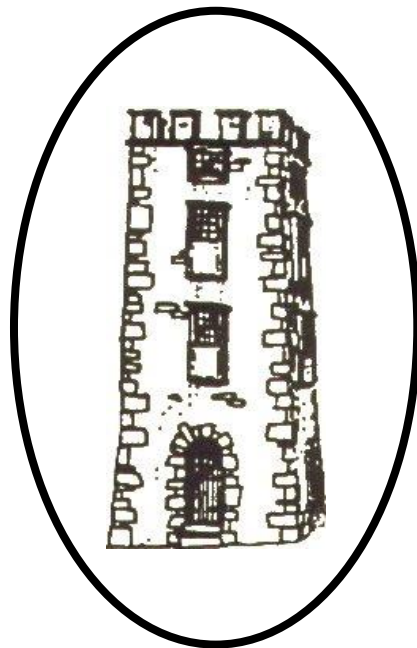


# **St. Mary's Primary School Cushendall**



## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

2019/20

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The primary role of our school is to provide the highest possible standard of education for all of our pupils. A stable, secure learning environment is an essential requirement to achieve this goal. Bullying behaviour, by its very nature, undermines and dilutes the quality of education and imposes psychological damage on those who are victims. In order that we may provide pupils with a safe and secure learning environment the issue of bullying must be positively and firmly addressed by school through a range of school-based measures and strategies by which all members of the school community are enabled to act effectively in dealing with this form of anti-social behaviour.

As part of our Pastoral Care Policy, it is our aim to build a community of children who care about each other and show respect for themselves and each other. This is supported in all classes through our CRED programme which recognises and celebrates the differences in cultures and traditions which exist in our school and wider community.

### **Rationale**

All schools have a pastoral responsibility towards the children in their care and should take all reasonable steps to ensure their welfare is safeguarded and their safety preserved.

At the centre of a whole school approach to promoting an anti-bullying culture should be the creation of a positive school climate, which encourages respect, trust, caring, consideration and sensitivity towards others.

The process of building such a climate will be facilitated when the overall quality of pastoral care is such that pupils feel secure, are free from emotional and physical harm, have their opinions valued and their concerns dealt with sympathetically and appropriately. Pupils should be able to enjoy their time in school and have educational experiences which are academically and socially fulfilling.

### **Definition**

Bullying is a repeated act of aggression causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to someone. It can take a number of forms: physical, verbal, making gestures, extortion and exclusion. It is an abuse of power. It can be planned and organised, or it may be unintentional. It may be perpetrated by individuals or by groups of pupils.

It is important that all parties are aware of the distinction between 'bullying' as repeated acts of aggression, and isolated incidents of aggression.

## **Aims**

- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils, parents/guardians.
- To create a school ethos which enables pupils to articulate their fears and concerns and be confident they will receive a sympathetic and supportive response from teachers and other adults within the school community.
- To develop and implement strategies which are preventative in orientation, intended to minimise the likelihood of incidents of bullying behaviour taking place.
- To develop and implement a programme of support for those who are victims of bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- To develop procedures for recording, reporting and investigating incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To develop procedures for working with parents and the appropriate external agencies in countering all forms of bullying and anti-social behaviour.
- To ensure comprehensive supervision and monitoring arrangements through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.

## **2. SPECIFIC ISSUES**

### **Ethos**

In St Mary's we promote an atmosphere of mutual respect and co-operation which will contribute to the learning process and generate a positive climate within the school community where every individual feels valued and cared for.

### **Values**

Every opportunity will be taken to praise our pupils for their contributions to the life of the school. Through positive daily experiences we aim to communicate the following positive values:-

- Mutual respect;
- Respect for property;
- Fairness and honesty;
- Care and consideration for others;
- Self-respect and self-discipline;
- Reconciliation.

### **Relationships**

St Mary's Primary School is completely opposed to bullying and will not tolerate it. All members of the school community have a right to work in a secure and caring environment. They also have a responsibility to contribute, in whatever way they can, to the protection and maintenance of such an environment.

