

MAGHERAFELT PRIMARY SCHOOL



Anti-Bullying Policy

Definition

The Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF) defines bullying as

“The repeated use of power by one or more persons intentionally to hurt, harm or adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others.”

Bullying is repeated and continuous behaviour which makes other people feel uncomfortable, insecure or threatened. All bullying behaviour usually has the following four features –

- it is repetitive and persistent
- 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

If unchecked, bullying can cause profound long and short term damage to the victim, emotionally, physically or both, and can seriously disrupt the capacity to learn or develop.

People react in varying ways to bullying, and it may not always be possible to tell if someone is hurt or upset.

In most cases, bullying would not automatically set in motion the child protection procedures.

Aim of Policy

Magherafelt Primary is a small, closely knit community in which all members are entitled to equal rights, opportunities, respect and worth. We wish to -

- foster a positive ethos in an environment where individuals can develop without fear or prejudice and one where bullying will not be tolerated
- prevent, as far as possible, any form of bullying
- deal promptly, consistently and fairly with any incidents of bullying which may arise
- ensure all members of the school community are aware of the nature of bullying and the consequences of such behaviour.
- ensure victims and perpetrators are treated in a supportive way.

Forms of Bullying

Forms of bullying can be classified as:

- **Physical** – hitting, kicking, spitting, taking, hiding, or damaging possessions
- **Verbal** – threats, name calling (including sectarian, homophobic or racist name calling), teasing, insulting, writing hurtful notes, inappropriate/unwelcome texts or telephone calls
- **Emotional** – being unfriendly, excluding someone from social groups, tormenting, spreading rumours, giving looks
- **Non-Verbal** – staring, ignoring, pulling faces
- **Cyber** – involves technology e.g. the internet or on a mobile phone; by sending abusive emails or texts directly or by posting nasty comments or humiliating images for others to see

Signs of Bullying

The sign and symptoms of bullying will vary with each individual and the list below is not an exhaustive guide. The behaviours may also be symptomatic of other issues unrelated to bullying. The individual may:

- be unwilling to come to school and suffer from low attendance
- claim to be ill
- be frightened to walk to and from school
- begin to fall behind in their school work
- alter their behaviour, i.e. become aggressive, withdrawn etc
- lose their appetite
- stop communicating at home and school
- have nightmares, have trouble sleeping, begin bed wetting
- display bullying behaviour towards younger children
- begin to self-harm

Role and Responsibilities

Governors

The Board of Governors will:

- review the Anti-Bullying Policy on a regular basis
- ensure procedures are followed

Staff

Our staff will:

- foster an atmosphere of self-respect and respect for others. Children are reminded regularly of the importance of working together in harmony and all reports of bullying are taken seriously
- demonstrate and foster high standards of personal and social behaviour. Children who display bullying behaviour are made aware of the total unacceptability of their actions
- discuss bullying in class through 'Personal Development and Mutual Understanding', so that every pupil is aware of the consequences for all those involved. Every opportunity is used to reinforce the anti-social nature of bullying and the consequences in terms of suffering
- be alert to the signs of bullying as listed above and any other indications of bullying
- listen sympathetically to any children who are being bullied and act to support them according to school procedures
- report any complaints or suspicions of bullying to the Principal or Vice-Principal
- report back to parents to discuss and resolve any issues

Pupils

Our pupils will:

- refrain from becoming involved in any form of bullying
- intervene to protect a fellow pupil from being bullied, unless it unsafe to do so
- report to a member of staff any bullying they may witness
- not suffer in silence but have the confidence and courage to report any bullying they experience

Parents

Our parents will:

- be alert for signs of distress in their children, which may be evidence of bullying
- encourage children to report any bullying to an adult within school
- reassure their child that the matter will be dealt with sensitively and firmly
- advise their child against any retaliatory actions
- be sympathetic and supportive toward their child
- keep a record of any reported incidents of bullying
- co-operate with school throughout the resolution process

❖ *Please refer to Appendix A – Parent Advice Sheet*

All members of our school community have a responsibility to work together to eradicate bullying.

School Support for an Anti-Bullying Culture

Teaching methods will be used to encourage co-operative work, as well as encouraging pupils to extend their relationships beyond a small group of close friends.

