



Anti- Bullying Prevention Policy

DRAFT

BULLYING PREVENTION POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide a definition of bullying and to identify types of bullying behaviours. The policy attempts to prevent clarification on how the school will respond to incidents of bullying behaviour and how the school will support pupils who experience bullying behaviour and support pupils who display bullying behaviour.

Rationale

Bullying is an unacceptable form of behaviour in St Mary's College. We recognise that it is destructive in that it interferes with the education of pupils, intentionally causes harm, hurt and affects the rights of pupils. It can have a serious impact on the mental and physical well-being of those involved and can also have an impact on parents and families. As a school community we must ensure that our school is a safe and secure learning environment for every individual pupil.

We will work to ensure that every pupil feels valued, supported and safe. We encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own behaviour and to think about their actions towards others. Pupils are advised to follow the School Code of Conduct and the Positive Behaviour Policy when in school and travelling to and from school and while wearing the school uniform. We will deal with incidents of bullying within the framework of our pastoral care framework and the ethos of the school keeping in mind that all pupils have the right to be treated fairly and equally. This policy will be supported by the Behaviour Management Policy and the Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy.

We recognise that not all unacceptable behaviour is bullying behaviour. Behaviours not assessed as bullying will be addressed through the Behaviour Management Policy.

Definition of Bullying

'Bullying includes but is not limited to the repeated use of verbal, written or electronic communication or any other act by a pupil or a group of pupils with the intention of causing physical or emotional harm to that pupil or group of pupils, including exclusion'.
(Bullying in schools Act N Ireland 2016)

'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' (Northern Ireland Anti Bullying Forum (NIABF))

It is important to note that while bullying behaviours are usually repeated behaviours they are not limited to repetition. The school reserves the right to decide if One-off acts of bullying have caused harm after assessing the severity of the impact. When bullying behaviours occur through the medium of electronic communications, 'repetition' can take place through the repeated viewing and sharing of a post even if there is only one post. We recognise that cyber bullying is an aggressive, intentional act carried out by an individual or group against other pupil/s.

A. Examples of Types of Bullying Behaviour which recognises verbal, physical and exclusionary behaviours /the list is non-exhaustive

- say mean or hurtful things to, or about others
 - make fun of others
 - causing distress
 - Stereotyping
 - Racially offensive language or actions towards another pupil
 - imbalance of power either physical or emotional
 - call another pupil mean or hurtful names
 - tell lies or spread false and malicious rumours about others
 - actively encourage pupils to dislike a pupil/s
 - extort from, blackmail or exploit another
 - physical bullying-kicking, hitting, pushing, shoving
 - taking items belonging to another pupil
 - intentionally leaving out or excluding a pupil from friendship groups, activities, games, group work in class
 - encouraging others to engage in bullying type behaviours
 - cyber-bullying in written or image form
- **The policy will be applied when a pupil experiences or displays bullying behaviour:**
- (i) when on the school premises, outdoor sport area and school grounds
 - (ii) while travelling to and from school on buses or walking, using a taxi for school visits
 - (iii) while the pupil is in the care of a member of staff on educational visits and trips
 - (iv) engaging in educational provision arranged by the school in the Foyle Learning Area or EOTAS

We will promote an anti-bullying ethos by clearly communicating with pupils that such behaviour is unacceptable and by providing guidance to the pupils on what they should do if they have a concern. A summary of the policy and the code of conduct will be printed in pupil diary. The school council will be involved in the review of the policy.

B. Working in Partnership with Parents/Guardians

We respect the right of parents/carers to speak with school staff if they believe their child is being bullied. We urge parents to contact the school immediately as soon as a concern is raised by the child. The policy will be made available to parents.

