



# **MALLUSK INTEGRATED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **ADDRESSING BULLYING POLICY**

**Addressing Bullying acknowledges that bullying type behaviour exists in all school communities and the wider society. Therefore, we seek to provide an open climate where pupils, staff and parents/ carers are free to talk, to address and support these behaviours.**

**This policy links to the following policies: Special Educational Needs, Attendance, Health and Safety, E-Safety & Acceptable Use of Internet, Pastoral Care, ICT, Positive Behaviour, Child Protection and Safeguarding, RSE, Educational Visits, Staff Code of Conduct and Safe Handling.**

### **Ethos**

At Mallusk Integrated Primary School we maintain that learning should be active, rewarding, meaningful, exciting, and accessible. We believe in child-centred teaching and learning and believe in working closely with parents/ carers & carers and pupils to ensure all our children reach their potential regardless of their background. Diverse characteristics in our children and their background include gender, religion, social, ethnic, linguistic, and educational abilities.

We are committed to providing a stimulating, caring and safe environment for our children alongside a range of exciting, supportive and challenging teaching and learning experiences. Our activities reflect the diversity in the school community. We maintain that these will help our children to lead happy and rewarding lives.

We believe in encouraging our children to try their best, take a pride in their work, recognise the importance of high standards of presentation and behaviour and to respect and accept everyone in our school community.

We believe in the centrality of good relationships within the school community and believe everyone has a valuable contribution to make. We encourage good self-esteem, mutual understanding, respect, and acceptance. We maintain that our delivery of a broad, well balanced and flexible curriculum will ensure that these qualities are developed, and that the children's knowledge, skills and capabilities will be enhanced.

We believe that our school community can be a model for society, where acceptance and diversity go hand in hand, so we aim for balance and equality in our school community, in keeping with the Core Principles of Integration.

### **The School's View**

Mallusk Integrated Primary School is completely opposed to bullying type behaviour 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. We value the views of the pupils, actively seeking them and taking them into account. We are committed to a preventative, responsive and restorative addressing bullying ethos across the whole school. We recognise that all members of the school community have a right to work in a safe and caring environment. They also all have a responsibility to contribute, in whatever way they can, to the protection and maintenance of such an environment.

In compliance with The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, this policy has been developed in consultation with pupils through Circle Time, class-based activities, and assemblies, and with parents/ carers through engagement with a focus group and feedback emails. The Governors and staff have contributed through discussions at BOG meetings and staff meetings.

## **Context**

This policy has been developed in line with the legislative and policy/ guidance framework applicable.

### **Legislative Context:**

- [The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2016](#)
- [The Education and Libraries Order \(Northern Ireland\) 2003](#)
- [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](#)

### **Policy/ Guidance Context:**

- The Addressing Bullying in School Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 Statutory Guidance for School and Boards of Governors (DE, 2019)
- [Pastoral Care in school: Promoting Positive Behaviour \(DE2001\)](#)
- [Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: A Guide for Schools \(DE2017\)](#)
- [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 United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016:

- Provides a legal definition of bullying type behaviour
- Places a duty on Boards of Governors to put in place measures to prevent bullying type behaviour, in consultation with parents/ carers and pupils.
- Requires schools to record all incidents of bullying type behaviour and alleged incidents of bullying type behaviour
  
- Sets out under which circumstances this policy should be applied-
  - in school, travelling to & from school.
  - when under control of school staff, but away from school
  - when receiving education organised by the school, but happening elsewhere
  
- requires that the policy be updated every four years.

The Education and Libraries Order (NI) 2003, requires Boards of Governors to “Safeguard and promote the welfare of registered pupils” (A.17)

The UNRC 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.
- 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)

### **Definition**

The legal definition of Bullying is defined in the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, as follows:

**(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.**

In simple terms, bullying type behaviour is targeted, usually repeated other than in a one-off incident, intentional and causes physical, emotional and/or psychological harm.

We define ‘harm’ as intentionally causing distress or anxiety by scaring, humiliating or adversely affecting a pupil’s self- esteem, physical harm as intentionally hurting a pupil or group of pupils by causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns, scrapes, or cuts.

### **Bullying type behaviour includes, but is not limited to:**

- Physical violence, such as hitting, scrabbing, 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
- Telling lies 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
- Omission- willfully excluding another pupil from a group activity or game.
- Ridiculing another pupil’s appearance, way of speaking or personal mannerisms
- Using on-line platforms or other electronic communication to carry out a written version of many of the acts noted above
- Impersonating someone on-line to cause hurt.
- Sharing images (photographs or video) on-line to embarrass someone or a group people.

