



## ST MARY'S HIGH SCHOOL, NEWRY

### **Anti-Bullying Policy**

**Revised May 2023**

#### **Rationale:**

As a Rights Respecting School, respect for self and others are core values within St Mary's and reflect a range of articles within the United Nations Convention for the Rights of the Child.

Bullying type behaviour in any form is caused by a lack of respect for another person's dignity and rights. It can take the form of psychological pressure, verbal, non-verbal or physical aggression or seeking control over others in unacceptable ways. In St Mary's, we aim to provide a safe, inclusive and secure learning environment for everyone in the school community. We believe all forms of bullying type behaviour to be unacceptable, all pupils have the right to learn in a safe and supportive environment.

*This policy is in line with the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016:*

*DENI Circular 2021/12 and the Statutory Guidance for Schools and Boards of Governors (DE, 2019)*

#### **Aims:**

As a Rights Respecting School we aim to:

- Encourage all pupils to exercise self-control, self-respect, respect for others, the environment and local community together with taking personal responsibility in line with Article 29 of UNCRC '*Education must encourage the child's respect for human rights as well as respect for others*'.
- Provide a systematic, consistent and appropriate response to addressing bullying concerns in school;
- Encourage pupils to fulfil their responsibility as outlined in the School Charter;
- Model mutual respect, empathy and kindness towards others;
- Support the health and safety of all pupils;
- Foster a learning culture that celebrates and rewards positive behaviour, achievement and success;
- Create a stimulating learning environment which encourages and rewards personal endeavour and achievement;
- Ensure pupils act in a socially acceptable manner at all times in school, travelling to or from school, during educational trips and while receiving educational provision arranged on behalf of the school and provided elsewhere than on the premises of the school;

## **Supportive and Caring Ethos:**

As a Rights Respecting School we:

- Believe any form of bullying type behaviour is unacceptable and every pupil has the right to be safe from any bullying type behaviour;
- Are committed to having a preventative, responsive and restorative anti-bullying ethos;
- Celebrate pupil diversity where their views and contributions are actively sought and respected;
- Understand that everyone in the school community has a role to play in challenging bullying type behaviour and in creating a safe and welcoming environment for all;
- Promote anti-bullying messages and implement preventative measures across the whole school community;

## **Structures and Procedures:**

- Staff lead by example in promoting respect for each other, forming positive relationships and developing resilience;
- Pupils learn in a Rights Respecting learning environment where they feel accepted and valued;
- Inclusive, child centred learning environment which promotes inclusion, where diversity is cherished and where the needs of all pupils are met;
- All staff receive Child Protection Training in line with EA guidelines and are familiar with the Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures. All staff are kept informed of new pastoral legislation and procedures;
- Emotional health and well-being is an integral part of the school curriculum and the Pastoral Programme;
- The school ethos is rooted in Christian values of respect and inclusion;
- The school works in partnership with a range of external agencies for support and guidance;
- Lunchtime supervision is provided by non-teaching members of staff who have completed Child Protection training and are fully vetted;
- Staff treat all incidents of socially unacceptable and alleged bullying type behaviours seriously and investigate each incident impartially in a non-judgmental manner.
- Any pupil experiencing socially unacceptable or bullying type behaviour is supported;
- Any pupil identified as displaying socially unacceptable or bullying type behaviour is supported;
- Reward and promote socially acceptable behaviour
- The Anti-Bullying Policy is shared with parents/carers and is published on the School Website and App;
- A Counselling Service is provided one day per week.
- The Personal Development Programme encourages pupils to explore key issues such as self-respect, self-concept, acceptable behaviour and respect for others.

## Consultation:

This policy has been developed in consultation with pupils through the Rights Respecting School Council with Parents/Carers and staff through consultative workshops and questionnaires (September 2022)

## Definition of Bullying:

### *Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016*

1- In this Act 'bullying includes (but 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 purpose of subsection (1), 'act' includes omission

## Bullying Type Behaviours

Bullying type behaviour that is usually repeated, targeted and carried out intentionally to cause hurt, harm or to adversely affect the rights and needs of other pupils. The following unacceptable behaviours when repeated, targeted and intentionally hurtful, may be considered bullying type behaviour/s:

Verbal or Written acts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Saying mean and hurtful things to, or about, others;</li><li>• Making fun of others;</li><li>• Calling another pupil mean and hurtful names;</li><li>• Telling lies or spread false rumours about others;</li><li>• Trying to make other pupils dislike another pupil/s.</li></ul>
Physical acts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hitting;</li><li>• Kicking;</li><li>• Pushing;</li><li>• Shoving;</li><li>• Material harm, such as taking/stealing money or possessions or causing; damage to possessions.</li></ul>
Omission (Exclusion)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leaving someone out of a game;</li><li>• Refusing to include someone in group work.</li></ul>
Electronic acts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Using online platforms or other electronic communication to carry out many of the written acts noted above;</li><li>• Impersonating someone online to cause hurt;</li><li>• Sharing image (eg photographs or videos) online to embarrass someone.</li></ul>