School staff and parents/guardians come together on bullying issues as a result of:

- Parents/guardians participating in the development and review of the school's Bullying Prevention policy.
- Parents/guardians expressing concern about their experiencing bullying behaviour
- The school requesting a meeting with parent/guardians of a pupil displaying bullying behaviour
- The anti-bullying policy will be made available to parents

C. Roles and Responsibilities of School Governors:

- The Board of Governors will review the anti-bullying policy in line with the school's policy review cycle or when there is a serious incident of bullying behaviour
- Governors will review the records of the alleged bullying incidents
- Take into consideration types/methods of bullying behaviour
- Consider the motivation behind the bullying incidents and how long the bullying went on
- Assess the effectiveness of the interventions applied and preventative measures
- Ensure the senior leadership team supports staff in implementing the policy
- Ensure that parents/pupils are consulted when the policy is being reviewed

D. Roles and Responsibilities of Staff when responding to a bullying concern

The staff will adopt a positive mind set when responding to bullying concerns. It is important not to avoid labelling pupils instead describe the behaviour '**displaying bullying behaviour**' and '**experiencing bullying behaviour**'. A member of the support staff who is aware of bullying behaviour or aware of a pupil experiencing bullying behaviour should consult a member of the teaching staff immediately.

Staff will gather the facts and record all conversations with all pupils involved. Ensure that the information is reliable and that it represents bullying behaviour. Staff will use the criteria outlined below to assess whether the incidents will be addressed through the Anti-Bullying Policy or Positive Behaviour Policy.

To determine level of severity, staff should take account of the following:

- The **nature and severity** of the bullying behaviour – for example deliberate teasing, excluding or hitting. There is a tendency among those who have a duty of care to rate some bullying, particularly violence, as more serious than other subtle forms. This can be a dangerous mistake and leave us vulnerable to ignoring "teasing" or "exclusion".
- The **frequency** of the bullying behaviour: daily, weekly or less often.
- The **duration** of the bullying behaviour: whether over a short or prolonged period of time. Staff should determine if the behaviour was pre-mediated
- The **perceptions** of the child experiencing bullying – The seriousness of bullying can only be measured by the degree of distress suffered by the pupil experiencing bullying behaviour. **"It can be defined as bullying only by measuring the effects and impact the act/s have on the other pupil/s"**

- It may be useful to take into consideration the previous relationship between the pupils

E. APPROPRIATE INTERVENTIONS- Respond Resolve Restore

When children and young people are involved in incidents of bullying, adults are required to intervene. In practice there is a wide range of possible interventions available and there are significant differences in these in terms of the purpose of the intervention and the needs being addressed.

In selecting an intervention, we should take account of:

- The level of severity, using this as a guide to select appropriate intervention(s)
- The legal status of the act (e.g. assault)
- The age and ability of those involved.
- Whether an individual pupil or a group is involved.
- The level of staff agreement, confidence and competence in adopting a restorative, behaviour changing approach.
- The agreement and support of the parents/carers in adopting a restorative, behaviour changing approach.
- Whether the pupil(s) displaying bullying behaviour acknowledge(s) the unacceptable behaviour and can be enabled to feel empathy for the other pupil, and act appropriately.
- The willingness of the pupil who displays bullying type behaviour to engage in group discussion as a means to resolution
- The willingness of the pupil experiencing bullying behaviour to engage in group discussion
- At what stage to involve parents

UNDERSTANDING THE LEVELS OF INTERVENTION

Level 1 Intervention – Low Level Bullying Behaviour

Interventions at Level 1 are to help individuals to recognise/reflect on their unacceptable behaviour and to “get them back on track” while listening to and supporting/strengthening the target pupil(s). We will never ignore low level bullying behaviour.

Staff Should:

- Explain the inappropriateness of the behaviour in line with the school’s values and discipline policy.
- Identify possible consequences if the bullying behaviour continues.
- Point out the level of distress experienced by the other pupil
- Talk with the targeted pupil to explore whether she has in any way provoked the bullying behaviour.
- Help the targeted pupil to identify ways in which she may be strengthened and supported (e.g. peer support, staff support)
- Encourage resolution and apology, if appropriate
- Monitor the situation carefully

- Be prepared to intervene with a higher response level if the situation persists or deteriorates.