It is the position of the Board of Governors and staff at Mallusk Integrated Primary that, while bullying type behaviour is usually repeated behaviour, there are instances of one-off incidents that the school will be consider as bullying type behaviour. When assessing a one- off incident, to decide on whether to classify it as bullying type behaviour aligned to legislation, the school shall consider the following criteria:

- Severity & significance of the incident
- Evidence of pre-meditation
- The physical/ emotional impact of the incident on individuals & the wider school community
- Previous incidents & relationships between those involved.

Any incidents which are not deemed to be bullying by the Safeguarding team will be addressed under the Positive Behaviour Policy, SEN and Suite of Pastoral Policies. The motivations behind bullying type behaviour include, but are not limited to:

- Ability
- Age
- Appearance
- Child Looked After (CLA)/ Care experienced
- Community background
- Cultural
- Disability
- SEN
- Family circumstances (pregnancy, marital status, young carer status)
- Economic status/ FSM
- Gender/ gender identity/ perceived gender)
- Newcomer/ migrant status
- Peer relationship breakdown
- Political affiliation/ sectarianism
- Pregnancy
- Race
- Religion
- Sexual orientation
- Jealousy

In order to maintain sensitivity in such an emotive issue, we will refer to ‘a child displaying bullying type behaviours’ and ‘a child experiencing bullying type behaviours’. We will encourage all member of the school community to use this language when discussing any alleged bullying incidents.

## **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/ carers in the development of this policy and seek to work in partnership with parents/ carers on this issue. The staff, children and parents/ carers are consulted and take part in the regular review of our Positive Behaviour Policy, which focuses on Restorative Practices and Positive Behaviour Approaches.

We regularly seek the views of the pupils and the children have made their own 'Golden Rules' for ensuring a happy and safe school environment. There is a Worry Box in the school foyer and children are made aware that they can speak to any adult about worries or concerns.

As an Integrated School Community, we have a holistic approach which encourages awareness of respect for individuals and groups, regardless of race, gender, religion, culture or physical ability. This is achieved through our Pastoral Care and Positive Behaviour Policies, and the regular inclusion of PDMU in our Thematic approach. Our children engage in regular, meaningful Circle Time, PDMU/ RE activities and assemblies which celebrate difference and diversity.

Child Line representatives come, and address KS2 children and Child Line contact details and posters are displayed throughout the school.

New P1 children are assigned a buddy to help them settle into school life and make friends. Prefects monitor toilets at transition times to ensure pupil safety. Zoning the playground and effective deployment of Supervisory assistants and prefects to monitor playground activities, ensures that all children are as safe and happy as possible. Outdoor play equipment is deployed at lunch time to ensure children are engaged in purposeful play.

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/ carers are informed of these names also.

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

In order to promote an Addressing 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 type behaviour.

Bullying type behaviour 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, technology can also be used negatively.

Cyber bullying is bullying type behaviour 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.

When children experience bullying type behaviour 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. We recognise that a one- off incident, such as a What's App message or a text, can become bullying type behaviour when it is shared over and over.

At Mallusk Integrated Primary School, we believe that cyber bullying type behaviour is unacceptable and that it is essential that pupils, staff, parents/ carers, and carers understand how cyber bullying type behaviour is different from other forms of bullying type behaviour how it can affect people and how to respond and combat misuse. Lessons on Cyber bullying type behaviour are embedded in our Themes. Children will be taught how cyber bullying type behaviour is different from other forms of bullying type behaviour how it can affect people and how to respond and combat misuse. Promoting a culture of confident users will support innovation and safety. Children are encouraged to report any instances of cyber- bullying type behaviour to teachers.

Each child has a unique log on and password. Children will only e-mail each other using the internal C2k system. Teachers will closely monitor the content of emails being sent/ received by the children.

C2k filters and controls access to social media and social networking sites. Children will be encouraged to approve and invite known friends only on social networking sites and to deny access to others by making profiles private.

Children are not allowed to use mobile phones in school. P7 children are permitted to have phones, but they must remain in their bags and be switched off during school. If a child breaches the school policy, then the phone or device will be confiscated and will be held in a secure place in the school office. Mobile phones and devices will be released to parents/ carers at the end of the day.

Where cyber bullying type behaviour outside school is reported to the school, it will be investigated and acted on in accordance with the Legislative guidance set out in this policy. The Police will be contacted if a criminal offence is suspected.

We encourage our pupils to be ambassadors for our school within the community. Children are regularly reminded of this, particularly on trips, and are aware that while in uniform, the adherence to the Golden Rules still applies.

The children are encouraged to challenge socially unacceptable behaviour and to talk to staff members about anything they have seen or heard. At present, none of our pupils take a bus to school. Where bullying type behaviour outside school (such as online or via text) is reported to the school, it will be investigated and acted on in accordance with the legislative guidance set out in this policy. The Police will be contacted if a criminal offence is suspected.

The children are supervised at all times, with a ratio of 1 adult to 30 children on duty at break and lunchtime, to include a teacher.

