Fountain Primary School

Anti-Bullying Policy

Reviewed: June 2020

Ratified by Board of Governors: August 2020

Next Review Date: June 2022

Signed: _____ (Chair of the Board of Governors)

Date: _____

Rationale

In Fountain Primary School we aim to instil within our pupil, values of acceptance, tolerance and respect through promoting the self-esteem of the whole school community. This policy reflects this with a view to providing a safe and happy environment, where all efforts and achievements are celebrated.

Ethos

In Fountain Primary School the welfare and safety of our whole school community is paramount. We believe that all forms of bullying behaviour are unacceptable. We believe that all pupils have the right to learn in a safe and supported environment.

This policy is based on the guidance provided by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland and other agencies in the following documents:

- 'Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection' DE, 1999
- 'Pastoral Care in Schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour' DE, 2001
- DE Circular 2003/13 'Welfare & Protection of Pupils Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003'
- ACPC 2005 Regional Guidance 'Cooperating to Safeguard'
- DE Circular 2007/01 'Acceptable Use of the Internet and Digital Technologies in Schools'
- DE Circular 2007/20 Article 19 'Duty to promote good behaviour, discipline and welfare – your pupils attending other schools'
- 'Evaluating Pastoral Care' ETI 1999 updated 2008
- 'Together Towards Improvement' ETI 2010
- The Education (School Development Plan) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010
- DE Circular 2011/22 'Guidance on Internet Safety'
- DE Circular 2015/13
- DE Circular 2016/27 'Guidance on Online Safety'
- Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016
- Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour (NIABF, 2013)- End Bullying

Fountain Primary School promotes the rights of the child based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (1992). This policy therefore takes into account:
- Article 12 - the right to express views and have these taken seriously
- Article 19 - the right to protection- incl. bullying

Consultation and Participation

This policy has been developed in consultation with pupils through class based activities and also with parents and school staff who are given an opportunity to comment on the draft policy prior to it being ratified by governors.

Aims and Objectives

This policy forms part of the overall pastoral care provision in school and therefore links and works with the:

- Pastoral Care Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Relationships and Sexual Education Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

This policy aims to:

- Create a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour;
- Promote a 'whole school' approach, where signs of bullying are identified and swift and effective action is taken;
- Show commitment to overcoming bullying by practicing **zero tolerance;**
- Promote a secure and happy environment free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behaviour;
- Ensure all school community, pupils and parents have an understanding of what bullying is, and what they should do if bullying arises;
- Inform children and parents of the school's expectations and to foster a productive partnership, which helps maintain a bully-free environment;
- Assure pupils and parents that they will be supported when bullying is reported;
- Assist in the provision of a positive and supportive atmosphere - for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour;
- Develop procedures for noting and reporting incidents of bullying behaviour.

Definitions

The Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF) defines bullying as '' **the repeated use of power by one or more persons intentionally to harm, hurt or adversely affect the rights or needs of another or others**.''

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016
Definition of "bullying"
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.

For the purposes of subsection (b), "act" includes omission.

At Fountain Primary School we realise that bullying refers to a range of harmful behaviour, both physical and psychological. All bullying behaviour usually has but is not limited to the following features; it is repetitive and persistent; it is intentionally harmful; it involves an imbalance of power, leaving someone feeling helpless to prevent it or put a stop to it; it causes distress. We also realise that:

- Bullying can take place between pupils, between pupils and staff, between staff, by individuals or groups; face to face; indirectly or using a range of cyber-bullying methods;
- It includes actions that cause physical, emotional or mental hurt to the victim and actions that violate another person's freedom and rights;
- Bullying is an abuse of power where the person/s being bullied find it difficult to reject or deal with the offending behaviour or those involved in the bullying behaviour have power over the victim. Some power imbalances can be subtle or build up over time, but more common examples include that they are bigger/stronger/older; have more acquaintances/friends; are more established in the school or simply care less about the consequences of their actions;
- Bullying thrives on secrecy, the reluctance of the target to talk about it and the neglect of responsible adults to acknowledge its existence.

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

- Severity and significance of the incident;
- Evidence of pre-meditation;
- Impact of the incident on the individual (physical/emotional);
- Impact of the incident on the wider school community;
- Previous relationship 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.

Understanding bullying and the different forms it can take is our starting point for preventing and responding to bullying behaviour effectively.

Types of bullying

Children who experience bullying behaviour at school will not always be prepared to disclose this. However, when a disclosure is made, it will always be treated seriously.

