**1.0 Introductory statement**

St. Macartan’s Primary School is completely opposed to bullying behaviour in all its forms, to any member of the school community by any member of the school community. We believe that all pupils have the right to learn in a safe and supported environment where every pupil is valued and supported to become confident individuals.

**2.0 Context**

This policy is informed and guided by current legislation and DE guidance listed below:

**2.1 The legislative context:**

* Health and safety at work Ni Order 1978 The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
* The Human Rights Act 1998
* **The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 Article 3 – see De 1998/25**
* **WELFARE AND PROTECTION OF PUPILS EDUCATION AND LIBRARIES (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 2007**
* **THE EDUCATION (2006 ORDER) (COMMENCEMENT NO.2) ORDER (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2007**
* **The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010**
* **Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016**

**2.2 The policy and Guidance Context**

* Pastoral Care in Schools: PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR DE, 2001
* Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools. A guide for Schools DE 2017-to be read in conjunction with the following:

*Cooperating to safeguard children and young people in Northern Ireland,*

*Dept. of Health, Social Services and Public Safety 2016*

* **Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 Statutory Guidance for schools and Board of Governors 2019**

**2.3 International Context:**

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

**3.0 Ethos and Principles**

**3.1 Mission Statement**

At Saint Macartan’s we strive to provide inspiring teaching within a supportive learning environment which empowers children to achieve. Our mission is not only to educate our children to a high standard but to create a safe, secure and caring environment in which all children are accepted, respected, appreciated and valued. Whilst Catholic, we aim to create a school community which is fully inclusive. We will work in partnership with the child, their parents and the wider community, living, working and growing together as part of God’s family.

**3.2 Guiding Principles**

At Saint Macartan’s Primary School

* Pupils have a right to learn in a safe and supportive environment, free from intimidation and fear.
* The welfare/well-being needs of all children and young people are paramount and pupils’ needs, whether pupil displaying bullying behaviours or targeted pupil, need to be separated from their behaviour.
* When bullying concerns are identified our school will work in a restorative and solution focussed way to achieve the necessary change.
* Pupils who are targeted will be listened to and supported.
* Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour will be listened to and supported to accept responsibility and change behaviour.
* Staff will receive awareness-raising training regarding bullying prevention including effective, appropriate strategies for intervention.
* Parents will be consulted and made aware of how we engage and consult with pupils regarding our school positive behaviour expectations, the prevention of bullying behaviour and how we will respond to bullying concerns informed by the ‘Effective Interventions’ Resource book (NIABF 2013) using ‘Restorative Practice’ and ‘Solution Focused’ interventions

**4.0 Consultation and Participation**

Under legislation, the Board of Governors and Principal are required to consult with pupils, parents and staff in compliance with the Addressing Anti Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016

In Saint Macartan’s P.S. the process of consultation took place through:

* Consultative workshops with pupils negotiating an agreed Code of conduct/class charter for positive behaviours
* Class based activities (circle time, PDMU)
* Involvement in NIABF Anti Bullying week annual events
* Whole school questionnaires disrupted to all pupils
* Discussion with school council/assemblies
* Questionnaires distributed to all parents/carers
* Staff survey for all staff, teaching and non-teaching
* Engagement activity for all staff teaching and non-teaching staff in August

**5.0 What is Bullying?**

**5.1 Definition**

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

**“(1) - In this Act “bullying” includes (but is not limited to) the repeated use of-**

1. **any verbal, written or electronic communication**
2. **any other act, or**
3. **any combination of those, by a pupil or group of pupils against another pupil or groups 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”**

In saint Macartan’s PS we recognise that there is a continuum of inappropriate/unacceptable behaviours which can impact on everyone’s right to be safe and happy. These inappropriate/unacceptable behaviours (**which are not considered as bullying)** will be dealt with in line with the schools Positive Behaviour Policy’s procedures.

