Steelstown Primary School



And Nursery Unit

**Anti-Bullying Policy**

# STEELSTOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY UNIT

**Anti-Bullying Policy**

**Article 29**

***Your education should help you use and develop your talents and abilities. It should also help you learn to live peacefully, protect the environment and respect other people.***

At Steelstown Primary School and Nursery Unit 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. It is the aim of Steelstown Primary School to provide an environment where children feel secure, free from emotional and physical harm and are educated in a safe and caring atmosphere. Our school curriculum is designed to influence the beliefs, values, and attitudes of our children in a positive manner. Staff are committed to Assertive Discipline and a positive approach to behaviour management. Staff and parents work together to ensure the safety and welfare of all children to prevent behaviour problems from occurring and to teach children to make responsible decisions regarding their behaviour. Pupils are taught to value and respect the contributions and views of others and treat each other with dignity and respect. School values which reject bullying behaviour are promoted through the curriculum. Pupils are taught to take responsibility for their own behaviour, to recognise the cause of conflict, to acknowledge the effect their behaviour is having on other pupils and to learn how to put things right with those they have upset or injured.

The school recognises bullying as negative, aggressive behaviour, either verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others (an individual or minority group).

**Legislative Context**

* The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016
* Education and Libraries Order (Northern Ireland) 2003
* 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

**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)

**Key points to note are:**

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

* 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:

1. In school, during the school day

2. While travelling to and from school

3. When under control of school staff, but away from school (e.g., school trip)

4. When receiving education organised by school but happening elsewhere

* Requires that the policy be updated at least every four years.
* The Education and Libraries Order (NI) 2003, requires the Board of Governors to: ‘Safeguard and promote the welfare of registered pupils’.
* 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. 2. Be protected from discrimination.

3. Express their views, in a supported and accessible way, on issues that affect them, and to have their opinions taken seriously.

4. Education

**School Ethos**

Bullying exists in all schools. Even if it is only present to a small extent, the suffering created may be out of all proportion to the number of pupils affected. Consequently, Steelstown Primary School seeks to create a climate where:

1. Pupils are willing to say they are being bullied

2. Bullies derive no encouragement from the school view

3. A message of action is conveyed to parents

The ethos of the school is central to the establishment and maintenance of good behaviour. The school seeks to emphasise and regard positive behaviour rather than apply sanctions. Factors essential in promoting good behaviour include:

(a) The Curriculum - quality, relevance, pupil grouping, teaching methods, record keeping and assessment procedures are all means by which teachers can reduce potential for bullying in class through effective class management.

(b) The Pastoral System – is supportive of pupils, proactive in developing programmes such as Circle time, buddy system, friendship stops and citizenship rather than relying on reactive management when things go wrong.

(c) The Ethos – relies on the quality of relationships between teachers themselves and between teachers and pupils to encourage an openness designed to allow pupils to speak out where problems are perceived.

Steelstown Primary School is rooted in the values of courtesy, consideration for others and the belief that everyone in the school community has an important role. If this is followed, condemnation of bullying is both implicit and explicit. The belief is promoted that reporting bullying is not ‘tale-telling’ but safeguarding others and the vast majority of pupils thus become a positive force in the protection of the individual by giving support to the victim and advising the bully to stop. Incidents should be reported in the knowledge that they will be taken seriously and dealt with both effectively and consistently.

**Definition**

Addressing Bullying in Schools Act 2016:

1. (1) 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, 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.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), “act” includes omission.

Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF): ‘Bullying is 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 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. 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 (e.g., photographs or videos) online to embarrass someone

This is not an exhaustive list and other behaviours which fit with the definition may be considered bullying behaviour.

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
* Pregnancy
* Marital status
* Race
* Religion
* Disability/SEN
* Ability
* Looked After Child status
* Young Carer status

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 child describing the situation surrounding that child, for example:

* A child displaying bullying behaviours
* A child experiencing bullying behaviours

We encourage all members of our school community to use this language when discussing bullying incidents.

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.

**Preventative Measures**

The focus for all anti-bullying work should be on preventing bullying and creating a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment. In Steelstown Primary School we do this by:

* 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, PATHS and R.E.
* Involvement in meaningful and supportive shared education projects, supporting pupils to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity.
* Through the five steps approach to wellbeing, promote positive physical and emotional health.
* Participation in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities.
* Engagement in key national and regional campaigns, e.g. Safer Internet Day.
* Development of peer-led systems (e.g. School Student Council, Eco Club, Digital Leaders and PATHS Pals) to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messaging within the school.
* Development of effective strategies for playground management, e.g. training for supervisors, zoning of playgrounds, inclusion of specific resources (buddy benches,) and provision of a variety of play option 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-curricular activities, aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks. For example, sporting activity, creative arts, leisure and games, etc.

**Preventative Measures on the way to and from School**

* Development of a culture where pupils take pride in their school and are viewed as ambassadors for Steelstown Primary School within the community. This includes regular reminders of the positive behaviour expectations of pupils whilst travelling to and from school.
* Measures to empower pupils to challenge inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour of their peers during the journey to and from school. This may include the implementation of peer monitoring systems on buses and for those walking.
* Regular engagement with transport providers to ensure effective communication and the early identification of any concerns.
* Promotion of key anti-bullying messages and awareness of behaviour expectations of pupils amongst the local community (e.g., local shops, cafes, service providers, residents, 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 gate/bus stops, where appropriate).

