

# **LISBURN CENTRAL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**



Signed: Mrs A Poots Principal  
Mr R Irvine Chairperson of Board of Governors

Date: 28/02/2023  
Review: February 2027

## **1 Introduction/Rationale**

In Lisburn Central Primary School we are committed to creating and maintaining a safe, positive and caring school environment. We believe that all forms of bullying behaviour are unacceptable and all children have the right to learn in a school community where mutual respect is valued and which is devoid from the threat of emotional or physical harm.

This document aims to set out the approach to bullying that will be taken at Lisburn Central Primary School. It is an integral part of a whole school approach. The only effective way of eliminating bullying is for the whole school community (pupils, teachers, parents and the wider community) to work together in a concerted way to establish a safe emotional and physical environment.

## **2 School Aims**

Lisburn Central aims to promote positive relationships and endeavours to provide an educational setting where effective learning will take place. In order to achieve this, the school aims to foster a climate of transparency in which pupils, parents/guardians/carers and staff feel comfortable in reporting bullying behaviours. We recognise that we must act swiftly when a case of bullying occurs. All members of staff share these values and work to ensure a child-centred approach in which caring is a shared responsibility of all staff.

It is our aim to ensure that:

- All pupils and parents/guardians/carers are made aware of how to raise a concern about bullying behaviour
- Appropriate responses are made to all reported instances of bullying behaviour
- Support is provided to pupils experiencing bullying
- Interventions are in place for the perpetrator
- Robust monitoring, recording and review procedures are in place in the event of bullying behaviour
- Staff and governors are kept updated.

## **3 Ethos & Principles**

At Lisburn Central Primary School we have based our Anti Bullying Policy on our school ethos and principles, which underpin everything we do.

- We are committed to a society where children and young people can live free and safe from bullying.
- We believe in a society where bullying is unacceptable and where every child and young person is safe and free from bullying.
- We believe that every child and young person should be celebrated in their diversity.
- We are committed to a preventative, responsive and restorative anti-bullying ethos across the whole school.

- We value the views and contributions of children and young people, we will actively seek these views and we will 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.

## 4 Consultation and Participation

The policy has been developed in consultation with pupils and their parents/carers, in compliance with the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016.

Consultation will take place with the aid of:

- Consultative workshops with pupils
- Class-based activities
- Whole school questionnaires distributed to all pupils, parents and staff
- The School Council
- Engagement with parent groups, eg. PTF
- Engagement with BOG
- Representative members of staff involved in writing anti-bullying policy.

## 5 Context

### The Legislative Context

This policy is informed and guided by current legislation and DE Guidance listed below:

- Addressing Bullying in School Bill (2016)
- DE Circular 2007/20 - the Education (2006 order) Order (N.I.) 2007
- Health and Safety at Work NI Order 1978
- The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 Article 3 – see DE 1998/25 DE Circular Number 2003/13 - welfare and protection of pupils, Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) order 2003 which amends Article 3 of 1998 N.I. Order
- Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection, DE, 1999
- Pastoral Care in Schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour, DE, 2001

### The 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)

### The International Context:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

- The most recent of these is The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 which:
- Provides a legal definition of bullying.
- Places a duty on the Board of Governors to put in place measures to prevent bullying behaviour, in consultation with pupils and parents.
- Requires schools to record all incidents of bullying behaviour and alleged bullying incidents.
- Sets out under which circumstances this policy should be applied, namely:
  - In school, during the school day.
  - While travelling to and from school.
  - When under control of school staff, but away from school (eg. school trips).
  - When receiving education organised by school but happening elsewhere (e.g. in another school).

## 6 Definition – What Constitutes Bullying?

The term bullying refers to a range of harmful behaviour both physical and Psychological that is directed towards an individual or group of pupils causing distress to them and others.

Bullying can take a number of forms; physical (e.g. hitting, kicking), verbal (e.g. name calling), social (e.g. excluding someone from a group) or psychological (e.g. when it causes an individual to lose self-esteem).

