



# Railway Street Nursery School

## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

### **INTRODUCTION**

This document describes the Railway Street Nursery Schools' Anti Bullying Policy which is used by all staff, both teaching and non-teaching and is available on our website. This policy was devised by the Principal and is approved by the Board of Governors. It will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis.

### **CONTEXT**

This policy sits in the context of and has been developed in line with:

- The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016
- The Education & Libraries Order (NI) 2003
- Pastoral Care in Schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour 2001
- Statutory Guidance for Schools DE Circular 2021/12
- Safeguarding and Child Protection: A guide for schools (2024)
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- EA Addressing Bullying Type Behaviour – Guidance & Resources
- EA 2024 Updated Anti-Bullying Resources (Released Sept 2024)

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

- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Being Well, Doing Well Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Mobile Devices and E-Safety Policy and Acceptable Use of Internet Policy
- Educational Visits
- Staff Code of Conduct

### **CONSULTATION, DISTRIBUTION, MONITORING AND REVIEW**

In the creation of this policy a copy was issued to parents, staff and Governors inviting comments over a two week consultation period before the policy was adopted. A copy of the policy is

provided to the parents/carers of every child as part of the induction progress. The policy can be read online on the school website. A printed copy is available on request from the school office. Governors review the policy in full annually. Bullying is a standing item on the agenda for Board of Governors meetings. This way Governors can ensure the implementation of the Policy, as well as highlighting any issues for more urgent review.

## **STATEMENT**

At Railway Street Nursery School we believe all forms of bullying behaviour are unacceptable. We aim to create a community in which all pupils and staff feel safe, valued, respected, supported and happy. We believe that all pupils have the right to learn in a safe and supported environment.

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
- Education

## **ETHOS AND PRINCIPLES**

The following statements outline the principles underpinning our approach to anti-bullying at Railway Street Nursery School:

- \* We are committed to a society where children can live free and safe from bullying
- \* We believe in a society where bullying is unacceptable and where every child is safe and feels safe from bullying
- \* We believe that every child 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 parents; we will actively seek these views 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) Definition of "bullying":

*"In this Act bullying includes (but is not limited to) the repeated use of*  
*(a) any verbal, written or electronic communication,*

*(b) another 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."*

This is a non-exhaustive definition of 'bullying' which applies only to child-to-child bullying, i.e. bullying behaviour by a child or a group of children against another child or group of children. For the avoidance of doubt, bullying behaviours, involving, or concerning an individual member of staff or various members of staff should be covered within a Staff Code of Conduct.

The definition of bullying includes 3 key elements:

- Non-limitation to Repeated Behaviours
- Methods of Bullying
- Intention to Cause Harm

It is very rare 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 year 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, disability or delay. Any incidents which are not considered bullying behaviour will be addressed under the Positive 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 Railway Street Nursery School:

### IN SCHOOL

- The subject of bullying will be approached sensitively through our Jenny Mosley's Rules (see poster below) and conflict resolution strategies.
- Raising awareness and understanding of the positive behaviour expectations, as set out in the Positive Behaviour Policy
- In accordance with our Positive Behaviour Policy, parents will be informed and encouraged to work alongside staff and outside agencies to improve the behaviours of the child.
- A written/pictorial statement of our school rules are given and explained to the parents at the initial induction meeting and these are displayed in our school reception area.
- Through Circle Time, through stories, songs or the use of puppets, children are encouraged to consider what is desirable and undesirable behaviour in class, and outside of class.
- Involvement in meaningful and supportive shared education projects with our shared education partner schools, supporting pupils to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity.
- Through the preventative curriculum actively promoting positive emotional health and wellbeing (e.g. mindfulness training- Relax Kids, Daily Mile)
- Participation in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities
- Engagement in key national and regional campaigns, e.g. Safer Internet Day
- Provision and promotion of extra- and co-curricular activities, aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks. For example, Shine for All Sports Club, Roots and Shoots Gardening Programme, ECO Club

## OUR NURSERY GOLDEN RULES



### ONLINE

- Addressing key themes of online behaviour and risk through Circle Time, stories, puppets, role play, including understanding how to respond to harm and the consequences of inappropriate use
- Participation in Anti-Bullying Week activities
- 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 of the Internet Policy, Mobile Phone Policy etc.)

