



Laurelhill Community College



Anti-Bullying Policy

February 2024

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Introduction and Mission Statement

'Learning and achieving together'

At Laurelhill Community College 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 which promotes mutual respect for all.

This policy is one of a number of interrelated policies which are concerned with pupils' behaviour and wellbeing, including the Child Protection and Positive Behaviour Management Policies

Context

This policy has been developed using the legislative and policy/guidance framework applicable. This includes:

The Legislative Context:

- The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016
- The Education and Libraries Order (Northern Ireland) 2003 (A17-19)
- 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

The 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)

The International Context

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

The 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:
 - In school, during the school day
 - While travelling to and from school
 - When under control of school staff, but away from school (eg. school trip)
 - When receiving education organised by school but happening elsewhere (eg. in another school in the ALC)
- 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:
 - Be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, maltreatment or exploitation.
 - Be protected from discrimination.
 - Express their views, in a supported and accessible way, on issues that affect them, and to have their opinions taken seriously.

Ethos & Principles

Laurelhill Community College is a caring, inclusive learning environment which prides itself on the care which is provided for all. The core values of the College are ‘Reach’ Respect, Enjoyment, Achievement, Care and Communication and Honesty –

- We are committed to a society where children and young people can live free and safe from bullying.
- We believe in a society where bullying is unacceptable and where every child and young person is safe and feels safe from bullying.
- We believe that every child and young person should be celebrated in their diversity.
- We are committed to a preventative, responsive and restorative anti-bullying ethos across the whole College.
- We value the views and contributions of children and young people, we will actively seek these views and we will respect and take them into account.
- We understand that everyone in our College community has a role to play in taking a stand against bullying and creating a safe and welcoming environment for all.

Consultation and Participation

This policy has been developed in consultation with registered pupils and their parents/carers, in compliance with the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016. Consultation with pupils took place, for example:

- Consultative workshops with pupils took place including setting up a mentoring programme to include NIABF anti bullying week involving sixth form mentors being assigned to year 8 classes.

What is Bullying?

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 provides all schools with a legal definition

Addressing Bullying in Schools Definition of “bullying”:

- (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.

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 College 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 Management Policy in the College.

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 (eg. photographs or videos) online to embarrass someone*

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

The various motivations behind bullying are listed below, 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 Laurelhill Community College 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.*

Section 6 – Preventative Measures

Laurelhill Community College by ethos is a caring College at the heart of the local Community and as such the College will be proactive in taking the following steps to prevent bullying behaviour and create a strong anti-bullying ethos.

- Raising awareness and understanding of the positive behaviour expectations, as set out in the Positive Behaviour Management Policy
- Promotion of anti-bullying messages through the curriculum eg. 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 PD/LLW (eg. sectarian, racist, homophobic, transphobic, disablist, etc.)
- Involvement in meaningful and supportive shared education projects, supporting pupils to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity.
- Through the preventative curriculum actively promote positive emotional health and wellbeing (eg. mindfulness garden)
- Participation in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities
- Engagement in key national and regional campaigns, eg Safer Internet Day, Good Relations Week, etc.
- Development of peer-led systems (eg. School Council) to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messaging within the school
- Development of effective strategies for playground management, eg. training for supervisors, zoning of playgrounds, inclusion of specific resources (buddy benches, play bus stops) 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 (eg. break time, lunch)
- Provision and promotion of extra and co-curricular activities, aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks. For example sporting activity and creative arts.

Under the new legislation, Laurehill Community College will implement preventative measures to prevent bullying behaviour on the way to and from school. These include:

- Development of a culture where pupils take pride in their school and are viewed as ambassadors for their school within the community. This includes regular reminders of the positive behaviour expectations of pupils whilst travelling to and from school.
- Regular engagement with transport providers (eg. Translink, EA Transport, etc.) 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 (eg. 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 (eg. staff duty at school gate/bus stops, where appropriate)

The new legislation also gives schools the authority to take steps to prevent bullying through the use of electronic communication amongst pupils at any time during term, where that behaviour is likely to have a detrimental effect on the pupil's education at school. Laurehill Community College will raise awareness of the nature and impact of online bullying and support our pupils to make use of the internet in a safe, responsible and respectful way. This will include:

- Addressing key themes of online behaviour and risk through PD/LLW, including understanding how to respond to harm and the consequences of inappropriate use.
- Participation in Anti-Bullying Week activities.
- Engagement with key statutory and voluntary sector agencies (eg. 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 (eg. Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy and Mobile Phone Policy etc.)

Section 7 – Responsibility

In Laurelhill Community College everyone has responsibility for creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all members of the College Community.