It is the repeated use of power by one or more persons intentionally to hurt, harm or adversely affect the rights and needs of others. It may be planned and organised.

At Lisburn Central Primary School we take the legal definition of bullying from '**The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016**' which defines bullying as follows:

*"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.*

The term 'omission' can, in certain circumstances be classified as an 'Act'.

### **The School's Understanding and Interpretation of the Definition**

At Lisburn Central Primary School we believe that while bullying is usually repeated behaviour, there are instances of one-off incidents that 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
- cognitive and SEN ability of those involved will also be assessed.

The school staff will consider the following questions:

- Does the school recognise that the action of the pupil displaying alleged bullying behaviour was intentional?
- Does the school believe there was a significant level of harm intended from one pupil to another through this action?
- Does the pupil have a capacity to understand the impact and consequences of their behaviour?
- Was there any perceived or actual imbalance of power between the pupil(s) displaying bullying behaviour and those experiencing it, e.g. physical, psychological and/or intellectual?

The school understands the term, 'omission' to be defined as, when a pupil has been deliberately left out of a school based activity and there is an intentional attempt to cause embarrassment, pain or discomfort. This term requires clear evidence of a failure to include a pupil on a regular basis for it to be construed as bullying.

Any incidents which are not considered bullying behaviour will be addressed under the Positive Behaviour Policy.

## **7 Possible Bullying Behaviours (not limited to)**

At Lisburn Central Primary School the following unacceptable behaviours on or off the school premises (i.e. school trips, short journeys to and from school or attended courses at alternative venues), 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
  - trying to make other pupils dislike another pupil/s
- Physical acts
  - hitting
  - kicking
  - pushing / shoving
  - spitting
  - nipping
  - material harm, such as taking/stealing money or possessions or causing damage to possessions
- Omission (Exclusion)

- Deliberately and repeatedly leaving someone out of a game
- Deliberately and repeatedly refusing to include someone in group work
- **Electronic Acts (PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY OFF SITE),**
  - Using online platforms or other electronic communication to carry out many of the written acts noted above. **Children should not have an account on social media at primary school age.**
  - Impersonating someone online to cause hurt
  - Sharing images (e.g. photographs or videos) online to embarrass someone

**Whilst these lists are not exhaustive Lisburn Primary School recognises that the behaviours listed above may fit the definition and be considered bullying behaviour.**

**All bullying behaviour usually has the following features:**

- It is intentionally harmful
- It involves an imbalance of power, leaving someone feeling helpless to prevent it or put a stop to it
- It causes distress

## **8 Factors that Create Bullying**

At Lisburn Central Primary School we acknowledge the 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
- Political affiliation
- Gender identity
- Sexual orientation
- Race
- Religion
- Disability / SEN Ability
- Children who are Looked After status

Bullying is an emotive issue, therefore it is essential that we ensure we use supportive, understanding language when discussing these matters. For that reason, at Lisburn Central Primary School 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.

At Lisburn Central Primary School 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.

## **9 Preventative Measures**

At Lisburn Central Primary School we aim to promote a strong anti-bullying ethos within the school and the wider school community.

At Lisburn Central Primary School we aim to prevent bullying and create a safe learning environment. We will:

- Raise awareness and understanding of the positive behaviour expectations, as set out in the Positive Behaviour Policy
- Promote anti-bullying messages through the curriculum eg. inclusion of age appropriate material specific to individual subject areas related to bullying, positive behaviour and inclusion
- Address issues such as the various forms of bullying, including the how and why it can happen, through PDMU/PD
- Participate in meaningful and supportive education projects, supporting pupils to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity.
- Through the preventative curriculum actively promote positive emotional health and wellbeing (eg. mindfulness training)
- Develop peer-led systems (eg. School Council) to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messaging within the school
- Develop effective strategies for playground management, eg. training for supervisors, zoning of playgrounds, inclusion of specific resources (buddy benches) and provision of a variety of play options to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Have focused assemblies to raise awareness and promote understanding of key issues related to bullying.
- Provide and promote extra-curricular activities, aimed at supporting the development of relationships and team building networks. For example sporting activities, creative arts, leisure and games, etc.

