

OUR LADY'S GIRLS'  
PRIMARY SCHOOL



# Anti-Bullying Policy

Our Lady's Primary School  
June 2021

## **Section 1: Introduction & Statement**

In Our Lady's Primary School bullying is always treated as a very serious matter. We are committed to acting promptly and firmly to combat bullying whenever and wherever it occurs. Everyone has the right to feel welcome, secure and happy. The highest standards of behaviour are expected from all of our pupils. In Our Lady's Primary good behaviour is imperative to the function of learning and teaching. Our school has a statutory duty under the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying. Only if this is the case will all members of our school community be able to achieve their maximum potential. Bullying behaviour of any kind can affect this secure environment.

## Section 2: Context

In Our Lady's we have devised this policy in conjunction with our pupils, staff, governors and our parent body, through discussion and survey in June 2021. We have also taken cognisance of the following documentation:

**The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016**, provides a legal definition of bullying and places a duty on the Board of Governors to put in place measures to prevent bullying behaviour, in consultation with pupils and parents. It requires schools to record all incidents of bullying behaviour and alleged bullying incidents. It 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 (e.g. school trip)
- when receiving education organised by school but happening elsewhere (e.g. in another school in the ALC)

**It also 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)

**PLEASE REFER TO THE FOLLOWING LIST, FOR LINKS TO PARTICULAR LEGISLATION**

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)
- [Pastoral Care in School: Promoting Positive Behaviour \(DE, 2001\)](#)
- [Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: A Guide for Schools \(DE, 2017\)](#)
  - [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 \(SBNI, 2017\)](#)

The International Context:

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

## Section 3: Ethos & Principles

### Mission Statement

*We believe that each child is an individual with individual talents, abilities and needs. Our goal is to ensure that each pupil acquires the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for responsible citizenship and develops the qualities of perseverance and resilience for the challenge of tomorrow's world.*

### Aims of Policy

- to ensure that in the school community, all pupils are valued and emphasis is placed on developing confidence and self esteem
- to provide a safe, secure and supportive learning environment for all pupils
- to give pupils the opportunity to talk about bullying in general and specifically
- to help pupils to develop positive attitudes towards themselves and others
- to encourage respect for families, friends and others
- to create an atmosphere of trust where pupils feel they can voice their concerns, fears and feel confident that they will be dealt with
- to raise awareness of bullying through school curriculum through PDMU
- to provide counselling for the child where necessary
- to provide learning experiences for all so that they recognise responsibility for their own behaviour
- to provide alternative strategies for those who bully so that they can work with others

Where bullying behaviour exists, the child must feel confident to activate the anti-bullying systems within our school. It is our aim to challenge attitudes about bullying behaviour and increase understanding for all parties. It is everyone's responsibility to prevent the occurrence of bullying and this policy contains guidelines to support that ethos.

## Section 4: Consultation & Participation

In compliance with the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016, the staff of Our Lady's Primary have consulted with our parent body via the school website. Parents/guardians have been invited to respond to our DRAFT policy and any forthcoming observations will inform final policy output. During the month of June 2021, teachers held consultation workshops with children in Primary 1 to 6. Feedback from children will also inform the out-workings of the final policy.

## Section 5: What is Bullying

### Definition of Bullying

***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 is deliberately hurtful behaviour repeated over a period of time, which makes other people feel uncomfortable, threatened or distressed – ***whether this is intended or not***. It is a form of abuse which is particularly destructive not just because of the child's immediate distress, but also because the inevitable loss of esteem can have damaging long term effects. The three main types of bullying are:

- Physical: hitting, taking or hiding belongings, etc.
- Verbal, written or electronic communication such as: name calling (including sectarian, homophobic, racist), teasing, insulting, threatening
- Emotional: exclusion, spreading rumours, tormenting, isolating, etc.

Bullying behaviour can include:

- using cruel nicknames
- being unfriendly
- making threats
- teasing
- taking or hiding property
- insults
- hitting
- kicking
- exclusion
- 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 (e.g. photos or videos) online to embarrass someone

This list is not exhaustive. There are other behaviours which fit with the definition and may be considered bullying behaviour

Bullying can happen:

- in classrooms
- in corridors
- in playgrounds
- on buses
- outside school
- in homes

### **One-Off Incidents:**

While bullying is usually repeated behaviour, there are instances of one-off incidents that the school will consider as bullying.