# RESPONSIBILITY

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF

To work together to combat and eradicate bullying in all its forms, we will strive to build a caring and happy family environment in which all individual members of our school community feel safe, valued and respected.

Staff will:

- Foster children's self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others
- Model the high standards of personal social behaviour that we expect of our pupils
- Discuss bullying behaviour with children so that they understand the forms which bullying can take and the damaging effects it can have on both victims and perpetrators
- Ensure that children feel able to approach staff when they feel threatened and upset as a result of being bullied
- Be alert to signs or indicators of bullying
- Listen to, support and protect victims and seek to help and support those who have been accused of bullying
- Report suspected cases of bullying to the designated teacher for child protection
- Follow up parental complaints about bullying and report back promptly to parents with regard to the actions which have been taken
- Deal with observed cases of bullying promptly and effectively
- Consult statements of children with Special Educational Needs for EA's advice and seek support and advice from the relevant multi-disciplinary agencies and professionals
- Keep factual written records when cases of bullying are reported

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF PUPILS

We expect our pupils to:

- Behave in a caring and thoughtful manner towards others at all times
- Tell a teacher or other member of staff when they or another child has been hurt or upset as a result of bullying
- Show kindness and consideration towards children who have been bullied

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS

We encourage parents to support their children in school by:

- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour which may indicate evidence of bullying
- Encouraging their children to tell the teacher or trusted adult if someone hurts or upsets them in any way while in school

- Being supportive towards their children and reassuring them that they and their teacher will help them
- Advising their children not to retaliate using any kind of violence
- Keep a written record of any reported incidences of bullying
- Informing the school of any suspected bullying
- Co-operating with the school if their child is accused of bullying, by trying to ascertain the truth and by explaining the implications and consequences of bullying for themselves and others

## **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.

Pupils can raise / report bullying concerns in various ways:

- Verbally- talking to a member of staff
- Through role play, circle time sessions, art work

It is important to note that ANY pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing this behaviour. Through the preventative work in Railway Street Nursery School, the message focuses on 'getting help' rather than 'telling'. As such, all pupils will 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

It is the responsibility of parents and carers to raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour with the school at the earliest opportunity. Parents/carers must encourage their children to react appropriately to bullying behaviour and to not do anything to retaliate or to 'hit back'.

The process of parents/carers reporting bullying concerns include:

- 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 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 involves making a formal, written complaint, to the Chair of the Board of Governors. Information on how to make a complaint is displayed on the parent noticeboard in the hallway

All reports of bullying concerns received from pupils and/or parents/carers 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.

## **RECORDING**

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 securely within the school. In order to protect the identity of children involved, only the Principal 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.

All records will be maintained in line with relevant data protection legislation and guidance and will be disposed of in line with the school's 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.

## **RESPONDING TO A BULLYING CONCERN**

The processes outlined below provides a framework for how Railway Street Nursery School will respond to any bullying concerns identified.

Using the NIABF Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource, the member of staff responsible shall:

- Clarify facts and perceptions
- Check records
- 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

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.

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

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF**

In Railway Street Nursery School we recognise the need for appropriate and adequate training for staff, including teaching and non-teaching school staff.

Staff will receive annual training on the school's Addressing Anti-Bullying policy and procedure alongside the annual Safeguarding and Child Protection training. These will be carried out at the beginning of the school year. Any staff who join school mid-year will receive this training as part of their staff induction.

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW OF POLICY**

To appropriately monitor the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy, the Board of Governors shall:

This policy will be monitored by the Governors through inclusion of Anti-Bullying as a standing item on the Board of Governors Meeting Agenda.

It will be subject to a full review every year. The Board of Governors may choose to review this policy at shorter intervals for example:

- if there has been a serious incident of bullying behaviour
- when reviewing other associated policies e.g. Safeguarding Policy / Positive Behaviour Policy
- in response to a recommendation by the Education and Training Inspectorate
- in response to relevant circulars from the Department of Education

Ratified by Board of Governors

Chairperson: Mrs K Glipin-Brown Date: February 2026