Level 2 Interventions – Intermediate Level Bullying Behaviour

While interventions at Level 2 involve continuing with the above, there is shift from individual support to group interventions. To be effective small group work needs:

- Head of Year or Head of Pastoral to facilitate small group intervention
- The consent and involvement of the targeted pupil.
- A planned session length dependent on age and ability.
- Parental/carer consent and agreement from participating pupils.
- Carefully selected group membership.
- To take place in a suitable and comfortable environment.
- To be uninterrupted.
- Structured and focused discussion amongst members about what is considered acceptable behaviour
- The purpose is to facilitate the development of empathy amongst pupils.
- A solution focused approach to the situation which is time bound
- To provide opportunities for pupils to take responsibility
- Meet with group until there is resolution

Level 3 Interventions – Complex Bullying Behaviour

Interventions at Level 3 will often involve the Pastoral Coordinator, SENCO, and other senior managers, support of external agencies in collaboration with pupil(s) and parents to determine the way forward in affecting change. Schools may use their individual Risk Assessment procedures which will determine a plan of intervention and risk management that will be communicated to all.

This planning may occur through a multi-agency discussion, involving EA service and other external support agencies. The manner in which teachers and others are involved in planning and how they are kept informed about the implementation of the plans will vary depending on the needs of the pupils involved.

Bullying at this level often involves complex group dynamics, where a number of roles are evident, such as those displaying bullying behaviour, bystanders and targeted pupils. Consequently, interventions may require one-to-one meetings, small group work and whole class involvement. These will often require group interventions as discussed in Level 2 along with individual support.

Level 4 Interventions – High Risk Bullying Behaviour

Bullying behaviours assessed at Level 4 are severe and involve a significant threat to the safety and welfare of any or all of the pupils involved. Such severe bullying concerns may be new or may have proved resistant to earlier school interventions and have now been assessed by SLT as high risk. Incidents at this level must be assessed in relation to the risk posed to any/all of the pupils involved. The school's Child Safeguarding Procedures will need to be invoked at this stage.

In addition to safeguarding procedures and practices including referral to external support services, the school's interventions at Level 4 should continue to implement interventions detailed in Level 3 as appropriate.

F Recording incidents of Bullying (see Appendix 1)

It is the duty of the school to record all reported incidents of bullying or alleged bullying on the school premises, while travelling to school, or on an educational visit or when a pupil is receiving educational provision other than the school premises. The record will be kept electronically using SIMS and will hold the following information:

- A record if the bullying or alleged behaviour was resolved through the school's discipline policy or anti-bullying policy
- State the motivation for the behaviour
- State the methods of bullying
- How the situation was addressed and resolved
- The extent of parental involvement

G Curriculum Arrangements

- Pupils will be given opportunities through LLW to explore 'bullying'
- The school will actively participate in anti-bullying week following guidelines from the Northern Ireland Anti Bullying Forum (NIABF)
- Pupils will explore bullying through the Enrichment Programme at KS3
- The school will use when appropriate the support and expertise of outside agencies

Anti-bullying Policy and Review

This policy will be reviewed as part of the policy review cycle. Comments on the content or outworking of the Policy are always welcome.

If you have a concern please contact Mrs Marie Lindsay, Principal or any member of staff

Appendix 1

Bullying Concern Assessment Form

Date:	Name(s)
Person(s) reporting concern	
Names(s) and class of pupils experiencing bullying behaviour	
Name(s) of pupils involved	
Does the behaviour involve Individual behaviour Individual to group Group to Individual Group to group	 () () () ()

Types of Bullying Behaviour (refer to policy)

Please Indicate	
Is there persistence recurrence of the behaviour?	Yes/No
Is it Targeted behaviour?	Yes/No
Is there power in balance?	Yes/No
Is it intentionally hurtful behaviour?	Yes/No
Does the incident meet your agreed definition of Bullying?	Yes/No
Has Parents been informed?	Yes/No

Record accounts from pupil experiencing the behaviour	
And or	
Accounts from staff	

A Record of Interventions to be implemented

Outline and action/support to be implemented for pupil who has experienced bullying behaviour	
Outline and action/support to be implemented for pupil who has displayed bullying behaviour	
Monitoring of Intervention	
Indicate if outside agencies were involved Name of agency	
Name and designation of teacher completing the form	