Teaching, non-teaching and supervisory staff will be vigilant and deal with incidences of bullying type behaviour promptly in line with legislative systems and processes.

Parent and pupil leaflets and posters are used to inform the school community about bullying type behaviours and how to express concerns about bullying type behaviour.

### **Interventions & Supports**

When low level/ socially unacceptable bullying type 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 socially 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 address incidents in a relational, solution focused manner aligned to Safeguarding and SEND. E.g. 1 to 1 check-in time with an adult/mentor during break and/or lunch, to address the behaviours being displayed, to work on self-regulation and to understand the impact of their behaviour on others.

If a parent/ carer reports bullying type behaviour, it will be dealt with sympathetically and investigated promptly. Teachers will respond to the parent/ carer 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 type behaviour (more severe or persistent) is observed, staff will act quickly to support both the child experiencing and the child displaying bullying type behaviour.

The strategies to enable us to do this are:

- The class teacher will talk with the child experiencing bullying type behaviour to show support and reassure the child
- The class teacher will talk calmly to the child(ren) displaying bullying type behaviour, asking him/ her to think about their behaviour, seeking underlying reasons. The teacher will discuss the effect of the bullying type behaviour on others and the appropriate consequences. The teacher will seek reassurances that the behaviour will not be repeated.
- As appropriate, the parents/ carers of the children both experiencing and displaying bullying type behaviour will be informed of the issue and the strategies to be put in place. The parents/ carers will be updated within an agreed period.
- All teaching and supervisory staff will be informed about the situation and will be asked to monitor and feedback to the class teacher.
- Addressing all incidents in a relational, solution focused manner aligned to Safeguarding, SEND and Addressing Bullying legislation and guidance.



- 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 awareness and understanding of bullying type behaviour 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](http://www.nicurriculum.org)).
- The teacher will seek a 'Circle of Friends' to support both the child who is displaying and experiencing bullying type behaviour 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 type behaviour may be placed on a Behaviour Support Plan/ Individual Education Plan in agreement with parents/ carers.
- The parents/ carers will be updated regularly.

If the bullying type behaviour continues, or becomes high risk, additional advice/support will be sought from EA Services and External Agencies. In partnership with the parents/ carers, the child(ren) displaying bullying type behaviour will be placed on an Individual Behaviour Plan. Relational, Nurturing, SEN, Trauma informed approaches aligned to legislation will include:

- Exclusion from the playground, from class trips/ events
- Suspension- following a presentation of bullying type behaviour suspension of provision may be required where a young person is presenting a danger to self or others. The purpose of the suspension is to give a time for staff, in consultation with multi-agency partners, the young person and parents/ carers to draft or update RRAP. This process ensures that the environment and reasonable adjustments are appropriately amended to facilitate inclusion. Staff are committed to ensuring that suspension of provision is avoided where possible and return to school is at the earliest opportunity. Refer to Suspension and Expulsion Policy – DE Circular

### **The Responsibilities of Governors**

Governors will:

- Ensure continuing good relationships with parents/ carers, staff, and pupils by attending school events and visiting classes through the year.
- Ensure an effective whole school Addressing Bullying approach by overseeing the preventative measures and interventions outlined in this policy.
- Engage in consultation with pupils and parents/ carers to ensure this policy is reviewed and updated annually.
- Monitor changes in guidance or legislation and make changes to this policy when necessary.

- Ensuring that a digital record (statutory) is kept of all incidents of bullying type behaviour or alleged bullying type behaviour at the school, while travelling to & from the school, while in the charge of a staff member of the school and while receiving educational provision arranged on behalf of the school & provided elsewhere.
- Ensuring that these records contain information regarding motivation, method, action taken & outcomes achieved.
- Monitor the effectiveness of this policy by having incidents of alleged and confirmed bullying type behaviour as a standing issue on each BOG Agenda.

### **The Responsibilities of Staff**

Our staff will:

- Foster in our pupil's 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 type behaviour with all classes, so that every pupil learns about the damage it causes to both the child who is experiences the bullying type behaviour and to the child displaying the bullying type behaviour, and the importance of telling a teacher about bullying type behaviour if it happens.
- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying type behaviour
- Listen to children who have been experienced bullying behaviour, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them.
- Record all incidents and alleged incidents of bullying type behaviour including the motivation, method, action taken and outcomes.
- Implement agreed strategies to address bullying type behaviour, support the child(ren) experiencing the bullying type behaviour promptly and effectively and help the child(ren) displaying the bullying type behaviour to recognise the impact of their actions and modify their behaviour.
- Report suspected cases of bullying type behaviour to the Principal or Senior Teacher
- Follow up any complaint by a parents/ carer about bullying type behaviour, 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 type behaviour, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity
- Intervene to protect the pupil who is experiencing the bullying type behaviour, unless it is unsafe to do so.
- Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying type behaviour, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances.
- Keep the 'Golden Rules'

