Holywood Nursery School

Anti-Bullying Policy

**Introduction**

At Holywood Nursery 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.

Holywood Nursery School aims to provide a caring and happy environment in which the potential of every child can be realised. We try to promote in all our pupils values that will make them caring, responsible citizens. We believe in the dignity and worth of each individual and in the development of the whole person. All members of staff share these values and work to ensure a child centred approach which underpins everything that we do.

**The Legislative Context:**

* [The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2016/25/contents)
  + 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 (Northern Ireland) 2003](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/2003/424/contents/made) (A17-19)

Requires the Board of Governors to:

* + ‘Safeguard and promote the welfare of registered pupils’ (A.17)
* [The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/annex-a-school-development-plans-regulations-2010.pdf)
* [The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1995/755/contents/made)
* [The Human Rights Act 1998](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents)
* [The Health and Safety at Work Order (Northern Ireland) 1978](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1978/1039)

**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)](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/pastoral%20care%20in%20schools.pdf)
* [Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: A Guide for Schools (DE, 2017)](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Safeguarding-and-Child-Protection-in-Schools-A-Guide-for-Schools.pdf)
  + [Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (Dept. of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, 2016)](https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/co-operating-safeguard-children-and-young-people-northern-ireland)
  + [Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland Policies and Procedures (SBNI, 2017)](https://www.proceduresonline.com/sbni/)

**The International Context**

* [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](https://downloads.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/UNCRC_united_nations_convention_on_the_rights_of_the_child.pdf?_ga=2.109765637.1827233515.1552648186-274690600.1552648186) (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 & Principles**

* 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 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 school.
* We value the views and contributions of children and we will respect and take them into account.
* We understand that everyone in our school community has a role to play in taking a stand against bullying and creating a safe and welcoming environment for all.

**What is Bullying?**

Bullying is usually repeated behaviour that intentionally hurts, harms or adversely affects the rights and needs of another or others. The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (2016) .

While bullying is usually repeated behaviour, there are instances of one-off incidents that the school will 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 incidents on wider school community
* previous relationships between those involved
* any previous incidents involving the individuals

It is not usual 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 years are learning how to behave appropriately in a larger social group, while at times there may be incidents of one pupil 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.

The following (non-exhaustive) list of examples of unacceptable behaviours, when repeated, targeted and intentionally hurtful, may be considered bullying behaviours;

- Physical Acts such as hitting, kicking, pushing, material harm such as taking/stealing money or possessions.

- Verbal Acts such as saying mean and hurtful things, making fun of others, name-calling.

- Omission - leaving someone out of a game, refusing to work with someone in a group.

- Electronic Acts - using online platforms to carry out the acts noted above, impersonating someone online to cause hurt, sharing images online to embarrass someone.

Some of these acts are more relevant to the Nursery School setting than others.

When assessing a one-off incident or such behaviour, 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 the wider school community
* previous relationships between those involved
* any previous incidents involving the individuals

These factors will be reviewed in line with the child’s individual capacity to understand the impact of their behaviours, e.g. due to development, age, special educational needs.

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

Recognising Bullying Behaviour Bullying is an emotive issue, therefore it is essential that we ensure we use supportive, understanding language when discussing 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 by describing the situation surrounding that child, for example:

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

We encourage all members of the 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 first approach taken as part of our Anti-Bullying Policy are the preventative measures put in place to limit the occurrence of bullying behaviours. At Holywood Nursery School, we will endeavour to:

* Pre-empt the issue by discouraging such behaviours before it develops
* Create an environment in which such behaviour and attitudes do not flourish
* Watch out for behaviour that is, or could become bullying in nature
* Actively and effectively intervene, if identified
* Deal with such behaviour appropriately and in line with the school’s anti-bullying policy.

Bullying behaviour and attitudes can be addressed through curricular intervention aimed at the prevention of bullying, both by explicit teaching activities and through the positive behaviour policy approaches used within the class.

* Co-operative work and non-aggressive behaviour should be praised
* Empathy should be encouraged through role play activities and conflict resolution strategies
* Language and communication work should cover the theme of how other people feel
* Part of Story time may be used to explore children’s feelings and attitudes.

**Responsibility**

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 pro-social 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 the 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 6
* resolve difficulties in restorative ways to prevent recurring bullying behaviour and meet the needs of all parties

**Reporting a Bullying Concern**

In most cases concerns around behaviour or incidents occurring in school will be dealt with by the class teacher. Parents can speak to their child’s teacher when they are bring their child to/from school or contact them through the school office. However if a parent, child or member of staff needs to report a concern of bullying they should contact the Principal, Ms Majury, directly through the school office. This can done by telephone, email or an arranged a face-to-face meeting. All concerns reported with be taken seriously and recorded accordingly.

**Recording Bullying Concerns**

All details of bullying/alleged bullying involving a child registered at the school that occur in the school during the school day or while the pupil is in the charge of a member of staff at the school must be recorded. The record will be made in line with the latest Department of Education guidance. In order to protect the identity of children involved only the Principal and class teacher will have access to these records within the school, making a redacted version available to the Board of Governors so they may fulfil their obligations under the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (2016). As part of this record the school will record whether the alleged incident of bullying is confirmed and responded to through the Anti-Bullying Policy, or if the alleged incident is responded to under another policy.

**Responding to a Bullying Concern**

Holywood Nursery School acknowledges that despite all efforts to prevent it, bullying behaviour can occur on occasion. Should such incidents occur, the staff will respond in accordance with the following principles:

* We address incidents quickly, thoroughly and sensitively
* We intervene to stop the child who using bullying behaviours from harming others
* We give comfort and reassurance to the child, or children, who have experienced bullying behaviour that we are able to listen to their concerns and act upon them
* We explain to the child using bullying behaviour why her/his behaviour is not acceptable and help them to recognise the impact of their actions
* We support the individual who has experienced bullying behaviours, keeping them under close supervision and checking their welfare regularly
* We make sure that children using bullying behaviour are encouraged to behave more appropriately by receiving positive feedback for considerate behaviour
* We recognise that all behaviour is communication. Children using bullying behaviours may be experiencing bullying themselves, or be subject to other circumstances causing them to express their anger in negative ways.
* We recognise that children using bullying behaviours are often unable to empathise with others and for this reason we do not insist that they say sorry. Instead we encourage them to help “put it right” and fix the situation or offer comfort to the child they have hurt/upset (the other child is not obligated to accept this comfort if it is offered)
* We discuss what has happened with the parents of the child using bullying behaviour and work out, with them, a plan for handling the child’s behaviour
* We share what has happened with the parents of the child who has experienced bullying behaviour, explaining that the child displaying the behaviour is being helped to adopt more acceptable ways of behaving
* If bullying behaviour persists, more serious actions may have to be taken, such as increased adult supervision, implementation of individual behaviour plan, and reduction in opportunities to display bullying behaviour (implementation of individual timetable).
* The Principal and Governors will review the Nursery’s procedures in respect of bullying, to ensure that practices are relevant and effective Professional Development of Staff. Staff will receive regular training on the school’s Addressing Anti-Bullying policy and procedure alongside Safeguarding and Child Protection training.