

# St Joseph’s P.S Slate St

**Anti-Bullying Policy**

**Section 1 Introduction and Statement**

**Policy Statement**

Bullying is usually repeated behaviour that intentionally hurts, harms or adversely affects the rights and needs of another or others

At St Joseph’s Primary School, we believe all forms of bullying behaviour are unacceptable. We believe that all pupils have the right to learn in a safe, nurturing, supportive environment.

**Section 2 - Context**

**The Legislative Context**

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

**The Policy and Guidance Context**

* The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 Statutory Guidance for Schools and Board 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)

The key points to note are:

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

1. Provides a legal definition of bullying
2. Places a duty on the Board of Governors to put in place measures to prevent bullying behaviour, in consultation with pupils and parents
3. Requires schools to record all incidents of bullying behaviour and alleged bullying incidents
4. Sets out under which circumstances this policy should be applied, namely

In school, during the school day

When 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 during Shared Education sessions)

* 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:

1. Be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, maltreatment or exploitation (A.19)
2. Be protected from discrimination (A.2)
3. Express their views, in a supported and accessible way, on issues that affect them, and to have their opinions taken seriously. (A. 12)
4. Education (A.28)

**Section 3 – Ethos and Principles**

**Ethos and Principles**

As a Catholic school and in keeping with our Catholic Ethos, we in St Joseph’s aim to nurture and develop the unique giftedness of each child in our care and empower them to reach their potential. We therefore work hard to create a school which is safe, secure and a happy place for our pupils, where all children feel loved and cared for and treated with kindness as a child of God. This atmosphere of caring is based upon good relationships and co-operation between staff, pupils and parents. As educators in a Catholic, nurturing school, we are concerned for the needs and well-being of each child and will take whatever steps are necessary to eliminate ‘bullying’ from our school.

* We are committed to helping to create a society where bullying is unacceptable and where every child is safe and feels safe from bullying
* We believe that every child should be celebrated in their diversity
* We are committed to a preventative, responsive and restorative anti-bullying ethos across the school
* We value the views and contributions of children. We actively seek their views and 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 our pupils, their parents/carers and in compliance with the Addressing Bullying Schools Act (NI) 2016

Consultation with parents took place through

* Online questionnaire

Consultation with pupils took place through

* Class based activities and discussion
* Queries through the school council
* Whole school questionnaire

Consultation took place with staff through

* Staff survey – teaching and non-teaching
* Discussion at staff meetings (directed time)

Consultation took place with Governors through

* Discussion at governor meeting

**Section 5**

**What is Bullying**

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 provides a legal definition of bullying

* “Bullying” includes (but is not limited to) the repeated use of
  + Any verbal, written or electronic communication
  + Any other act, 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
* The word ‘act’ in point two above also includes omission

*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.*

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

The following unacceptable behaviours, when repeated, targeted and intentionally hurtful, may be considered a 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

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. Photograph or videos) online to embarrass someone

The above list is not exhaustive and that other behaviours which fit with the definition may be considered bullying behaviour.

There may be various motivations behind bullying, including those named in the Act. These include, but are not limited to:

* Age
* Appearance
* Breakdown in peer relationships
* Community background
* Gender identity
* Sexual orientation
* Race
* Religion
* Disability/SEN
* Ability
* Looked After Child status
* Young Carer status

Bullying is an emotive issue, therefore it is essential that we, in St Joseph’s, 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 child by 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 discussing bullying incidents.

**Definitions of emotional and physical harm set out in DE Guidance**

* emotional or physical harm as intentionally causing distress or anxiety by scaring, humiliating or affecting adversely a pupil’s self-esteem
* physical harm as intentionally hurting a pupil by causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts

**Section 6**

**Preventative Measures**

In St Joseph’s we have developed a number of measures to promote a strong anti-bullying ethos within our school and wider community. Anti-bullying work is primarily focused on Prevention. As such this section is the key lynchpin of the policy document.

* Nurturing school – promotion of nurturing language, kindness and care of each other
* One school rule –BE KIND
* Anti-Bullying week
* Promotion of positive behaviour through individual class contracts and reward system for positive behaviour
* Anti-bullying assemblies
* Raising awareness and understanding of the positive behaviour expectations, as set out in the Positive Behaviour Policy
* Promotion of anti-bullying messages through the curriculum e.g. inclusion of age-appropriate material specific to individual subject areas related to bullying, positive behaviour and inclusion
* Addressing issues such as the various forms of bullying, including the how and why it can happen, through PDMU/PD/RE e.g. racist, sectarian, disablist etc.
* Involvement in meaningful and supportive shared education projects, supporting pupils to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity
* Through the preventative curriculum actively promote positive emotional health and well-being (well-being programmes – anger management, mindfulness training etc)
* Engagement in regional or other campaigns e.g. Safer Internet Day, Good Relations week etc
* Development of peer-led systems (e.g. School’s Council) to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messaging within the school
* Development of effective strategies for playground management e.g. zoning of playground, training of supervisors, inclusion of specific resources (buddy benches etc.), playground materials and equipment, variety of play options to meet the needs of all pupils
* Focused assemblies to raise awareness and promote understanding of key issues related to bullying
* Development of effective strategies for the management of unstructured times (e.g. break time, lunch)
* Provision and promotion of extra and co-curricular activities, aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks. For example, sporting activity, creative arts, leisure and games etc.