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

The school understands that there are various motivations behind bullying type behaviour/s, these may include (not exclusive);

- 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

### **Electronic Bullying:**

- If the alleged electronic bullying type behaviour has an impact on relationships between pupils in school, staff will investigate the incident providing support to both the pupil experiencing and the pupil displaying bullying type behaviour.
- The Vice Principal and the Principal together may request a pupil to allow them to view evidence of a socially unacceptable or potentially bullying type behaviour contained on electronic devices. The pupil's parents/carers will be notified before this request is made and informed of the outcome.
- If a pupil refuses to share the electronic evidence with the Principal and Vice Principal their parents/carers will be requested to come into the school immediately.
- Evidence may be shared with the PSNI to aid investigations of child protection or potentially law-breaking behaviour

### **One-off Incidents**

While bullying type behaviour is usually repeated, there are examples of one-off incidents that the school will classify as bullying type behaviour, considering the following criteria:

- ❖ Severity and significance of the incident
- ❖ Evidence of pre-mediation
- ❖ Impact of the incident on individuals (physical or emotional)
- ❖ Impact of the incidence on the wider school community
- ❖ Previous relationships between those involved
- ❖ Any previous incidents involving the individuals

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

Bullying type behaviour is an emotive issue requiring understanding and support. For this reason, this policy and the school will not refer to a child as 'a bully', nor will refer to a child as 'a victim'. The school community will use the following language:

- A child displaying bullying type behaviour/s
- A child experiencing bullying type behaviour/s

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

### **Preventative Measures:**

The focus of all anti-bullying strategies is on prevention of bullying type behaviour during school and to and from school. This includes:

- Consistent promotion of the whole school ethos of respect, tolerance and inclusion;
- Development of a culture where pupils take pride in their school and are viewed as ambassadors of their school;
- Raising awareness and understanding of the positive behaviour expectations of all pupils and staff;
- Promotion of anti-bullying messages, eg Personal Development lessons, whole school assemblies, school charter;
- Raising awareness of the various forms of bullying type behaviour, including how and why it can happen through curriculum areas such as: Personal Development, LLW, RE
- Pupil awareness of the Pastoral Referral System
- Actively promoting positive emotional health and wellbeing of all pupils and staff;
- Participation in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities;
- Engagement in national campaigns including Safer Internet Day to promote the importance of online safety and appropriate behaviour;
- Support from external organisations to promote anti-bullying messages for example PSNI – Acceptable Internet use;
- Lunchtime supervision by non-teaching members of staff who have completed Child Protection training and are fully vetted;
- Effective peer support and mentoring programmes;
- Pupil engagement in a wide range of student voice groups;
- Regular engagement with transport providers such as Translink to ensure early identification of any pastoral concerns and promote effective communication.

### **Responsibilities:**

**Everyone in the school community, including pupils, their parents/carers and the staff of the school are expected to respect the rights of others.**

### **Board of Governors:**

- Ensure that a safeguarding ethos is maintained within the school environment and arrangements are reviewed on an annual basis;
- Ensure that the school has an Anti-Bullying Policy which has been consulted with pupils, parents/carers and staff;
- Review the Anti Bullying Policy every 4 years or earlier if required;
- Ensure appropriate measure are taken to prevent and address bullying type behaviour;
- Ensure that Governors undertake appropriate Child Protection and Anti-bullying training;
- The school records incidents of bullying type behaviour or alleged bullying type behaviour

- Ensure that the Board of Governors receive termly updates regarding the prevalence of bullying type behaviour and alleged bullying type behaviour including identification of any trends and patterns to inform further development of policy and procedures.

**School:**

- To promote an ethos of respect for self, for others and the environment;
- To set the highest possible standards for positive relationships among staff, pupils and parents;
- To ensure a safe environment for staff and pupils;
- To encourage openness about any form of socially unacceptable and bullying type behaviour;
- Listen sensitively to anyone who raises a concern about alleged bullying type behaviour, take what is said seriously and provide reassurance that an appropriate investigation will take place;
- Investigate all concerns about bullying type behaviour, gather evidence which is then matched against the criteria in the Bullying Concern Assessment Form to determine if the concern is (a) socially unacceptable or (b) bullying type behaviour.
- If the concern is deemed to be socially unacceptable behaviour, the Positive Behaviour Policy will be implemented.
- If the concern is deemed to be bullying type behaviour, the Anti-Bullying Policy will be implemented.
- To involve parents when necessary and appropriate.
- To support and help the pupil experiencing bullying type behaviour and the pupil displaying bullying type behaviour;
- Resolve difficulties through positive restorative practices to meet the needs of all the parties involved and to prevent recurring behaviour.

