



ADDRESSING BULLYING POLICY

“Learning every day in a fun and Safe way”

St. MacNissis Primary School Addressing-Bullying Policy.

It is a duty placed on Boards of Governors in Northern Ireland, to ensure the school has an effective Addressing Bullying Policy and practices aligned to the Addressing Bullying in Schools (NI) Act 2016 which commenced in schools September 2021. St. MacNissis's Primary School, 'Addressing Bullying Policy' takes account of key legislation and is informed by DE Guidance, EA and CCMS publications.

Introduction

At St. MacNissis's we acknowledge that bullying type behaviour exists in schools and wider society and can impact on the lives, mental health, and well-being of those involved. This policy aims to help create, maintain, and embed a culture where everyone agrees that bullying type behaviour is unacceptable. We believe that safeguarding our pupils is paramount and the responsibility of all stakeholders. We promote a safe, inclusive, and relational school environment where concerns of bullying type behaviour may be shared and addressed, and where pupils are supported within the context of Article 19 Measures to Prevent Bullying, Education (NI) 2003 and the 2016 Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (N.I.)

St MacNissis's Primary School is a Catholic school where we strive to make education a shared experience between all interested parties in the community. At St MacNissis's our policy is to develop, in our children, the capacity to become self-confident, contributing members of society who will have acquired a reasoned set of values, attitudes and beliefs.

St MacNissis's is committed to developing each child's full potential to become a positive contributor to society in their adult life. We strive to achieve this by working in partnership with the child, their parents and the wider community, to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding truly reflecting Catholic values.

In order to develop these qualities in our children we aim to:

- create a happy, stimulating and secure environment for each child.
- offer a well-structured and balanced curriculum, within the requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum, which meets the needs of the individual child.
- ensure the individual child feels a sense of self-worth and encourage the development of confidence and self-esteem.
- develop an awareness of the need of self-discipline, which leads to respect for other people and sensitivity towards them.

- encourage the children to acquire positive attitudes towards others of differing religious beliefs and an understanding of the wider world in which we live.
- develop a genuine partnership between the home, church and the school.

It is within the context of these specific aims that a policy on bullying has been formulated.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

‘The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (N.I.) 2016’ provides schools with a legal definition which is used by all schools to assess reported concerns of bullying type behaviour.

“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.*

Although incidents usually involve **repetition**, a **one-off incident** may be classified as bullying type behaviour through consideration of the following criteria.

- severity and significance of the incident
- evidence of pre-meditation
- psychological/physical impact of the incident on the individuals and/or wider school community
- previous relationship(s) between those involved.
- any previous incident(s) involving the individuals.

A **one-off electronic communication** can constitute bullying type behaviour through repeated viewing and unwanted sharing of a post.

Electronic Communication

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act enables school to take steps to help prevent and address online bullying type behaviour involving registered pupils during term time. We acknowledge that negative online behaviour occurring either in or out of school hours, can harm a pupil’s education and emotional well-being, and we will support affected individuals. At St.MacNissi’s Primary School we are committed to supporting our pupils to use the internet safely, responsibly, and respectfully.

At St MacNissi’s we follow guidance from NIABF and in doing so we are keen to avoid labelling individual children and would describe a situation as, e.g. ‘a bullying incident was reported on (date) where (named child) is alleged to have displayed bullying behaviour towards (named child).’

Bullying is an emotive issue therefore it is essential that we use supportive, understanding language when discussing these matters. NIABF recommends that schools also use the terms:-

- **Victim:** The term victim is problematic – it can mean different things to different people. Because of this we will use the term, 'child who has been bullied', or 'target of bullying'.
- **Bully:** The term bully is problematic – it implies focus on the child's self, rather than the behaviour he or she is displaying. Because of this we will use the term 'child who is displaying bullying behaviour'.

FORMS OF BULLYING

Bullying can take many different forms and is behaviour that intentionally and persistently causes distress to others.

