

2023



ANAHILT

Primary School

Anti-Bullying Policy

NOVEMBER 2023

REVIEWED: NOVEMBER 2025

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT:

At Anahilt Primary School 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 is free from the threat of physical or emotional harm.

Anahilt Primary School aims to promote positive relationships and endeavours to provide a learning environment free from bullying behaviour. In addition, the school seeks to create a **TELLING, LISTENING** and **RESPONDING** environment where everyone can feel safe, valued and cared for.

CONTEXT:

This policy has been informed by current legislation and DE Guidance listed below:

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)

Key Legislation:

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 which:

- 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 (eg. school trips).
 4. When receiving education organised by school but happening elsewhere (e.g. in another school).

- 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’ (A.17)

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. (A.19)
- Be protected from discrimination. (A.2)
- Express their views, in a supported and accessible way, on issues that affect them, and to have their opinions taken seriously. (A.12)
- Education. (A.28)

ETHOS AND PRINCIPLES – ANAHILT PRIMARY SCHOOL

School Ethos:

In Anahilt Primary School our pupils are at the heart of everything we do. It is a happy and welcoming place where children’s learning and personal development are central. Set amidst the drumlins of County Down, the school has been in existence for over 200 years and we are very proud of our rich history. The school offers a happy, safe and caring environment in which pupils, parents and staff are valued. As a school we are committed to the well-being, happiness and success of all our pupils.

School Values:

At Anahilt Primary School our shared vision is ***‘Helping Children Think for Themselves.’*** We aim to prepare children to make reasonable and informed decisions for life’s challenges. Our mission is ***‘to develop the intellectual, physical, aesthetic, spiritual and social characteristics of children in order to enhance the quality of their lives, both in the present and in the future’.***

Anahilt Primary School is committed to

1. Provide a happy, safe and secure atmosphere in which learning is enjoyable and where children grow in confidence and interdependence.
2. Provide a bright, stimulating and welcoming environment in which the children take pride.
3. Promote a school where members of staff are caring and approachable.
4. Help children develop a moral code in the context of the school, community and global society.
5. We believe in a society where bullying behaviour is considered to be unacceptable behaviour.
6. We believe that every young person has the right to feel safe and be free from the threat of bullying.
7. We are committed to developing a school culture where bullying behaviour is seen as unacceptable and therefore bullying concerns will be addressed.
8. We believe that every child is different and we celebrate diversity.

10. The school is committed to developing a preventative, responsive and restorative anti-bullying ethos.
11. We value the views and opinions of our pupils regarding bullying and take them into account.

We understand that everyone in our school community has a role to play in taking a stand against bullying behaviour and in creating a safe and welcoming environment for all.

The values we wish to promote include:

- Confidence, independence and interdependence, responsibility, respect, trust, honesty, perseverance, co-operation, resilience, compassion and self-discipline.

CONSULTATION AND PARTICIPATION:

This policy document has been developed in consultation with pupils and their parents/carers, in compliance with The Addressing Bullying in School Act (NI) 2016.

Consultations included:

- Consultative workshops with The School Council
- Class-based activities on Bullying (circle time sessions/PDMU)
- Whole school questionnaires distributed to all pupils, parents/carers and staff
- Engagement with all staff, teaching and non-teaching
- Engagement with the Board of Governors
- Engagement with parent group, the PTA
- Representative members of staff and governors involved in writing the school's Anti-bullying Policy.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Anahilt Primary School uses the legal definition of bullying for Northern Ireland as defined in the 2016 Anti-Bullying Act:

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
- the exclusion of children (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.

While bullying is usually repeated behaviour, there may be one-off instances which the school may consider as bullying. **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 incident on the 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 school's Behaviour Management Policy.

The following unacceptable behaviours, when repeated, targeted and intentionally hurtful, may be considered 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 spreading false rumours about others
 - trying to make other pupils dislike another pupil/pupils
- **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 e.g. text messages, apps etc.
 - impersonating someone online to cause hurt
 - sharing images (e.g. 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.

MOTIVATING FACTORS FOR BULLYING

There are a range of factors which may motivate a pupil or group of pupils to display bullying behaviour towards another pupil/s. Examples of these include, but are not limited to:

- Age
- Appearance
- Breakdown in peer relationships
- Race
- Religion

- Community background
- Political affiliation
- Gender identity
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy
- Marital status
- 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 discussing these matters. Staff in Anahilt Primary School will be encouraged to use the following language when applying this policy:

- 'child/ren *displaying* bullying behaviour'
- 'child/ren *experiencing* bullying behaviour'

Language including the terms 'bully,' 'victim,' and 'perpetrator' is not considered to be helpful or appropriate.

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:

Under the legislation, the focus for all anti-bullying work should be on prevention.