We also have put the following preventative measures in place to prevent bullying behaviour on the way to and from school. While many of the measures outlined above will support the development of an anti-bullying culture, we in St Joseph’s can further build upon this related specifically on the journey to and from school, including:

* Development of 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 of pupils whilst travelling to and from school. Reminders will be given during class discussions and assemblies.
* We aim to empower pupils to challenge inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour of their peers during the journey to and from school. This may be through reporting incidents to parents when they get home or teacher/s in school
* Promotion of key anti-bullying messages and awareness of behaviour expectations of pupils amongst the local community (e.g. local shops, cafes, service providers, youth clubs etc. ) including information on how to raise any concerns with the school
* Appropriate deployment of staff to support the transition from school day to journey home ( e.g. staff duty at school gates)

As a school we also take steps to prevent bullying through the use of electronic communication amongst pupils at any time during term, where behaviour is likely to have a detrimental effect on the pupil’s education at school. We raise awareness of the nature and impact of online bullying and support our pupils to make use of the internet in a safe, responsible and respectful way by the following:

* Addressing key themes of online behaviour and risk through PDUM/PD, including understanding how to respond to harm and the consequences of inappropriate use
* Participation in Anti-Bullying Week activities
* Engagement with key statutory and voluntary sector agencies including (c2k, PSNI, PHA, Safeguarding Board for NI e-Safety Forum) to support the promotion of key messages
* Participation in annual Safer Internet Day and promotion of key messages throughout the year
* Development and implementation of robust and appropriate policies in related areas (e.g. Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy, Filtering and Blocking Policy, Mobile Phone Policy, Connected Devices Policy, etc.)

The lists above are not exhaustive

**Section 7**

**Responsibility**

Everyone has a responsibility for creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all members of St Joseph’s community. We all, including pupils, 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 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**

Pupils reporting a concern

Pupils are encouraged to raise concerns with any member of staff, including teaching and non-teaching.

Children can report bullying concerns, including:

* Verbally- talking to a member of staff
* By writing a note to a member of staff (e.g. in a homework diary)
* By sending a message to a member of staff on SEESAW
* 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. Through the preventative work taken forward mentioned in Section 6, this message should focus on ‘getting help’ rather than ‘telling’. As such, all pupils should be encouraged to ‘get help’ if they have a concern about bullying that they experience or is experienced by another.

**Parents/Carers Reporting a Concern**

It is important that parents and carers raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour with our school at the earliest opportunity. Parents/carers are reminded to encourage their children to react appropriately to bullying behaviour and to not do anything to retaliate or to ‘hit back’.

* In the first instance, all bullying concerns should be reported to the class teacher/Parent Support Officer (Mrs Morelli)
* Where a 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 Vice Principal, Mr McCann, as applicable
* Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken by the Head of Year/Vice Principal to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to the principal, Miss Weir.

Where the parent/carer remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, St Joseph’s complaints procedure should be followed. This usually involves making a formal, written complaint, to the Chair of the Board of Governors. It is important that this information is included within the Anti-Bullying Policy and that information on how to make this complaint is accessible to all parents.

While the majority of reports of bullying concerns will come from pupils and their parents/carers, we, in St Joseph’s are very open to receive such reports from anyone.

All 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**

St Joseph’s takes all allegations of bullying behaviour seriously. Our aim of any intervention in responding to the bullying is to restore the well-being of all those concerned. As such, any strategy for responding to bullying concerns must concentrate on the prevention of any further incidents.

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

Using the NIABF Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource, the member of staff shall…

* Clarify facts and perceptions
* Check records (SIMS/BMM)
* 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

NIABF advocates a restorative approach to responding to bullying behaviour. Interventions suggested in the Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource focus on responding to the behaviour, resolving the concern and restoring the well-being of those involved. This is the approach we advocate in St Joseph’s.

School staff may also implement interventions aimed at responding to the behaviour, resolving the concern and restoring the well-being of those involved. Where appropriate, school staff may implement sanctions for those displaying bullying behaviour.

It is important to reiterate that information regarding any action taken regarding a pupil cannot be disclosed to anyone other than that pupil and his/her parents/carers.

**Section 10 – Recording**

As recommended by the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 we in St Joseph’s will record all incidents of bullying and alleged bullying behaviour. In St Joseph’s we will record on an ‘Anti Bullying Concern Form” all relevant information related to reports of bullying concerns, including:

* How the bullying behaviour was displayed
* 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 SIMS Behaviour Management Module, which is part of the C2k system in schools. 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**

In St Joseph’s we recognise that there is a always a continued need for adequate training for staff, including teaching and non-teaching school staff. This may include:

* Our commitment to ensuring our 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
* CPD records will be kept and updated regularly

**Section 12 – Monitoring and Review of 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
* Assess the effectiveness of strategies aimed at responding to bullying behaviour

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

**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: