



Reviewed September 2011

St. Eithne's Primary School Bullying Policy

Some people say.....

“If you hit back, you won’t get bullied again...”

Don’t believe it. It may work sometimes, but it is just as likely to make things worse.

Child Line can help. Tel: 0800 11111

1. Aim of Policy

It is our aim at St. Eithne's to prevent bullying and deal with bullying when it occurs.

We seek to provide a safe and secure learning environment and foster a sense of security in each child to develop his / her confidence and independence. One way in which we seek to protect our pupils is by helping them to recognise unwelcome behaviour in others and acquire the confidence and skills they need to keep themselves safe.

Linked to our pastoral care system is the need for discipline throughout the school. We hope to achieve a high standard of discipline but not at the expense of our pupils' own self-esteem. Our behaviour policy has been devised with the rights and feelings of our pupils in mind. Poor behaviour often stems from personal problems or difficulties. It is not our intention to simply punish bad behaviour and ignore the reasons for it.

Our pastoral support principle is that it is better to prevent poor behaviour, rather than merely to react to it with punishments.

These values are reflected in our 3 main school rules.

- Always behave courteously showing good manners and consideration for others;
- Always show respect for your own property as well as the property of others;
- No bullying, no fighting and no rough play in the school at any time.

Definition of bullying

Bullying is the wilful, conscious desire to hurt, isolate, threaten or frighten someone else.

Bullying can mean many different things. There are many ways in which children perceive that they themselves are being bullied. These range from being called names, being teased, being pushed or pulled about and even hit or attacked.

A child who manifests bullying tendencies has his/her own problems – he /she may feel upset or angry or feel that they don’t fit in - perhaps they have problems at home.

Maybe they get bullied themselves, perhaps by someone in their own family or other adults. They may be scared of getting picked on so they do it first. They want to show off and seem tough. Many children who show these bullying traits don’t like themselves and so take it out on someone else.

2. Dealing with Bullying at St. Eithne's

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in our school. All staff members are vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring, and will take immediate steps to stop it happening, to protect and reassure the victim and to discipline the bully. Parents of both victim and bully will be personally contacted immediately bullying behaviour is identified.

Any complaint by a parent that their child is, or may be, being bullied will be fully addressed.

- Parents should first approach the class teacher and explain the situation.
- The class teacher will immediately bring the issue to the attention of the Principal (Mr. T. McDowell) who is responsible for whole school discipline or designated teacher for child protection (Mrs L. McCusker) who is responsible for Child Protection.
- Necessary steps will be taken to address the issue and the teacher will contact the parent within the space of one week to see if any progress has been made.
- Should the situation continue the Principal or designated teacher for child protection will further consider the matter and appropriate action will be taken.
- Team action will be taken to protect the victim. This will usually include ensuring that another child or small group of children befriends and supports the child being bullied during the school day.
- A parent making a complaint about bullying will have a personal response from the teacher or designated teacher or the principal (whoever is dealing with the issue) within one week of making the complaint, indicating the investigation, which has been carried out, and the action being taken.

NOTE: In all instances the school will deal with bullying issues. However, in some cases it may be found that bullying has not actually taken place. Parents/carers will be given an explanation of the circumstances and we urge you to accept the school's explanation. Nevertheless, the matter will not rest there. The situation will be monitored until the school is satisfied that the child who has stated that he/she felt threatened is safe from bullying.

PARENTS MUST NEVER TAKE MATTERS INTO THEIR OWN HANDS. The sanctions taken against a pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case, but will include the loss of any privileges or position of responsibility he/she holds in the school. His/her behaviour will be carefully monitored until the teacher and/or designated teacher are satisfied that the problem has been resolved. If a pupil's bullying behaviour persists, the second stage will be to instigate child protection procedures and put in place a programme to protect the child in question. At this stage parents of the child who is the known bully will be contacted and asked to assist in remedying the situation. We ask the full support of all parents in these matters with the knowledge that all our parents are willing to take an active role for the good of all our pupils. The final sanction may be considered and used. This is suspension or even expulsion. Please understand if the ultimate sanction of suspension or even expulsion is applied the blemish on the child's record becomes extremely hard to undo.

The School Pastoral Team

The school has a pastoral team which will discuss issues regarding the pastoral aims of the school. The team will consider all cases of bullying, children with pastoral needs and steps needed to manage the needs of these children. Members of the Team: Mr. McDowell (Principal), Mrs Mc Cusker (Child Protection), Mr. Feeney (Pastoral Leader), Mr. Gormley (SENCO).

Raising Awareness

As part of our Bullying Policy we aim to raise awareness through the curriculum and give pupils the opportunities to talk about and deal with bullying in general. Teachers will make their children aware of school rules and routines. As part of the class lessons teachers will also educate their pupils morally and spiritually through the Religious programme dealing with the issue of bullying from time to time. Pupils will be informed who the designated teacher for child protection is and given the opportunity to approach this teacher at any time. Teachers may use the "Advice to Pupils" appended with this policy to help pupils understand about bullies, victims and bullying.

