

# Tildarg Primary School



## Anti-Bullying Policy

September 2022

**TILDARG PRIMARY SCHOOL.....WHERE EVERY CHILD MATTERS.**

## **1. Introductory Statement**

Tildarg Primary School believes that bullying behaviour in all forms, to any member of the school community or by any member of the school community, is completely unacceptable. We believe that every pupil has the right to learn in a safe and supported environment, where they are valued and supported to become confident individuals. We aim to prevent bullying in any form through an approach committed to building positive relationships and dealing quickly and effectively with incidents of bullying.

## **2. Context**

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

### **2a. The Legislative Context**

- Health and Safety at Work NI Order 1978 The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 Article 3 - see De 1998/25
- Welfare and Protection of Pupils Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2007
- The Education (2006 order) (Commencement No.2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2007
- The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010
- Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

### **2b. The Policy and Guidance Context**

- Pastoral Care in Schools: PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR DE, 2001
- Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools. A guide for Schools DE 2017-to be read in conjunction with the following:
  - *Cooperating to safeguard children and young people in Northern Ireland, Dept. of Health, Social Services and Public Safety 2016*
- Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 Statutory Guidance for schools and Board of Governors 2019

### **2c. International Context**

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

### **3. Ethos and Principles**

#### **3a. School Mission Statement**

At Tildarg Primary School, we seek to provide a safe, secure, happy and caring learning environment for each child in order that they can realise their full potential, celebrate their achievements, respect their differences and encourage mutual respect. Our school's vision is encapsulated in our mission statement, '*Where every child matters...*'

#### **3b. Principles**

- Pupils have a right to learn in a safe and supportive environment.
- The welfare, well-being and needs of all children are paramount.
- Staff will treat all children fairly and implement rules in a fair and consistent manner.
- Targeted pupils will be listened to and supported.
- Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour will be listened to and supported to accept responsibility, change behaviour and agree a way forward to repair relationships.
- Create an atmosphere where children feel confident about speaking out if they feel they are being bullied by others or witness bullying behaviour.
- Staff will be supported and provided with strategies to support the children in their care.
- Parents will be consulted and informed regarding the school's positive behaviour expectations, the prevention of bullying behaviour and how the school will respond to bullying concerns.

### **4. Consultation and Participation**

Under legislation, the Board of Governors and Principal are required to consult with pupils, parents and staff in compliance with the Addressing Anti Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016  
At Tildarg Primary School, the process of consultation took place through:

- Pupils liaising to agree a Code of Conduct/class charters for positive behaviours
- Class based activities (circle time, PDMU)
- Board of Governors meeting on the implementation of 'Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016'
- School community (staff/pupils/parents) questionnaires
- Discussion with school council
- Information for parents at curriculum meetings in October
- Involvement in NIABF Anti Bullying Week annual events

## **5. Definition of Bullying**

### **5a. Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016**

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 provides schools with a legal definition.

"(1) In this Act "bullying" includes (but is not limited to) the repeated use of-

- a) any verbal, written or electronic communication
- b) any other act, or
- c) any combination of those, by a pupil or group of pupils against another pupil or groups 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"

### **5b. School Policy Statement**

By definition, bullying is behaviour that intentionally and persistently causes distress to others. Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF) defines bullying as,

"The repeated use of power by one or more people intentionally to harm, hurt or adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others" NIABF (2005)

While bullying is usually repeated behaviour, there are occasions of one-off incidents that the school will consider as bullying.

When assessing a one-off incident, to make a decision on whether to classify it as bullying the school shall consider the following criteria:

- Severity and significance of the incident,
- Evidence of pre-meditation,
- Impact of the incident on individuals (physical/emotional),
- Impact of the incidents on wider community,
- Previous relationships between those involved,
- Any previous incidents involving the individuals.

Any incidents which are not considered bullying will be addressed under the school's Behaviour Policy.

### **5c. The Key Elements Present in Bullying Behaviour**

The following unacceptable behaviours, when repeated, targeted and intentionally hurtful, may be considered a bullying behaviour (other behaviours which fit the definition may also be considered as bullying behaviour):

- **Physical** - jostling, hitting, pushing, kicking, tripping, spitting, hair pulling, throwing things, interfering with another's property by stealing/hiding/damaging/ intruding upon it, threatening demands for money or other items, writing or drawing offensive notes/graffiti about another
- **Verbal** - name calling, insulting or offensive remarks, accusing, taunting, put downs, ridiculing another's appearance/way of speaking/disability/personal mannerisms/race/colour/religion/gender, humiliating another publicly, spreading malicious or nasty rumours, threatening, intimidation, mocking, sarcasm
- **Omission/Exclusion** - isolation, refusal to work with/talk to/play with/help another
- **Electronic Acts** - use of on-line platforms such as e-mails, images, text, blogs, tweets, forums and chat rooms to hurt /embarrass /demean /harass /provoke or humiliate another using perceived anonymity, impersonating someone on-line to cause hurt

