

# Larne & Inver Primary School



## ***Addressing Bullying Behaviour Policy***


*To be reviewed before June 2026*

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## **Section1 - Introduction and Statement**

***At Larne and Inver Primary School, 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. We are completely opposed to any form of bullying and will not tolerate it. It is entirely contrary to the values and principles we work and live by in creating 'a bridge to the future'.***

The Department of Education has urged schools to prevent and tackle any incidents of bullying systematically. Our school Governors have stressed their commitment to prevent bullying in all its forms. All staff members are focused on their responsibility to protect pupils and give them the skills to avoid being bullied. Parents quite rightly demand that bullying is stamped out when it occurs. Most importantly, the pupils want to be safe and free from the threat of bullying.

The rationale for having an Anti-Bullying Policy is very straightforward. Bullying can happen in any school and it can take away a child's happiness and deprive them of their rights to flourish. As a school we stand robustly against bullying and will not allow it to go unchallenged.

Bullying Facts:

- Bullying can be found in any school and community.
- It can be countered effectively.
- It is a learned behaviour.
- It can be unlearned.
- A bully needs help to change.
- Recipients need protection and empowerment.
- We do not want it in our school or in our community.

Victims (now known as ***A child experiencing bullying behaviours***) can suffer from:

- Low self-esteem
- Guilt and shame
- Timidity
- Social isolation
- Fear of meeting strangers
- Anxiety and panic attacks
- Psychosomatic illness
- Agoraphobia
- Depression

Bullying is better prevented than punished. This policy aims to raise awareness of bullying, create a culture that seeks to prevent it, build up children experiencing bullying behaviours to speak out and, finally, help the perpetrators to change their negative behaviours.

This type of proactive anti-bullying policy is rooted in our school's vision:

*'Larne & Inver Primary School provides a safe and happy environment where all children are cared for and treated in a manner which encourages positive and varied learning experiences at all times.'*

This requires an environment that deals effectively with bullying when it occurs.

## **Section 2 – Context**

This policy is based upon the Anti Bullying Framework provided by the Education Authority but is also reflective of the following:

### **The Legislative Context:**

- The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016
- The Education and Libraries Order (Northern Ireland) 2003 (A17-19)
- The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010
- The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Health and Safety at Work Order (Northern Ireland) 1978

### **The Policy & Guidance Context**

- The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 Statutory Guidance for Schools and Boards of Governors (DE, 2019)
- The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016:
  - Provides a legal definition of bullying.
  - Places a duty on the Board of Governors to put in place measures to prevent bullying behaviour, in consultation with pupils and parents.
  - Requires schools to record all incidents of bullying behaviour and alleged bullying incidents.
  - Sets out under which circumstances this policy should be applied, namely:
    - In school, during the school day
    - While travelling to and from school
    - When under control of school staff, but away from school (eg. school trip)
    - When receiving education organised by school but happening elsewhere (eg. in another school)
  - Requires that the policy be updated at least every four years.
- The Education and Libraries Order (NI) 2003, requires the Board of Governors to:
  - 'Safeguard and promote the welfare of registered pupils' (A.17)

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) sets out every child's right to:
  - Be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, maltreatment or exploitation. (A.19)
  - Be protected from discrimination. (A.2)
  - Express their views, in a supported and accessible way, on issues that affect them, and to have their opinions taken seriously. (A.12)
  - Education. (A.28)
  
- Pastoral Care in School: Promoting Positive Behaviour (DE, 2001)
  
- Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: A Guide for Schools (DE, 2017 – updated September 2019)
  - Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (Dept. of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, 2016)
  - Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland Policies and Procedures (SBNI, 2017)
  
- 2001 ANTI-BULLYING POLICY FRAMEWORK: updated to include implications arising from “Addressing Bullying In Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, “Inspection and Self-Evaluation Framework” ETI 2017 and “Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools, A Guide for Schools” DE 2017

## The International Context

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

Our school is a UNICEF Rights Respecting School and a Global Learning Programme School. **Article 29** of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) underlines our school's visions and aims by clearly stating that:

***“Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment”***

The rights implicit in these values include:

- ✓ The right to be safe
- ✓ The right to be heard
- ✓ The right to fair treatment
- ✓ The right to be treated with respect
- ✓ The right to be able to learn and teach without unnecessary interruption.

### **Section 3 – Ethos and Principles**

Our school Vision and Aims state that we aim 'to create positive school attitudes which encourage discipline through a Christian ethos where self/mutual respect and understanding are central to all learning experiences.'

Larne and Inver Primary School is committed to providing a safe, positive, valuing and inclusive environment for all members of the school community. All members of the school community have an **entitlement** to work and learn in a secure and caring environment, where they can be treated with respect and courtesy, regardless of gender, race, religion or ability. In addition, however, everyone has a **responsibility** to contribute, in whatever way they can, to the protection and maintenance of such an environment.

Teachers, pupils and parents should feel mutually respected and, able to openly express their concerns in a reasonable manner. Teachers, pupils and parents should feel confident that they would be listened to and taken seriously.

All school 'community' members have a role to play in promoting and implementing an anti-bullying culture. We see the relationships formed between these 'community' members as an integral element of creating this culture.