### **The Responsibilities of Parents/ Carers**

We ask our parents/ carers 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 type behaviour.
- Advising their children to report any bullying type behaviour to a teacher.
- Advising their children not to retaliate violently to any form of bullying type behaviour
- Keeping a written record of any reported instances of bullying type behaviour
- Informing the school of any suspected bullying type behaviour, even if their children are not involved.
- Co-operating with the school, if their children are allegedly displaying bullying type behaviour, try to ascertain the facts, and point out the implications of bullying type behaviour, both for the children who are experiencing and for those displaying the bullying type behaviour

### **Reporting a Bullying Concern**

#### **Pupils:**

All pupils are encouraged to raise a concern with any staff member, including teaching and non-teaching staff. Any pupil can raise a concern about bullying type behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing this behaviour. All pupils will be encouraged to see this as 'seeking help' rather than 'telling'. Pupils are reminded of this regularly through assemblies, PDMU activities and during Anti-Bullying week events.

Pupils are encouraged to make their concerns known:

- Verbally
- By writing a note (e.g. in the homework diary)
- By sending an email to a staff member
- By posting a comment in the Worry Box

### **Parents/ Carers:**

Parents/ carers are encouraged to:

- Report any concerns about bullying type behaviour to the class teacher in the first instance.
- Where a parent/ carer is not satisfied that the appropriate action has been taken to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to the Principal, Mrs Kinsella.
- If parents/ carers are unsatisfied with the school response regarding a bullying type concern, complaints should be managed in line with the school's complaints policy accessible on the school website.

While most concerns will be raised by pupils and parents/ carers, the school is open to receiving reports from anyone. All reports will be responded to in line with this policy, and feedback will be made to the person reporting the concern. No information in relation to a pupil can be disclosed to anyone other than the pupil and his/ her/ their parents/ carers.

### **Responding to a bullying Concern**

*The Legislative Flowchart of Responses* will be implemented (Appendix A).

### **Recording**

As required by the Addressing Bullying in schools Act (NI) 2016, the school will maintain a record of all incidents of bullying and alleged bullying type behaviour. These records will be kept on the SIMS BMM, which is part of the C2k system. Access to these records will be restricted and only provided to those members of school staff with a legitimate need to have access. These records will include:

- How the bullying type behaviour was displayed
- The motivation
- How each incident was addressed by the school
- The outcome of the interventions employed

Witness accounts and any written reports/ accounts will be stored in a locked filing cabinet marked 'Confidential' in the Principal's office. The key to this is kept in a lock box with a four-digit security code. These records will be disposed of in line with the school's Disposal of Records Policy.

### **Professional Development of Staff**

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. All staff are encouraged to complete the ABSIT Level 1 training.

Records of training are kept and updated regularly. Safeguarding training is given to all Governors & staff annually by Mrs Kinsella. The Safeguarding Team is trained in line with EA recommendations.

### **Monitoring and Review of this Policy**

The Board of Governors, in liaison with the Principal, Mrs Kinsella, will monitor the effectiveness of this policy by:

- Maintaining a standing item on the BOG agenda, where a report on incidents will be noted
- Identifying trends and priorities for action
- Assessing the effectiveness of strategies aimed at preventing bullying type behaviour
- Assessing the effectiveness of strategies aimed at responding to bullying type behaviour

### **Resources**

Living, Learning Together (ccea)

Sarah and the Wammi (NI Curriculum)

**Updated:** February 2024

## Appendix A

### OVERVIEW ILLUSTRATING THE PROCEDURES INVOLVED WHEN SUPPORTING PUPILS WHO ARE EXPERIENCING OR DISPLAYING BULLYING OR ALLEGED BULLYING BEHAVIOURS

Behaviour reported as alleged Bullying Type Behaviour.

Maintain clear chronological digital records - If a young person is educated off-site, ensure effective sharing of information for accountability.

Ensure all support complies with relevant legislation and guidelines such as: The Children (NI) Order (1995), Code of Practice (1996), Freedom of Information Act (2000), Pastoral Care in Schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour (2001), Welfare and Protection of Pupils ELB (NI) Order (2003), SENDO (2005), The Education (SDP) Regulations NI 2010, SEN Resource File (2011), SEND Act (NI) (2020), Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) (2016), EOTAS Centre's Guidance in the Use of SIMs (2017), GDPR (2018), Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: A Guide for Schools (2020), A Fair Start Report (2021), CYPs Emotional Health and Well-being Strategy (NI) (2021), Guidance on Remote Learning (2022), Revised PEP (2023), Guidance on Parental Responsibility (2023) etc.

#### Process to be followed

