Addressing Bullying Type Behaviour Policy

It is a duty placed on Boards of Governors in Northern Ireland, to ensure the school has an effective Addressing Bullying Policy and practices aligned to the Addressing Bullying in Schools (NI) Act 2016 which commenced in schools September 2021.

This addressing bullying policy takes account of the key legislation and is informed by DE Guidance, EA publications and the international context

Contents:

Section 1: Statutory Context & Guidance

Introduction

At Hope Nursery School. we acknowledge that bullying type behaviour exists in schools and wider society and can impact on the lives, mental health, and well-being of those involved. This policy aims to help create, maintain, and embed a culture where everyone agrees that bullying type behaviour is unacceptable.

In Hope Nursery School we believe that safeguarding our pupils is paramount and the responsibility of all stakeholders. We promote a safe, inclusive, and relational school environment where concerns of bullying type behaviour may be shared and addressed, and where pupils are supported within the context of Article 19 Measures to Prevent Bullying, Education (NI) 2003 and the 2016 Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (N.I.) *(see appendix 1)*.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- define bullying type behaviour
- summarise rights, roles and responsibilities
- explain preventative measures
- clarify processes used for reporting, recording, and responding
- outline monitoring and review processes

The policy is applied where concerns of alleged bullying type behaviour between pupils have been reported.

Ethos and Values

At Hope Nursery School we provide a happy, safe, nurturing and stimulating educational environment, where staff work together to ensure that each child is valued and their well-being and development in all areas is promoted.

We recognise the uniqueness of every pupil and celebrate the diversity of all children within our community.

We are committed to a society where children can live free and safe from bullying type behaviour.

We are committed to promoting positive behaviours, good relationships and teaching age-appropriate messages to support children's learning in this area.

We value and respect the views of and contributions of stakeholders.

Consultation with others

Staff   - staff development sessions, October / November 2024

Parent focus group

Governors

Links to Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with SEND, Safeguarding, Inclusion, and the wider suite of Pastoral Care policies available on the school website or from the school office by request. These policies include but are not limited to:

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy	Staff Code of Conduct/Staff Handbook
Pupil Attendance Policy	(Positive) Behaviour Policy
Health and Safety Policy	Online Safety Policy
Special Educational Needs Policy	Educational Visits Policy
	Pastoral Care Policy
Equality and Inclusion	Visitor Policy

Definitions

The addressing Bullying in Schools Act (N.I.) 2016 provides schools with a legal definition :-

Bullying includes (but is not limited to) the repeated use of

- any verbal, written or electronic communication
- any other act
- or combination of those, by a pupil or 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
- an act can also include "omission"

Socially unacceptable behaviour becomes bullying type behaviour when, after clarifying facts and perceptions, TRIP is confirmed

- T – when behaviour is TARGETTED at a specific pupil or group
- R – when behaviour is REPEATED over time
- I – when behaviour is deliberately INTENDED to cause harm
- P- when the behaviour causes PSYCHOLOGICAL/emotional and/or PHYSICAL harm

While an 'imbalance of power' has not been included in the legal definition, the Board of Governors have agreed to incorporate this criterion to help determine if bullying type behaviour was **targeted**. An 'imbalance of power' is present when *someone seen with lesser power*, is identified as an object of negative attention. It will be used to validate and confirm the final TRIP decision. Although incidents usually involve **repetition**, a **one-off incident** may be classified as bullying type behaviour through consideration of the following criteria.

- severity and significance of the incident (See appendix 4)
- evidence of pre-meditation
- psychological/physical impact of the incident on the individuals and/or wider school community
- previous relationship(s) between those involved.
- any previous incident(s) involving the individuals.

A **one-off electronic communication** can constitute bullying type behaviour through repeated viewing and unwanted sharing of a post.

The 2016 Act requires school to consider whether a pupil(s) **intended** to cause harm when determining if the incident(s) meets the legal definition. In this school, we will consider the following when assessing **TRIP**.

The pupil(s):

- capacity to regulate and understand the impact of their behaviour
- developmental age
- additional, educational, special, physical, or medical needs
- behaviours displayed/presenting profile (diagnosed or undiagnosed e.g. Social Behaviour Emotional Wellbeing, Autism, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Moderate Learning Difficulties etc.)
- individual circumstances e.g. trauma profile, safeguarding concerns, family circumstances and resilience

Omission will be considered when addressing bullying type concerns. This is where a pupil(s) is or are wilfully excluded from a game, activity or group work etc causing potential **psychological harm**. Pupils do not have to be friends in this school, but friendly.

Language

We recognise that all behaviour is communication and should be addressed through a learner centred lens for those who display *and* experience socially unacceptable or bullying type behaviour. We will address all behaviour in a relational, solution focused manner aligned to Safeguarding and SEND.

