Leaney Primary School
Anti-Bullying Policy
March 2024

1. Introduction and Statement

At Leaney, we live and work together as a community to create a happy, secure and successful school. We believe all forms of bullying behaviour are unacceptable. We believe that all pupils have the right to learn in a safe and supported environment.

At Leaney we follow the guidance on the definition of bullying which is: 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.

We seek high standards of achievement, both academically and behaviourally, for our children and high standards of professionalism from our staff. Our aim is to enable children to achieve their academic and social potential, both as individuals and as members of a wider community.

We aim to support the development of our children and ourselves as individuals by promoting the following values – Respect, Honesty, Friendship, Enthusiasm, Independence, Responsibility, Resilience, Personal Development and Perseverance.

The Anti-Bullying policy supports the school's vision of providing a safe and enriched environment where children can learn in a relaxed, secure and happy environment.

This policy covers times when children are on the premises of the school during the school day, while travelling to or from the school during the school term, while the pupil is in the lawful control or charge of a member of the staff of the school, while the pupil is receiving educational provision arranged on behalf of the school and provided elsewhere than on the premises of the school.

2. Context

2.i. Legislation

This policy has been developed in line with the following legislation and policy/guidance materials –

- 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

2.ii. 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)
- Effective Response to Bullying Behaviour (DE 2022)

3. Principles

Principles and values that our school holds -

- We are committed to a society where children and young people can live free and safe from bullying.
- The welfare of all children is paramount, and pupils' needs, whether the person who displays bullying behaviour or pupil experiencing bullying behaviour, need to be separated from their behaviour
- We are committed to a preventative, responsive and restorative anti-bullying ethos across the whole school.
- When bullying concerns are identified our school will work in a restorative and solution focussed way including the use of sanctions to achieve the necessary change
- Pupils who are targeted will be listened to and supported.
- Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour will be listened to and supported to accept responsibility and change their behaviour.
- Parents will be made aware of our school's practice to prevent and to respond to concerns through their active participation in partnership with the school to resolve concerns involving their child.

4. The Process of Participation and Consultation

- Pupils agreed school rules in class/school councils.
- Pupils had input with regards to devising rewards and sanctions for behaviour through Class and School Councils
- Pupils participate in NI Anti-Bullying week and Internet Safety Day
- Bullying awareness programmes are delivered through PDMU, assemblies.
- Parents, staff and pupils are consulted in relation to pastoral issues through self-evaluation questionnaires and meetings. The results are used to address concerns and improve procedures.
- Policy will be reviewed, updated and agreed by the BoG at least every four years.

5. What is Bullying?

The addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 provides schools with the legal definition:

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 (includes omission), 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 groups of pupils.

Guidance issued in support of the Act states that:

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.

i. In determining 'harm' we define:
  • Emotional or psychological 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.

ii. In determining "intention" we define:
  • The repetition of the behaviour
  • Pre-mediated behaviour with an element of planning

iii. "Act" can refer to exclusion and as mentioned omission.

iv. In determining "exclusion" we define:
  • Intentionally acting to stop someone/others from joining in

v. In determining "omission" we define:
  • Intentionally choosing not to mention something i.e., wilful omission arising from a desire to cause hurt.

vi. In determining "repeated/repetition" we define:
  • **At least 3 incidents involving the same target/s within a short period of time. The frequency of the bullying behaviour e.g., daily, weekly or less often and the duration of the bullying behaviour i.e., whether it is over a short or prolonged period of time will be taken into account. Each case will be judged on its own merits and special set of circumstances.**

5.1 Socially Unacceptable Behaviour i.e., one off incidents

Within schools there is a continuum of socially unacceptable behaviours. These socially unacceptable behaviours infringe on everyone's right to be safe. They include (but are not limited to) the following examples:

1. Physical - includes jostling, physical intimidation, punching/kicking, any other physical contact which may include use of weapons
2. Verbal - includes name calling, insults, jokes, threats, spreading rumours
3. Indirect - includes isolation, refusal to work with/talk to/play with/help others, interfering with personal property and includes electronic (cyber) bullying: misuse of mobile phones and internet programmes to humiliate, threaten and/or isolate another.

