Killinchy Primary School

Addressing Bullying Policy

February 2022

Approved by Board of Governors on _____

To provide parental thoughts or feedback on this draft Policy, please click the consultation link here…

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Addressing Bullying Policy

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1.0 Introduction

At Killinchy 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.

This Anti-Bullying Policy (hereafter referred to as 'The Policy', sets out the context of the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (ABiSA) along with how it is interpreted and applied within our school.

The ABiSA has been in law since September 2021 and, as such, is not optional. All schools have a legal duty to implement it.

2.0 Context

This Policy has been developed as a collaborative project between partner schools in Northern Ireland. In line with requirements set out within the legislation, a draft version was released for parental consultation on _____ . On completion of the consultation period, any necessary adjustments were made before it was tabled and approved by the Board of Governors on _____ .

The Policy sits within the following contexts:

2.1 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

2.2 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)

2.3 The International Context

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

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 also requires schools to record all incidents of bullying behaviour and alleged bullying incidents.

This policy will be applied:

- 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 in the ALC)

It will be reviewed and if necessary, updated, every 4 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)

3.0 Ethos & Principles

We are confident that this policy reflects well the ethos and principles of the Killinchy Primary School Motto and Mission Statement:

3.1 Motto

'Every moment counts; every child matters.'

3.2 Mission Statement

Killinchy Primary School exists to provide a caring learning community based on Christian principles where every child is treated as an individual. When compared with many others we are a relatively large school however all stakeholders go the extra mile to ensure no compromise is necessary in terms of personal, individual attention.

It is important to everyone at Killinchy PS that we retain close relationships with all members of our school community, extending this beyond pupils to involve family members and community organisations in an ethos of mutual support and respect. Whilst there is a strong emphasis on

academic success, the value of a holistic education is equally recognised. Our objective is to produce pupils who understand the value of lifelong learning, respect for others and the importance of making a positive contribution to society.

We aim to achieve this by ensuring all pupils have access to a wide range of experiences and opportunities to achieve success. We promote high standards of behaviour, discipline and academic achievement whilst also recognising that success comes in many forms and that every child develops and progresses at his/her own rate.

Healthy competition is seen as a positive experience for pupils whilst instilling good sportsmanship and a love of participation in exercise and physical activity. Artistic interests are celebrated and nurtured in the form of a wide and varied music curriculum, choral singing, dramatic performances and a superb fine arts programme.

At Killinchy Primary School, every child is encouraged to be the best they can be and should leave having had an all-round outstanding school experience.

3.3 Ethos and principles specifically in relation to bullying:

- 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 feels safe 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.

4.0 Consultation and Participation

4.1 Consultation with Pupils

- Consultative workshops with pupils (insert details)
- Class-based activities (insert details)
- Engagement with a reference group of pupils. (insert details)

4.2 Consultation with Parents

This draft Policy was provided to parent in draft form in February 2022 and comments/feedback were invited and considered in the construction of the final draft.

4.3 Consultation with Staff

While not required by legislation, it is also good practice for schools to consult with all members of the school community when developing or reviewing policy.

The draft Policy was also distributed to staff and feedback taken during an Anti-Bullying training refresher in Term 2B 2022.

5.0 What is Bullying?

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 provides schools with the following legal definition of bullying:

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.

Note on 'repetition'

* While repetition is internationally recognised as an important element in establishing bullying behaviour, the Act does not require repetition for behaviours to be defined as bullying.

For example, when bullying behaviours occur through the medium of electronic communications, 'repetition' can take place through the repeated viewing and sharing of a post even if there is only one post.

A school may also conclude that a one-off act of undesirable behaviour constitutes bullying where there is clear evidence of pre-meditation, intention to hurt, harm or adversely affect the rights of another or where the incident has caused significant emotional and/or physical harm to the target.

5.1 One-Off Incidents

When assessing a one-off incident, to make a decision on whether or not 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 imbalance of power**

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

5.2 Repeated 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

The above list is not exhaustive; other behaviours which fit with the definition may be considered bullying behaviour.

5.3 Motivation and Intent

Schools are required to record the alleged or suspected motivations behind bullying, including those named in the Act. These 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 Child status
- Young Carer status

Similarly, schools are required to assess the level of intent to cause harm.

In determining intent to cause harm, schools can use their discretion in assessing an individual pupil's capacity to understand the impact of their behaviours eg. due to developmental age, disability or delay.

5.4 Imbalance of Power

Whilst the term "imbalance of power" is **not** contained within the statutory definition of bullying in Northern Ireland, it is a long-standing element of bullying behaviour and internationally recognised by leading academics. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways:

- Physical
- Psychological (knowing what upsets someone),
- Intellectual
- Group/more than one individual.