Anahilt Primary School aims to prevent bullying and create a safe learning environment in the following ways:

- Raise awareness and understanding of positive behaviour expectations, as set out in the school's Behaviour Management Policy
- Promote anti-bullying messages through the teaching of the curriculum e.g. developing good relationships, respect, positive behaviour and inclusion
- Address issues such as the various different types of bullying, including the *how* and *why* it can happen, through PDMU and wellbeing lessons
- Participate in meaningful and supportive education projects to encourage pupils to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity
- Actively promote emotional health and wellbeing (e.g. mindfulness sessions)
- Participate in the NIABF (Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum) annual Anti-Bullying Week activities
- Engage in key national and/or regional campaigns e.g. Safer Internet Day
- Use the School Council to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messages within the school
- Deploy effective strategies for playground management e.g. training for supervisors and P7 Buddies, zoning of playground for different key stages, inclusion of specific resources (buddy benches) and provision of a variety of play options to meet the needs of all pupils

- Hold focused assemblies to raise awareness and to promote understanding of key issues/messages related to bullying
- Provide and promote a range of extra-curricular activities, aimed at supporting the development of effective relationships and teamwork

The following is a list of preventative measures Anahilt Primary School will put in place to help prevent bullying on the journey to and from school:

- Development of a culture where pupils are viewed as ambassadors for their school within the community. This includes pupils taking pride in their school and regular reminders of the positive behaviour expectations of pupils whilst travelling to and from school.
- Reminders and measures to empower pupils to report inappropriate or unacceptable behaviour of their peers during the journey to and from school.
- Regular weekly engagement with transport providers (EA Transport) to ensure effective communication and the early identification of any concerns.
- Promoting awareness of behaviour expectations of pupils amongst the local community (e.g. local play park, local shop, residents, service providers etc.)
- Appropriate deployment of staff to support the transition to and from school (e.g. Staff duty outside the school while pupils arrive and depart)

In addition, the staff in Anahilt Primary School believe that it is important to 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 may include:

- Addressing key themes of online behaviour and risk through PDMU including understanding how to respond to harm and the consequences of inappropriate use
- Participation in Anti-Bullying Week activities annually
- Participation in the annual Safer Internet Day activities and promotion of key messages throughout the year
- Engagement with key statutory and voluntary sector agencies (e.g. C2k, PSNI, Safeguarding Board for NI, Barnardos and the NSPCC) to support the promotion of key messages
- Development and implementation of robust and appropriate policies in related areas (e.g. Social Media Policy, E-safety, Acceptable Use Policy and Behaviour Management Policy)

RESPONSIBILITY

In Anahilt Primary School we believe that everyone has responsibility for creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all members of the school community. Everyone in the school 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 positive behaviour
- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying behaviour
- Inform the school 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 when required
- Resolve difficulties in restorative ways to prevent recurring bullying behaviour and meet the needs of all parties

REPORTING A BULLYING CONCERN

Pupils Reporting a Concern:

Pupils are encouraged to raise concerns with **any** member of staff, including teaching and non-teaching staff. If preferred, pupils may choose to talk to a member of the Safeguarding Team (Mr A Smyth or Mrs A McCune)

Pupils can raise a bullying concern in the following ways:

- Verbally – talking to a member of staff
- By writing a note to a member of staff (e.g. in a homework diary)
- By sending an email to a member of staff (P7 only)
- By posting a comment in the ‘worry box’

It should be noted that ANY pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing the behaviour. Through the preventative approach being taken forward (*see Preventative Measures Section*) the ‘message’ will focus on ‘getting help’ rather than ‘telling.’ All pupils therefore will be encouraged to ‘get help’ if they have a concern about bullying that they experience or is experienced by another.

How to report a bullying concern will be addressed at class, key stage and whole school level through PDMU, Circle Time, whole school assemblies, School Council meetings, P7 Buddy Training sessions and visits from outside agencies e.g. NSPCC.

Parents/Carers Reporting a Concern:

Parents and carers are encouraged to raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour with the school at the **earliest opportunity**. Anahilt Primary School will encourage parents/carers of the need to tell their children to react appropriately to bullying behaviour by reporting it to an adult in the school and to not do anything to retaliate or ‘hit back’.

The process for parents/carers to report an alleged bullying concern is as follows:

- **In the first instance**, all bullying concerns should be reported to the **class teacher** who in turn will liaise with a member of the Safeguarding Team
- 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 Principal
- Where the parent/carer remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the school's complaints procedure should be followed. This will involve making a formal, written complaint, to the Chair of the Board of Governors. The Anahilt Primary School **Complaints Procedure** will be found on the school website, under the Parent Tab, in the section titled 'Policies.'

While the majority of reports of bullying concerns will come from pupils and their parents/carers, the school is open to receiving such reports from anyone. All reports of bullying concerns received from pupils and/or parents/carers will be responded to in line with this Anti-Bullying Policy and feedback will be made to the person who made the report. However, 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 processes outlined below provides a framework for how the school will respond to any bullying concerns identified.