To achieve the creation of such an environment, our school community aims:

- To build self-confidence, social awareness, cooperation and flexibility;
- To protect and celebrate our diverse range of needs, faiths and races
- To provide opportunities to recognize achievement in others whilst developing a sense of modesty and 'team spirit';
- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with governors, teachers, pupils and parents/guardians;
- To create a school ethos which encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour;
- To develop and implement strategies intended to minimise the likelihood of incidents of bullying;
- To develop and implement a programme of support for both the child displaying bullying behaviours and the child experiencing bullying behaviours as appropriate, treating everyone fairly
- To develop procedures for recording, reporting, investigating and dealing with bullying behaviour;
- To develop procedures for working with appropriate external agencies;
- To influence attitudes of pupils in a positive manner through a range of curricular, extra-curricular initiatives including outdoor games and activities;
- To continue supervision and monitoring arrangements to ensure that bullying opportunities are, at best, kept to a minimum;
- To respond to the concerns of parents and to inform them of any follow-up actions.
- To develop a sense in every child of relationship, belonging and acceptance with positive peers (Barnardo's All Stars Character Education Programme)

### **The achievement of these aims should lead to:**

- High levels of pupil attendance.
- High levels of pupil satisfaction and participation in school life.
- High levels of welcome and appreciation of other cultures and needs (Shared Education.)
- High levels of parental confidence and demand for school places.
- High levels of support from the local community.
- High levels of self-esteem amongst pupils.
- High levels of emotional intelligence across the school.
- High levels of a personal and collective 'social conscience'.

We believe that all members of the school community are to be valued for their contribution and that each individual should show respect for others and themselves. An anti-bullying climate should be created through openness and consultation, where the views of all members of the school community are encouraged and considered.

***This school is completely opposed to any form of bullying and will not tolerate it. It is entirely contrary to the values and principles we work and live by in creating 'a bridge to the future'.***

The anti-bullying policy and procedures play an important role in the provision of a safe, positive, valuing and inclusive environment for everyone. In addition, they enable all members of our school community to be clear as to what is expected in order to maintain an effective learning environment.

### **In summary -**

- *We are committed to a society where children and young people can live free and safe from bullying.*
- *We believe in a society where bullying is unacceptable and where every child and young person is safe and free from bullying.*
- *We believe that every child and young person should be celebrated in their diversity.*
- *We are committed to a preventative, responsive and restorative anti-bullying ethos across the whole school.*
- *We value the views and contributions of children and young people, we will actively seek these views and we will respect and take them into account.*
- *We understand that everyone in our school community has a role to play in taking a stand against bullying and creating a safe and welcoming environment for all.*



#### ***Section 4 – Consultation and Participation***

This policy has been developed in consultation with pupils and their parents/carers, in compliance with the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016.

- Consultation with pupils took place:
- Questionnaires (age appropriate) distributed to ALL pupils in June 2022
  
- Consultation with parents/carers took place:
- Questionnaire distributed to all parents/carers – June 2022
- Parents invited to respond to policy on ClassDojo: 16<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> May 2022
  
- Consultation with all school staff took place:
- Questionnaire distributed to all staff – June 2022
- Staff invited to respond to policy on ClassDojo: 16<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> May 2022

## **Section 5 – What is Bullying?**

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 provides schools with a legal definition which must be used.

### **Addressing Bullying in Schools Definition of “bullying”:**

1. (1) 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.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), “act” includes omission.

Larne and Inver Primary School understands this to mean –

**‘Bullying** includes (but is not limited to) the repeated use of any verbal, written or electronic communication, any other act (e.g. physical or omission), or 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.’

***Bullying is behaviour that is usually repeated, which is carried out intentionally to cause hurt, harm or to adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others.***

Bullying thrives on **secrecy**, the reluctance of the target to talk about it, and the lack of confidence of responsible adults to acknowledge its existence.

*Bullying is an emotive issue and it is therefore essential that we use supportive, understanding language when discussing these matters.*

*For that reason we will not refer to a child as ‘a bully’, nor will we refer to a child as ‘a victim’.*

***Instead, we will refer to the situation surrounding that child, for example:***

- ***A child displaying bullying behaviours***
- ***A child experiencing bullying behaviours***

***We encourage all members of the school community to use this language when discussing bullying incidents.***

*In determining ‘harm’ we refer to DE Guidance which states that:*

- ***Emotional or psychological harm is defined as intentionally causing SIGNIFICANT distress or anxiety by scaring, humiliating or affecting adversely a pupil's self-esteem.***
- ***Physical harm is defined as intentionally hurting a pupil by causing SIGNIFICANT VISIBLE injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts.***

Bullying is an **abuse or imbalance of power** where the person/s being bullied find it difficult to reject or deal with the offending behaviour. Some power imbalances can be subtle or build up over time but more common examples may be that the **children displaying bullying behaviours** are bigger/stronger/older, have more friends, are more established in the school or care less about the consequences of their actions.

### **Imbalance of Power**

Whilst the term “imbalance of power” is **not** contained within the statutory definition of bullying in Northern Ireland, it is a long-standing element of bullying behaviour and internationally recognised by leading academics. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways:

- Physical
- Psychological (knowing what upsets someone),
- Intellectual
- Group/more than one individual.

It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

Bullying is usually **repetitive and persistent but individual incidents** of bullying can have exactly the **same impact** on the **children experiencing bullying behaviours** and should be recognised and dealt with as such.

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

- ***severity and significance of the incident***
- ***evidence of pre-meditation - INTENT***
- ***impact of the incident on individuals (physical/emotional)***
- ***impact of the incidents on wider school community***
- ***previous relationships between those involved***
- ***any previous incidents involving the individuals***
- ***any imbalance of power***

***Any incidents which are not considered bullying behaviour will be addressed under the Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy.***

***The following examples of unacceptable behaviours, when repeated, targeted and intentionally hurtful, may be considered a bullying behaviour.*** This list is not exhaustive and, through constant monitoring and evaluation, other behaviours which fit with the definition may also be considered bullying behaviour.