**Socially unacceptable behaviours BECOME BULLYING BEHAVIOURS when the information gathered clearly demonstrates that the unacceptable behaviour DOES MEET THE CRITERIA LISTED BELOW i.e. on the basis of the evidence gathered the behaviour was/is;**

- Intentional - 3 or more repetitious incidents involving the same target/s,
- Targeted at a specific pupil or group of pupils,
- Repeated - the act is not accidental, it is done wilfully, knowingly and with the deliberation to do harm. Repetition of an act will be used to establish intention to harm,
- Causing emotional /psychological harm- intentionally causing distress, anxiety, humiliation and the impact on self-esteem,
- Physical harm - intentionally causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns,
- Omission- intentionally choosing not to mention (failure to act) i.e. wilful omission arising from a desire to cause hurt.

#### **5d. Definition of Emotional and Physical Harm as Set Out in DE Guidance:**

**Emotional/psychological harm** - intentionally causing distress or anxiety by scaring, humiliating or adversely affecting a pupil's self-esteem.

**Physical harm** - intentionally hurting a pupil by causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts.

#### **5e. Use of language**

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.

## **5f. Indicators of Bullying Behaviour**

The signs and symptoms of bullying may vary with each individual and therefore this is not an exhaustive list of behaviours. These behaviours may be symptomatic of other problems, however, some of the common signs might be that the pupil:

- Does not want to come to school and attendance may deteriorate.
- Will often claim to feel ill (especially when it is close to time for school).
- Appears frightened to walk to and from school.
- Avoidance, hanging back from playground or staying late at school.
- Deterioration in the standard of schoolwork, forgets items required for the school day, is late to school etc.
- Reluctance to sit beside or near certain pupils.
- May change their behaviour / act out of character i.e. withdrawn, aggressive, nail biting, flinching, flare up or restlessness.
- Frequent complaining of non-specific pains, headaches, tummy upsets, withdrawn, loss of appetite.
- May stop communicating in school and at home.
- Asking for or stealing money.
- Stress manifested at home e.g. nightmares, trouble sleeping, crying, irritability or bedwetting.
- Unexplained bruising or cuts / damaged clothing.
- Bullying younger siblings.

## **6. Preventative Measures**

At Tildarg Primary School, we aim to prevent bullying behaviour and create a positive, safe, secure environment where children feel valued and respected. We have established, and will maintain the following strategies, which aim to promote a strong anti-bullying ethos within the school and the wider school community.

### **Preventative Strategies to Use in School**

- Raising awareness and understanding of the positive behaviour expectations (eg. Golden Rules, Principal's Awards & positive behaviour systems in each class).
- Promotion of anti-bullying messages through the curriculum e.g. inclusion of age-appropriate material specific to individual subject areas related to bullying, positive behaviour and inclusion.
- Addressing issues such as the various forms of bullying, including the how and why it can happen, through PDMU, Circle Time, WAU etc. (eg. sectarian, racist, disablist, etc.).
- Involvement in meaningful and supportive projects, supporting pupils to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity (eg. Community Partnerships) .
- Focussed assemblies to raise awareness and promote understanding of key issues related to bullying.
- Through the preventative curriculum, actively promote positive emotional health and wellbeing (e.g. My Happy Mind Programme, Parent workshops).
- Use of creative learning to enhance social and emotional skills.
- Participation in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities.
- Engagement in key national and regional campaigns, eg Safer Internet Day, Good Relations Week, Anti-bullying Week etc.
- Use of peer-led systems (eg. School/Eco Council) to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messaging within the school.
- Vigilant supervision and effective playground management, eg. training for supervisors, use of peer mediation/buddy bench and provision of a variety of play options to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Ensure that all staff (teaching and non-teaching), parents and pupils and all members of the school community are aware of the school's Behaviour Policy.
- Use of effective strategies for the management of unstructured times e.g. games organised by supervisors for playtime etc.
- Provision and promotion of extra- and co-curricular activities, aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks. For example sporting activities/teams, creative arts etc.

### **Preventative Strategies for Travelling to and from School**

- At Tildarg P.S we foster and promote a culture and ethos 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.
- Children on the bus and taxi are encouraged to feel empowered to challenge inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour of their peers during the journey to and from school and to inform the adult in charge of the vehicle of any issue when it has safely stopped.

- Regular communication with transport providers (taxi Company/Afterschools).
- Appropriate deployment of staff to support the transition from school day to journey home, by ensuring pupils are safely on the 'After Schools' bus/taxi.

