

St Peter's Nursery School Addressing Bullying Policy



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CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Definition of Bullying
3. Aims
4. Types of Bullying Behaviour
5. Effects of Bullying
6. Signs & Symptoms of Bullying
7. Recognising Bullying Behaviour
8. Recognising Potential Targets of Bullying
9. Anti Bullying Action Plan
10. The responsibilities of Parents / Guardians
11. Monitoring & Evaluation

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy was written using the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, and the Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum's Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource.

The role of any nursery school is to provide the highest possible standard when delivering the preschool curriculum and educating the "whole child". To achieve this goal, a stable, secure learning environment is an essential requirement. Bullying by its very nature undermines and dilutes the quality of education and can impose psychological damage on those who are victims.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states:

'Children have the right to be protected from all forms of violence (physical and mental). They must be kept safe from harm and they must be given proper care by those looking after them'.

Most incidents of aggressive or hurtful behaviour at this stage of development are due to immature development of social and emotional skills. In the nursery classroom this presents as an inability to share, to take turns, to accept the approach of others in to the play situation and results in inappropriate ways of coping with frustration. E.g. pushing, snatching toys.

2. DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying behaviour is defined as 'deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for the victim to defend themselves' (DENI 1999)

3. AIMS

In St Peter's Nursery School we aim to establish an ordered, friendly environment in which children feel valued, secure and happy. We aim:-

- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with teachers, pupils, parent/guardians.
- To enable pupils to articulate their fears and concerns and be confident that they will receive a sympathetic and supportive response from teachers and other adults within the school community.
- To create a school ethos which encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To develop and implement strategies to minimise the likelihood of incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To offer support for those who are victims of bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- To seek to influence attitudes of pupils to bullying behaviour, in a positive manner, through a range of curricular initiatives.
- To respond to the concerns of parents and inform them of follow-up action taken, aimed at bringing the bullying to an end for the victim and the bully.

4. TYPES OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

The following are unacceptable forms of anti-social behaviours which will only constitute bullying behaviours when there is evidence that the behaviour is recurrent/persistent, targeted, intentionally hurtful, and where a power imbalance between pupils is evident.

Types of unacceptable anti-social behaviours which infringe everyone's rights to be safe include:

1. Physical (includes jostling, physical intimidation, punching/kicking, any other physical contact which may include use of weapons).
2. Verbal (includes name calling, insults, jokes, threats, spreading rumours).

3. Indirect (includes isolation, refusal to work with/talk to/play with/help others, interfering with personal property) and includes Cyber-bullying: misuse of mobile phones and internet programmes to humiliate, threaten and/or isolate another.

5. EFFECTS OF BULLYING

Pupils who are being bullied may develop feelings of insecurity and extreme anxiety and thus may become more vulnerable. Self-confidence may be damaged with a consequent lowering of self-esteem.

Despite a positive and supportive climate within the school, pupils may still be reluctant to report instances of bullying, perhaps because they are fearful of the consequences. Both parents/guardians and teachers must therefore be vigilant and observant to detect changes in the mood and behaviour in a pupil and take early intervention.

6. SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF BULLYING

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

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school.
- Unwillingness to go to school.
- Pattern of physical illness, eg. headaches, stomach aches.
- Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school.
- Unexplained changes, either in mood or behaviour.
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress, eg. difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, and stammering.
- Possessions missing or damaged.
- Unexplained bruising, cuts or damaged clothing.
- Reluctance or refusal to say what is troubling him/her.

This list is not exhaustive and there may, of course, be other causes for such behaviour. However, if signs or symptoms are repeated or occur in combination, then our school recognises that they warrant investigation to establish what is affecting the pupil.

7. RECOGNISING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

All bullying behaviour usually has the following four 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.

These attitudes and behaviours can be addressed through curricular intervention aimed at the prevention of bullying.

1. Co-operative work and non-aggressive behaviour should be praised through specific positive praise.
2. Empathy should be encouraged through role play activities.
3. Language and communication work should cover the theme of how other people feel.
4. Circle time should be used to explore children's feelings and attitudes.
5. Class Rules should be implemented consistently.