We will consider if the appropriate/unacceptable behaviours BECOME BULLYING BEHAVIOURS when the information gathered from investigation clearly demonstrates that the inappropriate/unacceptable behaviours meet the criteria below:

* intentional
* targeted at a specific pupils or group of pupils
* repeated\*
* causing physical or emotional harm
* omission

**\*While bullying is usually a repeated behaviour, there are instances of one-off incidents that we will consider as bullying.**

When assessing a one-off incident, to make a decision on whether to classify it as bullying, we 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

**5.2 The key elements present in bullying behaviour**

There exists a continuum of socially unacceptable behaviours. These unacceptable behaviours infringe on everyone’s right to be safe - They include the following

* ***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 (e.g. photographs or videos) online to embarrass someone*

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

**Definition of emotional and physical harm which are set out in the DE Guidance.**

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.

**Motivations**

The various motivations behind bullying 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 children 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. For that reason, in Saint Macartan’s 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 a bullying incident.

**5.3 Indicators of Bullying Behaviour**

A child might:

* not want to go to school
* begin truanting or go missing from home
* often feel ill especially when time for school
* be frightened to walk to or from school
* begin to lag in their schoolwork
* lose possessions at school
* cease to communicate with parents
* change their behaviour i.e. become withdrawn, irritable
* lose their appetite
* have trouble sleeping, nightmares, bed-wetting
* ask for money/ steal
* bully younger siblings

**6.0 Preventative Measures**

The focus for all anti bullying work is prevention. Saint Macartan’s Primary School has established and will maintain the following strategies which aim to promote a strong anti-bullying ethos within the school and the wider school community.

Proactive Strategies to ensure awareness is raised:

* consistent implementation of the Positive Behaviour Policy
* promotion of Anti-bullying messages through the curriculum and pastoral e.g. 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 how and why it can happen, through PDMU
* involvement in meaningful and supportive shared education projects, supporting pupils to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity
* active promotion of positive emotional health and wellbeing through the pastoral/preventative curriculum
* the development of emotional literacy, interpersonal skills and intrapersonal skills through the pastoral/preventative curriculum, for e.g. participation in circle time, workshops etc.
* active whole school participation in NIABF’s Anti-Bullying week activities.
* Engagement in key national and regional campaigns, e.g. Safer Internet Day
* Development of peer led systems (e.g. school Council) to support the delivery and promotion of key anti bullying messaging within the school
* Focused assemblies to raise awareness and promote understanding of key issues related to bullying
* Development of effective strategies for playground management, e.g. training for supervisors, zoning of playgrounds, inclusion of specific resources and provision of a variety of play options to meet the needs of all pupils
* Development of effective strategies for the management of unstructured times (e.g. break time, lunch)
* Ongoing tracking and monitoring of supervision arrangements re dining room, playground, corridors
* Provision and promotion of extra and co-curricular activities, aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks. For e.g. sporting activity, creative art, leisure and games, etc.

**We are also committed to the prevention of bullying behaviour on the way to and from school. Measures include:**

1. 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.
2. Measures to empower pupils to challenge inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour of their peers during the journey to and from school. This may include the implementation of peer monitoring systems on buses and for those walking
3. Regular engagement with transport providers (e.g. EANI transport, etc.) to ensure effective communication and the early identification of any concerns
4. Promotion of key anti bullying messages and awareness of behaviour expectations of pupils amongst the local community
5. Appropriate deployment of staff to support the transition from school day to journey home (e.g. staff duty at school gates/bus stops, where appropriate)

The **‘Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016’** gives the school 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. As a result, we will continue to raise awareness of the nature and impact of online bullying and support 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.
* Engagement with key statutory and voluntary sector agencies (e.g. 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 (e.g. Acceptable Use and e-Safety Policy).

**7.0 Responsibility**

Everyone in the school community has a responsibility for creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all its members. Pupils, parents and the staff of 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 being 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 instance 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.

**8.0 Reporting a Bullying Concern**

*All reports of bullying behaviour will be responded to in line with this policy and 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*

**8.1 Pupils Reporting a Bullying Concern**

In St Macartan’s PS, pupils are encouraged to raise concerns with any member of staff, including teaching and non-teaching. Pupils can report bullying concerns:

* Verbally-talking to a member of staff
* By writing a note to a member of staff (e.g. in a homework diary)
* By posting a comment on our “worry box”

Any pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing bullying behaviour. Through the preventative curriculum we focus on the “getting help” message rather than “telling”. As such pupils are encouraged to “get help” if they have a concern about bullying that they experience or is experienced by another.

