



MALLUSK INTEGRATED PRIMARY SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

This policy links to our Pastoral Care Policy, ICT Policy, Positive Behaviour Policy and Safe Handling Policy.

The School's View

Mallusk Integrated Primary School is completely opposed to bullying and will not tolerate it. It is entirely contrary to the values and principles we work and live by and to the ethos of our school. All members of the school community have a right to work in a secure and caring environment. They also have a responsibility to contribute, in whatever way they can, to the protection and maintenance of such an environment.

Definition

The term bullying refers to a range of harmful behaviours, both physical and psychological. Bullying behaviour is repetitive and persistent, is intentionally harmful and involves an imbalance of power, leaving someone feeling helpless to prevent it or put a stop to it. It causes distress. It can take a number of forms: physical, verbal, making gestures, extortion, exclusion and bullying behaviour via the use of technology including interactive chat media. It may be perpetrated by individuals or by groups of pupils.

Bullying Behaviour includes, but is not limited to:

- Physical violence, such as hitting, pushing or spitting at another pupil
- Deliberately interfering with another pupil's property, by stealing, hiding or damaging it
- Using offensive names when addressing another pupil
- Teasing or spreading rumours about another pupil or his/her family
- Belittling another pupil's abilities and achievements
- Writing offensive notes or graffiti about another pupil
- The use of technology, including the use of interactive chat media to humiliate, harass or emotionally wound another person
- Excluding another pupil from a group activity
- Ridiculing another pupil's appearance, way of speaking or personal mannerisms

The Responsibilities of Staff

Our staff will:

- Foster in our pupils self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others
- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils
- Discuss bullying with all classes, so that every pupil learns about the damage it causes to both the child who is bullied and to the child displaying the bullying behaviour, and the importance of telling a teacher about bullying if it happens
- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying
- Listen to children who have been bullied, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them
- Implement agreed strategies to address bullying, support the bullied child promptly and effectively and help the child(ren) displaying the bullying behaviour to recognise the impact of their actions and modify their behaviour
- Report suspected cases of bullying to the Principal or Senior Teacher
- Follow up any complaint by a parent about bullying, and report back promptly and fully on the action which has been taken

The Responsibilities of Pupils

We expect our pupils to:

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

The Responsibilities of Parents

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

- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children, which might be evidence of bullying
- Advising their children to report any bullying to a teacher
- Advising their children not to retaliate violently to any form of bullying
- Keeping a written record of any reported instances of bullying
- Informing the school of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved
- Co-operating with the school, if their children are accused of bullying, try to ascertain the facts, and point out the implications of bullying, both for the children who are bullied and for those displaying the bullying behaviour

Preventative Measures

Our school ethos promotes positive relationships. We believe that a child is more likely to seek help or to modify their behaviour if they feel that they are cared for and listened to. We work with parents in the development of this policy and seek to work in partnership with parents on this issue.

Through our Pastoral Care and Positive Behaviour Policies, and the regular inclusion of PDMU in our Thematic approach, we endeavour to provide the children with a safe and secure environment. This holistic approach encourages awareness of respect for individuals and groups, regardless of race, gender, religion, culture or physical ability.

Child Line representatives come and address KS2 children and Child Line contact details and posters are displayed throughout the school. A child protection assembly is held each September to inform the children about what to do or who to speak to if they have worries and concerns. The photographs and names of the Designated and Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection are displayed throughout the school. Parents are informed of these names also.

P6 & P7 children participate in the PSNI CASE programme which addresses Cyber Bullying and personal safety.

In order to promote an anti-bullying culture and to encourage pupils to seek help when they need it, our whole school participates in Anti-Bullying week each year. Children take part in discussions and activities designed to raise awareness of how their actions can affect others and to develop strategies for dealing with bullying behaviour.

Bullying and cyber-bullying issues are embedded in our Thematic approach e.g. Look at Me, Look at You; Mighty Me; Home Sweet Home; Are you Wise?; Impact; Building Bridges.