***Verbal or written acts***

- ***saying mean and hurtful things to, or about, others***
- ***making fun of others***
- ***calling another pupil mean and hurtful names***
- ***telling lies or spread false rumours about others***
- ***try to make other pupils dislike another pupil/s***
- ***threatening harm or intimidating language***

***Physical acts***

- ***Hitting***
- ***kicking***
- ***pushing***
- ***shoving***
- ***throwing an object to cause harm***
- ***intimidating gestures or signs***
- ***material harm, such as taking/stealing money or possessions or causing damage to possessions***

***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 noted above***
- ***Impersonating someone online to cause hurt***
- ***Sharing images (eg. photographs or videos) or messages online to embarrass or blackmail/bribe someone***

## Other behaviours

Not all hurtful behaviour is bullying, but all hurtful behaviour is unacceptable in school. The following are examples of hurtful behaviour which may not be bullying -

- Children may 'fall out' with their friends and engage in hurtful behaviour. Such experiences can be extremely distressing to the individuals concerned.
- Children may retaliate against the hurtful behaviour of others.

Although not all hurtful behaviour is intentional, all hurtful behaviours are a matter of concern and will be dealt with by the school (see Managing Behaviour policy). Where pupils cause harm or distress without intent, the impact of their behaviour will be addressed and any continuance will be regarded as intentional. Similarly, all unsafe behaviour will be addressed.

Teachers can bully pupils through persistent and vindictive sarcasm, regularly holding a pupil up to ridicule, or making disparaging comments about his/her abilities, appearance or family, or inappropriately serve punishments for misdemeanours. Such bullying behaviour is equally unacceptable in Larne and Inver Primary School.

## Bullying against staff

***'Larne and Inver Primary School will not tolerate parents/carers/visitors raising their voices, harassing, making threats or being abusive towards any member of our school staff or children, either in person or by any other means, including social media. If this occurs, the parent/carer/visitor will no longer be afforded the privilege to speak to anyone on future occasions without making an appointment, in writing or by telephone through the school secretary, so that the necessary staff members can be present. All matters of concern will be reported to the Board of Governors who may choose to seek legal advice and take the matter further.'***

The 'Health and Safety' Code of Conduct for our School Community is available on the school website and at the school office upon request.

## **Motivation and Intent**

Schools are required to record the alleged or suspected motivations behind bullying, including those named in the Act.

Although no list can be exhaustive, pupils may become targets for bullying for a range of reasons/motivations or none. These include but are not limited to:

- Age
- Appearance e.g. size, weight, colour or disability
- Breakdown in peer relationships
- Community/family status/background e.g lack of financial resources
- Political affiliation
- Social affiliation e.g. football team
- Gender identity
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy
- Marital status
- Race
- Religion
- Disability / SEN
- Ability or achievements
- Looked After Child status
- Young Carer status

## **Signs of Bullying**

There are several signs which may indicate bullying. However, the following is not an exhaustive list of such signs and behaviours.

***Teachers and parents should realise that whilst these behaviours may be symptomatic of bullying, they may also be signs of other problems.***

### **In School -**

- Increased or erratic absence from school, unwillingness to attend
- Sudden deterioration in school performance including forgetfulness, distractibility, sudden loss of possessions, workbooks destroyed or defaced, spoilt packed lunches
- Reluctance to walk home at the same time as other pupils or to use the same route as others – looking for excuses to stay later in school
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress e.g. nail biting, non specific pains, headaches, stomach aches
- Unexplained changes in mood or behaviour e.g. temper flare up, abusive language or impulsive hitting out
- Asking to sit elsewhere in class – avoiding contact with certain other pupils
- Trying to avoid going out to play at break and lunch times and, if persuaded to, remaining close to an adult supervisor
- Unexplained bruising, cuts, etc
- Isolation and the desire to stay with adults
- Reluctance to say what is troubling him/her

### **At Home -**

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school
- Staying late at school
- Pattern of illness
- Visible signs of distress
- Bed wetting
- Sleep walking
- Continual need (increased requests) for extra money
- Repeated loss of personal possessions
- Reluctance to say what is troubling him/her
- Threats of, or attempted suicide

## **Section 6 – Preventative measures**

It is the focus of our school to prevent bullying behaviour, as defined in the section above. The measures set out here aim to promote a strong anti-bullying ethos within the school and the wider school community.

Under the legislation, the focus for all anti-bullying work should be on prevention. As such, this section is the **key lynchpin** of the policy document.

### ***Proactive Strategies (to ensure awareness is raised)***

Staff members use the following proactive strategies in order to attempt to prevent bullying in our school -

- Circle Time in every classroom
- A worry box and quiet corner in every classroom
- Agreed classroom/whole school rules and behaviour - School Golden Rules and Children's Charter displayed in every classroom
- Prizes etc to recognise and reward Good Behaviour everyday
- Curricular Provisions through PDMU topics e.g. use of age appropriate stories/character studies/role play relating to bullying, positive behaviour and inclusion
- Parental Communication through the website, ClassDojo, diaries and questionnaires
- Peer Support Schemes for potentially 'vulnerable' children
- Regular reminders regarding the 'Family Tree' notice board and the procedures highlighted on it
- Pupil Questionnaires
- Staff Training
- Use of outside agencies e.g. PSNI, Childline, NSPCC, Action for Children
- Promotion of positive emotional health and wellbeing (eg. mindfulness training – Relax Kids, Go Noodle etc)
- Participation in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities – BLUE Week
- Involvement in meaningful and supportive shared education projects, supporting pupils to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity.
- Development of peer-led systems (eg. Class and School Council) to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messaging within the school
- Development of effective strategies for playground management, eg. training for supervisors, zoning of playgrounds, effective training and deployment of P6/7 buddies, inclusion of specific resources (buddy benches, play bus stops) and provision of a variety of play options and equipment to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Focused assemblies to raise awareness and promote understanding of key issues related to bullying, including the forms of bullying and how/why it can happen



- Development of effective strategies for the management of unstructured times (eg. break time, lunch) – games and videos etc
- Provision and promotion of extra-curricular activities, aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks.