Everyone in the College Community, including pupils, their parents/carers and the staff of the school are expected to respect the rights of others to be safe.

Everyone has the responsibility to work together to:

- foster positive self-esteem
- behave towards others in a mutually respectful way
- model high standards of personal pro-social behaviour
- be alert to signs of distress* and other possible indications of bullying behaviour
- inform the College of any concerns relating to bullying behaviour
- refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying behaviour, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity.
- refrain from retaliating to any form of bullying behaviour
- intervene to support any person who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so.
- report any concerns or instances of bullying behaviour witnessed or suspected, to a member of staff.
- emphasise the importance of seeking help from a trusted adult about bullying behaviour when it happens or is observed
- explain the implications of allowing the bullying behaviour to continue unchecked, for themselves and/or others.
- listen sensitively to anyone who has been bullied, take what is said seriously, and provide reassurance that appropriate action will be taken
- know how to seek support – internal and external
- resolve difficulties in restorative ways to prevent recurring bullying behaviour and meet the needs of all parties

Section 8 – Reporting a Bullying Concern

The various ways in which pupils, parents and anyone else with concerns can make these known to the school.

Pupils Reporting a Concern

Laurelhill pupils can report a bullying concern to any member of staff both teaching and non-teaching that they have a trust with or they can speak directly with their Form Tutor or Head of Year. Pupils can report bullying concerns:

- Verbally- talking to a member of staff
- By writing a note to a member of staff (eg. in a homework planner)

It must be emphasised that ANY pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing this behaviour. Through the preventative work taken forward under Section 6, 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.

Parents/Carers Reporting a Concern

Parents/carers should raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour with the College at the earliest opportunity. We would also remind parents/carers of the need to encourage their children to react appropriately to bullying behaviour and to not do anything to retaliate or to 'hit back'.

- In the first instance, all bullying concerns should be reported to the Class Teacher or Form Tutor.
- 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 Head of Year or Deputy-Principal, as applicable.
- Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken by the Head of Year/Deputy-Principal to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to Principal.

Where the parent/carer remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the College's complaints procedure should be followed. This usually involves making a formal, written complaint, to the Chair of the Board of Governors.

While the majority of reports of bullying concerns will come from pupils and their parents/carers, the College must be open to receiving such reports from anyone in the Community and acting on these concerns in the best interests of the pupil/s

All reports of bullying concerns received from pupils and/or parents/carers will be responded to in line with this policy and that 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.

Section 9 – Responding to a Bullying Concern

It must be remembered that the focus of any intervention must be on responding to the bullying concern and restoring the wellbeing of those involved. As such, any strategy for responding to bullying concerns must concentrate on the prevention of any further incidents.

This section may be worded as follows:

The processes outlined below provide a framework for how the school will respond to any bullying concerns identified.

- *Clarify facts and perceptions*
- *Check records (SIMS)*
- *Assess the incident against the criteria for bullying behaviour*
- *Identify any themes or motivating factors*
- *Identify the type of bullying behaviour being displayed*
- *Identify intervention level*
- *Select and implement appropriate interventions for all pupils involved, including appropriate interventions, consequences and sanctions not listed in the Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource*
- *Track, monitor and record effectiveness of interventions*
- *Review outcome of interventions*
- *Select and implement further intentions as necessary*

Laurelhill Community College in line with the NIABF advocates a restorative approach to responding to bullying behaviour. Interventions suggested in the Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource focus on 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.

It is reiterated that information regarding any action taken regarding a pupil cannot be disclosed to anyone other than that pupil and his/her parents/carers.

Section 10 – Recording

It is a legal requirement, as set out in the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016, to maintain a record of all incidents of bullying and alleged bullying behaviour.

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 on the online SIMS Behaviour Management Module, which is part of the C2k system in schools. Access to these records will be restricted and only provided to those members of school staff with a legitimate need to have access.

All records will be maintained in line with relevant data protection legislation and guidance. 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 College.

Section 11 – Professional Development of Staff

Laurelhill Community College recognises the need for appropriate and adequate training for staff, including teaching and non-teaching school staff. This will include:

- stating a commitment to ensuring that staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school’s ongoing CPD/PRSD provisions
- ensuring that opportunities for safeguarding training are afforded to Governors and all staff – teaching and non-teaching

Section 12 – Monitoring and Review of Policy

To appropriately 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 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 shall be reviewed as required, in consultation with pupils and their parents/carers, on or before Sep 2025