**Preventative Measures Online**

Steelstown Primary School raises awareness of the nature and impact of online bullying and supports our pupils to make use of the internet in a safe, responsible, and respectful way. We do this by:

* Addressing key themes of online behaviour and risk through PDMU, PATHS, R.E and ICT, including understanding how to respond to harm and the consequences of inappropriate use. – Internet Safety Lessons
* 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, E-Safety and Mobile Phone Policy.

**Responsibilities of Staff**

* Staff will foster in our pupils, self-esteem, self-respect, and respect for others.
* Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect in our pupils.
* Discuss bullying with all classes so that every pupil learns about the hurt it causes to both the child who experiences bullying behaviour and to the child who is displaying bullying behaviour.
* Staff will continually reinforce the importance of telling a trusted member of staff about bullying when it happens.
* Be alert to signs of distress and other indications of bullying.
* Listen to children who reports that they have experienced bullying behaviour, take what they say seriously and provide reassurance that appropriate action will be taken.
* Follow up any concern by a parent about bullying and report back promptly and fully on the action that has been taken.
* Report suspected cases of bullying to a member of the Safeguarding Team who will record and take appropriate action.
* Fully engage in activities and competitions organised during Anti-Bullying Week.
* Use circle time, PDMU lessons, PATHS lessons, RE lessons, school assemblies etc. to promote opportunities to discuss the subject.

**Responsibilities of Support Staff and all other adults connected with the school for Clubs and Activities**

* All staff and adults working with pupils (includes sports coaches and adults leading after-school activities) should be vigilant in looking for signs of bullying.
* They should report any incident of bullying or suspected bullying to the class teacher or in the absence of the teacher, a member of the Safeguarding Team.
* During lunch times, supervisory staff will assist with playground games and help maximise the use children make of the play equipment and playground markings. They will closely monitor children’s involvement in activities.

**Responsibilities of our Pupils**

We expect our pupils to:

* Tell an adult if they are experiencing bullying behaviour.
* Refrain from becoming involved in any form of bullying.
* Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying.
* Intervene to protect any pupil who is experiencing bullying behaviour by reporting the incident to an adult.

**Responsibilities of our Parents**

We ask our parents to support us by:

* Advising their children to report any incidents of bullying to their teacher or any other staff member.
* Informing the school of any suspected bullying behaviour.
* Advising their child not to retaliate to any form of bullying.
* Co-operate with the school in matters of bullying - if their child is experiencing bullying behaviour or if their child is displaying bullying behaviour.

**Parents must not approach another child about a behaviour matter or an incident of suspected bullying at Steelstown Primary School. All concerns must be brought directly to school staff in line with school policy.**

**Reporting a Bullying Concern**

Pupils Reporting a Concern

Any pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing this behaviour. Through the preventative work as previously listed, 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 pupil.

**Pupils can report bullying concerns by:**

* Verbally- talking to a member of staff
* By writing a note to a member of staff (eg. in a homework diary)
* By posting a comment in a ‘worry box’.

**Parents/ Carers reporting a Concern**

**Parents / carers can report bullying concerns 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, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to the Vice-Principal, Mrs O’Neill.
* Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken by the Vice Principal to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to Principal, Mrs Doorish.
* Where the parent/carer remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the school’s complaints procedure should be followed. This usually involves making a formal, written complaint, to the Chair of the Board of Governors.

While a report of a bullying concern is most likely to come from pupils or their parents/carers, the school will be open to receiving such reports from others not directly involved with the school. Any report of a bullying concern 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.

**Responding to a Bullying Concern**

The school’s process outlined below provides a framework for how we will respond to any bullying concerns identified.

* Clarify facts and perceptions
* Check records (SIMS)
* Assess the incident against the criteria for bullying behaviour

**If bullying behaviour has been identified:**

* Identify any themes or motivating factors
* Identify the type of bullying behaviour being displayed
* Identify intervention level for pupil displaying/ experiencing bullying behaviour
* Select and implement appropriate interventions for all pupils involved
* Track, monitor and record effectiveness of interventions
* Review outcome of interventions
* Select and implement further interventions 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, school staff may implement sanctions for those displaying bullying behaviour. As previously stated, no information about action taken in relation to a pupil can be disclosed to anyone other than the pupil and his/her parents/carers.

**Recording**

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

Records will be kept securely on the online SIMS which is part of the C2k system in schools. Access to these records will be restricted and only provided to appropriate members of school staff. 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.

Professional Development of Staff We are committed to ensuring that staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school’s ongoing Continued Professional Development (CPD) provisions. CPD records will be kept and updated regularly.

**Monitoring and Review of Policy**

To appropriately monitor the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy, the Board of Governors will:

* 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 will be reviewed, in consultation with pupils and their parents/carers, on or before.

**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 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
* Staff Code of Conduct