When discussing allegations of bullying type behaviour, we use language that is aligned to the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016, and other relevant legislation and guidance *(see appendix 1)*. We refer to the behaviour not the pupil and use the following:

- **pupil displaying bullying type behaviour** rather than the 'bully'.
- **pupil experiencing bullying type behaviour** rather than the 'victim'.
- **socially unacceptable behaviour** rather than 'bad behaviour' or 'serious/gross misconduct etc' For nursery aged children, we are likely to refer to choice of behaviour, e.g. children will be reminded that they can make a good choice. This is easier for our children to understand than "socially unacceptable behaviour".

Any incident(s) which do not meet the legal definition and TRIP criteria will be addressed under the Positive Behaviour or other relevant policies.

Journey To and From School

The Act outlines a statutory requirement for schools to implement measures to prevent and address bullying type behaviour for pupils whilst travelling ***to and from school***.

To this end we expect that our young children (aged 3-4) are accompanied to and from school by a responsible adult /person over the age of 16. Parents must agree to this and provide names of anyone who regularly collects their child.

We also

    Address safeguarding concerns reported in relation to travel to and from school.
- Provide timely support and intervention.
- Assign staff to support transition at the beginning and end of the school day.
- Agree a scaffolded support plan to address individual needs,
- Reinforce positive and upstanding behaviour expectations through the preventative curriculum.

- Communicate consistently the expectation to include and respect individual rights and diversity.

Electronic Communication

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act enables school to take steps to help prevent and address online bullying type behaviour involving registered pupils during term time. We acknowledge that negative online behaviour occurring either in or out of school hours, can harm a pupil's education and emotional well-being, and we will support affected individuals. We are committed to encouraging parents carers to supervise their children's use of the internet, and, in an age appropriate way, to supporting our pupils to use the internet safely, responsibly, and respectfully.

Where appropriate we

- Engaging with statutory and voluntary sector agencies and resources (e.g. Safeguarding Board NI, PSNI, Public Health Agency, Safer Schools App) to support the promotion of key messages and online safe digital use.
- Addressing reported safeguarding concerns in relation to the misuse of electronic communication and provide timely support and intervention.
- Establish good relationships with parents/carers and children to enable them to express concerns in a variety of ways e.g. face to face, by phone and via communication app (seesaw)
- Creating, agreeing and implementing an Acceptable Use Agreements see DE Circular 2016/27

Section 3: Methods and Motivations of Socially Unacceptable or Bullying Type Behaviour

The following are methods of socially unacceptable behaviours which, when *targeted*, *repeated*, *intentional* and causing *psychological/physical* harm, may be considered as bullying type behaviour:

Physical Acts	Physical - negative physical contact, material harm such as damaging or taking possessions without permission
Verbal or Written acts	Verbal or written - unpleasant comments, written, verbal, gestures.
Social/Relational	Negatively influencing the actions of others to cause psychological or physical harm
Omission (Exclusion)	Excluding someone/others from e.g. game, activity, group work etc
Electronic Acts	Misuse of online platforms or other electronic communications to cause psychological upset

(Please note the list is not exhaustive)

Our school acknowledges various motivations for bullying type behaviour which we address through our preventative curriculum and responsive approaches. This includes all identity or prejudice motivated bullying type behaviour related to those characteristics protected through Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Motivations include but are not limited to:

• Ability	• Economic Status/FSM

• Age • Appearance • Child Looked After (CLA)/Care experienced • Community background • Cultural • Disability • SEN • Family circumstances (pregnancy, marital status, young carer status)	• Gender/Gender identity/Perceived Gender • Newcomer/Migrant Status • Peer relationship breakdown • Political affiliation/sectarianism • Race • Religion • Sexual orientation • Other_____

Section 4: Rights, Roles and Responsibilities

In this school, we believe that all members of our school community have the right to be educated in a safe, supportive, learning environment. We acknowledge that all members of our community have a role to play and responsibility to prevent and address bullying type behaviour.

See appendix 5

Section 5: Preventative Measures

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (N.I.) 2016, requires schools to focus on preventative measures to help reduce bullying type behaviours. The focus of this section is to set out the approaches taken by our school to help prevent bullying type behaviour effectively.

We promote a positive, relational learning environment where all members of the school community feel safe, included and valued. Our preventative measures help avoid bullying type behaviour and contribute to support plans for pupils. They are evident in all domains of school life and include, but are not limited to.