## **Preventative Strategies for Bullying by Use of Electronic Communication**

- UICT lessons on Internet Safety, including understanding how to respond to harm and the consequences of inappropriate use.
- Participation in Anti-Bullying Week activities.
- Engagement with key statutory and voluntary sector agencies (eg. C2k, PSNI, Public Health Agency, Safeguarding Board for NI e-Safety Forum, NSPCC) to support key messages.
- The school adheres to legal regulations and guidelines and will guide and advise parents and pupils about using age appropriate social media, apps and games.
- 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, Mobile Phone Policy etc.)

## **7. Responsibility**

Everyone in the school community has a responsibility for creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all its members. Pupils, parents and the staff of 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 being 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 instance of bullying behaviour witnessed or suspected, to a member of staff.
- Emphasise the importance of seeking help from a trusted adult about bullying behaviour when it happens or is observed.
- Explain the implications of allowing the bullying behaviour to continue unchecked, for themselves and/or others.
- Listen sensitively to anyone who has been bullied, take what is said seriously and provide reassurance that appropriate action will be taken.
- Know how to seek support-internal and external.

- Resolve difficulties in restorative ways to prevent recurring bullying behaviour and meet the needs of all parties.

## **7a. Roles and Responsibilities of the Board of Governors**

### **The Governors will:**

- Ensure that the school's anti-bullying policy is adhered to.
- Support the principal with the implementation of the policy.
- Monitor and review the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy at regular intervals in consultation with the school community (at least every 4 years).
- Keep a record of reported incidences of bullying.

## **7b. Roles and Responsibilities of the Principal**

### **The Principal will:**

- Be responsible for the implementation of the school discipline and anti-bullying policies.
- Ensure that all staff; both teaching and non-teaching, are familiar with the policies and receive appropriate training when available.
- Inform the Board of Governors of confirmed incidents of bullying.
- Encourage an ethos of mutual respect, support and praise, thus making bullying less likely.
- Ensure that all pupils are clear about what bullying is and that it will not be tolerated.

## **7c. Roles and Responsibilities of Teaching Staff**

### **Staff will:**

- Foster self-respect and respect for others.
- Discuss bullying during PDMU lessons.
- Know the possible indications of signs of bullying.
- Listen to the child experiencing bullying behaviour and act to support and protect them.
- Report suspected cases of bullying to the Principal.
- Follow up any complaint made by a parent and report back to them in a timely manner.
- Deal with alleged instances of bullying in accordance with agreed procedures as stated in this policy.

## **7d. Roles and Responsibilities of the Non-teaching Staff**

### **Non-teaching staff will:**

- Foster self-respect and respect for others.
- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we

expect of our pupils.

- Be vigilant in looking for signs of bullying.
- Report any incidents of suspected bullying to the class teacher/Principal.

## **7e. Roles and Responsibilities of Pupils**

**Pupils should:**

- Understand that they have the right not to be bullied.
- Know that they are not to blame if they experience bullying behaviour.
- Report witnessed or suspected bullying to a member of staff.
- Not become involved in behaviour which might be considered as bullying.

## **7f. Roles and Responsibilities of Parents**

**Parents should:**

- Watch for signs of distress or unusual behaviour which may indicate bullying.
- Encourage their children to report incidents of bullying to a member of staff.
- Be supportive and reassuring towards their children.
- Suggest non-aggressive strategies for dealing with bullying behaviour and stress that retaliation is not helpful.
- Inform the school of suspected bullying, even if their own child was not involved.
- Co-operate fully with the school if their child has been accused of displaying bullying behaviour in order to ascertain the truth and to point out the implications and consequences of bullying.
- Accept their role in dealing with bullying behaviours which occur outside the school in order that they do not interfere with teaching and learning during the school day.

## **8. Reporting a Bullying Concern**

All reports of bullying behaviour will be responded to in line with this policy and feedback will be made to the person who made the report. No information about action taken in relation to a pupil can be disclosed to anyone other than the pupil and his/her parents/carers.

### **8a. Pupils Reporting a Bullying Concern**

Pupils are encouraged to raise concerns with any member of staff, including teaching and non-teaching. Pupils can report bullying concerns by:

- Talking to any member of staff.

- Writing a note to a member of staff (e.g. in a homework diary).
- Posting a comment in the "worry/suggestion box".

Any pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing bullying behaviour. Through the preventative curriculum we focus on the "getting help" message rather than "telling". As such pupils are encouraged to "get help" if they have a concern about bullying that they experience or is experienced by another.

### **8b. Parent/Carers Reporting a Bullying Concern**

Parents and carers have the responsibility to raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour with the school at the earliest opportunity. Parents and carers should also encourage their children to act appropriately to bullying behaviour and to not do anything to retaliate or 'hit back'.

