

CARRICKFERGUS MODEL SCHOOL



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Date of Rewrite of Policy	April 2026	PRINCIPAL
Date of Governor Ratification of Policy	May 2026	CHAIR OF BoG
Review Date of Policy	April 2030	

CARRICKFERGUS MODEL SCHOOL

Anti-Bullying Policy

At Carrickfergus Model Primary School we acknowledge that bullying type behaviour exists in schools and wider society and can impact on the lives, mental health and wellbeing of those involved. This policy aims to help create, maintain, and embed a culture where everyone agrees that bullying type behaviour is unacceptable.

In Carrickfergus Model Primary School, we believe that safeguarding our pupils is paramount and the responsibility of all stakeholders. We promote a safe, inclusive, and relational school environment where concerns of bullying type behaviour may be shared and addressed, and where pupils are supported within the context of Article 19 Measures to Prevent Bullying, Education (NI) 2003 and the 2016 Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (N.I.).

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Define bullying type behaviour;
- Summarise rights, roles and responsibilities;
- Explain preventative measures;
- Clarify processes used for reporting, recording and responding; and
- Outline monitoring and review processes.

This policy is applied where concerns of alleged bullying type behaviour between pupils have been reported. For other concerns regarding bullying type behaviour between pupils have been reported. For other concerns regarding bullying type behaviours please refer to the school complaints procedures or associated policies which are aligned DE Circular 2016/08 Public Services ombudsman (NI) Act).

Ethos and Values

We at Carrickfergus Model Primary School recognise the uniqueness of every pupil and celebrate the diversity of all children and young people within our community. Our values of '**Caring, Mannerly, Prepared and Safe**' alongside our Motto of '**Aspiring to learn, care and grow together**' encourages our commitment to the following:

- Because we **CARE**...we value good relationships and use restorative approaches to address and seek solutions to conflict. We are committed to a preventative, relational and restorative ethos.
- Because we are **MANNERLY**...we value and use positive words and body language to everyone in our school community. We aim to show kindness, teamwork and respect for others.
- Because we are **PREPARED**...we value explicit teaching of our values and learning powers to prepare children to be good citizens inside and outside of school. We value, respect and consider the views and contributions of children, young people and wider school community.
- Because we are **SAFE**...we recognise that physical and emotional safety looks different for everyone and can be dependent on age, stage, special educational needs, gender or cultural backgrounds, disability or socio-economic status. We are committed to a society where children and young people can live free and safe from bullying type behaviour.

Links to other policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with SEND and Safeguarding and the wider suite of Pastoral Care policies available from the school office by request. These policies include but are not limited to:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Pupil Attendance Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- Equality and Inclusion
- Staff Code of conduct
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Visitor Policy
- Supervision Policy

Consultation

We value and respect the views and contributions of our school community. Therefore, as part of this policy development and review, and in compliance with Article 19 of the 2003 Education (NI) Order and the 2016 Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (N.I.) we have consulted with pupils, parents / carers and staff.

What is Bullying Type Behaviour?

'The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (N.I.) 2016' provides schools with a legal definition which must be used by all schools to assess reported concerns of bullying type behaviour.

Legal Definition:

- (1) In this Act 'bullying' (but it 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

TRIP

While the legal definition, as set out in the Act, is the primary definition, we also use the mnemonic TRIP. This helps to build a shared understanding across our school community of the difference between socially unacceptable and bullying type behaviour.

Socially unacceptable behaviour becomes bullying type behaviour when, after clarifying facts and perceptions, TRIP is confirmed:

T – when the behaviour is **TARGETED** at a specific pupil or group of pupils

R – when the behaviour is **REPEATED** over time

I – when the behaviour is deliberately **INTENDED** to cause harm

P – when the behaviour causes **PSYCHOLOGICAL/EMOTIONAL** and / or **PHYSICAL** harm

Whilst an ‘imbalance of power’ has not been included in the legal definition, the Board of Governors have agreed to incorporate this criterion to help determine if bullying type behaviour was targeted. An ‘imbalance of power’ is present when someone with lesser power, is identified as an object of negative attention. An imbalance of power is not necessarily linked to age or size.