Additional strategies may include:

- circle time
- school assemblies
- pastoral care policies
- rigorous supervision and suitable activities at play times
- cross-curricular themes / PDMU
- Anti-Bullying Initiatives
- external agency support

Procedures

In our school, we aim to create an atmosphere where children who feel they are being bullied, or those who are aware of it, know that they will be listened to and that action taken will be swift and firm whilst at the same time, recognising their concerns. In light of this, it is essential that school is made aware of any suspected incidents as soon as they arise. The procedures and actions taken are listed below:

- details of incidents will be recorded using the school's 'Bullying Report Form' (Appendices B & C)
- help and support will be given to the victim
- the child displaying bullying behaviour will be warned as to future conduct and appropriate sanctions put in place
- positive measures will be put in place to assist the child displaying bullying behaviour to cease their actions and to become aware of the consequences of these
- parents of victim and the child displaying bullying behaviour will be informed of school's actions and any future consequences

Sanctions

- verbal apology
- written apology (if appropriate)
- exclusion from playground (break and / or lunch)
- exclusion from after-school activities
- individual behaviour chart (matched to needs of the pupil and signed by parents and appropriate member of staff on a daily basis)
- withdrawal of pupil at lunchtime by parent
- restrictions or close supervision when accessing the internet in school, in accordance with the school Internet Policy
- inappropriate use of mobile phones and other electronic devices will result in the devices being held in the school office until collected by a parent
- suspension

Monitoring and Evaluation

Governors, Principal and SMT will monitor the policy.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Chairman of BOG

Date

Principal

Date

Appendix A - Parent Advice Sheet

My child is being bullied – what should I do?

1. Reassure your child that he / she was right to tell you.
2. Listen to your child's concerns; reassure your child that the matter will be dealt with sensitively.
3. Reassure your child that it is not their fault and no one deserves to be bullied.
4. Ascertain the facts.
5. Emphasize that they must tell the truth.
6. Allow time for the child to explain what is happening.
7. Keep a record of what happened and when and any witnesses to the bullying.
8. If the bullying is connected with school (i.e. in school, or on the way to and from school) then inform us immediately.

How do I approach a meeting at school?

1. Remember that you and school are a partnership – we are here to help. We want to resolve the issue as much as you.
2. Relate the incident /s to us – where, when, who and how often.
3. Tell us how your child has been feeling and how the incidents have affected him or her.
4. Be reassured your worries and concerns will be dealt with and you will be kept informed.
5. Please keep us informed of any other incidents which arise.

Appendix B – Initial Concern Form

Magherafelt Primary School

Incident Report Form

Child's Name		Child / Children Named
Year Group		
Teacher		
Date		

Person reporting the incident	
To who reported	
Location of incident	

Nature of Concern (Please tick)							
Physical Bullying		Verbal Bullying		Emotional / Non-Verbal Bullying		Cyber Bullying	
Hitting / Punching		Teasing / name calling		Leaving people out		Offensive text messages	
Pinching / scratching		Making offensive remarks		Spreading rumours		Offensive emails	
Kicking, pushing, tripping		Insulting someone		Excluding someone		On line game abuse	
Spitting		Threatening someone		Making fun of someone		Face time / skype abuse	
Damaging / stealing property		Repeated teasing		Stopping people from befriending someone		Chat room abuse	
Throwing objects		Intimidating someone		Excluding someone		Social media abuse	
Other _____		Other _____		Other _____		Other _____	

Details of Concerns	Actions taken

Parents informed: Yes ☐ No ☐

Date _____

Signed: _____

Date _____

Appendix C – Bullying Report Form

Magherafelt Primary School Incident Report Form

Child's Name		Child / Children Named
Year Group		
Teacher		
Date		

Person reporting the incident	
To who reported	
Location of incident	

Nature of Alleged Bullying (Please tick)							
Physical Bullying		Verbal Bullying		Emotional / Non-Verbal Bullying		Cyber Bullying	
Hitting / Punching		Teasing / name calling		Leaving people out		Offensive text messages	
Pinching / scratching		Making offensive remarks		Spreading rumours		Offensive emails	
Kicking, pushing, tripping		Insulting someone		Excluding someone		On line game abuse	
Spitting		Threatening someone		Making fun of someone		Face time / skype abuse	
Damaging / stealing property		Repeated teasing		Stopping people from befriending someone		Chat room abuse	
Throwing objects		Intimidating someone		Excluding someone		Social media abuse	
Other _____		Other _____		Other _____		Other _____	

Details of Allegation	Outcomes / Sanctions

Parents informed:

Yes

9

No

☐

Date _____

Signed: _____

Date _____