The following are a list of preventative measures we will put in place to prevent bullying behaviour on the way to and from school:

- Development of a culture where pupils take pride in their school and are viewed as ambassadors for their school within the community.

- Promoting an awareness of behaviour expectations of pupils amongst the local community (eg. local shops, cafes, service providers, residents, etc)
- Appropriate deployment of staff to support the transition to and from school (eg. staff duty at school gate)

In Lisburn Central Primary School we believe it is important to 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.

This may include:

- Addressing key themes of online behaviour and risk through PDMU including the understanding of how to respond to harm and the consequences of inappropriate use.
- Participation in Anti-Bullying activities.
- Engagement with key statutory and voluntary sector agencies (eg. C2k, PSNI, Barnardos and NSPCC) to support the promotion of key messages.
- Participation in safe internet activities and the promotion of key messages throughout the year.
- Development and implementation of robust and appropriate policies in related areas e.g. Child Protection Policy, E-Safety and Acceptable Use Agreement

As pupils attending Lisburn Central Primary School are under the age of 12, it is the responsibility of parents/guardians to be fully aware of their child(ren)'s online activity. Parents are also responsible for ensuring that social media age restrictions are enforced. The school's "Duty of Care" will not apply in situations where pupils behave inappropriately on social media platforms as this is the responsibility of parents/guardians.

Should incidents of online bullying/abuse be reported to school by a concerned parent, the parent will be advised as to how to report this behaviour to the relevant authority, ie. PSNI.

It is the responsibility of parents to keep their child safe from internet bullying whilst at home.

## **10. Roles and Responsibilities of School Community**

Everyone in Lisburn Central Primary School, school community, including pupils, their parents/carers and the staff 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 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 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

**Governors are responsible for:**

- Providing leadership and drive for the development and regular review of the school's policies
- Providing leadership and ensuring the accountability of the Principal and senior leadership for the communication and implementation of school policies
- Highlighting good practice and promote it throughout the school and wider community
- Providing appropriate role models for staff, pupils, parents and all other stakeholders
- Celebrating examples of good practice throughout the school
- Ensuring a consistent response to incidents
- Ensuring that the school carries out the statutory duties

**Principal is responsible for:**

- Initiating and overseeing the development and regular review of policies and procedures
- Consulting pupils, staff and stakeholders in the development and review of the policies
- Ensuring the effective communication of the policies to all stakeholders
- Ensuring that staff are trained as necessary to carry out the policies
- Overseeing the effective implementation of the policies
- Providing appropriate role models for all staff and pupils
- Providing opportunities and mechanisms for the sharing of good practice
- Taking appropriate action in cases of bullying and ensure a consistent response to incidents
- Ensuring that the school carries out its statutory duties effectively

**Staff are responsible for:**

- Proactively following this policy and any associated guidelines

- Providing role models for pupils through their own actions
- Dealing with incidents of bullying and negative behaviour
- Promoting positive behaviour and avoiding discrimination against anyone for reasons of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, gender, disability, religion or belief, perceived sexual orientation or socio-economic circumstances

**Pupils are responsible for:**

- Treating others kindly and fairly without prejudice, discrimination or harassment
- Attending and engaging in their own learning as well as helping other pupils to learn
- Telling staff about any bullying related incidents that occur.

**Parents are responsible for:**

- Supporting our school in its implementation of this policy
- Following and understanding the school policy through their own behaviour
- Ensuring their children attend and engage in the learning.

## **11. Reporting a Bullying Concern**

At Lisburn Central Primary School it is essential that pupils are encouraged to raise concerns with any member of staff, including teaching and non-teaching staff.

Pupils can raise concerns by:

- Verbally – talking to a member of staff or
- By writing a note to a member of staff (eg. in a homework diary)

Any pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing this behaviour.

Parents/Carers reporting a concern.