Leaney Primary recognises that bullying behaviour can include instances of such one-off incidents. As a school, we will use the following criteria to assess whether incidents will be addressed through this policy or be addressed via the schools Positive Behaviour Policy:

- Severity and significance of the incident
- Evidence of pre-meditation i.e., intentional
- 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.

When alleged incidents fail to meet the criteria for bullying behaviour, the school will use our Positive Behaviour Policy to address any unacceptable behaviour.

5.2 Digital Behaviour
The Act gives us, as a school, the power to take action to prevent cyber bullying, which is taking place outside school, but which is likely to have an impact on the pupil's education in school. Although we do not have a duty to act, each case of alleged cyber bullying will be reviewed (and any action to be taken) on a case-by-case basis.

5.2 Discretions
In determining intent to cause harm, the school will take into consideration the pupil's capacity to understand the impact of their behaviour and how this could have been affected by developmental age/delay/diagnosis (e.g., SBEW, ASD, FASD, MLD etc.)

5.3 Language
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 situation surrounding that child:
- A child displaying bullying behaviour/s
- A child experiencing bullying behaviour/s
We encourage all members of the school community to use this language when discussing bullying incidents.

6. Preventative Measures

We aim to promote a strong anti-bullying ethos within the school and the wider school community. The following measures will be taken by our school to prevent bullying behaviour -

- Formulation and communication of school wide rules concerning good behaviour expectations e.g., school rules/classroom rules displayed in all classrooms, incentives, house points, pupil awards, school assemblies.
- Vigilant supervision- playground/general school environment
- Development of effective strategies for playground management e.g., provision of a variety of play resources in each playground
- Good parental communication
- School curriculum which promotes positive relationships and addresses prejudice, discrimination, and social/emotional learning (PDMU)
- 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.
- Provision and promotion of activities aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks e.g., sporting activities, creative arts, leisure, and games etc.
- Through the preventative curriculum actively promote positive emotional health and wellbeing (e.g., mindfulness training)
- School values - Respect, Honesty, Friendship, Enthusiasm, Independence, Responsibility, Resilience, Personal Development and Perseverance.
- Awareness raising programmes such as Anti-Bullying week in November each year.
- E-Safety lessons throughout the year
- School wide supervision and effective, consistent behaviour management by all staff
- Opportunities for developing positive peer relationships and behaviour e.g., Class/School Councils, Circle Time and PDMU lessons.
- Use of 'Worry Boxes' in Y4-Y7 classrooms.
- Positive Behaviour Policy which sets out a clear code of conduct for the whole school community
- Use of outside agencies such as Childline/NSPCC
- Anti-Bullying Ambassadors – children and staff members trained through the Diana Award Scheme to help prevent bullying and ensure everyone feels safe and happy in school.
- Engagement in key national campaigns such as Safer Internet Day
- Focused assemblies to raise awareness and promote understanding of key issues related to bullying.
- Reducing the behavioural barriers to learning through: school counsellor, SEN support, teacher training in Take 5 and nurture support, teachers and pupils receive on-line safety awareness, teacher training in working memory, ASD, autism. Work with SENCo to identity and respond to needs.
- Individual target setting and self-assessment.
- Inappropriate behaviour quickly identified and challenged.

6.i Preventative measures in place to prevent bullying behaviour on the way to and from school.

- We strive to develop a culture where pupils take pride in their school and are viewed as ambassadors for their school within the community through regular reminders of the positive behaviour expectations of pupils whilst travelling to and from school.
- Engagement with transport providers (eg. Translink, EA transport, Taxi company) to ensure effective communication and the early identification of any concerns.
- Staff to support the transition from school day to journey home e.g. staff overseeing children getting onto bus

We interpret travelling to/from school during term time as travelling directly to school at the start of the day and directly home/place of care at the end of the day.

6.ii Electronic Communication

The new legislation gives schools the authority to take steps to prevent bullying through the use of electronic communication amongst pupils at any time during term, where that behaviour is likely to have a detrimental effect on the pupil's education at school.