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
- 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 incidents which are not considered bullying behaviour will be addressed under the Positive Behaviour Policy

Bullying is an emotive issue, therefore it is essential that we ensure 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 use the terms:

- 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.



## Section 6: Preventative Measures

Annually, Our Lady's Girls' Primary School will take part in Anti-Bullying Week (Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum - November). This raises awareness of bullying for the children, staff and families of our community.

"School bullying can have serious consequences for children, leading to academic underachievement, physical and emotional distress, loss of self-esteem, eating disorders and truancy. It must be tackled through both preventing incidents from occurring by awareness raising **and** responding to reported incidents by providing support to all involved."

*Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum website*

### Discouraging Bullying Behaviour

It is important that we create an atmosphere in the school where students who are experiencing bullying behaviour, or others who know about it, feel that they will be listened to and believed, and that action taken will be sensitive to their concerns. Our message to pupils is - **Informing on Bullying Behaviour is Not 'Touting!'**

### Bullying and the School Curriculum

We at Our Lady's Primary School believe that prevention is better than cure. We ensure that opportunities are provided through the curriculum to reinforce the ethos of the school and help pupils to develop strategies to combat bullying-type behaviour. An awareness of the issue of bullying is raised in a variety of subjects including English, Religious Education, PDMU and Circle Time. Role play and other drama techniques are used so that pupils learn to cope better with bullying behaviours. These also provide a forum for discussing important issues such as human rights, relationships, justice and acceptable behaviour.

In Our Lady's Primary we will:

- maintain a school ethos which encourages children to identify and disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour
- teach the rules of acceptable social behaviour
- help pupils acquire the social skills necessary in forming relationships
- provide opportunities for improving pupil's self-esteem, assertiveness and independence
- help children to express their own feelings and emotions
- help pupils to develop skills of co-operation, listening, sharing
- raise awareness of bullying, as a form of unacceptable behaviour, with staff, pupils and parents
- ensure our procedures for noting and reporting incidents of bullying behaviour and for investigating and dealing with bullying behaviour, are robust
- establish and develop links with outside agencies e.g. Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum website, N.S.P.C.C. and the Behaviour Team (EA)
- take part in Anti-Bullying Week and Safer Internet Day

## Section 7: Responsibility

All members of our school community have a responsibility for creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all children. 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

## Section 8: Reporting a Bullying Concern

### ADVICE FOR PUPILS

#### What to do if you have a concern about a potential bullying situation

- Talk to someone you trust e.g. a parent/guardian, a teacher, an older friend, a relative
- If you can write down what has been said or done to you and how you feel about it. Be careful to write down what actually happened
- If you need to, ask a friend to come with you to talk to the teacher, classroom assistant, key stage co-ordinator, vice principal or principal
- Always do something – sometimes the bullying will stop, however, it may not and you may become more upset. This may encourage the bullying behaviour remember, other people could be hurt unless it stops
- Pass a note to any member of staff or post your concern in a ‘worry box’
- Remember it is not your fault- they need to change, NOT YOU

#### What you should not do

- Do not suffer in silence – there is nothing wrong with asking for help
- Do not retaliate and hit the other person – you could be accused of bullying behaviour
- Always be truthful – do not exaggerate. If anything you say is untrue, people may doubt your whole story
- Do not believe all the stories people tell about you – you know that they might be untrue

All of our pupils will be encouraged to ‘get help’ if they have a concern about bullying that they experience or is experienced by another child

### ADVICE FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

-Watch for signs of distress in your child e.g. –

- an unwillingness to attend school
- a pattern of headaches or stomach pains
- equipment that has gone missing
- damage to clothing

-If you think your child is being bullied in school in the first instance inform the class teacher. If after this you are not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken to

prevent further incidents, the concern should be reported to the vice-principal. If a parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken by the vice-principal to prevent further incidents, the concern should be reported to the principal.

