



## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

- *This policy is currently under review in line with the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016*

**\*\* August 2019 This Policy is currently under review in line with the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016. Please be aware that while bullying is usually repeated behaviour, there are instances of one-off incidents that the school will consider as bullying.**

## **St. MacNissis Primary School Anti Bullying Policy.**

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

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

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

- create a happy, stimulating and secure environment for each child
- offer a well structured and balanced curriculum, within the requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum, which meets the needs of the individual child.
- ensure the individual child feels a sense of self-worth and encourage the development of confidence and self-esteem.
- develop an awareness of the need of self-discipline, which leads to respect for other people and sensitivity towards them.
- encourage the children to acquire positive attitudes towards others of differing religious beliefs and an understanding of the wider world in which we live.
- develop a genuine partnership between the home, church and the school.

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

The aims of this policy are:

- To inform the whole school community of measures taken by the school to prevent bullying
- To encourage pupils to ‘tell’
- To clarify for Staff, pupils and parents that bullying is always unacceptable and not to be tolerated.
- To create an environment in which individual children can flourish and fulfil their true potential.
- To promote self- discipline, self respect and respect for others.
- To promote an awareness that we are all responsible for creating a climate in which all children feel safe.
- To emphasise the importance of and to strengthen communication between home and school.
- To outline strategies used within the school to deal with incidents of bullying when they do occur.

It is hoped that this policy, adopted by the whole school community, will contribute towards the maintenance of a positive ethos in the school.

### **WHAT IS BULLYING?**

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in St MacNissis Primary School. At St MacNissi's Primary School we take the view that bullying behaviour, whatever form it may take, is totally unacceptable. A position approach to discipline and the pastoral care of pupils - emphasising, praising and rewarding good behaviour - is adopted throughout the school. Children are encouraged to behave in an appropriate manner, relating to others with courtesy and respect. Guidance from Northern Ireland Bullying Forum defines bullying as:-

**“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.”**

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

NIABF recommends that schools also use the terms:-

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

## **PRINCIPLES**

- Pupils have a right to learn in a safe and supportive environment, free from intimidation and fear.
- The welfare/well-being needs of all children and young people are paramount and pupils' needs (whether bully or targeted pupil) need to be separated from their behaviour.
- When bullying concerns are identified our school will work in a restorative and solution focused way to achieve the necessary change.
- Pupils who are targeted will be listened to and supported.
- Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour will be listened to and encouraged to accept responsibility and change their behaviour.
- Staff will receive awareness-raising training regarding bullying prevention including effective, appropriate strategies for intervention.
- Where a concern arises, staff will receive ongoing support from Senior Managers with Pastoral responsibility.
- Parents will be made aware of our school's practice to prevent and to respond to concerns through parent information meetings, consultation processes and where necessary, their active participation in partnership with the school to resolve concerns involving their child.

The child who has been bullied can suffer the physical and psychological abuse of their persons, isolation, loneliness, insecurity, anxiety and fear arising from a threatening atmosphere which surrounds them.

**Children are therefore encouraged to speak out** about bullying where it does occur, not only when they, themselves are the child who has been bullied, but also when they may have witnessed bullying taking place. We assure children that any incident that is brought to our attention will be dealt with. Children who has been

bullied will be given help, advice and support and those children involved in bullying will be encouraged to modify their future behaviour.

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

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

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

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

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

### **DEALING WITH INCIDENTS OF BULLYING**

Each incident of bullying which is reported is taken seriously, promptly investigated and appropriate action taken. Supervisory Assistants employed at the school to

supervise children during midday break are instructed to bring to the attention of class teachers any incident of bullying observed during lunchtime. More serious cases are reported directly to the Vice-Principal or Principal. Appropriate enquires are made and the outcome of enquiries are made known to those involved. In serious cases, or when bullying behaviour persists, the children's parents are informed and their involvement and co-operation is sought in resolving the bullying. In St MacNissi's, if any type of bullying is highlighted, the following strategies will be implemented by staff in two stages:-

### **STAGE 1**

All staff will:

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

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

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

### **STAGE 2**

If the problem is not resolved staff will:

1. Implement procedures within the hierarchy of sanctions (refer to Positive Behaviour Policy).
2. Continue to monitor the situation and follow procedures for reporting a significant/repeated/or serious one-off incident of bullying as outlined above.
3. Record details as appropriate.
4. Contact parents if necessary at any stage of the procedures, depending on the seriousness of the bullying e.g. phone call, letter or request for interview by class teacher / Vice Principal / Principal.
5. Contact outside network of support at any stage of the procedures e.g. Education Welfare Officer, Behaviour Support Team

## **FORMS OF BULLYING**

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

### **PHYSICAL BULLYING**

e.g.

- hitting; pushing; kicking; tripping; spitting; hair pulling; throwing things; interfering with another's property by stealing/hiding/ damaging / intruding upon it;*
- extortion / threatening demands for money or other items*
- writing or drawing offensive notes / graffiti about another*

### **EMOTIONAL BULLYING**

e.g.

- excluding/shunning others from group activity/social setting or play;*
- belittling another's abilities or achievements;*
- menacing looks/stares;*
- rude signs or gestures*

### **VERBAL BULLYING**

e.g.

- name calling; insulting or offensive remarks; accusing; taunting; put downs*
- ridiculing another's appearance/way of speaking/disability/personal mannerisms/race/colour/religion;*
- humiliating another publicly*
- spreading malicious or nasty rumours; threatening; intimidation; mocking; sarcasm*

### **CYBER BULLYING**

e.g.