It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

5.5 The Language of Bullying

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 refer to the child by describing the situation surrounding that child, for example:

- **A child displaying bullying behaviours**
- **A child experiencing bullying behaviours or 'target'**

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

6.0 Preventative Measures

Killinchy PS promotes a strong anti-bullying ethos.

Under the legislation, the focus for all anti-bullying work should be on prevention.

6.1 In-school strategies

In order to try and prevent bullying and create a safe learning environment, we engage in the following activities:

- 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/PD/LLW (eg. sectarian, racist, homophobic, transphobic, disablist, etc.)
- 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 etc.
- 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, 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 (eg. break time, lunch)
- Provision and promotion of extra- and co-curricular activities, aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks. For example sporting activity, creative arts, leisure and games, etc.

6.2 Travelling to and from school

Under the new legislation, schools must also make clear the preventative measures they will put in place 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 schools can further build upon this related specifically on the journey to and from school. These include:

- 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, trains and ferries, and for those walking.

- Regular engagement with transport providers (eg. Translink, EA Transport, etc.) 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. local shops, cafes, service providers, residents, 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 school gate/bus stops, where appropriate)

6.3 Cyber-Bullying

The new legislation also gives schools 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.

We will 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. Strategies may include:

- Providing a robust e-safety curriculum;

- 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, Internet Filtering Policy, Mobile Phone Policy, Connected Devices Policy, etc.)

The Anti-Bullying Policy is one of a number of policies in the wider pastoral care and safeguarding suite of policies and is consistent in its messaging.

Given the nature of technology, as constantly changing and developing, we will monitor this Policy/message and make changes as and when necessary.

7.0 Responsibility

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

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

8.0 Reporting a Bullying Concern

8.1 Pupils Reporting a Concern

Children and young people have told NIABF that when they have a concern about a potential bullying situation, they would like the opportunity to discuss this with a member of staff that they trust. While many schools may wish to identify key staff with responsibility for bullying, pupils at Killinchy PS are encouraged to raise concerns with any member of staff, including teaching and non-teaching staff.

Pupils can raise a concern by:

- Verbally- talking to a member of staff
- By writing a note or message to a member of staff (eg. in a homework diary or on Seesaw)
- By sending an email to the teacher or Principal

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 taken forward under Section 6, pupils should be encouraged to focus on 'getting help' rather than 'telling'.

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

8.2 Parents/Carers Reporting a Concern

Parents/carers should 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 is as follows:

- In the first instance, all bullying concerns should be reported to the Class Teacher;

- Where the parent/carer is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the parent should re-visit this with the class teacher;

- If the parent/carer remains dissatisfied at this point, the concern should be reported to the Vice-Principal or Principal.

- Where the parent/carer remains dissatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately handled/resolved, the school's Complaints Procedure should be followed. This usually involves making a formal, written complaint, to the Chair of the Board of Governors. The **Complaints Policy** for Killinchy PS can be found on

our dedicated school app under the 'Policies' section. Alternatively, a hard or soft copy can be provided on request by contacting the school office on 028 97541132 or ddornan780@c2kni.net.

While the majority of reports of bullying concerns will come from pupils and their parents/carers, our school is open to receiving such reports from anyone.

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.

9.0 Responding to a Bullying Concern

The focus of any intervention will be on responding to the bullying concern and restoring the wellbeing of those involved. As such, any strategy for responding to bullying concerns will always concentrate on the prevention of any further incidents.