In addition, the whole school approach includes -

- **Meeting and Greeting**- Speaking to children as they enter school and targeting 'quiet' or 'withdrawn' children
- **Effective Supervision**- Ensuring that the exits are 'covered', that buddies are trained properly and that all members of staff are aware of the 'effective supervision' policy
- **Accident Book** - The school accident book (kept in the staff room) should be maintained daily and monitored by the Vice Principal
- **Incident forms** – This form is used for recording incidents that are not of a Safeguarding/Child Protection nature.  
(The Incident Form 2020 replaces the Pastoral Care running records)

All staff have also agreed the following strategies to assist with the prevention of bullying in our school -

## **Classroom**

*Effective use of -*

- Seating plans- grouping children according to personalities
- Lining up - exit and entrance strategies
- Settling activities
- Agreed classroom rules constantly reinforced
- Praising and rewarding good behaviour
- Close monitoring of opportunities for movement
- Integrating new children into classroom
- Classroom temperature
- Pupil of the week and 'well done' awards

## **Corridors**

- Ensuring teacher supervision during movement
- Classes and individuals walking on the left side of corridor
- Classes moving in small groups (as far as possible)
- Classes moving short distances before stopping
- Re-allocation of cloak pegs to be outside classrooms (as far as possible)
- Children not allowed back inside the school, without permission before school, at break/lunch time and after school
- Spot prizes/ Award board for good standards of movement

## **Toilets**

- Limiting the numbers of children in toilets at any one time
- Monitoring children from different classes meeting at the toilets
- Teacher/ Monitor supervision moving to/from toilet & at toilet entrance
- During wet break/lunch times, limiting the number of children moving to/from toilet and ensuring Teacher/Classroom Assistant being available to monitor supervision
- No bags, pens, pencils etc allowed into toilet areas.

## **Empowering Children**

Through assemblies and various curricular tasks, including 'circle time', staff members ensure that all children are informed -

- That they have the right not to be bullied.
- That it is the child displaying bullying behaviours who has the problem, not them.
- That they are not alone, despite what the bully may have done to make them think so.
- That they cannot, and are not expected to, deal with a bullying situation by themselves....they must seek help.
- That they see it as their responsibility to stand against bullying, by reporting it and by supporting their peers when bullying happens.
- That they should 'speak out' and trust teachers to take their concerns seriously and sort them accordingly

Children are also taught about how bullying affects the various people involved -

### ***Effects on the children experiencing bullying behaviour***

- Loss of Self-Esteem
- Emotional problems e.g. depression, finding it difficult to trust others
- Isolation
- Absenteeism
- Desire to bully others
- Health problems

### ***Effects on the children displaying bullying behaviour***

- Sense of identity
- Increase in self esteem
- Protection from problems
- Long term depression

- Long term criminal activities

***Children experiencing bullying behaviour remain silent because of -***

- A fear of making the situation worse
- A fear of not being believed
- A fear of being blamed for provoking it
- A fear of not knowing where to go for help
- A hope that it will go away
- Feeling that 'I am not a nice person'
- Feeling that 'no one would like to be my friend'

***'At all times, children's concerns are our concerns'***

Under the new legislation, schools must state within their policy the preventative measures they will put in place to prevent bullying behaviour ***on the way to and from school***.

In Larne and Inver Primary School, we:

- Have created our Code of Conduct for Educational Visits which is signed by all parents and reinforced to all children prior to travelling on buses etc.
- Regularly remind parents (ClassDojo) to collect their children from inside the school grounds and to cross the surrounding roads safely using the patrol crossing person or with adult supervision
- Have developed a culture where pupils take pride in their school and are viewed as ambassadors for their school within the community. This includes regular reminders of the positive behaviour expectations whilst travelling to and from school. ***When in school uniform, you are representing our school!***
- Have requested that pupils and parents report inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour of others during the journey to and from school, working alongside parents to investigate any matters of concern.
- Have positive engagement with transport providers (eg. Translink, EA Transport, etc.) to ensure effective communication and the early identification of any concerns for trips, swimming lessons etc
- Welcome the promotion of key anti-bullying messages and awareness of behaviour expectations of pupils amongst the local community (eg. local shops, cafes, service providers, residents, etc), including information on how to raise any concerns with the school.
- Appropriately deploy staff to support the transition from school day to journey home e.g. all exits and carparks are supervised.

The new legislation also gives schools the authority to take steps to prevent bullying through the use of **electronic communication** amongst pupils, staff and parents at any time during term, where that behaviour is likely to have a detrimental effect on the pupil's, parent's or staff member's well-being at school.

In Larne and Inver Primary School, we:

- Address key themes of online behaviour and risk through PDMU lessons and in assemblies, including understanding how to respond to harm and the consequences of inappropriate use.
- Participate in Anti-Bullying Week (BLUE Week) activities and Safer Internet Day
- Ensure that everyone knows to report any known online bullying, whether inside or outside of school, which could affect anyone during school time.
- Ensure that everyone knows that online/electronic bullying will not be tolerated and that immediate and/or legal action may be taken if necessary
- Engage with key statutory and voluntary sector agencies (eg. C2k, PSNI, Public Health Agency, Safeguarding Board for NI e-Safety Forum, National Online Safety Agency) to support the promotion of key messages.
- Develop and implement robust and appropriate policies in related areas (eg. Acceptable Use of the Internet/ E Safety Policy, Mobile Phone Policy etc)
- Distribute our e safety policy and NSPCC resources to parents
- Ensure that all staff and governors have read, understood and signed the appropriate code of conduct regarding online behaviour
- Ensure that all parents read the annual UICT Pupil Agreement form with their child and sign the agreement
- Ensure that our school website has many external links to other websites which support the work done in school on anti-bullying
- Ensure that our school website has many resources to support parents with keeping their children safe online (National Online Safety Parent Guides Posters)
- Ensure that all parents are aware of the Safer Schools NI app and have been sent instructions for using it
- Ensure that parents set a good example when online by behaving in a respectful manner at all times. Parents sign the Data Capture Form and agree to this annually.

