



**KNOCKBREDA**  
**PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Addressing Bullying Policy**

**Ratified by Board of Governors: February 2023**

**Review Date: February 2026**

## INTRODUCTION

At Knockbreda Primary School we promote positive discipline, expect high standards of discipline and are proud of the behaviour of our pupils.

We believe that our pupils have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment, free from intimidation and fear. We encourage our pupils to develop an understanding of, and respect for, the feelings of others.

As a staff we are aware that even in a supportive and caring environment, bullying can occur and recognise that **'no school is immune'**. At Knockbreda we treat bullying as a very serious matter and will take every possible step to address it.

Bullying is considered unacceptable behaviour and will not be tolerated.

## WHAT IS BULLYING?

The Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying forum defines bullying as;

*'Any behaviour that intentionally hurts, harms or affects the rights and needs of another or others.'*

Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 provides schools with a legal definition.

### **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.**

We recognise that this can involve an imbalance of power leaving someone feeling helpless to prevent it.

Bullying can present in varying forms but is not limited to:

- **Physical** – hitting, kicking, rough pushing, spat at etc.
- **Verbal** – name calling, teasing, threats etc.
- **Emotional** or psychological/omission– excluding an individual from a group e.g. discussion, games, activities.
- **Damage to property or theft** - includes threats to hand over property.
- **Electronic or written**- e.g. cyber bullying

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, we 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 can and usually takes the form of repeated behaviours such as;

- ***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***
- ***Physical acts***
  - ***Hitting***
  - ***kicking***
  - ***pushing***
  - ***shoving***
  - ***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) online to embarrass someone*

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

***Bullying is an emotive issue, therefore it is essential that we ensure we use supportive, understanding language when discussion 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 child describing 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 discussion bullying incidents.***

## **LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES**

This Anti Bullying Policy forms part of the school’s overall Pastoral Care Policy. It links with the Child Protection 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 Positive Discipline Policy in which the school outlines the types of behaviour which are considered appropriate and inappropriate. The E-Safety Policy addresses cyber bullying and gives further guidance on on-line safety. School may take action to prevent cyber bullying that is taking place outside school and may have an impact inside school. If we know something is happening to a child outside of school we ‘must’ report it. We morally cannot know information and do nothing with it.

## **PREVENTATIVE MEASURES**

**School Rules and Ethos:** the cultivation of a positive ethos and promotion of a caring school community are key elements which restrict the potential for bullying behaviour or events to occur. We have adopted a set of

'Fair Rules' which are regularly shared with all pupils in an age appropriate manner and focus of positive aspects of school life. These rules are also shared with parents and displayed prominently in the school. Good behaviour, work and effort are recognised, praised and rewarded. There is also guidance titled 'Let's have a Happy Playtime' which gives children pointers for safe and happy playground time'

**Good Teacher-Pupil Relationships:** We encourage pupils to talk to a member of staff and tell their parents if they feel that they are being bullied. This is not 'telling tales' it is enlisting the help of a responsible adult who can help to address the situation.

Pupils will be made aware of the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and the Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection. Information on these roles is displayed in the school entrance foyer and around the school buildings. Parents are kept informed of these roles through various policies, the BOG annual report and on-line updates.

In order to develop an ethos of trust it is vital that positive relationships are developed between pupils and school staff. Where teachers and other members of staff have established good relationships it is more likely that staff will be aware of changes in mood or behaviour and that pupils will feel able to talk to staff if necessary.

School staff are all familiar with the Anti-Bullying and related policies. There is guidance for lunchtime supervisors which encourages positive play and strategies for addressing bullying behaviour

**Collective Responsibility:** Teaching staff, non-teaching staff and parents have a collective responsibility for the well-being of each pupil and consequently to report incidents of suspected bullying.

## **CURRICULUM**

Bullying will be addressed in each class through differentiated PDMU activities in accordance with the pupil's age and abilities (including Barnardos PATHS programme), R.E., Health Education etc. using areas such as role play, stories, problem solving, discussions and circle time etc. Additional resources may be utilised to support classroom teaching such as NSPCC and Childline.

If there is a concern regarding bullying which targets a particular area such as race, disability or gender, a series of related, specific lessons may be devised to address the issue.

Specific ongoing E-safety lessons and participation in activities during E-safety week.

Sharing internet safety posters from the National Online Safety with parents via Facebook/newsletter.

Department of Education Safer Schools App.

## **ASSEMBLY/EVENTS**

School assemblies and workshops provide a good forum to consider issues such as bullying. The school participates in the Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum's Anti-Bullying Week which gives a whole school focus for preventative measures and raise awareness amongst the pupils.

## **ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN WHEN BULLYING IS SUSPECTED**

*Quick reference 'Process to Follow When Supporting Young People Who are Experiencing or Displaying Bullying Type Behaviours' flow chart (Appendix 4)*

### **Addressing incidents where a child has been experiencing bullying behaviour**

**Listen** – the child should be listened to sympathetically (it may have taken considerable courage to come forward). The child should have the immediate opportunity to talk and should not be dismissed. This will apply even if it is obvious that the child is mistaken; this can often be easily resolved.