## **The Responsibility of 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 with all classes, so that every pupil learns about the damage it causes to both the child who is bullied and to the bully, and the importance of telling a teacher about bullying when it happens;
- be alert to the signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying;
- listen to children who have been bullied, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them;
- report suspected cases of bullying to the designated teacher for child protection i.e. Mrs C. Magill (Primary School);
- follow up any complaint by a parent about bullying and report back promptly and fully on the action which has been taken;
- deal with observed instances of bullying promptly and effectively.

## **The Responsibilities of Pupils**

### **We expect our pupils to:-**

- avoid becoming involved in any form of bullying;
- intervene to protect the pupil who is being bullied, if it is safe to do so;
- report to a teacher, classroom assistant or supervisor any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying;

Anyone who becomes the target of bullies should:

- not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out, to put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets.

## **The Responsibilities of 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 Mrs C. Magill (designated teacher for child protection), their class teacher or to the Principal;
- advising their children not to retaliate violently to any form of bullying;
- being sympathetic and supportive towards their children and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken;
- keeping a written record of any reported instances of bullying;
- informing the school of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved;

- co-operating with the school, if their children are accused of bullying. Try to ascertain the truth, and point out the implications of bullying, both for the children who are bullied and for the bullies themselves.

## **The Responsibility of All**

### **Everyone should:-**

- work together to combat and, hopefully in time, to eradicate bullying;

As a school we will work as a team to help everyone involved in any form of bullying.

## **Forms of Bullying**

- Physical violence, such as hitting, pushing or spitting at another pupil;
- Interfering with another pupil's property, by stealing, hiding or damaging it;
- Persistent name-calling directed at a pupil which insults or humiliates;
- Teasing or spreading rumours about another pupil or his/her family;
- Belittling another pupil's abilities or achievements;
- Writing offensive notes about another pupil;
- Excluding another pupil from a group activity;
- Ridiculing another pupil's appearance, way of speaking or mannerisms;
- Extortion of favours or money whether accompanied by threats or not;
- Abusive telephone calls / text messaging / e-mails.

## **Effects of Bullying**

Pupils who are being bullied may develop feelings of insecurity and extreme anxiety and as a result may become more vulnerable. While they may not talk about what is happening to them, their suffering is indicated through changes in mood and behaviour. Bullying may occasionally result in suicide. It is therefore, important to be alert to changes in behaviour as early intervention is desirable.

## **Signs and Symptoms**

The following signs/symptoms may suggest that a pupil is being bullied:-

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school;
- Unwillingness to go to school;
- Loss of enthusiasm and interest in school;
- Pattern of physical illnesses e.g. headaches, stomach aches;
- Unexplained changes in either mood or behaviour;
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress – stammering, nightmares, not eating;
- Spontaneous out-of-character comments about either pupils or teachers;
- Possessions missing or damaged;
- Increased requests for money and/or stealing money;
- Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing;
- Reluctance and / or refusal to say what is troubling him / her.

**These signs do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied. If repeated or occurring in combination they warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the pupil.**

**In St Mary's we recognise that any pupil can be a victim of, or perpetrator of, bullying behaviour.**

## **Recognising a Bully**

Pupils who bully others are not always easily recognised, but research has shown that all bullies have common characteristics:-

- Bullies tend to have assertive, aggressive attitudes over which they exercise little control;
- Bullies tend to lack empathy; they cannot imagine how the victim feels;
- Bullies tend to lack guilt - they think that the victim somehow "deserves" the bullying treatment.

## **Preventative Strategies**

In St Mary's we promote a preventative approach to bullying where pupils are respected and valued as individuals and where their self-confidence and self-esteem are fostered routinely.