## ***Section 7 - Roles and responsibilities***

This Anti-Bullying Policy makes clear that **everyone** has responsibility for creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all members of the school communities.

Everyone in the school community, including pupils, their parents/carers and the staff of the school are expected to respect the rights of others to be safe.

Everyone has the responsibility to work together to:

- foster positive self-esteem
- behave towards others in a mutually respectful way
- model high standards of personal pro-social behaviour
- be alert to signs of distress\* and other possible indications of bullying behaviour
- inform the school of any concerns relating to bullying behaviour
- refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying behaviour, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity.
- refrain from retaliating to any form of bullying behaviour
- intervene to support any person who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so.
- report any concerns or instances of bullying behaviour witnessed or suspected, to a member of staff.
- emphasise the importance of seeking help from a trusted adult about bullying behaviour when it happens or is observed
- explain the implications of allowing the bullying behaviour to continue unchecked, for themselves and/or others.
- listen sensitively to anyone who has been bullied, take what is said seriously, and provide reassurance that appropriate action will be taken
- know how to seek support – internal and external
- resolve difficulties in restorative ways to prevent recurring bullying behaviour and meet the needs of all parties

The ***Addressing Bullying In Schools Act Northern Ireland 2016*** states that

The ***Board of Governors*** of a grant-aided school must—

1(a) ensure that policies designed to prevent bullying involving a registered pupil at the school are pursued at the school;

1(b) determine the measures to be taken at the school (whether by the Board of Governors, the staff of the school or other persons) with a view to preventing bullying involving a registered pupil at the school—

(i) on the premises of the school during the school day;

(ii) while travelling to or from the school during the school term;

(iii) while the pupil is in the lawful control or charge of a member of the staff of the school; or

(iv) while the pupil is receiving educational provision arranged on behalf of the school and provided elsewhere than on the premises of the school;

1(c) review those measures—

(i) at intervals of no more than 4 years; and

(ii) at such times as the Department may direct;

1(d) before determining or revising those measures, consult (in such manner as appears to it to be appropriate) the principal and the registered pupils at the school and the parents of those pupils;

1(e) in determining or reviewing those measures, have due regard to any guidance given by the Department;

1(f) prepare a written statement of such measures and secure that -

(i) a copy of that statement is given or otherwise made available, free of charge and in such form as the Board of Governors considers appropriate, to the parents of all registered pupils at the school and to the staff of the school; and

(ii) copies of the statement are available for inspection at the school at all reasonable times, free of charge and in such form as the Board of Governors considers appropriate; and

1(g) secure that such measures are taken.

(2) The Board of Governors of a grant-aided school may, to such extent as it thinks reasonable, consider measures to be taken at the school (whether by the Board of Governors, the staff of the school or other persons) with a view to preventing bullying involving a registered pupil at the school which –

(a) involves the use of electronic communication;

(b) takes place in circumstances other than those listed in subsection (1)(b) and

(c) is likely to have a detrimental effect on that pupil's education at the school.

(3) Directions under subsection (1)(c)(ii) may be given—

- (a) in relation to grant-aided schools generally;
- (b) in relation to a class or description of grant-aided school; or
- (c) in relation to any particular grant-aided school or schools.

In addition, we recognise that all **staff members** have responsibilities to –

- Foster the characteristics of self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others in our pupils through the Barnardo's All Stars Character Education Programme – Caring, Forgiving, Helpful, Honest, Respectful and Responsible
  - Provide a safe, secure and caring environment
  - Demonstrate, by example, the high standards of personal and social behaviour that we expect from our pupils;
  - Supervise in a vigilant manner as per school policy
  - Discuss bullying with the pupils, through curriculum activities, its implications, correct actions to follow and the importance of reporting any incidents;
  - Be alert to all signs of bullying;
  - Listen, in a supportive way, to children's reports and to record, assess and act upon them if necessary;
  - Recognise and reward good behavior;
  - Be fair to all children;
  - Recognize and ensure that all children involved receive appropriate support i.e. both the children displaying and experiencing bullying behavior.
- 'Bullying is not fixed by a sanction, pupils on both sides require support'*
- Report suspected cases of bullying to Designated Teacher for Child Protection or to the Principal;
  - Respond to any concerns of parents/guardians and inform them of any follow up action, if appropriate/ necessary - ***If a complaint is made in writing, the response should also be made as per school policy*** in consultation with the Principal.
  - Deal with any instances of bullying promptly and effectively, in accordance with agreed procedures;
  - Ensure that all pupils in their class are aware of the 'We Care About You' notice board in school and the associated procedures;
  - Be aware of relevant outside agencies e.g. NSPCC, Childline, PSNI, EA Behaviour Support Team, National Online Safety Agency

All **pupils** have responsibilities to -

- Remember that we are a TELLING/LISTENING/RESPONDING school
- Understand and follow the school's 'Golden Rules' and 'Children's Charter';
- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of becoming temporarily unpopular;
- Support other pupils and intervene to protect other pupils, unless it is unsafe to do so;
- Report any incidents of bullying they witness or suspect and not to keep it a secret;
- Speak to their teacher, designated teacher or any staff member if they have any fears or problems;

- Tell and don't retaliate
- Use the Worry Box in the classroom if they do not wish to speak directly to someone;

Most matters of concern arise in the playground. Children are taught to be STARS –

<b>S</b> top	Say - I don't like you doing that!
<b>T</b> hink	Why did you do that? Why did I do that?
<b>A</b> ct	Change/stop the behaviour. Walk away. Say sorry.
<b>R</b> eport	If you are annoyed, TELL SOMEONE
<b>S</b> afe	You will be safe and happy when it is sorted!

