Gracehill Primary School

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Consultation with staff Date: August 2021

Consultation with Parents Date: June 2021

Consultation with Board of Governors Date: October 2021

Ratified by BOG Date: October 2021

Review Date: September 2025

Signed:

Mr R McCombe   Date: 11/10/21 (Principal)

Bishop S Groves   Date: 11/10/21 (Chair of Board of Governors)

Gracehill Primary School Vision

'Caring, Learning, Achieving, Together'

Gracehill Primary School aims to provide a safe, secure and supportive environment so that the academic, personal and social potential of each child is realised. The school aims to foster values of tolerance and mutual respect through promoting the self-esteem of all members of the school community.

Mission Statement

At Gracehill Primary 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. Recognising our pastoral responsibility towards our children, we will take all reasonable steps to ensure that their welfare is safeguarded, and their safety is preserved. We will create a positive school climate which encourages respect, trust, caring, consideration and sensitivity towards others. Values such as mutual respect, respect for property, fairness and honesty, care and consideration of others, self-respect and self-discipline will be central to the creation of our caring environment. We realise that bullying behaviour affects not only those immediately involved, it also affects everyone in the classroom, the school community and ultimately in the wider community. All members of the school community have the right to work in a secure and caring environment. They also have a responsibility to contribute, in whatever way they can to the protection and maintenance of such an environment. The Anti-Bullying Policy of Gracehill Primary School endeavours to promote a caring environment within the school, in which the positive ethos of the school is reflected.

Aims

We aim to help our children:

1. foster a desire and enjoyment for learning through active learning in a broad and balanced curriculum relevant to their needs.
2. to be critical thinkers and open minded towards the ideas, theories and opinions of others.
3. fulfil their intellectual, spiritual, physical, social, aesthetic and emotional potential.
4. to be resilient and to proactively look after their own physical and mental well-being and to help others in their time of need.
5. to enjoy reading and writing and develop confidence in language which will enable them to communicate effectively with others.

6. develop the skills and knowledge of Numeracy to enable them to cope confidently in everyday situations.
7. be e-confident and e-safe to enhance themselves as learners.
8. learn through skills-based activities, helping them to develop responsible values to contribute to their community and beyond.

Agreed by the Gracehill Primary School community, August 2021

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Gracehill Primary School Anti-Bullying Policy

Statement of Intent

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a safe and secure atmosphere in line with the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all pupils should know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Context

The key points to note are:

* The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016:
  ○ 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)
  ○ 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:
  ○ 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 and fees safes 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 young people, 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.

Methods of Consultation and Participation

Pupils:

✳ Consultative workshops with pupils

✳ Class-based activities – awareness raising programmes – PDMU curriculum and school assemblies

✳ Whole school questionnaires distributed to all pupils on paper

✳ Obtaining the views of elected student representatives - School Council

Parents:

✳ Information events with parents/carers

✳ Consultative workshops with parents/carers

✳ Questionnaires distributed to all parents/carers (online/paper?)

✳ Engagement with parent groups, eg. PTA

Members of the school community:

✳ Staff survey for all staff, teaching and non-teaching

✳ Engagement activity for all staff, teaching and non-teaching

✳ Representative members of staff involved in writing anti-bullying policy

✳ Governor participation

✳ Engagement event, or questionnaires, for those connected to the school (eg. local clergy, local supporters, external agencies that regularly provide input, etc.)

Parents will be informed at the time of the governor approved Anti-Bullying Policy publication as to how members of the school community where consulted and participated in the development of this policy.

What is Bullying?

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

Addressing Bullying in Schools Definition of "bullying":

1.—(1) In this Act "bullying" includes (but is not limited to) the repeated use

of—

(a) any verbal, written or electronic communication,

(b) any other 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.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), "act" includes omission.

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.