Preventative measures include:-

- encouraging respect towards each other during classroom and other activities e.g. religious education, structured play, physical education, talking and listening sessions and whole school assemblies;
- being vigilant and ensuring that the pupils are properly supervised at all times;
- making all staff aware we have a vital role to play in the prevention of bullying;
- implementing the P.D.M.U. (Personal Development and Mutual Understanding) area of learning of the NI Curriculum in all classes P1-7 which will include a range of activities with a C.R.E.D. (Community Relations, Equality and Diversity) focus;
- 'Circle Time' sessions lead by the class teacher which focus on positive relationships;
- use of the School Council 'suggestion box' where class councillors can raise issues of general concern with the Principal;
- the placing of a 'Worry Box' on the windowsill outside the Principal's office to encourage pupils to express their concerns on the issue of bullying or other matters which may be worrying them;
- pastoral notice boards and posters highlighting school procedures and helpline numbers.

## **Reactive Strategies**

Where an incident of bullying has been suspected this will be reported to the designated teacher for child protection. The matter will be investigated fully by either the designated teacher or the Principal who will keep a written record and report any findings to the class teacher. In trying to resolve an incident of bullying, the parents of all concerned will be kept

fully informed and involved in the plan for resolution which is adopted. Appropriate sanctions, which may include those set out in the Positive Behaviour Policy, will be taken against those responsible and the situation will be closely monitored by the class teacher and the designated teacher for child protection to ensure there is no recurrence of the problem.

In extreme cases it may be necessary to involve other agencies in the provision of support.

**If a serious incident or a persistent pattern is established the procedures set out in the Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy will be implemented.**

### **3. IMPLEMENTATION**

#### **Roles and Responsibilities (ref: Appendix 1)**

**The Board of Governors** have overall responsibility for ensuring a safe environment for the school community.

**The Principal** is responsible for promoting an anti-bullying culture and ensuring the policy is active.

**Senior Management Team** will provide leadership in terms of developing both preventative and reactive strategies.

**Teachers** must follow procedures outlined in the policy and promote an Anti-Bullying culture in school.

**Non-teaching staff** must be aware of policy and procedures.

**All staff** must avoid:-

- using sarcasm or other insulting or demeaning forms of language when addressing pupils; making negative comments about a pupil's appearance or background;
- humiliating directly or indirectly, a pupil who is particularly weak or outstanding or vulnerable in other ways;
- using any gesture or expression of a threatening or intimidating nature, or any other form of degrading physical contact.

**Pupils** must be aware of what to do if they are bullied or witness a bullying incident. Victims and witnesses need to be encouraged to tell as secrecy and silence nurture bullying.

#### **Parents**

The school will issue guidelines to parents as to how they should report concerns about bullying and the procedures by which the school will inform parents of the action taken to deal with bullying incidents.

## **Supervision**

Teachers will promote an anti-bullying culture in their class and be involved in a supervisory role before school, during school and after school in key areas. Additional supervision will be provided in the playground at breaktime by classroom assistants and at lunchtime by supervisory assistants.

## **Staff Training**

Opportunities will be provided to raise awareness of the nature and extent of bullying in school and staff will be involved in planned INSET sessions to review policy and procedures. Staff will attend external based courses, appropriate to the needs of the school. Support staff will receive guidance and training as necessary.

## **Resources**

Materials used to deliver the programme will be reviewed and updated regularly by all staff.

## **Links To Other Policies**

- Pastoral Care
- Child Protection & Safeguarding
- Positive Behaviour
- Special Educational Needs

These policies share the goal of creating an environment in which pupils feel secure and confident in the knowledge that their concerns will be listened to and dealt with by members of staff in a sympathetic and appropriate manner.

## **Monitoring And Evaluating**

The policy will be kept under continuous review in the light of incidents of bullying behaviour encountered.

2003 - Survey of pupils, parents and staff used to form the basis of policy review.

2009 - Survey of pupils, parents and staff to form basis of the 2009 policy review.

2013 - Survey of pupils, parents and staff used to form the basis of 2013/14 policy review.



The Pastoral Care Co-ordinator will be responsible for co-ordinating, monitoring and evaluation.

Signed ..... (Chairman of the Board of Governors)

Signed ..... (Principal)

Initially Adopted: 05.03.03

Last Review Date: 21.05.18

Current Review Date: 04.06.19 at Board of Governors Meeting 2

Exemplars of the entitlement and responsibilities of teachers, pupils and parents are included below.