**8.2 Parent/carers reporting a bullying concern**

Parents and carers have the responsibility to raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour with the school at the earliest opportunity. Parents and carers should also encourage their children to act appropriately to bullying behaviour and to not do anything to retaliate or ‘hit back’

* In the first instance, all bullying concerns should be reported to the class teacher
* 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 remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the school’s complaint procedure should be followed.

**9.0 Responding to a Bullying Concern**

Staff in Saint Macartan’s P.S. will respond to bullying behaviour promptly and effectively, in an assertive and confident manner, with an expectation of change being achieved through implementing the procedures set out in our Positive Behaviour and Anti Bullying Policies.

The following process will be followed

* We will gather information- clarify facts and perceptions using the NIABF’s Resource, Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour Assessment Form
* We will use the Class Behaviour Incident Files to check for previous incidents and identify any themes or motivating factors
* We will identify the type of bullying behaviour being displayed
* We will use the information gathered to complete part 1 of the ‘Bullying Concern Assessment Form’ (BCAF)
* The information gathered will be checked against the legal definition of bullying in this policy and will be determined whether bullying has taken place.

**9.1 Procedures to follow when criteria for bullying has not been met**

**If on the basis of the information gathered the criteria for bullying behaviour has not been met the inappropriate behaviour will be dealt with under the schools ‘Positive Behaviour Policy’.**

**9.2 Procedures to follow when the criteria for bullying behaviour has been met**

Staff will

* Complete the rest of the BCAF form and implement
* Identify any themes or motivating factors
* Identify the type of bullying behaviour being displayed
* Identify intervention level – level 1-4
* Select and implement appropriate interventions (level 1-4) 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

When responding to a bullying concern, 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. (refer to Positive Behaviour Policy)

**10.0 Recording**

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

St Macartan’s PS will centrally record all relevant information related to reports of bullying concerns, including:

* How the bullying behaviour was displayed (the method)
* The motivation of 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 school C2k system. Access will be restricted 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 and will be disposed of in line with the schools Retention and Disposal of Documents Policy. 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.

Parents/carers should understand that in Saint Macartan’s P.S., information regarding any action taken regarding a pupil cannot be disclosed to anyone other than that pupil and his/her parents/carers.

**11.0 Professional Development of Staff**

Saint Macartan’s PS is committed to ensuring that staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school ongoing CPD provision.

**12.0 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 policy will be reviewed at intervals of no more than 3 years. However, the policy will be reviewed following any incident which highlights the need for review and/or when directed by DE in light of new guidance. Amendments may be made in response to issues arising from a current situation or from data generated to identify existing behavioural patterns and trends.

This Anti Bullying Policy shall be reviewed as required, in consultation with pupils and their parents/carers, on or before June 2023.

**13.0 Links to other Policies.**

In the development and implementation of this Anti Bullying Policy, the Board of Governors has been mindful that the school has a duty to ensure that safeguarding permeates all activities and functions;

* St Macartan’s Primary School Addressing Bullying Policy forms part of our school’s overall **Pastoral Care Policy**
* it links with our **Child Protection Policy** in which our school outlines the steps it will take to protect our pupils from harm as well as develop and encourage personal safety strategies
* All socially unacceptable behaviours are managed under the **Positive Behaviour Policy**
* Our Addressing Bullying also links with our **e-Safety** policy in providing parents and pupils with guidelines for safe internet use and protection from cyberbullying and our **Relationships and Sexuality Policy** which requires pupils to treat others fairly and with respect
* Code of practise action plans are drawn up, tracked, monitored, assessed and reviewed through the implementation of the **Special Needs (SEN) Policy**-see current school SEN policy for further details regarding procedures
* Should physical restraint prove necessary it will be undertaken in compliance with the school’s **Safe Handling Policy**-see current policy for further details
* Incidents relating to e-safety will be manged with reference to the schools **E-safety Policy** requirements-see current policy for further details
* Further details relating to the preventative curriculum can be found in the **PDMU Policy,** which highlights how the school gives specific attention to the pupils’ emotional wellbeing, health and safety, relationships and the development of as moral thinking and value system.