Children can use the STARS bench to sit on if they are annoyed.

***If bad behaviour is repeated, this shows intent and is therefore bullying.***

Any child who becomes the target of bullies ***should not suffer in silence but have the courage to speak out*** and to put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets.

All **parents** have responsibilities to support the work being done in school by -

- Ensuring that their child is safely collected from inside the school grounds and is properly supervised when crossing the surrounding roads, either by a responsible adult or by the school patrol crossing person.
- Being aware of actions that may cause hurt or be viewed as bullying e.g. omitting some children from a birthday party
- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children which might be evidence of bullying;
- Advising children to tell their teacher, designated teacher or staff member of any bullying incident;
- Explaining the implications of allowing the bullying to continue, for themselves or other pupils;
- Reinforcing the need for their child not to retaliate;
- Being sympathetic and supportive to their child, ensuring them that appropriate and necessary actions will be taken;
- Informing the school of any suspected bullying incidents;
- Keeping a written record of any reported instances of bullying;
- Co-operating with the school and adhering to the aims and procedures of the anti-bullying policy;
- Co-operating with and assisting the school, if their children are accused of bullying, by trying to ascertain the truth and by pointing out the



implications of bullying, both for the children experiencing bullying behaviour and for the children displaying bullying behaviours.

## **Section 8 - School Procedures: Reporting a Bullying concern**

### ***Pupils Reporting a Concern***

*Children and young people have told the 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.*

All children are made aware through assemblies, class discussions and posters/displays in every classroom and throughout the school, that they can talk to anyone in school about anything that is annoying them, not just members of the Safeguarding team. If they prefer, they know to talk to someone at home.

(See Appendix 3)

Pupils can report bullying concerns in any way which makes them comfortable, including:

- Verbally- talking to any 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'

ANY pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing this behaviour. Our preventative work focuses on 'getting help' rather than 'telling'. As such, all pupils are encouraged to 'get help' if they have a concern about bullying that they experience or is experienced by another.

Larne and Inver Primary School believes that all members of the school community must be educated and involved in the prevention of bullying within our school.

When dealing with bullying behaviour the school will aim to:

1. Stop the bullying behaviour.
2. Protect and support the pupil experiencing bullying behaviour.
3. Change the attitude and behaviour of the pupil displaying bullying behaviour.

Every child can make mistakes and can behave in ways that are hurtful to others. In most cases a quiet word and an explanation of how others feel is sufficient to make a difference. Children can and do learn over time how to care for themselves and for others. We believe that learning from mistakes and being genuinely sorry for them is part of growing up to be a socially well-adjusted

person. We believe much can be achieved by talking with everyone involved to achieve a resolution and reconciliation.

### ***Parents/Carers Reporting a Concern***

Parents and carers have a responsibility to raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour with the school at the earliest opportunity. Parents/carers need to encourage their children to react appropriately to bullying behaviour and to not do anything to retaliate or to 'hit back'.

Parents/Carers are made aware through school noticeboards, Class Dojo and the school website as to how they should raise a concern about ANY child -

- 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 the Head of Key Stage, Vice-Principal, as applicable.
- Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken by the Head of Key Stage or Vice Principal to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to Principal.
- Where the parent/carers remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the school's complaints procedure should be followed. This involves making a formal, written complaint, to the Chair of the Board of Governors.

(see Appendix 4)

The Complaints policy is available on the school website and from the school office.

While the majority of reports of bullying concerns will come from pupils and their parents/carers, our school is open to receiving such reports from anyone.

***All reports of bullying concerns received from pupils and/or parents/carers will be responded to in line with this policy and feedback will be made to the person who made the report. However, it must be noted that no information about action taken in relation to a pupil can be disclosed to anyone other than the pupil and his/her parents/carers.***

## **Section 9 – Responding to a Bullying concern**

The focus of any intervention must be on responding to the bullying concern and restoring the wellbeing of those involved. As such, our strategy for responding to bullying concerns concentrates on the prevention of any further incidents.

The processes outlined below provides a framework for how the school will respond to any bullying concerns identified.

The NIABF Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource states that the members of staff responsible shall...

- 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 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

***When responding to a bullying concern, school staff will implement interventions aimed at responding to the behaviour, resolving the concern and restoring the wellbeing of those involved. Where appropriate, school staff may implement sanctions for those displaying bullying behaviour.***

***Again, information regarding any action taken regarding a pupil cannot be disclosed to anyone other than that pupil and his/her parents/carers.***

See also: Appendix 5 – Flowchart for alleged bullying

## ***Reactive Strategies***

We hope to react to incidents of bullying in ways which are supportive of everyone involved and which seek to influence the behaviour of the children displaying bullying behaviours away from repeating this type of unacceptable behaviour.

All incidents of alleged bullying must be reported and all such reports will be taken seriously. The school recognises that the speed of response is important and, wherever possible, incidents will be resolved quickly. However, significant incidents will involve investigation and time may be required to reach a resolution.