- Bullying concerns should be reported firstly to the class teacher.
- Where the 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 Designated Teacher for Child Protection/Principal, as applicable.
- Where the parent/carer is not satisfied that appropriate action has been appropriately responded to, the school's complaints procedure should be followed.

While the majority of reports of bullying concerns will come from pupils and their parents/carers, the school must be open to receiving such reports from anyone.

All reports of bullying concerns received from pupils and/or parents/carers will be responded to in line with this policy and appropriate feedback will be made to the person who made the report.

## **12 Assessing A Bullying Allegation**

It is extremely important that any allegation of bullying behaviour is investigated appropriately.

As information about such allegations will now appear on a pupil's record, it is vital that there are sufficient grounds and evidence for this formal process to be initiated. Accusing another child of bullying, when the child is innocent, can also constitute bullying behaviour in itself. A parent or child may accuse another child of bullying in order to inflict harm or distress on that child or their family.

Each incident of alleged bullying will initially be assessed by the class teacher so the facts and the context can be established. Should the accusation need to be further investigated, this will be carried out by the school's Safeguarding Team. If the Safeguarding Team feel the allegation meets the school's definition of bullying behaviour, then the formal process will begin. Any incidents which are not deemed to be bullying will be dealt with through the school's Positive Behaviour Policy.

### **Responding to Bullying Concerns**

The processes outlined below provide a framework for how Lisburn Central Primary School will respond to any bullying concerns identified.

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

- Clarify facts and perceptions
- Check records
- 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

When responding to a bullying concern, Lisburn Primary School staff shall implement interventions aimed at responding to the behaviour, resolving the concern and restoring the wellbeing of those involved. Where appropriate, school staff may implement sanctions for those displaying bullying behaviour.

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

## **13 Recording Information**

Incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported to the school must be recorded. This will initially be done by the class teacher, however, any recording on SIMS will be carried out by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection or in her absence, by one of the school's Safeguarding Team.

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

- how the bullying behaviour was displayed (the method)
- the motivation for the behaviour
- how each incident was addressed by the school
- the outcome of the interventions employed.

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 Circular. 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.

#### **Duty to keep a record of incidents of bullying**

(1) The Board of Governors must ensure that a record is kept of incidents of bullying or alleged bullying involving a pupil at the school that occur—

- (a) on the premises of the school during the school day;
- (b) while travelling to or from school, during the school term, within the times of the school day
- (c) while the pupil is in the lawful control or charge of a member of the staff of the school; or
- (d) while the pupil is involved in an educational activity off the main school site.

(2) A record must—

- (a) state what, from the circumstances, appears to be the motivation of the incident;
- (b) state the method of bullying;
- (c) include information about how the incident was addressed.

The purpose of recording information is to promote and sustain a safe and effective learning environment.

## **14 Consultation and Participation**

At Lisburn Central Primary School we have based our Anti Bullying Policy on consultation with registered pupils and their parents/carers, in compliance with the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016.

We worked with pupils through the following consultation processes:

- Consultative workshops with pupils
- Class-based activities
- Discussion at School Council
- Discussion with Anti-Bullying Ambassadors

We worked with parents/carers through the following consultation processes:

- Questionnaires distributed to all parents/carers online

We worked with staff members and the Board of Governors through the following consultation processes:

- Whole School Audit for all staff (annually)
- Staff meetings in relation to the anti-bullying policy
- Board of Governor meeting to discuss the anti-bullying policy

We worked with pupils through the following consultation processes:

- Consultative workshops with pupils
- Class-based activities
- Discussion with School Council

## **15 Professional Development**

All staff in Lisburn Central Primary School will have opportunities to meet their professional development needs. This includes staff across all sections and support that will be provided to meet their training needs as outlined in our School Development Plan. New and temporary staff will be made aware of our Anti-Bullying Policy and other Safeguarding policies in relation to this.

## **16 Monitoring and Review of Policy**

At Lisburn Central Primary School to ensure we 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

Legislation requires the school to review its Anti-Bullying Policy at least every four years.

## **17 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:

- Positive Behaviour
- 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
- Staff Code of Conduct

