



Anti-bullying Policy

September 2021

We are a Rights Respecting Community who are committed to actively promoting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.





Section One: Introduction and Statement

At Saint Vincent de Paul Primary School we believe all forms of bullying behaviour are unacceptable and will always be treated as a very serious matter. We believe that all pupils have the right to learn in a safe and supportive environment where the highest standards of behaviour are expected from all our pupils.



Section Two: Context

In Saint Vincent de Paul we have devised this policy taking account of the following documentation:

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

Provides a legal definition of bullying and places a duty on the Board of Governors to put in place measures to prevent bullying behaviour, in consultation with pupils and parents. It requires schools to record all incidents of bullying behaviour and alleged bullying incidents. It 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 (e.g. school trip)
- When receiving education organised by school but happening elsewhere (e.g. in another school in the ALC)

It also 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:

- **Article 42:** The Right to know your rights and adults have the responsibility to help you learn about these.
- **Article 19:** The Right to be protected from being hurt or badly treated.
- **Article 31:** The Right to relax and play.
- **Article 17:** The Right to access to information from the media. Every child has the right to reliable information from a variety of sources and to be protected from material that would harm them.
- **Article 29:** The Right to an education that develops every child’s personality, talents and abilities.



PLEASE REFER TO THE FOLLOWING LIST, FOR LINKS TO PARTICULAR LEGISLATION

The Legislative Context:

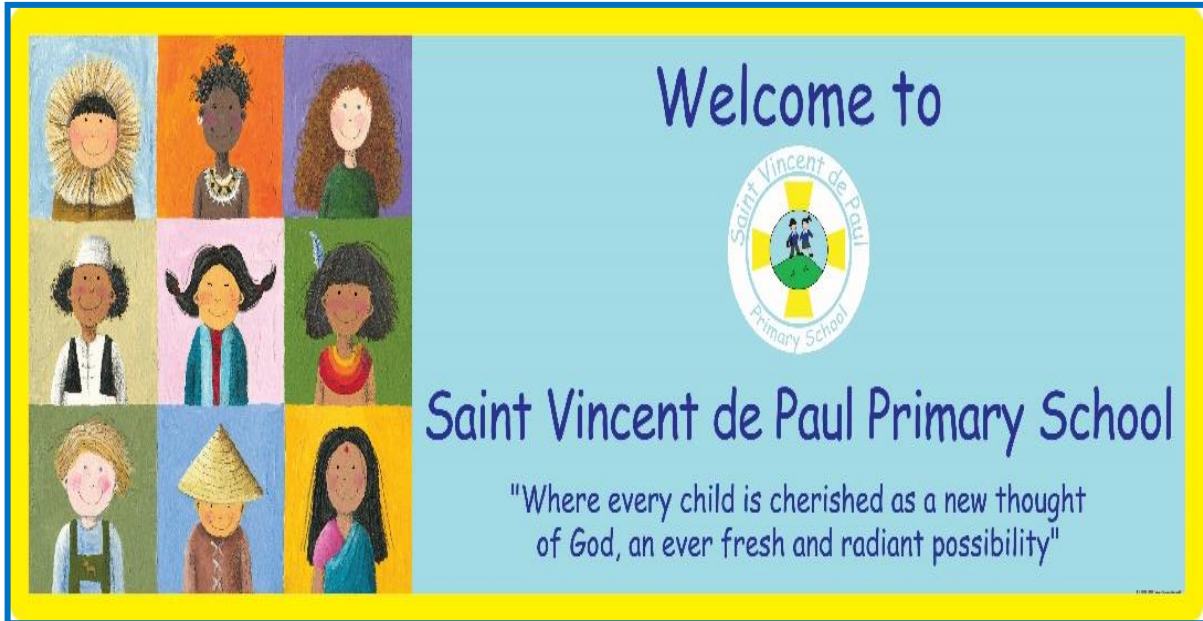
- [The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2016](#)
- [The Education and Libraries Order \(Northern Ireland\) 2003 \(A17-19\)](#)
- [The Education \(School Development Plans\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2010](#)
- [The Children \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1995](#)
- [The Human 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 \(UNCRC\)](#)



Section Three: Ethos and Principles

School Mission Statement

Saint Vincent de Paul Primary School is committed to working in partnership with our parents to ensure the development of each child's full potential in a climate of support, joy, challenge, co operation and celebration. We value the realisation that every child born into the world is a new thought of God, an ever fresh and radiant possibility. We are an inclusive school where all are respected and cherished as individuals.