<p><u>PHYSICAL BULLYING</u></p> <p>e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> hitting; pushing; kicking; tripping; spitting; hair pulling; throwing things; interfering with another's property by stealing/hiding/ damaging / intruding upon it; <input type="checkbox"/> extortion / threatening demands for money or other items <input type="checkbox"/> writing or drawing offensive notes / graffiti about another. 	<p><u>VERBAL BULLYING</u></p> <p>e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> name calling; insulting or offensive remarks; accusing; taunting; put downs. <input type="checkbox"/> ridiculing another's appearance/way of speaking/disability/personal mannerisms/race/colour/religion; <input type="checkbox"/> humiliating another publicly. <input type="checkbox"/> spreading malicious or nasty rumours; threatening; intimidation; mocking; sarcasm.
<p><u>EMOTIONAL BULLYING</u></p> <p>e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> excluding/shunning others from group activity/social setting or play; <input type="checkbox"/> belittling another's abilities or achievements; <input type="checkbox"/> menacing looks/stares; <input type="checkbox"/> rude signs or gestures 	<p><u>CYBER BULLYING</u></p> <p>e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> misuse of e-mails, images, text, blogs, tweets, forums and chat rooms to hurt /embarrass /demean /harass /provoke or humiliate another using perceived anonymity. <input type="checkbox"/> misuse of mobile phones by text messaging /calls or images – again to hurt /embarrass /demean/harass/provoke or humiliate another using perceived anonymity. <input type="checkbox"/> unauthorised publication or manipulation of private information; impersonation

STRATEGIES TO PREVENT OR REDUCE BULLYING

At St MacNissi's Primary School we take the view that bullying behaviour, whatever form it may take, is totally unacceptable. A position approach to discipline and the pastoral care of pupils - emphasising, praising and rewarding good behaviour - is adopted throughout the school. Children are encouraged to behave in an appropriate manner, relating to others with courtesy and respect. Our school acknowledges various motivations for bullying type behaviour which we address through our preventative curriculum and responsive approaches.

Proactive Strategies to ensure awareness is raised.

- ✓ Promoting school ethos at all times (We are a **TELLING / LISTENING / RESPONDING school**).
- ✓ Raising awareness of Rights and Responsibilities.
- ✓ Recognising and rewarding good behaviour.
- ✓ Using creative learning to enhance social and emotional skills.
- ✓ Ensuring that all staff (teaching and non-teaching), parents and pupils and all members of the school community are aware of the school's Positive Behaviour Policy.
- ✓ School assemblies – addressing Bullying and providing Anti-Bullying Strategies.
- ✓ Vigilant supervision – playground / general school environment.
- ✓ Consultation with School Council.
- ✓ Use of PDMU lessons / PATHS programme / Circle time/ Tools for Life programme /Love is for Life / RSE / Grow in Love.
- ✓ Promotion of Playground Buddies
- ✓ Good parental communication.
- ✓ Awareness raising e.g. P1 Parent Induction meetings, class information meetings, School Policies Booklet issued, newsletters, website.
- ✓ Awareness of national Anti-Bullying Week (in November each year).
- ✓ Use of outside agencies – NSPCC, Child line, PSNI, Behaviour Support Team.
- ✓ Staff training / effective communication.
- ✓ Formulation (involving all stakeholders) and communication of school rules concerning Positive Behaviour expectations (e.g. classroom rules, posters, displays, incentives, pupil awards, school assemblies, workshops)
- ✓ School Curriculum which addresses prejudice, discrimination and Social/Emotional Learning (PDMU)

- ✓ School wide supervision and effective, consistent behaviour management by all staff
- ✓ Opportunities for developing Positive Peer Relationships (Circle time strategies and training provided re. Peer Support/Playground Buddies and Class/School Council).

Children are encouraged to behave in an appropriate manner, relating to others with courtesy and respect:

- through direct teaching in the classroom
- through medium of the formal curriculum, especially Religious Education
- through morning assemblies
- by the manner in which teachers relate to pupils in their classes and throughout the school

Teachers in the school expect a high standard of behaviour from their pupils and this expectation is transmitted to pupils in the ways mentioned above

Rights and Responsibilities

In St. MacNissi's, we believe that all members of our school community have the right to be educated in a safe, supportive, learning environment. We acknowledge that all members of our community have a role to play and responsibility to prevent and address bullying type behaviour.

- 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 (whether bully or targeted pupil) need to be separated from their behaviour.
- When bullying 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 encouraged to accept responsibility and change their behaviour.
- Staff will receive awareness-raising training regarding bullying prevention including effective, appropriate strategies for intervention.
- Where a concern arises, staff will receive ongoing support from Senior Managers with Pastoral responsibility.
- Parents will be made aware of our school's practice to prevent and to respond to concerns through parent information meetings, consultation processes and where necessary, their active participation in partnership with the school to resolve concerns involving their child.

