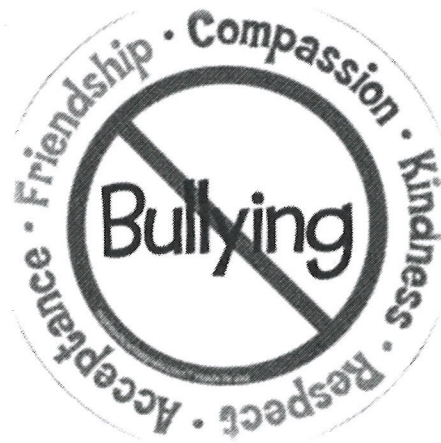




Strandtown
Primary School

STRANDTOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL

ADDRESSING BULLYING POLICY



October 2022

Section 1 – Introduction and Statement

We believe that each child has a right to be safe, valued and respected as individuals without fear of being bullied. We believe a clear code of conduct, as outlined in our Positive Behaviour Policy, which is understood and accepted by all, helps us to achieve and maintain good standards of behaviour so that effective teaching and learning takes place. This policy has been constructed with due consideration and compliance to the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016.

The Addressing Bullying Policy reflects the school's aims with a view to maintaining a safe, secure and happy environment for all children and staff, adopting our school mantra **Ready, Respectful and Safe**. We aim to encourage a whole school approach to bullying to ensure that effective learning and teaching takes place for all. We aim to prevent bullying in any form and to have a consistent approach in dealing with incidents of bullying quickly and effectively.

We believe that every child and young person should be celebrated in their diversity. We are committed to a preventative, responsive and restorative addressing bullying ethos across the whole school.

Reports/allegations of bullying will be taken seriously, parents and pupils will be listened to and a prompt investigation will follow to determine the exact nature of the incidents. 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.

Parents will remain informed and should allow a reasonable time frame for school staff to thoroughly investigate the issue.

Strandtown actively promotes positive relations among all members of the school community. 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.

We will ensure that all members of the school community are aware of this policy.

Section 2 – Context

This policy has been informed by the following key legislative and policy documents:

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 from 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 ALC)
- * Requires that the policy be updated at least every four years.

The key points to note from The Education and Libraries Order (NI) 2003, requires the Board of Governors to:

- * 'Safeguard and promote the welfare of registered pupils' (A.17)

The key points to note from 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 4 Consultation

This policy was created in consultation with staff, parents, all Year 6 classes, parent focus group and Governors. It will be reviewed in consultation with pupil groups in Year 4 and Year 7.

The following definition will be used to determine the presence of bullying and the activation of this policy. Other incidents will be addressed within the positive behaviour policy.

Section 5 What is Bullying?

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.

In Strandtown Primary School we recognize **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.**

When we are addressing bullying in schools it is important that the use of the terms 'bully' and 'victim' be avoided. 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.

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.

While bullying is usually repeated behaviour, there are instances of one-off incidents that we may consider as bullying.

When assessing a one-off incident, to make a decision on whether to classify it as bullying, the following criteria will be considered:

- * 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 the Positive Behaviour Policy.

As with all forms of harm or abuse, there is no exhaustive list of signs or indicators to watch out for. But these can include: changes in children's behaviour, demeanor, physical appearance and presentation, language or progress. Additionally, the following list of unacceptable behaviours should not be considered as an exhaustive overview and every individual case or context must be considered.

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
- Non-verbal gestures

* **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 (eg. photographs or videos) online to embarrass someone

In investigating allegations of bullying and for both prevention and awareness, the various motivations behind bullying, will be considered. 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 statu

Section 6 – Preventative Measures

These will be carried out by the school to prevent bullying, highlight the seriousness of bullying, create a safe learning environment and promote positive behaviours. The measures taken by the school have a view to prevent bullying on the premises of the school during the school day, while travelling to and from school during the term and while a pupil is in the charge of a member of school staff.