Leaney Primary seeks to raise awareness of online bullying and online safety through:

- Addressing key themes of online behaviour and risk through PDMU, 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 (e.g., C2k, PSNI, Public Health Agency, 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, Mobile Phone Policy)

7. Responsibilities

All members of the school community have a key role in creating a safe and supportive learning environment and for promoting, implementing and supporting the Anti-Bullying policy of Leaney Primary School.

Governors have oversight of the Ant-bullying Policy and ensure its effective implementation by:

- Ensuring that, at each full board meeting, a report on bullying is presented as a standing item within.
- Ensuring records are kept including information on numbers of recorded incidents, method, motivation and how the incident was addressed.

- Recording how pupils, parents / carers, teachers and Governors are consulted if and when changes are made to the policy.
- Identifying trends and patterns to inform further development of policy and practice.

Everyone in the school community 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 experiencing bullying behaviours 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 experienced bullying behaviour, take what is said seriously, and provide reassurance that appropriate action will be taken.
- know how to seek support – internal and external.
- resolve difficulties through sanctions and/or in restorative ways to prevent recurring bullying behaviour and meet the needs of all parties

8. Reporting a Bullying Concern

8.i Pupils

Pupils can report a concern by:
- Verbally talking to a member of staff
- Writing a note to a member of staff
- Post a note in the worry box

Any pupil can report a concern, not just the pupil who is experiencing the behaviour. All pupils are encouraged to "get help" if they have a concern about bullying behaviour.

8.ii Parents/Carers

Concerns should be raised at the earliest opportunity. Parents/carers should encourage their child to react appropriately to bullying behaviour in line with this policy.
Parents/carers can report a concern by:

- In the first instance, all bullying concerns should be reported to the Class Teacher
- Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken to prevent further incidents, the concern should be reported to Head of Year or Vice-Principal, 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, the concern should be reported to Principal.

Where the parent/carer remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the school's complaints procedure should be followed. A copy of the complaints policy is on the school website or can be obtained upon request from the school office.

All reports of bullying concerns received from pupils and/or parents/carers will be responded to in line with this policy and that 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.

9. Responding to a Bullying Concern

Whilst any member of staff can receive a report regarding bullying behaviour, it is the responsibility of the class teacher of the child receiving the alleged bullying behaviour to complete the process detailed here.

The main aim of any intervention is to respond to the bullying that is taking place, resolve the concern and restore the well-being of all those involved.

The processes outlined below provides 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 responsible shall…

- Check records paper/SIMS/BMM
- Assess the incident against the criteria for bullying behaviour.

If the incident is deemed to meet the threshold for bullying behaviour, then:

- Identify any themes or motivating factors (if possible)
- Identify the type of bullying behaviour being displayed.
- Select and implement appropriate interventions for all pupils involved, including appropriate interventions, consequences and sanctions listed in the Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource and from other sources.

- 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, and in line with the school's positive behaviour policy, school staff may implement sanctions for those displaying bullying behaviour.

Parents/carers of both parties involved will be informed if the threshold for bullying behaviour has been met.

10. Recording

We have a legal requirement, as set out in the Addressing Bullying in Schools act (NI) 2016, to maintain a record of all incidents of bullying and alleged bullying behaviour. As a school, we will ensure that all incidents that are reported as bullying are recorded. We will record whether the alleged incident of bullying is confirmed and responded to through the Anti-bullying Policy, or if the alleged incident is responded to under another policy.

The school will record all relevant information related to reports of bullying concerns, including:

- How the alleged bullying behaviour was displayed (the method)
- The motivation for the behaviour
- Details of the incident(s)
- How each incident was addressed by the school if required
- The outcome of the interventions employed.

These records will be held by the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator. 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.

11. Professional Development of Staff

All school staff will be involved in any training relating to pupil behaviour management at School Development days. Relevant teaching staff will also attend other training provided by the Education Authority or external agencies. Any relevant changes made to our practices will be reflected in this policy and any other relevant ones.
Training received by staff will be recorded and held by the school.

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 at least every 4 years.

13 Links with other School Policies

Governors has been mindful of related policies, including:
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- E-Safety Policy & Acceptable Use of Internet Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Educational Visits