Signs of stress in pupils which may indicate bullying:

- ✓ Child's unwillingness to attend school / lateness / erratic attendance.
 - ✓ Avoidance, hanging back from playground or staying late at school.
 - ✓ Deterioration of work or mislaid books, money, equipment or belongings / under achievement.
 - ✓ Spurious illness / non-specific pains, headaches, tummy upsets, withdrawn, loss of appetite.
 - ✓ Nail biting / flinching / jumpiness / forgetfulness / distractibility.
 - ✓ Impulsive hitting out / out of character temper, flare up or restlessness / sudden aggressiveness.
 - ✓ Stresses manifested at home – bed wetting / insomnia / nightmares / restlessness and irritability.
 - ✓ Reluctance to sit beside or near certain pupils / hesitant to walk home.
- (NB. These behaviours may also be symptomatic of problems other than bullying)

In St. MacNissi's we therefore take a proactive approach to dealing with reported incidents of bullying within school,

All members of staff are vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring, and will take immediate steps to stop it happening, to protect and reassure the child who has been bullied and to work with the child who is displaying bullying behaviour.

Any complaint by a parent that their child is, or may be, bullied will be fully investigated by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection (Mr. J. McAuley) or in his absence the Deputy Designated Teachers (Mrs. Mitchell / Mrs. Burns). A parent making a complaint about bullying will have a personal response from the Designated Teacher within one day of making the complaint, indicating the stage at which the investigation is, and the action that may be taken. Parents of both the victim and the bully will be contacted immediately bullying behaviour has been identified.

Resolution in dealing with the child who is displaying bullying behaviour will depend on the seriousness of the case. The child who is displaying bullying behaviour will be carefully monitored until staff are satisfied that the problem has stopped. **If a child who is displaying bullying behaviour persists then the designated teacher will instigate Child Protection procedures.**

Pupils Reporting a Concern:

Pupils may report bullying type concerns in the following ways:

- Verbally sharing with a member of staff.
- By writing a note to a member of staff.
- Placing a concern in the 'Worry Box'.

All pupils are encouraged to share concerns regarding socially unacceptable or bullying type behaviour that they experience, display or witness. They should not view this as 'telling' but rather 'talking about concerns' with the emphasis on 'getting help'.

- Children are encouraged to speak out about bullying where it does occur, not only when they, themselves are the child who has been bullied, but also when they may have witnessed bullying taking place. We assure children that any incident that is brought to our attention will be dealt with. Children who have been bullied will be given help, advice and support and those children involved in bullying will be encouraged to modify their future behaviour.

We work very hard to ensure that the relationship between teachers and children is characterised by mutual respect and trust so that children feel able to tell teachers if they are being bullied. We also encourage pupils to tell their parents if they are children who has been bullied.

Steps are taken to ensure that children are adequately supervised by staff while they are in school - in the classroom, at play during mid-morning break or lunchtimes and for a short period after the school day finishes. Other action taken will usually include a 'team approach' to protect the victim by ensuring that another child or small group of children befriends and supports the child who has been bullied during the school day.

DEALING WITH INCIDENTS OF BULLYING (See Appendix 1)

Please note in the first instance teaching and support staff including classroom assistants, lunchtime supervisors, office staff etc should verbally report any concerns directly to the child's class teacher as soon as an incident has occurred.

Parents/Guardians or others Reporting a Concern:

In the first instance, parents/carers or others report concerns to their child's class teacher in one of the following ways:

- Sending an email into school 'briefly' outlining the nature of the concern and requesting a telephone call back from the teacher.
- By writing a note to their child's class teacher.

Please note, we do not advise parents to send confidential information regarding concerns of bullying type behaviour to the general school email address.

Should parents/guardians continue to have concerns following contact with the class teacher contact can be made with Principal / Vice Principal.

LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

St MacNissi's 'Anti-Bullying Policy' is set in the context of our Pastoral Care Programme and reflects our Mission Statement. It links with other policies such as:

- ✓ Safeguarding & Child Protection
- ✓ Pastoral Care
- ✓ Positive Behaviour
- ✓ Special Educational Needs
- ✓ Health & Safety Curricular Policies.
- ✓ Internet Safety Policy.
- ✓ Staff Code of Conduct Policy.

USE OF MOBILE PHONES

- All mobile phones should be turned off during the school day.
- If a parent needs to contact a pupil, during the school day, this can be done by contacting the school secretary.
- Should the mobile phone be used during the school day it will be confiscated and returned to the parent of the child.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Professional Development of Staff

In St.MacNissi's Primary School we recognise the need for effective, updated, and ongoing training for all staff within our preventative measures. As such, we are committed to:

- ensuring that all staff and Governors complete relevant Safeguarding, Child Protection, SEND and Addressing Bullying in Schools training, including those provided by the Education Authority.
- reviewing and amending the content of the Addressing Bullying Policy following training, complex case review or as directed by Department of Education.
- keeping and regularly updating continued professional development records.