- ✿ Adherence to Strandtown's Positive Behaviour Policy will create an ethos in the classroom and whole school where bullying behaviour is seen as totally unacceptable.
- ✿ At the start of every new term, teachers will discuss school rules and contract with the pupils. All pupils will be asked to sign the contract witnessed by their parent/ guardian. (This will be referred to throughout the year)
- ✿ Good behaviour will be celebrated in school through initiatives such as TREK and pupils being awarded a Hutchinson Hero Award. Teachers will display READY RESPECTFUL SAFE message in their rooms and regularly remind pupils of the significance of these words.
- ✿ Pupils will be reminded of the appropriate use of mobile phones/tablet technology in school. Parents will be asked to refer to the Using ICT and New Technologies and Internet Safety Policies.
- ✿ Teachers will discuss with their pupils the protocol to be observed when accessing the Internet in school. Parents will be asked to sign an agreement about the safe and appropriate use of the Internet in school. E-safety seminars will be held during assembly and internet safety awareness day/week will be supported by lessons. Parent information sessions will also be facilitated.
- ✿ Posters designed to encourage positive behaviour and prevent bullying will be displayed around the school. Pupils will be introduced to teachers involved in Pastoral Care.
- ✿ Pupil's learning and work in PDMU will include opportunities to explore self-awareness, feelings and emotions, relationships, safety, similarities and differences and managing conflict.
- ✿ Pastoral programmes in school will equip pupils to respond to issues and develop skills in resilience and coping strategies. For example, Pupil Support, Life Skills and our programme for Social, Emotional and Physical Wellbeing. Outside agencies will support the delivery of key learning objectives, eg Love for Life, Action Mental Health and NICCY.
- ✿ An assembly plan for the year is constructed which addresses key safeguarding messages each month. This will keep active thought in this area to ensure the well-being and safety of all pupils in school. This will also dovetail with engagement in key national and regional campaigns, eg Safer Internet Day, Mental Health Day, etc.

1. **Promotion of Addressing bullying messages through the curriculum.** Further opportunities for pupils to learn how to recognize bullying and strategies to deal with bullying will be provided during Addressing Bullying week via participation in the NIABF annual Addressing Bullying Week activities:
 - A special assembly for each year group including input from a PSNI officer/ youth worker. The aim of the assembly is to highlight the seriousness of bullying.
 - Follow-up activities which will be carried out in class to reinforce the issues raised and to promote further discussion.
 - Pupils and parents signing a pledge to adhere to Addressing bullying conduct.
2. **Parent and Pupil Questionnaires**, will allow any concerns to be expressed. These questionnaires will be analysed and suggestions used for the review of the policy.
3. Additionally, **circle-time, assemblies, RE topics, Behaviour Plans, Rules and Rewards** will support this.
4. **Pupil focus groups** will allow pupils to express their understanding of the preventative curriculum and their feelings of safety and well-being.
5. **NSPCC will be invited to deliver the 'Stay Safe Speak Out' Programme** every two years with our pupils.
6. **Quick and accessible communication** with class teachers and SLT on Dojo.
7. Development of **effective strategies** for playground management, zoning of play space and provision of a variety of play boxes.
8. **Provision and promotion of extra- and co-curricular activities**, aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks. For example sporting activity, creative arts, leisure and games, etc.
9. 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.
10. **Messaging to empower pupils to challenge inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour** of their peers during the journey to and from school.



Online Bullying

As mobile phone and internet use become increasingly common, so has the misuse of this technology. The use of the web, text messages, e-mail, social media, video or audio to cause intentional harm to another pupil or member of staff will not be tolerated by Strandtown.

It is necessary to remember that while the harmful online speech or interactions can occur out of school, personal interactions between those involved are occurring at school.

The following key areas form a comprehensive and effective prevention plan:

- ⊗ School will foster a culture of understanding and talking about online bullying. Everyone in school needs to be aware of the impact of online bullying and the ways in which it differs from other forms of bullying. The school will provide parents and pupils with support should the online bullying take place out of school.
- ⊗ School will keep policies and practices updated, this includes keeping good records of any incidences of online bullying.
- ⊗ School will make reporting online bullying easy, by keeping pupils informed of who they can talk too. Children should be confident when it comes to reporting inappropriate incidents involving the internet or mobile technology: they must be able to do this without fear.
- ⊗ School will promote the positive use of technology by discussing e-safety and digital literacy and by 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 robust and appropriate policies in related areas (eg. Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy, E Safety Policy.)