- In the first instance, a bullying concern should be reported to the class teacher.
- Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to the Principal.
- Where the parent remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the school's complaint procedure should be followed.

## **9. Responding to a Bullying Concern**

Staff in Tildarg P.S. will respond to bullying behaviour promptly and efficiently, with an expectation of change being achieved through implementing the procedures set out in our policies.

**The following procedure will be observed (see also related flowcharts):**

- The BCAF is a recording mechanism. The concern will be recorded following current guidance.
- Record an initial Bullying Concern incident in SIMS and create the Bullying Concern Assessment Form (BCAF). In every case a BCAF is initiated and attached as a linked document in SIMS at the end of the process.
- Gather information, clarify facts and perceptions.
- Use the SIMS Behaviour Management Module to check for previous incidents and identify any themes or motivating factors.
- Identify the type of bullying behaviour being displayed.
- Part 1 of the BCAF will be completed by an appropriate member of staff (Principal/Designated/Deputy Designated Teacher of Child Protection) and saved to a private folder.
- The information gathered will be checked against the legal definition of bullying in this policy and will be determined whether bullying has taken place.

**9a. Procedures to follow when the criteria for bullying behaviour has NOT been met:**

- Parents/carers are engaged and kept informed.
- Update SIMS Bullying Concern status, attach the BCAF with part 1 completed.
- Proceed to Behaviour Policy and record the behaviour incident in SIMS.
- Select and record appropriate intervention(s) and actions - update BMM/SIMS.
- Tailored interventions will be implemented in order to reduce the level of unacceptable/anti-social behaviour(s) to ensure behaviour does not move into bullying behaviour-update BMM/SIMS.
- Together track, monitor and assess progress to determine, on the information generated, the efficacy of the intervention(s) and outcomes.
- Continue review cycle until agreed outcomes are achieved.
- Review and record outcomes on BMM/SIMS.

**9b. Procedures to follow the criteria for bullying behaviour HAS been met:**

- Parents/carers are engaged and kept informed.
- Complete Part 2 BCAF -update SIMS Bullying Concern status.
- Continue with Anti Bullying policy.
- Select and record appropriate interventions and actions (See NIABF Effective responses to Bullying Behaviour (ERBB)(2013) -update BCAF Part 3.
- Interventions implemented to;
  - (a) strengthen target(s) resilience
  - (b) reduce unacceptable bullying behaviours
- Update BCAF Part 3a/b.
- Together staff and pupils, as part of the Code of Practice, track, monitor and assess progress to determine, on the information generated, the efficacy of the intervention(s) and outcomes.
- Review and record outcomes on BCAF. Complete Part 4, update the SIMS Bullying Concern and attach the BCAF as a linked document.

Tildarg P.S., in line with NIABF (Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour), advocates a restorative approach to responding to bullying behaviour. Interventions will focus on responding to the behaviour, resolving the concern and restoring the wellbeing of those involved.

When responding to a bullying concern, staff shall implement interventions aimed at responding to the behaviour, resolving the concern and restoring the wellbeing of those involved. Where appropriate, school staff may implement sanctions for those displaying bullying behaviour.

## **10. Recording**

The Board of Governors must ensure a record is kept of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying involving a registered pupil at the school (Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016).

The school will centrally record all relevant information related to reports of bullying concerns. This may include:

- How the bullying behaviour was displayed (the method)
- The motivation of the behaviour
- How each incident was addressed by the school
- The outcome of the interventions employed

Records will be kept on the online SIMS Behaviour Management Module, which is part of the school C2k system. Access will be restricted 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 policy. Collated information regarding incidents of bullying and alleged bullying behaviour will be used to inform the future development of anti-bullying policy and practice within the school.

## **11. Professional Development of Staff**

Tildarg P.S. is committed to ensuring that staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school ongoing CPD/PRSD provision. Annual safeguarding training is provided for all teaching and non-teaching staff. Governors can also avail of training through the EANI.

## **12. Monitoring and Review of Policy**

It is the responsibility of the Board of Governors, in liaison with the Principal, to monitor the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying 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 where a report on recorded incidents of bullying will be noted
- 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 at intervals of no more than 4 years. However, the policy will be reviewed following any incident which highlights the need for review and/or when directed by DE in light of new guidance.

This Anti-Bullying Policy shall be reviewed as required, in consultation with pupils and their parents/carers, on or before September 2025.

### **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:

- Behaviour Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Acceptable Use of the Internet and Digital Technologies
- Acceptable Use of Mobile Phones and Digital Devices

### **14. Appendices**

1. NIABF - Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour
2. DE Flowchart displaying BCAF process to record a bullying concern
3. BCAF - Bullying Concern form (hard copy)
4. Anti-bullying Policy Framework (updated to include implications arising from the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016

