



# Ballycraigy Primary School

## Policy for Dealing with Bullying

<b>Date reviewed</b>	August 2016
<b>Date ratified by governors</b>	
<b>Next review due</b>	August 2017



## **POLICY FOR DEALING WITH BULLYING**

### **Definition**

All schools are required by law to have measures in place to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils. At Ballycraigy primary we believe that understanding bullying and the different forms it can take is the starting point for preventing and responding to bullying behaviour 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
2. it is intentionally harmful
3. it involves an imbalance of power, leaving someone feeling helpless to prevent it or put a stop to it
4. it causes distress

The Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF) 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.

As a Rights Respecting School, staff, parents and children at Ballycraigy Primary work together to create a happy, caring and safe learning environment. Article 6 of UNCRC states "All children have the right to life. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily" and Article 36 states "Children should be protected from any activities that could harm their development." And so bullying, whether verbal, physical or indirect, is not tolerated. It is everyone's responsibility to try to prevent occurrences of bullying and to deal with any incidents quickly and effectively.

Research has shown, repeatedly, that the extent of bullying in schools is greatly underestimated.

As the terms "victim" and "bully" are problematic the school will use the following terms:

1. "child who has been bullied" or "target of bullying" to refer to the victim
2. "child who has been displaying bullying behaviour" to refer to the bully

Bullying may be brought to the attention of any member of staff by the child (children\_ who has been bullied or target of bullying, their friend(s), their parent(s) or other interested people.

### **Aims**

- ◆ To provide a safe, caring environment for the whole school community, especially the children in our care.
- ◆ To instil in children that bullying is unacceptable and that reports of bullying will be taken seriously, recorded and acted upon.
- ◆ To reassure children that they will be listened to and will know that it is all right to tell.
- ◆ To heed parents and keep them informed of actions taken in response to a complaint.
- ◆ A full investigation will follow any report of bullying with detailed records kept of incidents, reports and complaints.
- ◆ To take appropriate action, including exclusion in cases of severe bullying.
- ◆ To monitor incidents of bullying.

### **The responsibility of staff**

Our staff will:

- ◆ Foster in our pupils self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others.
- ◆ Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils.
- ◆ Discuss bullying with all classes, so that every pupil learns about the damage it causes to both the child who is bullied and to the bully, and the importance of telling a teacher about bullying when it happens.
- ◆ Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying.
- ◆ Listen to children who have been bullied, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them. To provide a safe, caring environment for the whole school community, especially the children in our care.
- ◆ Report suspected cases of bullying to the Principal or Key Stage Coordinator.
- ◆ Follow up any complaint by a parent about bullying, and report back promptly and fully on the action which has been taken.
- ◆ Deal with observed instances of bullying promptly and effectively, in accordance with agreed procedures.

### **The responsibilities of pupils**

We expect our pupils to:

- ◆ Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity.
- ◆ Intervene to protect the pupil who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so.
- ◆ Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances

Anyone who becomes the target of bullies should

- ◆ Not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out, to put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets.

### **Working in partnership with parents and carers**

Bullying is often reported to schools by parents/carers. Such concerns will be met openly and sympathetically.

School staff and parents/carers meet on bullying issues as a result of:

- ◆ Parents/carers participating in the development of the school's anti-bullying policy
- ◆ Parents/carers expressing concern about their child's involvement in a bullying incident/situation, particularly if their child has been bullied
- ◆ The school requesting a meeting with parents/carers regarding a bullying incident/concern

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

- ◆ Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children, which might be evidence of bullying.
- ◆ Advising their children to report any bullying to the Principal or Key Stage Coordinator, and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for the other pupils.
- ◆ Advising their children not to retaliate violently to any form of bullying.
- ◆ Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken.
- ◆ Keeping a written record of any reported instances of bullying.
- ◆ By informing the school of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved.
- ◆ Cooperate with the school, if their children are accused of bullying, try to ascertain the truth, and point out the implications of bullying, both for the children who are bullied and for the bullies themselves.

### **The responsibilities for all**

Everyone should:

- ◆ Work together to combat and, hopefully in time, to eradicate bullying.

### **Strategy for Dealing with Bullying**

Staff will respond to a bullying concern with a positive mindset. We believe the following are important factors when managing a bullying situation. Staff will:

- ◆ Be calm
- ◆ Be positive
- ◆ Be assertive
- ◆ Be confident
- ◆ Ensure that the specific behaviour is in fact bullying behaviour which conforms to the school's agreed definition of bullying
- ◆ Assess the situation and its level of severity and deal with it accordingly

To determine the level of severity staff will take account of:

- ◆ The nature of the bullying behaviour
- ◆ The frequency of the bullying behaviour
- ◆ The duration of the bullying behaviour
- ◆ The perceptions of the child being bullied

In response to a complaint of bullying, the discipline procedures of Ballycraig Primary should be followed, with staff making a full investigation, keeping detailed records and applying interventions as necessary (Appendix 2). The Bullying Concern Assessment Form (Appendix 1) will be completed and the appropriate level of intervention will be selected (Appendix 3).