Many young people and adults find that using the internet and mobile phones is a positive and creative part of their everyday life. Unfortunately, technologies can also be used negatively. Cyber bullying is bullying that takes place through electronic technologies, such as:

- Mobile or smart phones – eg. calls, texts, BBM, etc.
- Smart phone apps – eg. Kik Messenger, Snapchat, WhatsApp, etc.
- Social network websites – eg. Facebook, Twitter, askFM, Instagram, etc.
- Gaming consoles – eg. Xbox Live, Playstation, etc.

(Northern Ireland Anti- Bullying Forum)

When children are the target of bullying via mobiles phones, gaming or the Internet, they can often feel very alone, particularly if the adults around them do not understand cyber bullying and its effects. A once previously safe and enjoyable environment or activity can become threatening, harmful and a source of anxiety.

At Mallusk Integrated Primary School, we believe that cyber bullying is unacceptable and that it is essential that pupils, staff, parents and carers understand how cyber bullying is different from other forms of bullying, how it can affect people and how to respond and combat misuse.

Where bullying outside school (such as online or via text) is reported to the school, it will be investigated and acted on in accordance with the anti-bullying procedures set out in this policy. The Police will be contacted if a criminal offence is suspected.

Teaching, non-teaching and supervisory staff will be vigilant and deal with incidences of bullying promptly.

Interventions

When low level bullying behaviour (a minor or first time occurrence) has been observed by staff, the child will be spoken to by the staff member present at the time. He/ she will be reminded of what behaviour is unacceptable, of the Golden Rules of our school, and of the expectation that they treat others respectfully.

The staff member will report the behaviour to the class teacher or Principal as appropriate and staff will monitor the situation. The child(ren) displaying the bullying behaviour may be excluded from the playground for a period of time.

If a parent reports bullying, it will be dealt with sympathetically and investigated promptly. Teachers will respond to the parent within an agreed number of working days (no more than 10). If the complaint is in writing, the response will be in writing.

In cases where intermediate or complex bullying behaviour (more severe or persistent) is observed, staff will act quickly to support and protect the bullied child and the child displaying bullying behaviour.

The strategies to enable us to do this are:

- The class teacher will talk with the bullied child to show support and reassure the child
- The class teacher will talk calmly to the child(ren) displaying bullying behaviour, asking him/ her to think about their behaviour, seeking underlying reasons. The teacher will discuss the effect of the bullying behaviour on others and the consequences or sanctions. The teacher will seek reassurances that the behaviour will not be repeated.
- As appropriate, the parents of the bullied child and the child(ren) displaying bullying behaviour will be informed of the issue and the strategies to be put in place. The parents will be updated within an agreed period of time.
- All teaching and supervisory staff will be informed about the situation and will be asked to monitor and feedback to the class teacher
- Sanctions may be put in place at this time, such as exclusion from the playground for a period of time
- The class teacher will undertake a structured and focused programme of work in class, involving friendship, alternatives to aggression, dealing with feelings, seeking help and bullying will be undertaken in class. This may include Circle Time, Conscience alley, activities from the Living, Learning Together resource (cea) and/ or Sarah and the Wammi (www.nicurriculum.org).
- The teacher will seek a 'Circle of Friends' to support and befriend the bullied child and to monitor the situation. They will also be asked to support the child(ren) displaying bullying behaviour in their personal development and in changing their behaviour.
- The class teacher will have regular, informal discussions with the children to assess the effectiveness of the strategies
- The child(ren) displaying bullying behaviour may be placed on a Behaviour Support Plan in agreement with parents
- The parents will be updated regularly

If the bullying behaviour continues, additional advice/support will be sought from EA Services and External Agencies. In partnership with the parents, the child(ren) displaying bullying behaviour will be placed on an Individual Behaviour Plan. Sanctions will include:

- exclusion from the playground, from class trips/ events
- suspension or exclusion from school in accordance with the school procedures for suspension and exclusion (see the Positive Behaviour Policy)

Resources

Living, Learning Together (ccea)

Sarah and the Wammi (NI Curriculum)

Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour (Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum)

Reviewed: January 2017