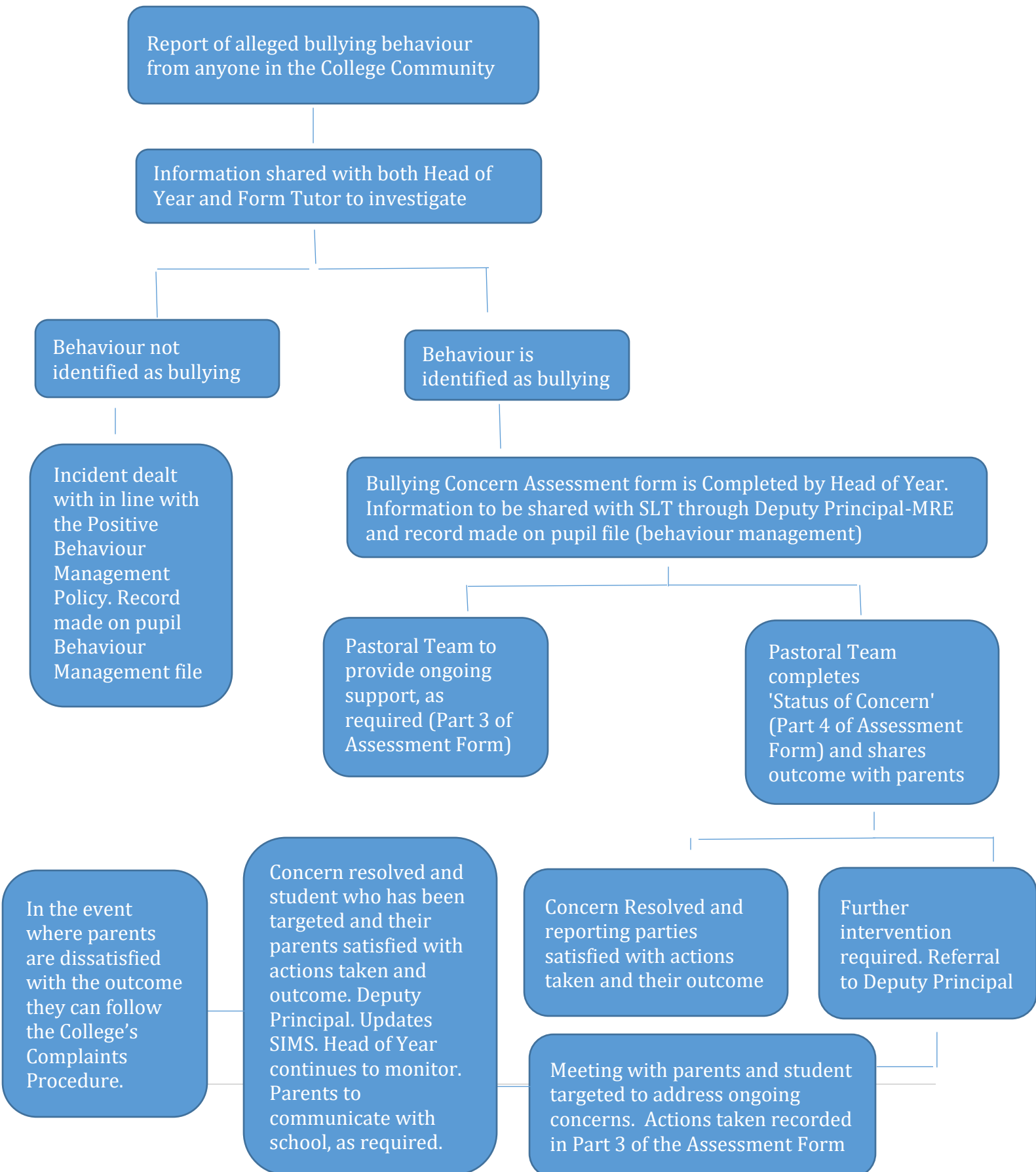
Section 12 – Links to Other Policies

In the development and implementation of this Anti-Bullying Policy, the Board of Governors has been mindful of related policies, including:

- Positive Behaviour Management 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

Appendix 1 – Application of Anti -Bullying Policy



Appendix 2 – Bullying Concern Assessment Form

Incident Date:

Pupils Involved	Role	Incident Date	Gender	DOB	Year and Reg

Incident	Comments
Bullying Concern	

PART 1 - Assessment of Concern

Date:

Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 defines bullying as follows:

“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.

	Name(s)	Gender	DOB/Year Group
Person(s) reporting concern			
Name of pupil(s) experiencing alleged bullying behaviour			
Name of Pupil(s) demonstrating alleged bullying behaviour			
Check records for previously recorded incidents			

Outline of incident(s): Attach all written accounts/drawings of incident(s) completed by targeted pupil, witnesses (i.e. other pupils, staff) including date(s) of events, if known, SIMS record.