### **Entitlement of teachers within a whole-school anti-bullying policy**

- To teach without harassment or unwarranted disruption
- To expect co-operation
- To be consulted, be informed and be treated courteously
- To have agreed rules and regulations obeyed by pupils

### **Responsibilities of teachers within a whole-school anti-bullying policy**

- Teachers should act as role models for pupils. They have the potential to influence pupils' behaviours in a positive direction by promoting relationships which are characterised by respect, tolerance and a spirit of friendship and co-operation – among and between pupils and staff.
- Teachers should be aware of signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying – both within the classroom / teaching area and while on supervision duty around the school.
- By arriving at class punctually and in moving promptly between lessons teachers can reduce the possibility of bullying behaviour.
- In dealing with a particular incident of bullying, teachers should take steps to help the victim and remove sources of distress without placing the victim at further risk.
- Teachers should, at the earliest opportunity, report suspects or actual incidents of bullying to the appropriate members of staff who will initiate necessary follow-up action.

### **Entitlement of pupils within a whole-school anti-bullying policy**

- A communication right; the right to express oneself, share ideas, ask questions and be listened to.
- A treatment right; the right to respect from others, to be treated fairly and equally.
- A safety right; the right to be free from intimidation in school and classroom, to be safe and secure and to have property protected.
- A problem right; the right to expect rational settlement of problems and to be able to tell their side of the story in a dispute.
- A learning right, the right to learn, without interference, to the level of their own ability in a secure working environment.

### **Responsibilities of pupils within a whole-school anti-bullying policy**

- Pupils should be aware of the serious effect which bullying can have on a victim and should refuse to become involved in any bullying situation.
- If a pupil is present when bullying of another pupil occurs he/she should report the incident to any member of the teaching staff.
- A pupil who is being bullied should either (a) report the matter to any member of the teaching staff, (b) report the matter to his Parent / Guardian who should then contact a member of the teaching staff.

### **Entitlement of parents within a whole-school anti-bullying policy**

- To be made aware of the school's policy and procedures for minimising bullying in school.
- To expect that the school will take all reasonable steps to reduce the likelihood of bullying within school.
- To be confident that the school will support any pupil who is being bullied.
- To expect to be consulted by the school on its procedures for dealing with any incident of bullying in which their child is either victim or bully.

### **Responsibilities of parents / guardians within a whole-school anti-bullying policy**

- Parents / Guardians should watch for common signs of bullying in their child, e.g. losing interest in school and becoming unwilling to attend school, a pattern of headaches, missing equipment, requests for extra money, damaged clothing, bruising, repeated requests to come home for lunch, changing unusual route to school or asking to be taken to school, and unexplained secretiveness, sullenness or unusual outbursts of temper.
- Parents / Guardians should take an active interest in their child's social life and should know his / her company.
- Parents / Guardians should strongly advise their child **not to retaliate** but to report any incident of bullying to either a member of the teaching staff or to the Parent / Guardian **as a matter of urgency**
- Parents / Guardians should inform the school of any cases of suspected bullying of which they are aware, **even if their own child is not directly involved.**
- Parents / Guardians should be willing to co-operate with the school authorities if their child is involved in any incident of bullying – either as victim or alleged bully.

**FORMS OF BULLYING****1. Physical Aggression:**

This behaviour is more common among boys than girls. It includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people up. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While boys commonly engage in 'mess fights', they can often be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.

**2. Damage to Property:**

Personal property can be the focus of attention for the bully; this may result in damage to clothing, school books and other learning material or interference with a pupil's school bag or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

**3. Extortion:**

Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out) in the event of the victim not promptly 'paying up'. Victims' lunches or lunch money may be taken. Victims may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to the bully. Sometimes, this tactic is used with the sole purpose of incriminating the victim.

**4. Intimidation:**

Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it is based on the use of very aggressive body language, facial expressions with the voice being used as a weapon.