If a bullying incident directed at a pupil occurs using e-mail or social media, either inside or outside of school time the following steps should be taken:

1. Advise the child not to respond to the message.
2. Secure and preserve any evidence (message/photo etc).
3. Notify school.
4. School will consider what further steps are necessary depending on the severity or repetitious nature of the incident.

Section 7 - Strategies for Implementation and Responsibilities

Everyone in the school community, including pupils, their parents/carers 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, 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.
- Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken by the Head of Year/Vice-Principal to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to Principal.

School should:

- Ensure the Addressing Bullying Policy is circulated/accessible to all staff, pupils and parents.
- Display relevant Childline Help telephone number and information on who pupils can talk to in school.
- Aim to inform parents early in the process, preferably before the end of the school day.

Staff should:

- **Recognise** and reward **positive behaviour**. E.g verbal praise, stickers, TREK points, certificates.
- **Actively support the school's Addressing Bullying Policy.**
- **Be vigilant** to the possibility of bullying occurring.
- **Take all reports** of bullying **seriously**. Classroom Assistants and Supervisory Assistants pass on relevant information regarding potential bullying.
- **Listen to the child/parent** to reassure them that the appropriate action will be taken. Provide feedback to those involved of the action that has been taken by all parties.
- **Establish the facts**. This may involve speaking to all concerned. Allow the children to make positive contributions. The children and/or teacher may suggest solutions. It is important that both parties feel that they have been fairly treated.
- **Record the relevant factual information**. Keeping an appropriate dated record of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying that occur: on the school premises, travelling to and from school during the term or while a pupil is under the supervision of a member of school staff. The record will contain what appears to be the motivation of the incident, nature of the alleged bullying and how the incident was addressed.
- **Monitor behaviour** until all concerned are satisfied that the problem has stopped. Give feedback to all concerned.

- **Inform parents and the relevant members of staff** if further action is necessary. Significant/ongoing incidences of bullying to be reported initially to the Head of Year and if necessary the Vice-Principal and Principal.
- **Keep minutes of all meetings with parents when an allegation of bullying is being dealt with.** Teachers should keep a record of Home/School liaison and at the end of the year pass information on to the next teacher.
- In the case of online bullying **consult the school's Internet Safety Policy** and inform the ICT Co-ordinators of any issues or concerns.
- Staff will explain to pupils the implications of allowing the bullying behaviour to continue unchecked, for themselves and/or others.
- Resolve difficulties in restorative ways to prevent recurring bullying behaviour and meet the needs of all parties
- Involve outside agencies for support and advice where appropriate.
- Support and advice can be sought from the Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers (Mr Devine and Miss Courtenay).

In all situations, regardless of the form of bullying occurring, attempt to keep the teacher/pupils self-esteem intact.

Treat pupils with respect and in accordance with their age.
 Always give a positive response when a pupil asks for help.
 Have a positive attitude to pupils.
 Remain calm in a crisis.
 Speak calmly and quietly to pupils.

Pupils should:

- **Act in a respectful and supportive manner** to fellow pupils. **Be aware that respect should be shown to all adults and children** and that sanctions will be imposed for those who do not adhere to this.
- **Refer to school contract** and Addressing Bullying pledge.
- **Seek** help from a trusted adult about bullying behaviour when it happens or is observed.
- Work together, be tolerant of others' ideas, trust others and be more willing to listen to ensure that they feel safe and accepted for who they are.
- **Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying**, even at the risk of being temporarily unpopular.
- **Intervene to protect the pupil** who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so.
- **Be aware of the dangers of online bullying** and the incorrect use of mobile phones.
- Be assured that they do not deserve to be bullied and this is not their fault.

Parents should:

- **Actively support the school's Addressing Bullying Policy.**
- **Stress** to children **the importance of good or appropriate social behaviour** – refer to Positive Behaviour policy.
- **Advise their children not to retaliate** physically and/or verbally. Parents should encourage their child/children to run, yell and tell.
- In the first instance, all bullying concerns should be reported to the Class Teacher.