8. RECOGNISING POTENTIAL TARGETS OF BULLYING

These may be pupils who are:

- New to the Nursery class or to St Peter's Nursery School.
- Different in appearance, speech or background from other pupils.
- Experiencing low esteem (but it's not clear whether this is a cause or effect of bullying).
- Demonstrating 'entertaining' reactions when bullied, e.g. tantrums, loss of control.
- More nervous or anxious.

9. ANTI BULLYING ACTION PLAN

Bullying can be dealt with through active classroom management. If a staff member becomes aware of bullying behaviour, they should:

- Take the incident or report seriously.

- Remain calm - reacting emotionally may encourage the bullying behaviour and give the child demonstrating bullying behaviours more control of the situation.
- Reassure the child who has been bullied - don't make them feel inadequate
- Offer concrete help, advice and support to the child affected.
- Encourage the child displaying bullying behaviour to see the other child's point of view.
- Use consequences with the child displaying bullying behaviour if appropriate but be very careful how this is managed. Reacting aggressively or punitively gives the message that it's all right to bully if you have the power.
- Explain clearly the consequence and why it is being given.

9.1 WHOLE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT ISSUES:

- Staff must inform the Class Teacher so that incidents can be handled discreetly and sensitively.
- Inform colleagues if the incident arose out of a situation where there are broader learning points and everyone should be vigilant.
- Inform the Principal, who may inform the parents/guardians of the children involved.
- Carefully monitor all areas of the environment e.g. including bathrooms and cloakrooms.
- Think ahead and plan how to prevent a recurrence of any incident of bullying.
- Record and report the incident at the next BOG meeting.

9.2 THE SCHOOL ANTI BULLYING POLICY APPLIES WHEN:

- On school premises during the school day .
- Pupils are under the lawful control of school staff (e.g. during a school trip).
- Pupils are receiving education, arranged by the school, but delivered away from the school premises (e.g. at another school in the Area Learning Community).

9.3 RECORDING INSTANCES OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

The school must first decide if this is a 'one off' occasion, considering:

- The severity and significance of the incident.
- Any evidence of pre-meditation.
- The impact of the incident on individuals (physical/emotional); the impact of the incident on the wider school community; and, previous relationships between those involved.
- Any previous incidents involving the individuals.

When alleged incidents fail to meet the criteria for bullying behaviour, the school will use the Positive Behaviour Policy to address unacceptable behaviour.

The governors must ensure that ALL incidents that are reported as bullying are recorded. (see appendix 1). Names will be anonymised when the Principal is reporting to the BOG.

The report will include:

- Circumstances and motivation of the bullying behaviour (e.g. age, appearance, race, disability, ability or child looked after etc.)
- Method of bullying
- How the incident was addressed (see Appendix 1 for record management pro forma)
- Frequency of bullying incidents will be reported at each governors meeting
- Details of review actions.

10. THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS / GUARDIANS

We ask parents to support their children and the school by:

- Understanding the definition of bullying.
- Working in partnership with the class teacher, to identify possible reasons and triggers for the behaviour and to share strategies to change the behaviour pattern of a child displaying bullying behaviour.
- Watching for signs of distress in their child and being aware of the signs and symptoms of bullying;
- Taking bullying seriously and finding out the facts when told about an incident of bullying;
- Advising their child to report any bullying to their class teacher;
- Informing child's teacher if it is school bullying and about outside incidents which may have a negative effect on the child in school;
- Keeping a written record if the bullying persists: who, where, when?
- Devising strategies to help their child to assert him/her. Reassure child that there is nothing wrong with him/her which justifies bullying.

11. MONITORING & EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed and monitored in line with the school's policy review schedule.

APPENDIX 1



RECORD OF INCIDENTS OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Date of incident	Initials of child displaying bullying behaviour	Initials of target child	Motivation behind the behaviour	Method of bullying (verbal, physical etc.)	How the situation was addressed	Review (including date)