The main aim of any intervention is to **RESPOND** to the bullying that is taking place, **RESOLVE** the concern and **RESTORE** the well-being of all those involved. In selecting an intervention we will take account of:

- ◆ The level of severity using the NIABF as a guide
- ◆ 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
- ◆ Whether the pupil(s) displaying bullying behaviour acknowledge(s) the unacceptable behaviour and can be enabled to feel empathy for the pupil experiencing bullying, and act appropriately

Procedures that will be followed by the Principal or Key Stage Coordinators:

1. Discuss the nature of the bullying with the child who has been the target of bullying, recording all the facts on the Bullying Concern Assessment Form.
2. Identify the child (children) who have been displaying bullying behaviours and any witnesses.
3. Interview witnesses.
4. Discuss the incident(s) with the alleged child (children) who have been displaying bullying behaviours. Confront them with the allegations and ask them to tell the truth about the situation/incident. Make it clear that this is only an investigation at this stage.
5. If the child (children) who have been displaying bullying behaviours owns up, make it understood that bullying is not acceptable at Ballycraig Primary and what effect it has on the education of the victim and the rest of the children in the class/school. Apply the interventions relevant to the type of bullying.
6. If the allegation of bullying is denied, investigate further. If there is sufficient evidence that the bullying occurred, apply relevant interventions.
7. Hold separate discussions with parents of child (children) who have been displaying bullying behaviours and the child (children) who has been the target of bullying.
8. Appropriate interventions will be selected from those listed in Appendix 2 and from NIABF Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour
9. Provide a Pastoral Support Programme for the child (children) who has been the target of bullying.
10. Provide a Pastoral Support Programme for the child (children) who have been displaying bullying behaviours.

In order to reduce incidents of bullying and recognise bullies, at Ballycraig Primary all staff watch for early signs of distress in pupils. We listen, believe and act.

There are posters in the entrance hall, classrooms, corridors and toilets advertising how children can report bullying and dissuading children from bullying.

All staff will be encouraged to use proactive strategies to create an anti-bullying school ethos. This will be done through activities such as circle time, positive behaviour, PDMU, promoting and developing each pupil's self-esteem, creating a listening culture, encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their behaviour and by promoting a decisive teaching style.

### **Bullying off the School Premises**

Ballycraig Primary is not directly responsible for bullying off the school premises.

Reviewed and Updated August 2016  
Review Date August 2017

Where possible, Ballycraigy Primary will support pupils who have been bullied, especially on their way to or from school, by pupils from another school or by other persons.

The following steps will be taken.

- ◆ Talk to the pupil(s) and parents involved from the other school.
- ◆ Talk to the Principal of another school whose pupils are bullying off school premises.
- ◆ Talk to the PSNI about problems on the local streets.
- ◆ Talk to the local transport company, if bullying is occurring on school buses.
- ◆ Talk to pupils about how to avoid or handle bullying situations.

### **Bullying Directed Towards Race, Gender, Sexual Orientation or Disability**

Ballycraigy Primary will not tolerate bullying against anyone because of his or her race, gender, sexual orientation or disability. The school will take preventative action to reduce the likelihood of bullying incidents of this nature occurring. Stereotypical views are challenged and pupils learn to appreciate and view positively differences in others, whether arising from race, gender, ability or disability e.g. through the PDMU programme.

### **Racial Bullying/Harassment**

Racial bullying will not be tolerated in Ballycraigy Primary and will be treated severely. If a child receives verbal abuse, physical threats or attacks, or if a pupil brings racist literature into school, incites others to behave in a racist way or writes racist insults, the strategies in the Policy for Education for Ethnic Diversity will be implemented.

A full investigation will be carried out, recording incidents. Ballycraigy Primary has a duty to develop children's understanding of ethnic diversity issues and explore racial tolerance in PDMU lessons and in Religious Education lessons.

Ballycraigy Primary guarantees confidentiality and support for those being bullied. Racial incidents are reported as required.

### **Sexual Bullying**

Sexual bullying has an impact on both genders. A sexual assault will lead to the exclusion of the perpetrator from Ballycraigy Primary. Sexual bullying is characterised by abusive name-calling, comments about appearance, attractiveness and emerging puberty, inappropriate and uninvited touching, sexual innuendoes and propositions (i.e. sexual harassment), and, in its extreme form, sexual assault or rape.

### **Sexual Orientation**

Sexual bullying can also be related to sexual orientation. Children do not have to be homosexual or bi-sexual to experience such bullying.

### **Special Education Needs or Disabilities**

Pupils with special educational needs or disabilities might not be able to articulate experiences as fluently as other children. However, they are often at greater risk of being bullied, both directly and indirectly, and usually about their specific disability.

Ballycraigy Primary makes sure the behaviour of staff does not trigger bullying unintentionally. They should avoid undue attention towards SEN children compared with others, and should not make comments based on pupils' appearance or perceived character.

We try to make classroom activities and lessons sensitive to such children's needs. We teach assertiveness and other social skills and teach victims to say 'No' or to get help. A named friend is appointed for the pupil to confide in.

If the bullying is serious, Ballycraigy Primary undertakes a full investigation, including a full discussion with witnesses, recording incidents and contacting parents. Discipline procedures are implemented.

High attainers, gifted or talented pupils can also be affected by bullying. Teachers should treat this as seriously as any other type of bullying.