**Reassure** – reassurance that the child has done the right thing and that every step will be taken to resolve the situation.

**Be Objective** – every child has the right to be heard and should be treated sympathetically and in line with school policy regardless of age, gender race, religion, social standing and academic or physical ability.

**Preventative Action** – If possible determine why a child believes he/she is being bullied and if there is anything the child can do to remove or avoid the cause of the bullying.

It may be necessary for the teacher to rearrange group or class dynamics in order to resolve a problem.

Temporary arrangements may be put in place for drop off or collection times if necessary.

**Building Self-esteem** - it is the responsibility of school staff to help pupils to develop a positive self-image. Children who lack self-confidence and self-esteem can be more vulnerable to 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 and emotional)
- The impact if the incidents on the wider school community
- Previous relationships between those involved
- Any previous incidents involving the individuals

In the case of a one off incident a record will be kept using Appendix 1

### **Establish, Record and Report the Facts:**

Where bullying behaviour is reported or suspected we talk to: the child who has expressed experiencing bullying behaviours towards them, the child who has been exhibiting bullying behaviours and any witnesses.

## **Procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour**

Teachers will record instances of alleged bullying behaviour following the levels of intervention found in Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum 'Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour' (ERTBB) using the Bullying Concern Assessment Form (BCAF) Appendix 1.

Each case will be dealt with individually and follow up action will be tailored to meet the needs of the individual. The following steps will be recorded:

### **1. Reporting an incident**

When an incident of a bullying nature has been disclosed, the information will be passed onto the following people

\*The teacher of the children involved

\*The Principal

\*The Designated Teacher of Child protection/safeguarding team

\*The classroom assistants as appropriate

### **2. Investigation of an incident**

This will be carried out by The Designated Teacher for Child Protection, the Principal and class teacher if appropriate. Pupils involved will be given a chance to let their voice be heard and their responses recorded. (See Appendix 1)

Once the incident has been investigated, parents of all pupils involved will be informed of the school actions and kept informed of subsequent action as appropriate.

### **3. Agreeing a plan for resolution**

Working with pupils and parents the DT and Principal will devise a plan to endeavour to resolve the conflict. Using the levels of intervention in the ERTBB this plan will include targets on acceptable behaviour and will provide support measures for all children involved. See Record of Support and Interventions. (Appendix 2). Any disciplinary actions required will be implemented in line with the school's Positive Discipline Policy.

### **4. Reviewing the situation**

The situation will be monitored and reviewed within a month of the initial report recording the review using the Review of Bullying Concern and Action to Date (Appendix 3). In most cases, the school will deal with the situation, however there may be times when further guidance is required (See Appendix 3)

#### 5. Involvement of outside agencies

In some cases, the School will need to draw on expertise support from a range of outside agencies. These may include, Education Welfare Officer, Behaviour support team and the Education Psychology Service (Appendix 3).

If parents are unhappy with which way the case has been dealt with, they can arrange a meeting with the school principal following the school's complaint policy.

#### **Addressing a pupil who has been exhibiting bullying behaviour**

Having established the facts it should be made clear to the child that such behaviour is unacceptable in school.

The child should be made aware that it is his/her behaviour that is unacceptable not the child themselves.

The child should be made to realise the hurt that he/she has caused.

If deemed appropriate the children involved may be given the opportunity to discuss the situation (with adult supervision) in an endeavour to improve relationships.

The teacher should continue to work with the child in order to eradicate any prejudices which may exist.

#### **DISCIPLINARY STEPS:**

1 .The child will be warned officially to stop offending.

2. An appropriate sanction may be applied in keeping with the school's Discipline Policy e.g.:

removal from the situation e.g. exclusion from playground

detention

extra work

loss of privileges

3. Inform the parents/guardians

(a) letter of apology signed by child and his/her parents

(b) daily report



4. The child may be excluded from the school premises at lunchtime
5. We may arrange for the child to be escorted to and from school
6. If the bullying behaviour continues he/she may be suspended for a minor fixed period (one or two days)
7. If he/she persists, the child may be recommended for a major fixed period (up to five days) or an indefinite period.
8. If the child does not end such behaviour, he/she may be recommended for permanent exclusion (expulsion).

**For further guidance please refer to:**

‘ANTI BULLYING, A GUIDE FOR PUPILS AND PARENTS DOCUMENT’

POSITIVE DISCIPLINE POLICY

PASTORAL CARE POLICY

DE Guidance: <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/dealing-bullying>

Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum: [www.endbullying.org.uk](http://www.endbullying.org.uk)

Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum: Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour

NSPCC Leaning: [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

Policy Review: **February 2026** or earlier if necessary.

Please see ‘Bullying Concern Assessment Forms’ document