3. Responsibility of Teachers

The teacher's responsibility in the class:

- Be watchful, observe the social relationships between pupils in the class.
- Keep records of any bullying incidents and what you did.
Inform members of Management Team if necessary.
- Contact parents if need be.
- Draw up a programme of activities on bullying awareness and prevention eg., circle time.

Responsibility of Other staff Members

All our staff members are duty bound to assist in the implementation of our policies within the school. Supervisors, classroom assistants and other non-teaching staff will be watchful at all times that the discipline in the school is maintained according to the rules. Our whole school aims dictate that we should all be caring towards each other and that means making sure that no member of the school community is suffering due to harassment or bullying.

Supervision & the School Environment

Pupils are supervised at all times in St. Eithne's Primary School. The ratio of adult supervisors to pupils at break-times and lunch times is always above the required averages. Teachers are responsible for pupils in lines and when they go to the toilets. We have taken measures in the construction of our procedures and routines so that it is extremely difficult for children to be physically bullied during the school day. Pupils must always go in pairs when moving about the school on messages or when fulfilling other tasks. Some areas of the school are out of bounds and pupils must not go there unsupervised. At playtime there are no areas where pupils play that are out of sight of supervisors or teachers and supervisors are warned to be watchful of all potential bullying situations.

Pupils on occasion may be threatened or bullied on the way home from school. We cannot be responsible for what happens to our children outside the school after school hours.

However, we do feel it is our responsibility to notify parents of victims and those who perpetrate such acts and assisting those who are victims as best we can for their safety of all our children. We believe that all our parents understand this point of view and will willingly help us resolve any problems of this nature.

4. Advice to Pupils

What does it feel like to be bullied?

Bullying hurts. It makes you scared and upset. It can make you so worried that you can't work well at school. Some children have told us they have skipped school to get away from it. It can make you feel that you are no good, that there is something wrong with you. Bullies can make you feel that it's your fault.

5. Helping a friend

Maybe you're not being bullied, but you know someone who is - perhaps that person is not even a good friend, but a classmate or someone from another class? Have you ever stood around and noticed that someone was being bullied, but weren't sure what, if anything, you could do? Or thought that nothing you could do, would make a difference? Don't ignore bullying. **You can help.** Don't let the bullies get away with thinking no one will do anything.

Here are a few things you can do, and a couple that you can't:

- Don't rush over and take them on - it might not be safe and you don't want other people to think you are a bully.
- Let a teacher or another adult know what's happening.
- Try to be a friend to the person being bullied.
- Refuse to join in.
- Sometimes you can't sort it out yourself. Ask an adult for help.

How to stop the bullying

If you are being bullied, you can do something about it. **You** can make a difference!

- **TELL, TELL, TELL.**
- Practise what you want to say.
- Keep a note or diary of what is happening.
- Don't give up.
- Ask your parents to visit the school.
- Talk over what to do with a friend, a teacher, your mum or dad or someone you trust.
- Remember that teachers have to listen carefully when a child tells them about being bullied.

Remember - it's right to tell an adult that you are being bullied and to ask for their help. But you don't have to let them take over. You can talk with them about what you would like to happen.

Children get bullied.....

- At school - in the playground, in class or in the toilets.
- On their way to and from school.
- On the bus.
- In the park.

6. Some people say.....

“Only victims get bullied...”

It is not true that some people are more likely to be bullied than others. Although some people are bullied because they may be different in some way (they have a disability, are from another country, or speak with a different accent), many other children are bullied without any obvious reason. Don't forget that bullies have sometimes been bullied themselves.

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ChildLine can help. ChildLine is the free telephone helpline for children and young people. You can ring any time of day, any day of the year. It's free and it's confidential - that means that no one else will know about the conversation unless you decide to tell him or her. The call will not show up on the family phone bill, although it may if you use a mobile or cable phone. Sometimes it's hard to get through, because the lines are all busy. But keep trying, you will get through eventually. Many children call ChildLine to talk about bullying. Last year, over 10,000 children called. If you want to talk to someone, you can speak to one of our counsellors. **Just ring 0800 1111.** Or you can write to Freepost 1111, London N1 0BR. You don't have to use a stamp.

Books to read about bullying

The Camera Obscura by Hugh Scott

(published by Walker)

For fluent readers.

Bully by David Hughes

(published by Walker)

For younger readers.

Taking the Cat's Way Home by Jan Mark

(published by Walker)

For younger readers.

Bully by Yvonne Coppard

(published by Red Fox)

For fluent readers.

Beat the Bullies by Michele Elliot

(published by Macmillan)

For younger readers.

The Bailey Game by Celia Rees

(published by Piper)

For fluent readers.

The Angel of Nitshill Road by Anne Fine

(published by Methuen)
For younger readers.

Bad Girls by Jacqueline Wilson
(published by Double Day)
For fluent readers

The Nubbler by Pam Ayres
(published by Orion)
For fluent readers.

Where can you go for help and information?

ChildLine

Helpline 0800 1111 (open 24 hours a day, every day)

Kidscape

Helpline - 0171 730 3300 (open Mon and Wed 9.30am - 5pm).

Kidscape produce leaflets and booklets about bullying.