Using the Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF) Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource, the member of staff responsible shall:

- Clarify facts and perceptions
- Check records (SIMS/BMM)
- Assess the incident against the criteria for bullying behaviour
- Identify any themes or motivating factors
- Identify the type of bullying behaviour displayed
- Identify the level of intervention required
- 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 the effectiveness of the interventions
- Review outcomes of interventions
- Select and implement further interventions if necessary

UNDERSTANDING THE LEVELS OF PREVENTATION: (From the NIABF Resource)

Level 1 Intervention – Low Level Bullying Behaviour

Interventions at Level 1 are to help pupils to recognise /reflect on their unacceptable behaviour and to 'get them back on track' while listening to and supporting /strengthening the pupil/s experiencing bullying.

Staff should:

- Explain the inappropriateness of the behaviour in line with the school's values

- Identify possible consequences if the bullying behaviour continues
- Point out the level of distress experienced by the bullied pupil
- Talk with the pupil being bullied to explore whether he/she has in any way provoked the bullying behaviour
- Help the pupil who is experiencing the bullying to identify ways in which he/she may be strengthened and supported e.g. peer support
- Encourage reparation to be made, if appropriate
- Monitor the situation carefully
- Be prepared to intervene with a higher level if the situation persists or deteriorates

Level 2 Interventions – Intermediate Level Bullying Behaviour

While interventions at Level 2 involve continuing with the above, there is a shift from individual support to group interventions. This will be led by the Principal. To be effective small group work needs:

- The consent and involvement of the pupil being bullied
- To be planned and timetabled, session length dependent on age and ability
- Parental/ carer consent and agreement from participating pupils
- Carefully selected group membership
- To take place in a suitable and comfortable environment
- To be uninterrupted
- To be facilitated in a positive manner, ideally by two adults whose role may alternate allowing one to participate and one to observe
- Structured and focused activities using active learning approaches to stimulate discussion and debate amongst members
- Decision and outcomes to be agreed and recorded e.g. on a flipchart
- To facilitate the development of empathy amongst pupils
- A solution focused approach to the situation
- Regular meetings of the group
- Regular meetings with the bullied pupil to assess ongoing effectiveness of agreed actions
- To ensure regular feedback is given on agreed actions

It is important to note that whilst all efforts will be made to address the issues immediately, staffing resources and a teaching Principal means that set times may be set aside for this group work during the working week.

Level 3 Interventions – Complex Bullying Behaviour

Interventions at Level 3 will often involve the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator/SENCO and members of the Senior Management Team, in collaboration with pupil/s and parents to determine the way forward in affecting change. A risk assessment may need to be carried out to determine the plan of intervention. This planning may occur through a multi-agency discussion, involving other support agencies.

Bullying at this level often involves complex group dynamics, where a number of roles are evident, such as those displaying bullying behaviour, bystanders and pupils experiencing bullying.

Consequently, interventions may require one-to-one meetings, small group work and whole class involvement. These will often require group interventions as highlighted in Level 2 along with individual support and strength building programmes.

Level 4 Interventions – High Risk Bullying Behaviour

Bullying behaviours assessed as Level 4 are severe and involve a significant threat to the safety and welfare of any pupil or all of the pupils involved. Such severe bullying concerns may be new or may have proved resistant to earlier school interventions and have now been assessed as high risk. Incidents at this level must be assessed in relation to the risk posed to any/all of the pupils involved. As such, the Principal, Vice-Principal and Chair of the Board of Governors will be involved in making decisions and determining a way forward.

In addition to safeguarding procedures and practices including referral to external support services, the school's interventions at Level 4 should continue to implement interventions detailed at Level 3 as appropriate.

When responding to a bullying concern at Anahilt Primary School, 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

Any action taken regarding a pupil cannot be disclosed to anyone other than that 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 type)
- The motivation for the behaviour
- How each incident was addressed by the school
- The outcome of the interventions employed

Records of all incidents of bullying and alleged bullying behaviour 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 school.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF:

Appropriate and adequate training for staff, including both teaching and non-teaching staff will be provided.

This will include:

- Ensuring that opportunities for safeguarding training are afforded to Governors and all staff, both teaching and non-teaching
- Noting the impact of the training given e.g. that staff understand the procedure and interventions and can use them effectively

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

The school recognises that it is a legal requirement that the Anti-Bullying Policy be reviewed at intervals of no more than four years. However, the policy will be reviewed following any incident which highlight the need for such a review. It may also need to be reviewed when directed by the Department of Education and in light of new guidance. Therefore, this Anti-Bullying Policy will be reviewed as required, in consultation with pupils and their parents/carers, on or before November 2024.

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:

- Pastoral Care Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy
- E-Learning and Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct Policy

Policy written by Senior Management in consultation with Board of Governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents.

November 2022 Ratified by BoG

Review Date: November 2024