**5. Abusive Telephone Calls / Text Messaging / E Message:**

The abusive telephone call / text message / e message (which may sometimes be anonymous) is a form of verbal intimidation or bullying. The anonymous phone call / text / e message is very prevalent where teachers are the victims of bullying.

**6. Isolation:**

This form of bullying behaviour seems to be more prevalent among girls. A certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or the entire class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the victim in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the victim or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard.

**7. Name Calling / Slagging**

Persistent name-calling directed at an individual, which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour, most name calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g. 'big ears', size or clothes worn.

**Need someone to talk to?**

- ▣ If you have something important to talk to staff about
- ▣ If you are worried about something that is happening to you, or to someone you know
- ▣ If you need help, or if you need to know how to get help

**The staff are here to listen and to help – they will try to do what they can.**

- ▣ If you are worried about telling things in confidence

**Tell the staff – they will understand. If they are concerned about your safety, or someone else’s, they may need to share this with others, but they will always tell you first.**

- ▣ If you are still unsure about talking to a member of staff, you can telephone

**Childline (NI) Tel. 0800 1111**

**NSPCC Tel. 0808 800 5000**

**Belfast Office Tel. 028 9035 1135**

**Antrim Office Tel. 028 9448 7533**

**Lifeline Tel. 0808 808 8000 (24 hour)**

These calls are free, and they will not show up on your phone bill. They will help you to work out what to do next.

**Education Authority North Eastern Region Contacts**

**Chief Education Welfare Officer: 028 2566 1273**  
**Designated Officer for Child Protection: 028 9448 2223**

**Educational Welfare Officer: 028 7086 8588**  
*32 Mullaghinch Road, Aghadowey*

**Behaviour Support Team, Antrim Board Centre 028 9448 2334**

## CONTACTS AND HELPLINES

### HELPLINES:

#### NSPCC

1<sup>st</sup> Floor Lanyon Building  
 Jennymount Court  
 North Derby Street  
 Belfast BT15 3HN  
 Telephone: 028 9035 1135  
 Free Helpline: 0808 800 5000  
 Web page: [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

#### NSPCC Child Protection

24 hours call free: 0808 800 5000  
 Text: 88858

#### Childline

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Lanyon Building  
 Jennymount Court  
 North Derby Street  
 Belfast BT15 3HN  
 Telephone: 028 2044 1641  
 Freephone: 0800 1111  
 Web page: [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

#### Contact Youth Counselling Services

The Bridge  
 139 Ravenhill Road  
 Belfast BT6 8DR  
 Telephone: 028 9045 7848  
 Free 24 hour 'Life Line' 0808 808 8000  
 Web page: [www.contactni.com](http://www.contactni.com)

### OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS:

#### Children's Law Centre

Rights House  
 127-131 Ormeau Road  
 Belfast BT7 1SH  
 Telephone: 028 9024 5704  
 Chalky Helpline: 0808 808 5678 (Free Phone Advice: 9am-5pm weekdays)  
 e-mail: [reception@childrenslawcentre.org](mailto:reception@childrenslawcentre.org)  
 Web page: [www.childrenslawcentre.org](http://www.childrenslawcentre.org)

#### Barnardos

Childcare Office  
 542-544 Upper Newtownards Road  
 Belfast BT4 3HE  
 Telephone: 028 9067 2366

Web page: [www.barnardos.org.uk](http://www.barnardos.org.uk)

#### Save The Children

Popper House  
 15 Richmond Park  
 Belfast BT10 0HB

Programmes Department:

Telephone: 028 9043 1123

Web page: [www.savethechildren.org.uk](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk)

## **Kidscape**

2 Grosvenor Gardens

London SW1 0DH

Telephone: 020 7730 3300

e-mail: [info@kidscape.org.uk](mailto:info@kidscape.org.uk)

Web page: [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)

## **Parenting NI**

42 Dublin Road

Belfast BT2 7HN

Office Tel: 028 9031 0891

Helpline: 0808 801 0722

e-mail: [help@parentingni.org](mailto:help@parentingni.org)

Web page: [www.parentingni.org](http://www.parentingni.org)