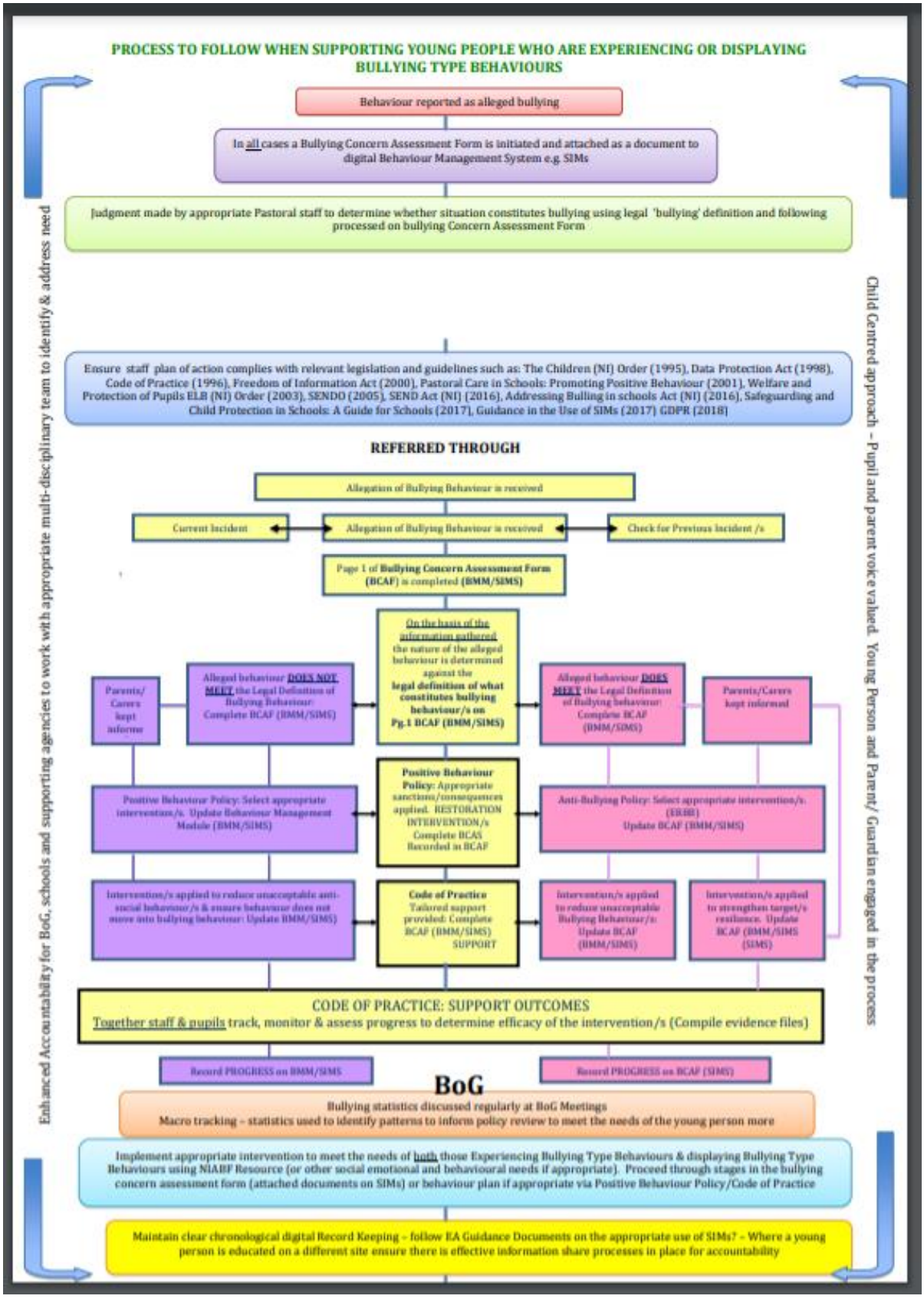
Using the NIABF Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource, the member of staff responsible shall…

- 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

Where appropriate, school staff may implement sanctions for those displaying bullying behaviour. This cannot be discussed with any party to the incident other than the recipient of the sanction and his/her parents/carers.

The procedure for responding to a concern about bullying is summarised on the flow chart on the following page:

Process to follow when supporting young people who are experiencing or displaying



bullying-type behaviours:

10.0 Recording

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

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.

A digital record of all reports will be retained in _____ using the bespoke-designed Bullying Concern Assessment Form (BCAF) which was developed alongside this 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.

11.0 Professional Development of Staff

The professional development and understanding of staff is pivotal to the success of this Policy and the procedures outlined therein.

All staff have been provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school's ongoing CPD provisions.

At KPS, bespoke training on the ABiSA was first delivered in 2019 in advance of the ascension of the Act. During these sessions, staff were fully briefed on changes to handling incidents of bullying which we had enacted at Killinchy PS as part of our project to bring procedures into line with the ABiSA.

As part of the above work, a new Policy (most recently revised in January 2021) was drafted and an initial version of the BCAF introduced.

Refresher training was then delivered in February 2022 following the formal introduction of the Act (September 2021) and adoption of new procedures. As part of this refresher, staff were consulted on the new Draft Policy document.

Reference to training of Governors needs inserted here.

12.0 Monitoring and Review of Policy

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

- Introduce a standing item on the Annual Safeguarding Report in relation to all incidents of alleged bullying;
- Through the Principal, identify trends and priorities for action
- Through the Principal, assess the effectiveness of strategies aimed at preventing bullying behaviour
- Through the Principal, assess the effectiveness of strategies aimed at responding to bullying behaviour

This Anti-Bullying Policy shall be reviewed as required, in consultation with pupils and their parents/carers, on or before the [date 4 years from now].

13.0 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