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

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

Unacceptable Behaviours

The following unacceptable behaviours, when repeated, targeted and intentionally hurtful, may be considered a bullying behaviour:

- ✳ 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 (eg. photographs or videos) online to embarrass someone

(This list is not exhaustive and other behaviours which fit with the definition may be considered 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 focus of our anti-bullying work will aim to prevent bullying and create a safe learning environment. Key actions will include:

* Raising awareness and understanding of the positive behaviour expectations, as set out in the Positive Behaviour Policy
* Promotion of anti-bullying messages through the curriculum eg. 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 the 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.
* Through the preventative curriculum actively promote positive emotional health and wellbeing (eg. mindfulness training)
* Participation in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities
* Engagement in key national and regional campaigns, eg Safer Internet Day
* Development of peer-led systems (eg. School Council) to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messaging within the school
* Development of effective strategies for playground management, eg. training for supervisors, zoning of playgrounds, 'Playground Pals,' and provision of a variety of play options to meet the needs of the 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 (eg. break time, lunch)
* Provision and promotion of extra-curricular activities, aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks. For example sporting activities, creative arts, games, orchestra etc.

Measures to prevent bullying behaviour on the way to and from school

While many of the measures outlined above will support the development of an anti-bullying culture, there are a number of ways we can further build upon this related specifically on the journey to and from school.

This includes:

* 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.
* 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.
* Regular engagement with transport providers (eg. Translink) to ensure effective communication and the early identification of any concerns.
* Promotion of key anti-bullying messages and awareness of behaviour expectations of pupils amongst the local community (eg. Residents, service providers etc), including information on how to raise any concerns with the school.
* Appropriate deployment of staff to support the transition from school day to journey home (eg. staff duty at traffic lights, travelling home etc.)

Measures to prevent bullying through the use of electronic communication

Where the behaviour is likely to have a detrimental effect on a pupil's education at school during term time, the preventative measures 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 (eg. 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 (eg. Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy, Mobile Phone Policy, etc.)

Given the nature of technology, as constantly changing and developing, it is important that we continue to monitor this area and make changes when necessary.

Responsibility

Everyone has a responsibility for creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all members of the school community. 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

Reporting a Bullying Concern

Pupils Reporting a Concern

Pupils can report a bullying concern in several ways. These include:

* Verbally- talking to a member of staff
* By writing a note to a member of staff (eg. in a homework diary)
* By posting a comment in a 'worry box'

ANY pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing this behaviour. Through our preventative work, the focus is on 'getting help' rather than 'telling'. As

such, all pupils are encouraged to 'get help' if they have a concern about bullying that they experience or is experienced by another.

Parents/Carers Reporting a Concern

Parents/carers need to encourage their children to react appropriately to bullying behaviour and to not do anything to retaliate or to 'hit back'. The process for parents/carers to report a bullying concern:

* 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/carer remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the school's complaints procedure should be followed.

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.

Responding to a Bullying Concern

The processes outlined below provide a framework for how the 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 school 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

NIABF advocates a restorative approach to responding to bullying behaviour. Interventions suggested in the Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource focus on responding to the

behaviour, resolving the concern and restoring the wellbeing of those involved. We will be following this approach.

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

Recording a Bullying Concern

The school will centrally record all relevant information related to reports of bullying concerns, including:

* how the bullying behaviour was displayed
* the motivation for the behaviour
* how each incident was addressed by the school
* the outcome of the interventions employed.

A Bullying Concern Assessment Form (BCAF) will be completed and saved in a private folder. Records will be kept on the private folder of the schools C2K 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.

Professional Development of Staff

We recognise the need for appropriate and adequate training for staff, including teaching and non-teaching school staff. This may include:

* stating a commitment to ensuring that staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school's ongoing CPD/PRSD provision
* noting the impact of the training given on both the policy and its procedures - e.g. any amendments made, inclusions added etc.
* ensuring that opportunities for safeguarding training are afforded to Governors and all staff – teaching and non-teaching
* stating that CPD/PRSD records will be kept and updated regularly

Monitoring and Review of Policy

It is the responsibility of the Board of Governors, in liaison 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 highlight the need for such a review.

