



ANTI – BULLYING POLICY

(Summary Document)

Date Reviewed:	September 2025
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This policy has been written following a consultation process, ratified by the Board of Governors and communicated to the school community as required. It will be monitored and reviewed as part of the school's policy review schedule.

ANTI – BULLYING POLICY (Summary Document)

INTRODUCTION

At Ballymagee Primary School and Nursery Unit we believe that each child has a right to be safe, valued and respected for their individual strengths and weaknesses without fear of being bullied (UNCRC Article 19). We believe a clear Code of Conduct, as outlined in our Positive Behaviour and Assertive Discipline Policy, which is understood and accepted by all, helps us to achieve and maintain good standards of behaviour so that effective teaching and learning can take place. We take a whole school approach, recognising that bullying is a concern for all of us, including children, teaching and support staff, parents and Governors.

BALLYMAGEE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY UNIT ANTI - BULLYING AIMS

- A whole school, proactive, approach to bullying behaviours is in place.
- Preventative measures are in place and maintained.
- There is a consistent approach to dealing with incidents of bullying.
- The school is an emotionally safe environment where positive relationships can develop.
- Opportunities for bullying behaviour to occur have been reduced/kept to a minimum.
- A consistent approach to managing bullying incidents is in place and evident.
- Mutually respectful relationships are established within a safe and welcoming environment.
- All children, parents, Governors and staff are aware of this policy and their roles and responsibilities in contributing to its success.

DEFINING BULLYING

1. Definition of 'Bullying'

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 definition of 'bullying' includes but is not limited to the repeated use of:

- any verbal, written or electronic communication,
- any other act,
- or 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.

This could include a failure to act e.g. not telling someone about a football match at break time as a way to exclude them.

As a result of this definition, the school may judge a one-off incident as bullying if the incident meets the one-off criteria included in the Bullying Concern Assessment Form (BCAF), the key to this is proving premeditation and the severity of the action.

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

Bullying can happen in any situation but we are particularly alert to the following settings:

- playground;
- classroom;
- dinner hall;
- open areas;
- toilets;
- school trips (residential/day trips);
- swimming pool;
- when children are coming and going to school;
- when children are lining up.

SOCIALLY UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

At Ballymagee Primary School and Nursery Unit we recognise that there is a range of socially unacceptable behaviours which contravenes everyone's right to be safe. They include, but are not limited to, the following examples:-

1. PHYSICAL - jostling, pushing, punching, kicking and other physical contact;
2. VERBAL - name calling, insults, jokes, threats, spreading rumours;
3. INDIRECT - omission, refusal to work with/talk to/play with/help others, interfering with personal property of someone and can include misuse of a digital device and/or social media platforms.

Socially unacceptable behaviours will be dealt with according to the school's Positive Behaviour and Assertive Discipline Policy. Every child can make errors of judgement behaving in ways that are hurtful to others. In most cases a quiet word and an explanation of how others feel is sufficient to make a difference. Children can and do learn over time how to care for themselves and for others. We believe that learning from mistakes and being genuinely sorry for them is part of growing up to be a socially well-adjusted person.

Socially unacceptable behaviour however can become bullying behaviour when the information gathered by a member of staff and shared with members of the Anti-Bullying Support Team clearly demonstrates that the unacceptable behaviours meet the criteria listed below i.e.

- Intentional;
- Targeted at a specific child or group of children;
- Repeated (but is not limited to this);
- Causing physical or emotional harm.

Such behaviour will subsequently be dealt with under the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

It is rare for bullying to take place in the Nursery School context as bullying is repeated behaviours by a child intending to cause physical or emotional harm to another child. Children in their pre-school year are learning how to behave appropriately in a larger social group, while at times there may be incidents of one child harming another, for example hitting or pushing, these rarely are intended to cause harm. Instead, these behaviours may be an immature expression of frustration or an inappropriate method of getting a toy or resource. As children learn to share, turn take and meet social expectations, incidents like these behaviours should become less frequent as the children's sense of empathy and ability to problem-solve/manage conflict grows.

RESPONSIBILITIES

All members of the school community have a key role in promoting, implementing and supporting the Anti-Bullying policy of Ballymagee Primary School and Nursery Unit. It is important that there is a collaborative school approach to address any difficulties which may be encountered. Everyone should work together to create a safe, happy and anti-bullying environment.

Staff will:

- provide a safe environment for all children, promoting the Ballymagee ethos and values.
- encourage children to tell;
- take all aspects of bullying seriously;
- log all incidents;
- celebrate and promote good behaviour;
- plan and teach lessons around the theme of bullying.

Children must:

- report all incidents of bullying;
- follow the school's code of conduct;
- avoid inappropriate behaviour which might be considered as bullying;
- be respectful and supportive to others.

Parents must:

- work in partnership with the school;
- follow the procedures set out in this Anti-Bullying Policy;
- discourage a tendency towards bullying behaviour;
- report concerns to their child's class teacher;
- stress to children that retaliation is not helpful
- resolve issues occurring outside of school to prevent them continuing inside school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING ABOUT BULLYING

Through teaching, children will learn about bullying behaviours and what to do if they believe they are being bullied.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH BULLYING

- All reports of bullying will be taken seriously.
- The problem may be reported by a child or parent to the class teacher who will deal with it initially.
- If deemed serious the Head of Key Stage will be involved as a member of the Anti-Bullying Team. If the issue is still not resolved it will be referred to the Vice Principal or Principal.
- The incidents will be investigated thoroughly including separate discussions with all those involved. All relevant details will be recorded from each discussion.
- All adults involved with the care of the children being investigated will be informed.
- It may be necessary, in certain circumstances, to impose sanctions on the child displaying bullying behaviours.
- A **restorative** and **solution-focused model** will be used by Ballymagee Primary School and Nursery Unit to move forward when responding to bullying behaviour.

LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

Ballymagee Primary School and Nursery Unit's Anti-Bullying Policy is set in the context of our Pastoral Care Programme. It forms part of the suite of safeguarding policies which links with other policies such as:

Child Protection	Pastoral Care	Positive Behaviour
Special Educational Needs	Health and Safety	Curricular Policies
Acceptable Use of the Internet		

RACE, EQUALITY AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

All children have equal access to the curriculum regardless of their gender, disability or ability. This policy takes account of any individual child's developmental age or capacity to understand the impacts of their behaviours. We plan work that is differentiated for the performance of all groups and individuals and are committed to creating a positive climate that will enable everyone to work free from racial intimidation and harassment to achieve their potential.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The policy will be reviewed every two years.

A full copy of our Anti-Bullying Policy can be viewed on request at the school office.