- **Be sympathetic and supportive** towards their child and assure them that appropriate action will be taken.
- **Inform the school** of any suspected incidents of bullying, even if their own children are not involved.
- Work in partnership with the school and allow school to manage all communications. It would be preferable that parents do not make communications with each other outside of school if the school is responding to an incident.
- **Deal with all incidents, following school procedures** as outlined in the Positive Behaviour and Addressing Bullying Policy.
- **Give the school reasonable time** to deal with the incident.
- Understand that ongoing issues or difficulties experienced outside school within the community are beyond the jurisdiction of the school.
- **Refer to Strandtown Primary School Addressing Bullying leaflet** – A Guide for Parents and Pupils and the Internet agreement signed by all parents at the start of the year.

Where a parent/carer feels that their 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, the school may receive such reports 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, no information about action taken in relation to a pupil can be disclosed to anyone other than the pupil and their parents/carers.**

Section 8 - Reporting a Bullying Concern

Pupils Reporting a Concern

Children and young people have told NIABF that when they have a concern about a potential bullying situation, they would like the opportunity to discuss this with a member of staff that they trust.

Pupils are encouraged to raise any matters of concern to them in school, in September '**Speak up, Speak Out**' is explored and discussed with all children. Trusted adults are identified for children in school as well as potential external sources of support. Mrs Hunt as Pupil Support Coordinator also provides a safe space for children to raise matters of concern. All classes have a post-box/worry box for children to post any comments.

In Strandtown we emphasise that **ANY** pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing this behaviour. Through the preventative curricular work, 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 is experienced by another.

Section 9 - Responding to a Bullying Concern

In Strandtown our central aim is to ensure any intervention responds to the bullying concern and restores the wellbeing of those involved. As such, our strategies for responding to bullying concerns concentrates on the prevention of any further incidents.

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 (Behaviour Logs, Handover Notes, E Safety Log)
- 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

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.

If appropriate, much can be achieved by talking to achieve a resolution and reconciliation, this will only occur with every pupils' consent. In some cases, however, talking things through will not be suitable. Where appropriate, school staff may implement sanctions for those displaying bullying behaviour.

The action taken involving a pupil who intentionally aims to hurt or harm another will depend on the seriousness/repetition of the incident and may include:

- verbal apology
- written apology
- time-out – with the approval of the relevant Year Head with possible additional work to complete.
- exclusion from the playground (a.m./p.m.)
- exclusion from the pitches at lunchtime
- exclusion from after school activities
- individual behaviour chart (matched to the needs of the pupil and signed by parents and appropriate members of staff on a daily basis)
- delayed leaving time from school (after parents have been informed)
- restrictions or close supervision when accessing the internet (see Internet Safety Policy)
- mobile phone kept in safe keeping by the office for use after school or in emergency, after consultation with the parent
- exclusion from residential school trips and/or parental attendance for day trips
- Internal removal from class for a prescribed period
- suspension from school

Irrespective of the sanction we want pupils to understand the impact and consequences of their behaviour and to find a positive way forward.

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

Section 10 - Recording

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.

The class teacher will liaise with their Head of Year in the completion of these records and these will be held centrally and reviewed by the Deputy Vice-Principal, who will review records for consistency in the outworking of this policy across the school. Records will be reviewed to explore the trends and frequency of issues and we will respond within our preventative curriculum to address these as they arise.

Access to all records will be restricted and only provided to those members of school staff with a legitimate need to have 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 Retention and Disposal of Documents Policy.

Section 11 - Professional Development of Staff

In Strandtown we have a commitment to ensuring that staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school's ongoing CPD.

All opportunities for safeguarding training are afforded to Governors and all staff, including both teaching and non-teaching. All new members of staff will be made aware of the school's policy.

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 policy will be reviewed every 4 years. However, if any issues arise as the result of a change in legislation or an incident in school, the policy will be reviewed sooner.

Section 13 - 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**
- **Staff Code of Conduct**
- **Personal Development and Mutual Understanding**

Date: **October 2022**

Next Review: **October 2025**