All members of staff share these values and work to ensure a pupils-centred approach in which caring is a shared responsibility of all staff.

Aims and objectives of our anti-bullying policy

- We are committed to provide a safe, secure and supportive learning environment for all our pupils
- We are committed to developing protective skills against in our children including learning how to:
 - * Co operate with others
 - * Be tolerant
 - * Show empathy
 - * Build healthy relationships
 - * Resist inappropriate pressure
- 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 and free 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; 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.
- We are committed to providing our pupils with additional support through our School Counsellor and through onward referral to other agencies if required.



Section Four: Consultation and participation

Our Anti Bullying policy has been developed in consultation with registered pupils and their parents/carers, in compliance with the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016.

Pupil Consultation:

- Consultative assemblies with pupils
- Class-based activities
- P4-P7 online questionnaires
- Creation of a reference group of pupils in our School Council

Parents/carers Consultation:

- Consultative information on our school website, Parent Newsletter
- Online questionnaires distributed to all parents/carers
- Engagement with core parents from our PTA

Staff Consultation:

- Staff survey for all staff, teaching and Non-Teaching
- Baker Day engagement session for all staff, teaching and Non-Teaching
- Representative members of staff involved in writing anti-bullying policy
- Engagement event and questionnaires, for those connected to the school

Board of Governor Consultation:

- Pastoral Care including Anti-Bullying is a standing item on the Agenda
- Draft Policy consultation
- Engagement Session in Term One

Section Five: What is Bullying

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.

Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour repeated over a period of time, which makes others feel uncomfortable, threatened or distressed- *whether this is intended or not*. It is a form of abuse which is particularly destructive not just because of the child's immediate distress, but also because of the inevitable loss of esteem can have damaging long-term effects.

Bullying behaviour can include:

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 list is not exhaustive. There are other behaviours which fit with the definition may be considered bullying behaviour.

Bullying can happen:

- In classrooms
- In corridors
- In playgrounds
- On buses
- Outside school
- In homes

One -off incidents:

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 as bullying, the school will 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

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

Bullying is an emotive issue; therefore, it is essential that we ensure we use supportive, understanding language when discussion 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 use the terms:

- A child displaying bullying behaviours
- A child experiencing bullying behaviours

We encourage all members of the school community to use this language when discussion bullying incidents.

Definitions of emotional and physical harm as 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.

Section Six: Preventive Measures

In accordance with the legislation, the focus for all anti-bullying work in Saint Vincent de Paul Primary School will be on prevention.

“School bullying can have serious consequences for children leading to academic underachievement, physical and emotional distress, loss of self-esteem, eating disorders and truancy. It must be tackled through preventing incidents from occurring by awareness raising and responding to reported incidents by providing support for all involved.”

Annually, Saint Vincent de Paul Primary School will take part in Anti-Bullying Week (NIABF- Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum- November) This raises awareness of bullying for our whole school community.

We will seek to create of a TELLING, LISTENING and RESPONDING School in which pupils are encouraged to express their feelings, fears and concerns. This will be facilitated through measures such as Circle Time, Pupil Council, Assemblies and whole school nurture approaches. We will promote and reward positive behaviour through measures such as awards for Playtime friend etc.