Where the parent/carer remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the school's complaints procedure should be followed. This usually involves making a formal, written complaint, to the Chair of the Board of Governors. Details of how to make a complaint can be found on our school website at [www.ourleadysdeanby.co.uk](http://www.ourleadysdeanby.co.uk) 'OUR SCHOOL' – POLICIES.

**Please remember that the School can only act if they are informed of the situation!**

-Advise your child that they **must** tell a teacher

-Do not encourage your child to hit back or respond verbally

### **Parent/Guardian Involvement**

The parents/guardians of children who display bullying behaviour and the children who have experienced the bullying behaviour, will be informed of any incident and the action that has taken place. The child displaying bullying behaviour will be reminded of the possible consequences of bullying and the sanctions for their actions will be clearly explained to them (in line with the school discipline policy). The future conduct of any pupil found to engage in bullying behaviour will be monitored.

Parents/guardians are reminded that they must tell their children to report any incident of bullying immediately. Keeping information from the school, or from their parents/guardians, will never help a problem to be solved, and will prolong the period the child has to suffer. At Our Lady's we are proud of the excellent relationships and the family values which have been developed over the years, however, in relation to bullying behaviours, we remain resolute in dealing with this issue. This policy will be kept under review to ensure that we are in a position to respond to any future developments.

This policy is an integral part of our Positive Behaviour Policy.

## Section 9: Responding to a Bullying Concern

### Procedures for Dealing with a Bullying Incident

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

1. Teachers should watch for early signs of distress in pupils. This could be evident in any aspect of school life and may include:
  - A deterioration of work
  - Spurious illness
  - Isolation
  - The desire to remain with adults
  - Erratic attendance

(Whilst these may be symptomatic of other problems, it may be the early signs that the pupil may be receiving bullying behaviour)

2. All instances of bullying observed or reported should be passed on to the class teacher and to the vice principal if necessary
3. It is important that a written record is made detailing the facts of the incident/incidents and added to the CPOMS system
4. The child should be offered immediate support and help. They should be given the chance to talk the problem over and to be listened to. In minor cases this will be done by the class teacher. In more serious cases the matter should be reported to the vice principal who will deal with the problem
5. Pupils who are involved should be spoken to separately at the initial stage
6. In more serious cases, parents/guardians will be contacted and asked to call/visit the school to see the member of staff who was in contact with them

7. Children who have displayed bullying behaviour will be required to apologise to the child
8. The situation will be monitored by the class teacher to ensure that any bullying has stopped
9. On-going support will be provided for both children
10. Any issues of bullying reported by parents will be taken seriously and dealt with accordingly

When dealing with incidents of bullying, staff will follow the following protocol:

- Clarify facts and perceptions
- Check records (SIMS/CPOMS)
- 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 interventions for all pupils involved, including appropriate interventions, consequences and sanctions
- 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 shall 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. At all times, information regarding any action taken towards a pupil cannot be disclosed to anyone other than that pupil and her parents/carers, unless absolutely necessary.

## **Section 10: Recording**

At Our Lady's we 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

Records will be kept on the online CPOMS system. Access to these records will be restricted and only provided to those members of school staff with a legitimate need to have access.

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**

The Board of Governors, Principal and Senior Leadership of Our Lady's Primary recognise the need for appropriate and adequate training for staff, including teaching and non-teaching school staff in the policy and procedures involved in incidents and reporting of Bullying behaviour.

We are committed to:

- ensuring that staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school's ongoing CPD/PRSD provisions
- involving outside agencies in providing staff development, e.g. Nurturing Approaches in Schools- Theraplay, Nurturing the Senses 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



## Section 12: Monitoring and Review of Policy

It is the responsibility of the Board of Governors, in conjunction with the principal, to monitor the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy.

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

- 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 and 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, the policy should 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.

**This Anti-Bullying Policy shall be reviewed as required, in consultation with pupils and their parents/carers, on or before the 30 June 2025.**

## Section 13: Links to Other Policies

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

- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- E-Safety Policy & Acceptable Use of Internet Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Educational Visits
- Staff Code of Conduct