- misuse of e-mails, images, text, blogs, tweets, forums and chat rooms to hurt /embarrass /demean /harass /provoke or humiliate another using perceived anonymity*
- misuse of mobile phones by text messaging /calls or images – again to hurt /embarrass /demean/harass/provoke or humiliate another using perceived anonymity*
- unauthorised publication or manipulation of private information; impersonation*

### **Signs of stress in pupils which may indicate bullying:**

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

(NB. These behaviours may also be symptomatic of problems other than bullying)

### **Proactive Strategies to ensure awareness is raised.**

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

## **LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES**

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

- ✓ Safeguarding & Child Protection
- ✓ Pastoral Care
- ✓ Positive Behaviour
- ✓ Special Educational Needs
- ✓ Health & Safety Curricular Policies.

## **USE OF MOBILE PHONES**

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

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

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

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

## **CONCLUSION**

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

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

## **Procedure Flow Line for incidents of Bullying in School**

- a. Incident Reported – Completion of Anti-Bullying Complaint form.
- b. The **child who is displaying bullying behaviour** and the **child who has been bullied** will be counselled separately by staff involved.
- c. Strategies employed to resolve the issue including Circle Time.
- d. Sanctions applied as necessary.
- e. Parents/Guardians of the **child who is displaying bullying behaviour** will be contacted (letter or phone call). Parents of the **child who has been bullied** will be informed if they are not already aware of the incident.
- f. The incident will be revisited by the teacher or Designated Teacher (Principal:- Mr J. McAuley) or in his absence the Deputy Designated Teacher (Vice-Principal Mrs. R. Mitchell) to ensure that it has been resolved satisfactorily.

### **2 If incidents continue**

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

### **3 If incidents still continue**

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

### **4 If incidents still continue**

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

## **USEFUL WEBSITES & TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

- ✓ **Department of Education [www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk)**
- ✓ **Northern Ireland Anti Bullying Forum [www.niabf.org.uk](http://www.niabf.org.uk)**
- ✓ **[www.thinkuknow.org](http://www.thinkuknow.org)**

NIABF recommends that each school actively seeks a full and shared understanding of the meanings of key words among all its school community members, as understanding bullying and the different forms it can take is the starting point for tackling bullying effectively. The term bullying refers to a range of harmful behaviour, both physical and psychological. All bullying behaviour usually has the following four features: 1. It is repetitive and persistent – though sometimes a single incident can have precisely the same impact as persistent behaviour over time. This is as a result of it being experienced as part of a continuous pattern and can be extremely threatening and intimidating, which is particularly the case with racist bullying. 2. It is intentionally harmful – though occasionally the distress it causes is not consciously intended by all of those who are responsible or play a bystander role. 3. It involves an imbalance of power, leaving someone feeling helpless to prevent it or put a stop to it. 4. It causes feelings of distress, fear, loneliness and lack of confidence in those who are at the receiving end.

Bullying can take many forms, including name-calling, taunting, mocking, and making offensive personal comments; threatening and intimidating; creating situations in which someone is humiliated, or made to look ridiculous, or gets into trouble; playing tricks and pranks; spitting, kicking and hitting; pushing and jostling, and ‘accidentally’ bumping into someone; hiding, damaging or taking belongings; sending malicious text messages, emails and photographs; leaving people out of groups or games or social occasions; and spreading hurtful and untrue rumours. Several of these behaviours plainly involve the use of words. Several, however, equally plainly, may be non-verbal, involving body language, gesture and facial expression. Non-verbal behaviours can be just as hurtful and intimidating as those that involve abusive language.

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. While many schools may wish to identify key staff with responsibility for bullying, it is essential that pupils are encouraged to raise concerns with any member of staff, including teaching and non-teaching staff. The policy should make this clear to pupils, and adequate training and support for staff should be outlined in Section 11 of the policy.

This section should also consider the ways pupils can raise concerns and how these can be communicated to staff. For example, the policy may list ways that pupils can report bullying concerns, including:

- \* Verbally- talking to a member of staff
- \* By writing a note to a member of staff (eg. in a homework diary)
- \* By sending an email to a member of staff or to a dedicated email address
- \* By posting a comment in a 'worry box'

The policy should also emphasise that ANY pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing this behaviour. Through the preventative work taken forward under Section 6, this message should focus 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.

#### Parents/Carers Reporting a Concern

This section should lay out the responsibilities of parents and carers to raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour with the school at the earliest opportunity. It should remind parents/carers of the need to encourage their children to react appropriately to bullying behaviour and to not do anything to retaliate or to 'hit back'.

The process of parents/carers reporting bullying concerns will differ, depending on the size of the school and the number of pupils and teachers. Generally, the processes tend to be:

- \* In the first instance, all bullying concerns 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 Head of Year or Vice-Principal, as applicable.
- \* 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.

Where the parent/carer remains unsatisfied that the 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. It is important that this information is included within the Anti-Bullying Policy and that information on how to make this complaint is accessible to all parents.

#### Section 9 – Responding to a Bullying Concern

This section should provide the framework for how all reports of alleged bullying behaviour, or any concerns identified, will be responded to by the school. This includes the outline process that will be employed, as well as the approach the school will take in its response. It must be remembered that the focus of any intervention must be on responding to the bullying concern and restoring the wellbeing of those involved. As such, any strategy for responding to bullying concerns must concentrate on the prevention of any further incidents.

This section may be worded as follows:

***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 (SIMS/BMM)***
- \* 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***