School has identified the following as unacceptable, anti-social behaviours which constitute bullying behaviour, however, the list is by no means exhaustive and other behaviours which fit with the definition of bullying will be considered as bullying.

Physical Acts - hitting; pushing; kicking; shoving; material harm, such as taking or stealing money or possessions or causing damage to possessions.

Verbal – saying mean and hurtful things to, or about others; making fun of others; calling another pupil mean and hurtful names; telling lies or spreading false rumours about others; trying to make other pupils dislike another pupil.

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 mentioned above; impersonating someone online to cause harm; sharing images such as photographs or videos online to embarrass someone.

Indicators of bullying

The following signs may indicate that a child is the target of bullying behaviour:

- Unwillingness to attend school, constant lateness or erratic attendance;
- Avoidance, hanging back from playground or staying late at school;
- Deterioration of work, under achievement or mislaid books, money, equipment or belongings;
- Unexplained 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, reluctance to walk home or travel on bus.

Whilst these behaviours may be symptomatic of other problems, bullying may be identified as a possible cause. Staff will be able to use their knowledge of pupils to identify any of these changes in behaviour. At all times pupils will be encouraged to discuss issues with their parents who can pass concerns onto school.

Bullying is an emotive issue, therefore it is essential that supportive and understanding language is used. Children will not be referred to as 'a bully' or 'a victim'. The child will be referred to by describing the situation surrounding them, for example:

- A child displaying bullying behaviours;
- A child experiencing bullying behaviours.

All members of the school community are encouraged to use this language when discussing incidents of bullying.

Strategy for dealing with bullying

Anti-bullying strategies take two forms: **Prevention** and **Responsive work**.

Prevention through the ongoing and sustained education of children in PDMU lessons and assemblies providing a consistent ethos and framework.

Responsive work in dealing with bullying behaviour once bullying has been identified.

When dealing with an incident of bullying, actions taken by staff will depend on the perceived seriousness of the situation. The emphasis for any incident will always be a caring, listening approach, as children who are displaying bullying behaviour may also be experiencing this behaviour in another setting.

The aim of any intervention is to **RESPOND – RESOLVE – RESTORE.**

Any bullying concerns identified in school will be responded to by using the **NIABF Effective Responses to Bullying** resource. The member of staff will:

- Clarify facts and perceptions;
- Check records;
- 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 listed in the 'Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour' resource;
- Track, monitor and record effectiveness of interventions;
- Review outcome of interventions;
- Select and implement further interventions if deemed necessary.

When responding to concerns of bullying interventions will be implemented, which are aimed at responding to the behaviour, resolving the concern and restoring the wellbeing of those involved. Where appropriate, sanctions for those displaying bullying behaviour may be implemented.

To aid with the identification of bullying incidents and children displaying bullying behaviour the following strategies will be carried out:

- All staff look for early signs of distress in pupils;
- All staff listen, believe and act;
- 'Playground Buddies' are available as a child's first point of contact, if they feel they cannot tell an adult. 'Playground Buddies' are children from the Primary 6/7 class;
- 'Worry boxes/hands/monsters are in each classroom where children can share problems;
- Anti-bullying posters are displayed on Safeguarding noticeboards;
- The Childline telephone number is displayed clearly.

Recording incidents of bullying

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 requires by law that schools and their Board of Governors should have:

- A definition of 'bullying';
- Secure measures to prevent bullying;
- A duty to keep a record of incidents of bullying.

All relevant information related to reports of bullying will be centrally recorded. These will include:

- How the bullying was displayed;
- The motivation for the behaviour;
- How each incident was addressed by school;
- The outcome of the interventions.

Access to these records will be restricted. Only those members of staff who have a legitimate need to access these will be permitted to do so.

All records will be maintained in line with relevant data protection legislation and guidance. They will be disposed of in line with the school's Retention and Disposal of Documents Policy.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Board of Governors will monitor the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy by:

- Maintaining Safeguarding and Child Protection as a standing item on the agenda of every Board of Governor meeting, where a report of recorded incidents of bullying will be noted;
- Identifying trends and priorities for action;
- Assessing the effectiveness of strategies aimed at preventing bullying behaviour;
- Assessing the effectiveness of strategies aimed at responding to bullying behaviour.

This policy will be reviewed in consultation with staff, pupils and parents/carers every four years or when DENI may direct to do so.

Useful websites

NI Anti-Bullying Forum: www.endbullying.org.uk

Dealing with bullying: Top Tips: www.parentingni.org.uk