type of incident:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Physical bullying</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Verbal bullying</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Indirect bullying</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Written</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Electronic</p> <p style="margin-left: 20px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Omission</p>	<p>Motivation (if applicable):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Disability</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Racist <input type="checkbox"/> Age</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sectarian <input type="checkbox"/> Not Known</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</p>
<p>Is this bullying or anti-social behaviour?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are these behaviours repetitive/persistent?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Is the behaviour intentional; causing physical or emotional harm?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Is there a power-imbalance?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Are the behaviours targeted towards a specific individual/group?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Does the behaviour involve omission (may not always be present)?</p> <p>In light of the above does this meet the definition of bullying? _____</p>	
<p>Are there previous records involving any of these pupils?</p>	
<p>Details of the incident; including location, witnesses, evidence:</p>	

Part 2: Details of the interventions to be deployed.	
The pupil(s) who have experienced bullying behaviour.	The pupil(s) who have displayed bullying behaviour
Have parents of the children been informed? (If not, why not?)	
Monitoring arrangements:	
Review of bullying concern and actions (two weeks later):	
Further Review (if required) Date: _____	