A safe learning environment will be developed through:

- Raising awareness and understanding of the positive behaviour expectations, as set out in the Positive Behaviour Policy
- Addressing issues such as the various forms of bullying throughout the curriculum, including the how and why it can happen, through PDMU
- Involvement in meaningful and supportive shared education projects with Ligoniel Primary School supporting pupils to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity.
- Through the preventative curriculum actively promote positive emotional health and wellbeing (e.g. mindfulness training)
- Participation in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities
- Engagement in key campaigns, e.g. Safer Internet Day, Good Relations Week, etc.
- Development of peer-led systems (e.g. School Council) to support the promotion of key anti-bullying messaging within the school
- Development of effective strategies for playground management, e.g. training for supervisors, zoning of playgrounds, inclusion of specific resources (buddy benches, play bus stops) and provision of a variety of play option to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Focused assemblies to raise awareness and promote understanding of key issues related to bullying.
- Development of effective strategies for the management of unstructured times (e.g. break time, lunch)
- Developing links with outside agencies e.g. Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum, NSPCC, Playboard- Our Generation: Spaces to Be, CRIS- Buddy Up programme, Action Mental Health- Healthy Me, Behaviour Support Team EA and EA Whole School Nurture Approaches

Section Seven: Responsibility

All members of our school community have a responsibility for creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all children. 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 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 – internal and external
- resolve difficulties in restorative ways to prevent recurring bullying behaviour and meet the needs of all parties

Section Eight: Reporting a Bullying Concern

ADVICE FOR PUPILS

What to do if you have a concern about a potential bullying situation

- Talk to someone you trust e.g. a parent/guardian, a teacher, an older friend, a relative
- If you can write down what has been said or done to you and how you feel about it. Be careful to write down what actually happened.
- If you need to, ask a friend to come with you to talk to the teacher, classroom assistant, key stage co-ordinator, vice principal or principal
- Always do something, sometimes the bullying will stop, however, it may not and you may become more upset. This may encourage the bullying behaviour remember, other people could be hurt unless it stops
- Pass a note to any member of staff or post your concern in a “worry box”
- Remember it not your fault-they need to change, NOT YOU!

What you should not do

- Do not suffer in silence-there is nothing wrong with asking for help
- Do not retaliate and hit the other person-you could be accused of bullying behaviour
- Always be truthful-do not exaggerate, if anything you say is untrue, people may doubt your whole story
- Do not believe the stories people tell about you, you know that they might be untrue

“All of our pupils will be encouraged to “get help” if they have a concern about bullying that they experienced by another child”

ADVICE FOR PARENTS/ CARERS

Watch for signs of distress in your child e.g.

- An unwillingness to attend school
- A pattern of headaches or stomach pains
- Equipment that has gone missing
- Damage to clothing

If you think your child is being bullied in school in the first instance inform the class teacher. If after this you are not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken, the concern should be reported to a member of the School Safeguarding Team. If a parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken by the Safeguarding Team to prevent further incidents, the concern should be reported to the principal.

Where the parent/carer remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responds to, the school's complaints procedure should be followed. This usually involves making a formal, written complaint, to the Chair of the Board of Governors. Details of how to make a complaint can be found on our school website at www.stvincentdepauls.com.

“Please remember that the school can only act if they are informed of the situation”

- Advise your child that they **must** tell a teacher
- Do not encourage your child to hit back or respond verbally
- We are here to LISTEN and HELP!



Parent/Carer Involvement

The parents/carer of children who display bullying behaviour and the children who have experienced the bullying behaviour, will be informed of any incident and the action that has been taken place. The child displaying bullying behaviour will be reminded of the possible consequences of bullying and the sanctions for their actions will be clearly explained to them (in line with the school positive behaviour policy). The future conduct of any pupil found to engage in bullying behaviour will be monitored.

Parent/carers are reminded that they must tell their children to report any incident of bullying immediately. Keeping information from the school, or from their parents/carers, will never help a problem to be solved, and will prolong their period the child has to suffer. At St Vincent de Paul we are proud of the excellent relationships and the family values which have developed over the years, however, in relation to bullying behaviours, we remain resolute in dealing with this issue. This policy will be kept under review to ensure that we are in a position to respond to any future developments.