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

Links to Other Policies

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
* Health and Safety Policy
* Relationships and Sexuality Education
* E-Safety Policy & Acceptable Use of Internet Policy
* Mobile Phone Policy
* Educational Visits
* Staff Code of Conduct

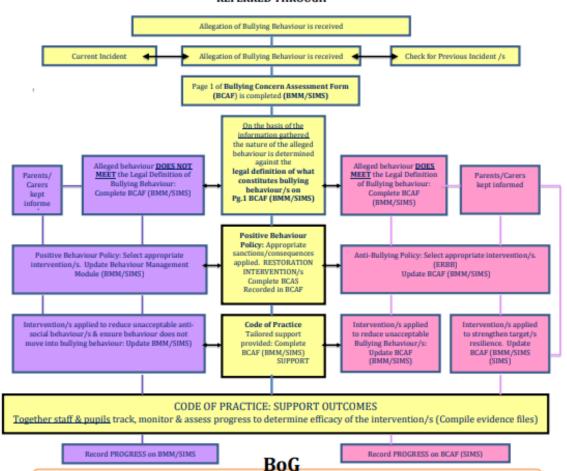**PROCESS TO FOLLOW WHEN SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE EXPERIENCING OR DISPLAYING BULLYING TYPE BEHAVIOURS**

Behaviour reported as alleged bullying

In **all** cases a Bullying Concern Assessment Form is initiated and attached as a document to digital Behaviour Management System e.g. SIMs

Judgment made by appropriate Pastoral staff to determine whether situation constitutes bullying using legal 'bullying' definition and following processed on bullying Concern Assessment Form

Ensure staff plan of action complies with relevant legislation and guidelines such as: The Children (NI) Order (1995), Data Protection Act (1998), Code of Practice (1996), Freedom of Information Act (2000), Pastoral Care in Schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour (2001), Welfare and Protection of Pupils ELB (NI) Order (2003), SENDO (2005), SEND Act (NI) (2016), Addressing Bulling in schools Act (NI) (2016), Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: A Guide for Schools (2017), Guidance in the Use of SIMs (2017) GDPR (2018)

REFERRED THROUGH

Allegation of Bullying Behaviour is received

Current Incident ← Allegation of Bullying Behaviour is received → Check for Previous Incident /s

Page 1 of **Bullying Concern Assessment Form (BCAF)** is completed **(BMM/SIMS)**

On the basis of the information gathered the nature of the alleged behaviour is determined against the **legal definition of what constitutes bullying behaviour/s on Pg.1 BCAF (BMM/SIMS)**

Parents/Carers kept informe

Alleged behaviour **DOES NOT MEET** the Legal Definition of Bullying Behaviour: Complete BCAF (BMM/SIMS)

Alleged behaviour **DOES MEET** the Legal Definition of Bullying behaviour: Complete BCAF (BMM/SIMS)

Parents/Carers kept informed

Positive Behaviour Policy: Select appropriate intervention/s. Update Behaviour Management Module (BMM/SIMS)

Positive Behaviour Policy: Appropriate sanctions/consequences applied. RESTORATION INTERVENTION/s Complete BCAS Recorded in BCAF

Anti-Bullying Policy: Select appropriate intervention/s. (ERBB) Update BCAF (BMM/SIMS)

Intervention/s applied to reduce unacceptable anti-social behaviour/s & ensure behaviour does not move into bullying behaviour: Update BMM/SIMS

Code of Practice Tailored support provided: Complete BCAF (BMM/SIMS) SUPPORT

Intervention/s applied to reduce unacceptable Bullying Behaviour/s: Update BCAF (BMM/SIMS)

Intervention/s applied to strengthen target/s resilience. Update BCAF (BMM/SIMS (SIMS)

CODE OF PRACTICE: SUPPORT OUTCOMES
Together staff & pupils track, monitor & assess progress to determine efficacy of the intervention/s (Compile evidence files)

Record PROGRESS on BMM/SIMS

Record PROGRESS on BCAF (SIMS)

BoG

Bullying statistics discussed regularly at BoG Meetings
Macro tracking – statistics used to identify patterns to inform policy review to meet the needs of the young person more

Implement appropriate intervention to meet the needs of **both** those Experiencing Bullying Type Behaviours & displaying Bullying Type Behaviours using NIABF Resource (or other social emotional and behavioural needs if appropriate). Proceed through stages in the bullying concern assessment form (attached documents on SIMs) or behaviour plan if appropriate via Positive Behaviour Policy/Code of Practice

Maintain clear chronological digital Record Keeping – follow EA Guidance Documents on the appropriate use of SIMs? – Where a young person is educated on a different site ensure there is effective information share processes in place for accountability

Enhanced Accountability for BoG, schools and supporting agencies to work with appropriate multi-disciplinary team to identify & address need

Child Centred approach – Pupil and parent voice valued. Young Person and Parent/ Guardian engaged in the process