Whole School	Classroom
• SEND, Addressing Bullying, Positive Behaviour, Safeguarding, Pastoral Care, Inclusion & Diversity policies • Visible school ethos e.g. essential agreements, displays, visual cues, celebrations, positive expectations • Adults modelling self-regulation, inclusive language and positive relationships • Trauma Informed and Nurture Principles • Celebration of diversity, equity and inclusion • Shared education projects, kindness day, anti-bullying week	• Social Emotional Learning • Circle-time/connect and nurture strategies • Physical/sensory environment • Friendship Education • Conflict Resolution
Non-Classroom • Buddy strategies • Professional Development/Training (including for non-teaching and supervision staff) • Structured Play	

• Play/art and other therapeutic approaches	

Professional Development of Staff

We recognise the need for effective, updated, and ongoing training for all staff within our preventative measures. As such, we are committed to:

- ensuring that all staff and Governors complete relevant Safeguarding, Child Protection, SEND and Addressing Bullying in Schools training, including those provided by the Education Authority.
- reviewing and amending the content of the Addressing Bullying Policy following training, complex case review or as directed by Department of Education.
- keeping and regularly updating continued professional development records.

To this end:
- All our teaching and support staff have completed the EA Addressing Bullying in Schools foundation training as part of this policy review (Oct 2024)

Section 6: Statutory Systems and Processes for Reporting, Responding and Recording.

As a school we recognise that reporting a concern of bullying type behaviour can be difficult. For this reason, we have systems in place to enable pupils, parents, and any other person to share concerns discreetly and efficiently with a trusted adult. All concerns of bullying type behaviour will be responded to in line with legislative processes as outlined in this policy.

Pupils Reporting a Concern:

Pupils may report bullying type concerns in the following ways

Verbally sharing with a staff member

Sharing a concern with a parent/carer.

All pupils are encouraged to share concerns regarding socially unacceptable or bullying type behaviour that they experience, display or witness. They are encouraged to view this as getting help.

Parents/Carers or Others Reporting a Concern:

In the first instance, parents/carers or others report concerns by

- Speaking with the Class Teacher or Principal, or any permanent member of staff, phoning or sending a note e.g. via seesaw app

Please note, we do not advise parents to send confidential information regarding concerns of bullying type behaviour to the general school email address.

Responding to and Recording a Bullying Type Concern

It is the responsibility of all staff (including teachers, teaching assistants, wider support staff, office staff, supervisors etc) to report any bullying type of behaviour concerns. All allegations of bullying type behaviour will be responded to using the Statutory Process Flowchart (see appendix 2), recorded on a Bullying Concern Assessment Form (BCAF) which is stored securely.

Upon receipt of a concern of bullying type behaviour, designated staff will:

- Clarify facts and perceptions.
- Check records and previous assessments.
- Collaboratively assess the incident using the T.R.I.P. criteria (Record on BCAF Part 1).

Where bullying type behaviour has been confirmed and in consultation with pupils involved and their parents/carers. Designated staff teacher or Principal) will ensure that parts 2-4 of the BCAF are completed will:

- Identify methods and potential motivating factors (Record on BCAF Part 2).
- Identify relevant level of support and intervention (Levels 1-4).
- Select appropriate support and interventions (see appendix 4) for all pupils involved (Record on BCAF Part 3a for the pupil experiencing and 3b for the pupil displaying).
- Ensure selected approaches are aligned to and in the context of wider safeguarding, SEND, Equality and diversity, and positive behaviour policies.
- Implement, track, monitor and record effectiveness of supports and interventions (BCAF Part 3).
- Review outcome of interventions (Record on BCAF Part 4).
- Select and implement further interventions as necessary.
- Based on the level of progress, revisit BCAF Parts 3a and 3b or proceed to case closure.

Please note details of support and intervention plans cannot be disclosed to anyone other than that pupil and their parents/carers.

Section 7: Monitoring and Review of Policy

The Act places responsibility on the Board of Governors, in consultation with the principal, to monitor the effectiveness of the Addressing Bullying Policy. To this end, the Board of Governors will:

- maintain a standing item on the agenda, under Safeguarding, where a report on bullying type behaviour is presented by the principal (see appendix 7).
- appoint a lead Governor to liaise with the principal (e.g designated safeguarding governor)
- minute the number of incidents including methods, motivations and how they were addressed
- identify trends and patterns to inform future policy and practice development and review.
- record written responses to relevant pupils, parents/carers when appropriate.

The Addressing Bullying Policy will be reviewed in consultation with all school community stakeholders:

- at intervals of no less than four year, or
- following any complex incident which highlights the need for such a review,
- when reviewing other associated policies, such as the Safeguarding Policy and the Positive Behaviour Policy
- in response to a recommendation by the Education and Training Inspectorate
- following new guidance as directed by the Department of Education.

A copy of this policy is available on the school website. . Parents/carers can also request a hard copy by contacting the school office