This policy is an integral part of our Positive Behaviour Policy

Section Nine: Responding to a Bullying Concern

Procedures for Dealing with a Bullying incident

The focus of any intervention by school staff must be on responding to any bullying concern raised and to restoring the wellbeing of those involved. As such, any strategy for responding to bullying must concentrate on the prevention of any further incidents.

1. Teachers should watch for early signs of distress in pupils. This could be evident in any aspect of school life and may include:

- A deterioration of work
- Spurious illness
- Isolation
- The desire to remain with adults
- Erratic attendance

(Whilst these may be symptomatic of other problems, it may be the early signs that the pupils may be receiving bullying behaviour)

2. All instances of bullying observed or reported should be passed on to the class teacher and to the vice principal if necessary

3. It is important that a written record is made detailing the facts of the incident/incidents and added to the CPOMS system

4. The child should be offered immediate support and help. They should be given the chance to talk the problem over to be listened to. In minor cases this will be done by the class teacher. In more serious cases the matter should be reported to the vice principal who will deal with the problem.

5. Pupils who are involved should be spoken to separately at the initial stage.

6. In more serious cases, parents/guardians will be contacted and asked to call/visit the school to see the member of staff who was in contact with them.

7. Children who have displayed behaviour will be required to apologise to the child

8. The situation will be monitored by the class teacher to ensure that any bullying has stopped

9. On-going support will be provided for both children

10. Any issues of bullying reported by parents will be taken seriously and dealt with accordingly

When dealing with incidents of bullying, staff will follow the following protocol:

- * Clarify facts and perceptions
- * Check records (Sims/CPOMS)
- * 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 interventions for all pupils involved, including appropriate interventions, consequences and sanctions
- * 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. Where appropriate, school staff may implement sanctions for those displaying bullying behaviour. At all times, information regarding any action taken towards a pupil cannot be disclosed to anyone other than that pupil and their parents/carers, unless absolutely necessary.

Section Ten: Recording

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

Therefore, at Saint Vincent de Paul we 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 outcomes of the interventions employed

Records will be kept on the online CPOMS system. 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 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.

Section Eleven: Professional Development of Staff

The Board of Governors, Principal and Senior Leadership of Saint Vincent de Paul Primary School recognise the need for appropriate and adequate training for staff, including teaching and Non-Teaching school staff in the policy and procedures involved in incidents and reporting of bullying behaviour.

We are committed to:

- Ensuring the staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of staff ongoing CPD and PRSD
- Involving outside agencies in providing staff development e.g. Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum, NSPCC, Playboard- Our Generation: Spaces to Be, CRIS- Buddy Up programme, Action Mental Health- Healthy Me, Behaviour Support Team EA and EA Whole School Nurture Approaches
- Ensuring that opportunities for safeguarding training are available to Governors and all staff- teaching and Non-Teaching
- Stating that CPD records will be kept and updated regularly

Section 12: Monitoring and Review of Policy

It is the responsibility of the Board of Governors in conjunction with the Principal to monitor the effectiveness of the Anti- Bullying 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

It is a legal requirement that the Anti- Bullying Policy be reviewed at intervals of no more than four years. However, the policy should be reviewed following any incident which highlights the need for such a review. It must also be reviewed when directed by the Department of Education and in light of new guidance.

This Anti-Bullying Policy shall be reviewed as required, in consultation with pupils and their parents/carers, on or before the September 2025.

Section Thirteen: Links with Other School Policies

This anti-bullying policy forms part of the school's overall Pastoral Care policy.

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

- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- E-Safety Policy and Acceptable Use of Internet Policy
- Remote Learning Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Educational Visits
- Staff Code of Conduct

This draft Policy was reviewed in consultation with the Parents, Staff, Pupils and Parents of Saint Vincent de Paul in September 2021.

Ratified by The Board of Governors on: _____

Signed:

Chairperson: _____

Principal: _____