Pupils experiencing bullying behaviour will be reassured that they are not in any way to blame (unless there is good reason to think otherwise) and appropriate support and protection will be given.

All incidents of reported bullying should be recorded by the class teacher on the Incident Form, which is retained in class. It should be copied to the appropriate sheet of everyone involved.

These records can then be used as a source of information for other staff (e.g. next year's teacher), parents or outside agencies if necessary and to monitor children's behaviour over longer periods of time. ***All alleged incidents are reported to the Principal/Vice-Principal or Pastoral Care Coordinator.***

A child who has been displaying bullying behaviour will be expected to take responsibility for their actions. The reasons for their behaviour will be explored and they will be expected to improve and change. They will be encouraged to think and talk about the implications of their behaviour for the pupil who was their 'target'. Discussion may also involve the pupils' parents to identify any relevant background information and to secure their support. It may also be necessary for the involvement of the SENCO to address any behavioural problems through a behavioural programme. The aim will be to resolve incidents, rebuild relationships and restore a safe environment for all. Incidents will be resolved in age-appropriate ways and any sanctions will be in line with the school's Managing Behaviour Policy.

## ***Capacity to Understand***

Teachers have a responsibility to address the needs of every pupil. It is important that all barriers are acknowledged and the teacher makes reasonable efforts to meet the needs of all pupils. Some pupils have complex issues that influence their behaviour and that may result in their safety and those of other pupils and staff being compromised. It is important that all staff who deal with the pupil are aware of their difficulties so they can act as appropriate when managing their behaviour, including bullying. The class teacher should liaise with the previous teacher and the SENCo before the school year. It is also key that all staff work with the SENCo, external agencies and within SENDO legislation to ensure that the pupil, and those who will be impacted by their

challenges, be supported in the most effective manner. A range of strategies needs to be agreed to manage some pupils' particular needs. This may also be explicitly included in the pupil's I.E.P.s.

In Larne and Inver Primary School, if any type of bullying is highlighted or alleged, the following strategies will be implemented by staff in two stages:

## STAGE 1

All staff will:

- Identify those involved in the bullying incident.
- Determine whether the alleged act was intentional
- Listen to concerns when reported, taking into consideration the **capacity to understand** of everyone involved
- Give each pupil the opportunity to talk. The discussion will focus on finding a solution and stopping the bullying from recurring.
- Remain neutral and avoid direct, closed questions.
- Support the pupils to find their own solution to their personal disagreement and discuss how their proposals will be put into action.
- Ensure that all pupils are happy with a solution and their well-being is intact
- Ensure that other appropriate members of staff will be informed i.e. class teacher, non-teaching staff, Head of Key Stage, Vice-Principal, Principal. Incidents will be recorded as appropriate.
- Record the incident using an Incident Form – if unsure ask the Head of KS, Vice Principal or Principal
- Organise a follow-up meeting/discussion to find out whether the solution has been effective or not.
- Ensure that parents/carers are informed if necessary, especially if there is any type of injury.  
***All head injuries must be reported to parents as soon as possible***

## STAGE 2

If the problem is not resolved staff will:

1. Implement procedures within the hierarchy of sanctions (refer to Managing Behaviour Policy).
2. Continue to monitor the situation and follow procedures as agreed. **Complete an Incident Form (Appendix 2) for a significant/repeated/or serious one-off incident.**
3. Record details as appropriate and send to Ms McBurney to be filed.
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 / Head of Key Stage / Vice Principal / Principal.

5. Contact outside network of support at any stage of the procedures e.g. Education Welfare Officer, Behaviour Support Team, PSNI.

### **Section 10 – Recording a Bullying concern**

Larne and Inver Primary School recognises the legal requirement, as set out in the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016, to maintain a record of all incidents of bullying and alleged bullying behaviour involving a registered pupil at the school.

The ***Addressing Bullying In Schools Act Northern Ireland 2016*** states that -

The Board of Governors of a grant-aided school must ensure that a record is kept of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying that occur –

1(a) on the premises of the school during the school day;  
(b) while travelling to or from the school during the school term;  
(c) while the pupil is in the lawful control or charge of a member of the staff of the school or while the pupil is receiving educational provision arranged on behalf of the school and provided elsewhere than on the premises of the school.

(2) A record under subsection (1) must –

(a) state what, from all of the circumstances, appears to be the motivation of the incident;  
(b) state the methods of bullying, as defined by section 1; and  
(c) include information about how the incident was addressed.

(3) For the purposes of subsection (2)(a), motivation may, for example, relate to -

(a) differences of religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, sex, sexual orientation or marital status;  
(b) differences between persons with a disability and persons without;  
(c) differences between persons with dependants and persons without;  
(d) differences between persons based on gender reassignment;  
(e) differences between persons based on pregnancy.

*The Department may from time to time publish guidance as to how a Board of Governors is to comply with the duty to keep a record under this section; and in complying with the duty under this section a Board of Governors must have due regard to any guidance for the time being published under this subsection.*

***Our school will centrally record all relevant information related to reports of bullying concerns, including:***

- ***how the bullying behaviour was displayed (the method)***
- ***the motivation for the behaviour***
- ***how each incident was addressed by the school***
- ***the outcome of the interventions employed.***

### ***Anti-Bullying Record Keeping in Larne and Inver Primary School***

It is important that records are kept both systematically and securely. They must be accurate and written in an objective manner. Staff members need to remember that data is both sensitive and important.

All members of staff have been issued with copies of the Pupil Incident Form. After an incident has been investigated, the report should be completed. One copy should be retained in each child's file who was involved.

One copy should be sent to the Safeguarding Coordinator (Ms McBurney) This will help her to spot which individuals are being bullied by one or more people across multiple classes and will allow the Principal to monitor trends as well as see patterns of behaviour, especially potential bullying.