Date	Information gathered	Location (stored)

Socially unacceptable behaviour becomes bullying behaviour when, on the basis of the information gathered, the criteria listed below have been met:	
The school will treat any incident which meets these criteria as bullying behaviours.	
Is the behaviour intentional?	YES / NO
Is the behaviour targeted at a specific pupil or group of pupils?	YES / NO
Is the behaviour repeated?	YES / NO
Is the behaviour causing physical or emotional harm?	YES / NO
Does the behaviour involve omission? (*may not always be present)	YES / NO

One-off Incident

When determining whether a one-off incident may be classified as bullying, the school shall take into consideration the following criteria and use the information gathered to inform and guide the decision making process:	
Criteria:	Information gathered:
severity and significance of the incident	
evidence of pre-meditation	
Significant level of physical/emotional impact on individual/s	
Significant level of impact on wider school community	
Status/nature of previous relationships between those involved	
Records exist of previous incidents involving the individuals	

YES the above criteria have been met and bullying behaviour has occurred.	NO the above criterial have not been met and bullying behaviour has not occurred.
The criteria having been met, proceed to complete Part 2 of this Bullying Concern Assessment Form	The criteria having not been met, proceed to record the details in the Behaviour Incident section of this Behaviour Management Module. Refer to the Positive Behaviour Policy of your school, continue to track and monitor to ensure the behaviour does not escalate.
<p>Agreed by _____</p> <p>Status _____</p> <p>On ___/___/___</p>	

PART 2

<p>2:1 Who was targeted by this behaviour?</p> <p>Select one or more of the following:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Individual to individual 1:1 <input type="checkbox"/> Individual to group <input type="checkbox"/> Group to individual</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Group to group</p>
<p>2.2 In what way did the bullying behaviour present?</p> <p>Select one or more of the following:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Physical (includes for example, jostling, physical intimidation, interfering with personal property, punching/kicking)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Any other physical contact which may include use of weapons)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Verbal (includes name calling, insults, jokes, threats, spreading rumours)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Indirect (includes omission, isolation, refusal to work with/talk to/play with/help others)</p>

Electronic (through technology such as mobile phones and internet)

Written

Other Acts

Please specify: _____ -

2.3 Motivation (underlying themes): this is not a definitive list

Select one or more of the following:

Age

Appearance

Cultural

Religion

Political Affiliation

Community background

Gender Identity

Sexual Orientation

Family Circumstance (pregnancy, marital status, young carer status)

Looked After Status (LAC)

Peer Relationship Breakdown

Disability (related to perceived or actual disability)

Ability

Pregnancy

Race

Not known

Other _____

Part 3a

RECORD OF SUPPORT AND INTERVENTIONS FOR PUPIL EXPERIENCING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR:						
Pupil Name:			Year Group/Class:			
REFER TO SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY AND TO LEVEL 1-4 INTERVENTIONS IN EFFECTIVE RESPONSES TO BULLYING BEHAVIOUR						
Parent/ carer informed:		Date:		By whom:		
Staff Involved:						
Date	Stage on Code of Practice	Intervention	Success Criteria	Action taken by whom and when	Outcomes of Intervention	Review

Record of participation in planning for interventions		
Pupil:		
Parent/carer:		
Other Agencies:		
Part 3b	Continue to track interventions until an agreed satisfactory outcome has been achieved	
RECORD OF SUPPORT AND INTERVENTIONS FOR PUPIL DISPLAYING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR:		
Pupil Name:	Year Group/Class:	
REFER TO SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY AND TO LEVEL 1-4 INTERVENTIONS IN EFFECTIVE RESPONSES TO BULLYING BEHAVIOUR		
Parent/ carer informed:	Date:	By whom:
Staff Involved:		

Date	Stage on Code of Practice	Type of Intervention	Success Criteria	Action taken by whom and when	Outcome of Intervention	Review

Record of participation in planning for interventions

Pupil:

Parent/carer:

Other Agencies:

Continue to track interventions until an **agreed** satisfactory outcome has been achieved

PART 4 - REVIEW OF BULLYING CONCERN AND ACTIONS TO DATE

Date of Review Meeting:

4a- Following the Review Meeting, to what extent have the success criteria been met?

- 1 – Fully
- 2 – Partially
- 3 – Further intervention/support required

Give details:

Part 4b- If the success criteria have not been met, continue to:

- Re-assess Level of Interventions and implement other strategies from an appropriate level
- Track, monitor and review the outcomes of further intervention
- Keep under review the Stage of Code of Practice each pupil is on
- Follow Safeguarding Policy
- Seek multi-agency input (EA, Health and Social Services etc.)
- Engage with Board of Governors

Agreed by:

School

Signed:

Date:

Parent

Signed:

Date:

Pupil

Signed:

Date: