

HOLY FAMILY PRIMARY SCHOOL
MAGHERAFELT



ANTI - BULLYING
POLICY STATEMENT

HOLY FAMILY PRIMARY SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Definition

Bullying is an act of aggression causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to someone. It can take a number of forms: physical, verbal, making gestures, extortion and exclusion. It is an abuse of power. It can be planned and organised, or it may be unintentional. It may be perpetrated by individuals or by groups of pupils.

Forms of Bullying

- Physical violence, such as hitting, pushing or spitting at another pupil;
- Interfering with another pupil's property, by stealing, hiding or damaging it;
- Using offensive names when addressing another pupil;
- Teasing or spreading rumours about another pupil or family members;
- Belittling another pupil's abilities and achievements;
- Writing offensive notes or graffiti about another pupil;
- Excluding another pupil from a group activity;
- Ridiculing another pupil's appearance, way of speaking or personal mannerisms.

The School's View

Holy Family Primary School will view bullying as unacceptable social behaviour and will take action to eradicate it. Teachers and non-teaching staff will strive to provide a safe environment in which children can work and play without fear or threat from their peers. They will work closely with parents to establish effective channels of communication through which bullying incidents may be readily reported to a trusted teacher. The teachers will strive to be consistent with parental advice which stresses that bullying is never justified and that fault lies with those who bully and not with those who are bullied. Bullying is a highly stressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in our school. All 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 victim and to discipline the bully.

Aims

- To ensure a safe and happy environment for pupils.
- To heighten awareness of the impact of bullying and exclusion
- To employ strategies to help prevent bullying.
- To ensure that all complaints of bullying are taken seriously and agreed procedures are followed.
- To make pupils aware that Holy Family is a listening, caring school.

The Responsibilities of Staff

Our staff will:

- Foster in our pupils self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others;
- Demonstrate by example the higher 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.(Refer Personal Safety Programme).
- 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;
- Report suspected cases of bullying to Principal (Mr Donnelly), Vice Principal (Mrs O'Brien), Mrs Mulholland, Miss Burns and Miss Bateson (Nursery Unit).
- Follow up any complaints 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
- 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.

The Responsibilities of Parents

We ask our parents to support their children and the 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 Class teacher, Principal/Vice Principal, designated teacher for Child Protection, and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for 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;
- informing the school of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved.
- co-operating 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 of all

Everyone should:

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

Strategies used to implement the Policy

- Circle Time
- Alive O Programme
- Assemblies
- Positive Discipline Policy
- Personal Safety Programme
- Adequate supervision at all play times
- Work done through other curricular areas.
- Peer Mediation
- Outside Agencies eg. NSPCC, Educational Psychologist.

Strategies for Dealing with Bullying Situations

The following are a list of actions available to staff depending on the perceived seriousness of the situation. The emphasis is always on a caring listening approach as bullies are often victims too – that is why they bully.

We aim to:

- create a climate of talking and listening
 - clarify with pupils definition of bullying.
1. Listen to the victim
 2. Identify the bully
 3. Listen to the bully
 4. If bully owns up follow the procedures
 5. Investigate further if bully doesn't own up
 6. Assess the seriousness of the situation
 7. Record bullying incidents on record sheets
 8. Discussion with parents of victim and bully (where it is a serious incident)
 9. Agree a plan for resolution/ Agree support for all concerned.
 10. If necessary impose reasonable sanctions/disciplinary procedures as set out in the school's Disciplinary Policy.
 11. Continue to monitor the situation by observation at play times, lunch times and having discussions with victim/bully to ensure no repetition.

Reporting of an Incident

When a bullying incident is reported the information will be passed on to the following people.

- The teacher of any child involved. Principal/Vice Principal, designated teacher for Child Protection
- Pupils involved will be interviewed and a record made of their responses using school's incident report form.
- Parents of all pupils involved will be informed of the school's action up to this point and will be kept informed of subsequent action.
- When necessary the school will draw on support from arrange of outside agencies including Education Welfare Officer, Behaviour Management Team and the Educational Psychology Service. In most instances the school will seek to deal with the situation from within its own resources. However, if it becomes clear that outside help is needed the school will not hesitate to avail of it.

Links with other School Policies

This anti-bullying policy forms part of the school's overall Pastoral Care Policy. It links with the Child Protection Policy and the Personal Safety Policy in which the school outlines the steps it will take to protect children from harm and develop their personal safety strategies. It links with the discipline policy in which the school outlines the types of behaviour which are considered appropriate and inappropriate, together with the sanctions which will be used as part of the disciplinary process.

Monitoring and Review of the anti-bullying policy

Implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Principal and Senior Management. A report on implementation will be provided annually to the Board of Governors, within the overall report on pastoral care provision. This policy will be formally evaluated and reviewed regularly.