This information will be stored in the locked filing cabinet in the office.

It is important that in each pupil's profile, apologies, reflection sheets and letters sent home and interviews/parents' notes are also filed. These should be filed chronologically. The most recent events should be filed to the front.

The Class Data File must be locked away securely. These folders will be passed on annually, in August, to the new teacher.

***All records will be maintained in line with relevant data protection legislation and guidance and will be disposed of in line with the school's Retention and Disposal of Documents Policy. Collated information regarding incidents of bullying and alleged bullying behaviour will be used to inform the future development of anti-bullying policy and practice within the school.***

## ***Section 11 – Professional Development of Staff***

We recognise the need for appropriate and adequate training for staff, including teaching and non-teaching school staff. We are committed to providing for all staff's professional development needs within the area of anti-bullying strategies.

This currently includes:

- consulting with all staff members to ensure that the Anti Bullying policy and procedures are user friendly, consistent and agreed
- ensuring that the support and encouragement of the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator, SENCo and S.L.T. are clear and evident
- ensuring that staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school's ongoing CPD/PRSD provisions
- noting the impact of the training given on both the policy and its procedures - e.g. any amendments made, inclusions added etc.
- ensuring that opportunities for safeguarding training are afforded to Governors and all staff – teaching and non-teaching
- stating that CPD records will be kept and updated regularly
- ensuring that appropriate resources are available to reduce the opportunities for bullying e.g. playground equipment



## **Section 12 – Links to other Policies**

It is important to remember that this Anti-Bullying Policy is one of a number of policies in the wider pastoral care and safeguarding suite of policies. As such, it is essential that these policies align and provide consistent messages. For example, the measures set out here, to prevent bullying behaviour through the use of electronic communication, are also included in the school's e-Safety Policy.

***In the development and implementation of this Anti-Bullying Policy, the Board of Governors has been mindful of related policies, including:***

- ***Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy***
- ***Pastoral Care Policy***
- ***Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy***
- ***Supervision Policy***
- ***Special Educational Needs Policy***
- ***Health and Safety Policy***
- ***'Health and Safety' Code of Conduct for our School Community***
- ***Safe Handling Policy***
- ***Relationships and Sexuality Education***
- ***PDMU Policy***
- ***UICT Policy***
- ***E-Safety Policy including Acceptable Use of Internet Policy and Mobile Phone Policy***
- ***Educational Visits Policy***
- ***Equality & Inclusion Policy***
- ***Staff Code of Conduct***
- ***Governors Code of Conduct***

Care has been taken to ensure that all policies are consistent.

### **Useful Websites and Contact Details**

Department of Education  
Northern Ireland Anti Bullying Forum

[www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk)  
[www.endbullying.org.uk](http://www.endbullying.org.uk)  
[www.thinkuknow.org](http://www.thinkuknow.org)

Childline NI  
NSPCC (Full Stop) campaign  
CAMHS  
Action for Children  
(Larne Parental Support Hub)

0800 1111  
0808 800 5000  
028 9250 1265  
028 2827 6044

### ***Monitoring and Review of Policy and Procedures***

It is the responsibility of the Board of Governors, in liaison with the Principal, staff, parents/carers and pupils, to monitor the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy.

***To appropriately monitor the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy, the Board of Governors will:***

- ***maintain a standing item on the agenda of each meeting of the Board where a report on recorded incidents of bullying will be noted***
- ***identify trends and priorities for action***
- ***assess the effectiveness of strategies aimed at preventing bullying behaviour***
- ***assess the effectiveness of strategies aimed at responding to bullying behaviour***

It is a legal requirement that the Anti-Bullying Policy be reviewed at intervals of no more than four years. However, this policy will be reviewed following any incident which highlights the need for such a review. It must also be reviewed when directed to by the Department of Education and in light of new guidance.

Given the nature of technology, as constantly changing and developing, we will monitor this policy and message and make changes when necessary.

The school's 'Children's Charter' and 'Golden Rules' supported by the effective promotion of positive behaviour and will be reviewed annually as part of this policy's review by the governors.

The following document was also utilised for the creation of this policy and Pupil Incident Report form -

- The NIABF: Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour: 2014

Staff will be issued with a hard copy of the new policy after its approval.

A Parental Summary will be issued to parents after every review. A full version will be available from the school office for reference or/and a paper copy issued if required.

The 'Children's Charter' and 'Golden Rules' support the effective promotion of an 'Anti Bullying' culture and will be reviewed annually, alongside the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, as part of this policy's review by the governors.

Parents sign their agreement annually as part of the Data Capture Form.

As part of the ongoing review process of the school's effectiveness regarding the promotion of an 'Anti Bullying' culture, audits will be carried out with parents, pupils and the staff of the school.

## **Resources**

Resources are allocated and stored at both class and whole school level. Each class is responsible for any resources they are provided with for behaviour management.

- Books
- Board games
- Online games and resources
- Well-being toys

The Pastoral Care Co-ordinator is responsible for recording and maintaining a register of equipment and resources allocated. These records must be available for audit purpose. If a staff member leaves, an audit must be completed before a new staff member arrives.

## **Equality of Opportunity**

All pupils, whatever their gender, race, disability, ability, religion and social background must have benefit from equal treatment and equal access to the curriculum. As a school we are committed to both nurture and discipline pupils without fear or favour. Teachers plan work that is differentiated so that all groups and individuals can achieve their potential and are committed to creating a positive climate that will enable everyone to work free from racial intimidation and harassment.

***This Anti-Bullying Policy shall be reviewed as required, in consultation with pupils and their parents/carers, on or before June 2026.***