**Parent Responsibilities:**

- To encourage their daughter to have self-confidence and to have confidence in talking to staff;
- To promote respect for self, others and property and support the school's Positive Behaviour Policy;
- To discuss with their daughters any fears or experiences of what appears to be and what is bullying type behaviour;
- To help their daughter work out, non-aggressive, strategies for dealing with what appears to be worrying behaviour on the part of another person;
- To actively promote socially acceptable behaviour at all times;
- To inform the school of any concern regarding bullying type behaviour and to encourage their daughter to react appropriately and refrain from retaliating;
- To co-operate with the school in resolving any concerns involving socially unacceptable and bullying type behaviour;

**Pupil Responsibilities:**

- To respect herself, others and the school environment;
- To know her rights and responsibilities regarding personal safety;
- To behave towards others in a respectful manner;

- To report any concerns regarding socially unacceptable or bullying type behaviour to a member of staff;
- To tell her parents/carers or a trusted adult if she is experiencing bullying type behaviour including through any electronic device eg their mobile phone;
- To avoid any behaviour which could be understood by others as bullying type behaviour: (e.g. giving ‘dirty looks’, calling names, spreading rumours, teasing, threatening);
- Refrain from retaliating to any form of bullying type behaviour.

## **Reporting concerns of Bullying:**

### **Pupils:**

- Pupils may report their concerns about potential bullying type behaviour to any member of staff, teaching or non-teaching.
- Pupils need to be aware that this member of staff may not be involved in the investigation of the concern and subsequent follow up;

### **Parents/Carers:**

- Parents/Carers are signposted to the school’s Anti-Bullying Policy on the School Website and App. They are provided with a hard copy of the Policy in Year 8 and a summary at the start of each other school year.
- Parents/Carers must report all concerns regarding bullying type behaviour/s to their daughter’s Form Teacher;
- Where the Parent/Carer is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken, their concern should be reported to their daughter’s Year Head then the Vice Principal and finally the Principal;
- Where the Parent/Carer remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the school’s complaints procedure should be followed including referral to the Education Authority Anti-Bullying Team.

All reports of concerns regarding bullying type behaviour received from pupils and/or parents or carers will be responded to in line with this policy and feedback will be made to the person who made the report as soon as the investigation has taken place.

**Due to pupil confidentiality, no information about action taken in relation to a pupil can be disclosed to anyone other than the pupil and her parents/carers.**

## **St Mary’s Response to Bullying Type Behaviour:**

Incidents of Bullying Type Behaviour will be dealt with firstly by the pupil’s Form Teacher then Year Tutor, Vice Principal and finally Principal. Form Teachers may be involved at the initial stage and will continue to have a supportive role. If potential bullying type behaviour is reported to another member of staff by a pupil or parent or a concern is suspected by a member of staff, it will be referred to the pupil’s Form Teacher.

The main aim of any intervention is to **RESPOND** to the concern of bullying type behaviour that is taking place and take action to **RESTORE** the well-being of all those involved.

### **Form Teacher/Year Tutor and or Vice Principal:**

When the Form Teacher/Year Tutor or Vice Principal receives details of the incident he or she is required to:

- Meet with the pupils separately (pupil who has allegedly experienced bullying type behaviour, witnesses, pupil who is allegedly displaying bullying type behaviour) connected with the incident;
- Record details in writing - dates, times, the type of bullying type behaviour, the name of any pupil who witnessed what was happening, where the incidents occurred (in the classroom, on the corridor, outside) in the BCAF;
- Collect other related information if necessary;
- When the investigation has been concluded there will be a 'Bullying Concern Assessment Meeting' to review the collected evidence by the Year Tutor, Behaviour Management Co-ordinator and Vice Principal - Part 1 of the Bullying Concern Assessment Form will be completed (BCAF).
- On the basis of the evidence gathered **all** of the following criteria must be met:
  - The bullying type behaviour is intentional?
  - The behaviour is targeted at a specific pupil or group of pupils?
  - The behaviour is repeated?
  - The behaviour is causing physical or emotional harm?
  - Behaviour that is deliberate omission?
- If the above criteria are met, Part 2 and 3 of the BCAF is completed;
- Parents/Carers will be notified during the investigation stage;
- If the criteria has not been met, the behaviour will be deemed as socially unacceptable and will be managed through the Positive Behaviour Policy and Procedures. The Year Tutor and Behaviour Management Co-ordinator will continue to monitor and support the pupil/s involved as outlined in the Positive Behaviour Policy;
- When the investigation is complete, the Year Tutor or Vice Principal will formally advise the Principal and the Board of Governors at their next scheduled meeting;
- If bullying type behaviour or serious socially unacceptable behaviour has occurred both sets of parents/carers will be contacted explaining what has been happening and how the incident will be resolved;
- Determine appropriate restorative measures and sanctions with a review date

It is the aim of the school to support the pupil experiencing bullying type behaviour and the pupil who is displaying bullying type behaviour.