This policy was formulated by SMT in consultation with school Governors, staff, pupils and parents. It has been approved by the Board of Governors and it is the intention of the staff to review and update it regularly.

It is important to remember that staff, pupils and parents all have an active part to play and have a responsibility to ensure an effective implementation and maintenance of this policy.

Monitoring and Review of Policy

The Act places responsibility on the Board of Governors, in consultation with the principal, to monitor the effectiveness of the Addressing Bullying Policy. To this end, the Board of Governors will:

- maintain a standing item on the agenda, under Safeguarding, where a report on bullying type behaviour is presented by the principal.
- appoint a lead Governor to liaise with the principal.
- minute the number of incidents including methods, motivations and how they were addressed.
- identify trends and patterns to inform future policy and practice development and review.
- record written responses to relevant pupils, parents/carers when appropriate.

The Addressing Bullying Policy will be reviewed in consultation with all school community stakeholders:

- at intervals of no less than four years or
- following any complex incident which highlights the need for such a review,
- when reviewing other associated policies, such as the Safeguarding Policy and the Positive Behaviour Policy
- in response to a recommendation by the Education and Training Inspectorate
- following new guidance as directed by the Department of Education.

A copy of this policy is available online at:-

www.saintmacnissis.com.

Parents/carers can also request a hard copy by contacting the school office on:-

[028 90342166](tel:02890342166).

CONCLUSION

The school can, and does, take action to reduce bullying when it occurs but the school cannot do it alone. Parents also have a very important role to play. Early signs of distress in pupils will very often manifest themselves at home - deterioration of work, spurious illness, isolation, the desire to remain with adults, reluctance to go to school, may be outward signs of bullying.

We encourage parents to contact the school at once if they think their child is being bullied. Each child at St MacNissi's Primary School has an inalienable right to feel safe and secure while at school. As a school, we are committed to upholding that right for all.

USEFUL WEBSITES & TELEPHONE NUMBERS

- ✓ **Department of Education www.deni.gov.uk**
- ✓ **Northern Ireland Anti Bullying Forum www.niabf.org.uk**
- ✓ **www.thinkuknow.org**

APPENDIX 1:-

Procedure Flow Line for dealing with incidents of Bullying in school.

STAGE 1

All staff will:

- ✓ Listen to concerns when reported.
- ✓ Identify those involved in the bullying incident.

Give each pupil the opportunity to talk. The discussion will focus on finding a solution and stopping the bullying from recurring.

- ✓ Staff will remain neutral and avoid direct, closed questions.
- ✓ The pupils are helped to find their own solution to their personal disagreement and discuss how their proposals will be put into action.
- ✓ Other appropriate members of staff will be informed e.g., Vice-Principal, Principal.
- ✓ Incidents will be recorded as appropriate.
- ✓ A follow-up meeting/discussion is useful to find out whether the solution has been effective or not.

STAGE 2

If the problem is not resolved staff will:

- ✓ Implement procedures within the hierarchy of sanctions (refer to Positive Behaviour Policy).
 - ✓ Continue to monitor the situation and follow procedures for reporting a significant/repeated/or serious one-off incident of bullying as outlined above.
 - ✓ Record details as appropriate.
 - ✓ Contact parents, if necessary, at any stage of the procedures, depending on the seriousness of the bullying e.g., phone call, letter, or request for interview by class teacher / Vice Principal / Principal.
 - ✓ Contact outside network of support at any stage of the procedures e.g., Education Welfare Officer, Behaviour Support Team.
- a) Incident Reported – Completion of Anti-Bullying Complaint form.
 - b) The child who is displaying bullying behaviour and the child who has been bullied will be counselled separately by staff involved.
 - c) Strategies employed to resolve the issue including Circle Time.

- d) Sanctions applied as necessary.
- e) Parents/Guardians of the **child who is displaying bullying behaviour** will be contacted (letter or phone call). Parents of the **child who has been bullied** will be informed if they are not already aware of the incident.
- f) The incident will be revisited by the teacher or Designated Teacher (Principal:- Mr J. McAuley) or in his absence the Deputy Designated Teachers (Vice-Principal Mrs. R. Mitchell and SENCO Mrs Burns.) to ensure that it has been resolved satisfactorily.

2 If incidents continue

- a. Both sets of parents are asked to see the Principal.
- b. Strategy developed with the consent of both sets of parents.

3 If incidents still continue

- a. Parents contacted again.
- b. Further counselling (additional external help may be sought for the **child who is displaying bullying behaviour** and the **child who has been bullied**)

4 If incidents still continue

- a. Exclusion procedures (in line with Employing Authority guidance) may begin.