### **Serious Incidents:**

Bullying type behaviours assessed as being complex or high risk will always involve the Vice Principal and/or Principal. There may be a significant threat to the safety and welfare of any or all the pupils involved. Incidents of this nature must be assessed in relation to the risk posed and the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures may need to be invoked and a Risk Assessment Action Plan may be devised.

The school will always take immediate action if a pupil's personal safety is at threat.



## **Investigation of Bullying Type Behaviour:**

Whenever the investigation has concluded and completion of Part 1 of the BCAF has established that bullying type behaviour has taken place, the school will implement support and appropriate interventions for the pupil experiencing bullying type behaviour and for the pupil displaying bullying type behaviour. Part 3 of the BCAF (Record of Support and Interventions) will be completed by members of SLT together with the Year Tutor. The team will establish a timeframe for review and complete Part 4 of the BCAF (Review of Bullying Concern and Actions to Date).

When responding to bullying type behaviour, school staff shall implement interventions aimed at responding to the behaviour, resolving the concern, and restoring the wellbeing of all involved. School staff will implement effective supportive responses for both those experiencing and displaying bullying type behaviour.

Using the Legislative flow chart, bullying concern assessment form (BCAF) and Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource, the member of staff responsible shall:

- Complete the relevant section of the BCAF
- Clarify facts and perceptions
- Check records (SIMS)
- Identify any motivating factors and methods
- Identify the type of alleged bullying type behaviour being displayed and experienced
- Parents/carers informed via phone from a restorative perspective.
- Assess the incident against the legal definition (criteria met - proceed to Level 1-4 ERTBB table, complete relevant sections on the BCAF)
- Identify intervention levels 1-4 in accordance with the bullying type behaviour
- Select and implement appropriate interventions and supports, as outlined in the table level 1-4 for all pupils involved, in addition to strategies that may not be listed in the Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour.
- Track, monitor and record effectiveness of interventions
- Provide Counselling
- Review outcome of interventions
- Implement further interventions and/or external supports as necessary including; Educational Welfare Services, EA Behaviour Support, Educational Psychology, Child Protection Support Services, CAMHS, Family Hubs.

Discretion will be applied regarding a student's capacity to understand the impact of their bullying type behaviour from a Special Educational Needs perspective and regarding the resilience of the pupil/pupils involved.

Where appropriate, school staff may implement support strategies for those displaying bullying type behaviour.

Recording:

- The school will centrally record all relevant information related to reports of bullying type behaviour as recorded in the Bullying Concern Assessment Form.
- All records will be maintained in line with relevant data protection legislation and guidance.

If a parent/carer is unsatisfied with the school's response regarding bullying type behaviour, the concern should be managed in line with the school's Complaints Policy.

### **Professional Development of Staff:**

Governors and all staff, both teaching and non-teaching are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development in relation to the school's Safeguarding and Anti Bullying policies and procedures. The school records this ongoing professional development and notes that such training may result in changes to the policy and procedures where relevant.

### **Dissemination of the Policy:**

This Anti Bullying Policy along with all Pastoral Policies are shared annually with Year 8 parents/carers and are available on the school's website and on the school app. A Pastoral Policies overview is sent to all parents/carers at the start of each academic year. Key Pastoral Policies are available from the school website [www.stmarysnewry.com](http://www.stmarysnewry.com) and the School App.

### **Related Whole School Policies:**

This policy is set within the broader school context of Pastoral Care and as such should be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Pastoral Care Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Drugs Education Policy
- Personal Development Policy
- RSE Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- E Safety and Acceptable Use of Internet Policy
- SEN Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- CRED Policy
- School Charter

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review:**

Mr Fitzpatrick, the Vice Principal and Designated Teacher, is responsible for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the implementation of the Anti-Bullying Policy. The policy will be revised every 4 years although it may be updated in light of any further guidance and legislation as necessary or following any incident which may highlight the need for review. This will be done in consultation with the Board of Governors, SLT, staff, students and parents.

To 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 type behaviours will be noted
- identify trends and priorities for action
- assess the effectiveness of strategies aimed at preventing bullying type behaviour

Signed by Chair of Governors: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed by Principal: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Review: \_\_May 2027\_\_\_\_\_