Although incidents usually involve repetition, a one-off incident may be classified as bullying type behaviour through consideration of the following criteria:

- severity and significance of the incident;
- evidence of pre-meditation;
- psychological / physical impact of the incident on the individuals and / or wider school community;
- previous relationship(s) between those involved; and
- any previous incident(s) involving the individuals.

A **one-off** electronic communication can constitute bullying type behaviour through repeated viewing and unwanted sharing of a post.

The 2016 Act requires schools to consider whether a pupil (s) **intended** to cause harm when determining if the incident(s) meets the legal definition. In this school, we will consider the following when assessing **TRIP**.

The pupil(s):

- capacity to regulate and understand the impact of their behaviour;
- developmental age;
- additional, educational, special, physical, or medical needs;
- behaviours displayed / presenting profile (diagnosed or undiagnosed eg social behaviour, emotional wellbeing, autism, ADHA, moderate learning difficulties etc; and
- individual circumstances eh trauma profile, safeguarding concern, family circumstances.

Omission will be considered when addressing bullying type concerns. This is when a pupil (s) is or are wilfully excluded from a game, activity or group work etc causing potential **psychological harm**. Pupils do not have to be friends, but friendly.

SOME POSSIBLE SIGNS OF BULLYING

- Refuse or do not want to go to school
- Cry themselves to sleep, have nightmares or wet the bed
- Complain of a sore head or stomach
- Have possessions that go missing
- Have unexplained cuts or bruises
- Become withdrawn or aggressive
- Ask for or steal money

- Are reluctant to get out of the car or get ready in the morning
- Have mood swings and want to stay close to you
- Let their standard of school work deteriorate

HOW MIGHT A BULLIED CHILD FEEL?

- Angry: venting this anger against family or pets
- Anxious: being worried about going outside or going to school
- Sick: having headaches, stomach pains etc
- Isolated: wondering 'Why is no-one playing with me?'
- Unable to sleep: crying out or having disturbed sleep
- Vulnerable: expecting something to happen or being constantly on edge
- Unfortunately, bullying will exist despite our rigorous supervision, anti-bullying messages and preventative action. As a parent you may feel:
- **angry** at the bully or the school and
- **frustrated** about the problem

Language

We recognise that all behaviour is communication and should be addressed through a learner centred lens for those who display and experience socially unacceptable or bullying type behaviour. We will address all behaviour in a relational, solution focused manner aligned to Safeguarding and SEND.

When discussing allegations of bullying type behaviour, we use language that is aligned to the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016, and other relevant legislation and guidance. We refer to the behaviour and not the pupil and use the following:

- pupil displaying bullying type behaviour rather than the 'bully'
- pupil experiencing bullying type behaviour rather than the 'victim'
- socially unacceptable behaviour rather than 'bad behaviour' or 'serious / gross misconduct etc'

Any incident (s) which do not meet the legal definition and TRIP criteria will be addressed under the Positive Behaviour Policy, SEN policy, Child Protection policy, Inclusion and diversity policy.

Journey to and from school

The Act outlines a statutory requirement for schools to implement measures to prevent and address bullying type behaviour for pupils whilst travelling **to and from school**. To this end, in our school we:

- Address safeguarding concerns reported in relation to travel to and from school;
- Provide timely support and intervention;
- Assign staff to support a structured, supervised transition at the beginning and end of the school day;
- Agree a scaffolded plan to address individual needs, regulation and vulnerabilities;
- Reinforce positive and upstanding behaviour expectations through the preventative curriculum;
- Engage with student voice about experiences on the journey to and from school;
- Promote and develop a culture where all pupils respect the rights of others to travel safely;
- Communicate consistently the expectation to include and respect the rights of others to travel safely;
- Communicate consistently the expectation to include and respect individual rights and diversity;

- Ensure effective communication with transport providers (eg Translink, EA Transport, etc) for early identification and response to reported concerns; and
- Provide reporting mechanisms for school and the local community to report concerns confidentially

Electronic Communications

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act enables school to take steps to help prevent and address online bullying type behaviour involving registered pupils during term time. We acknowledge that negative online behaviour occurring either in or out of school hours, can harm a pupil's education and emotional well-being, and we will support affected individuals. At Carrickfergus Model we are committed to supporting our pupils to use the Internet safely, responsibly and respectfully.

The Addressing Bullying policy is one of several school policies that address electronic behaviour and are reviewed in response to technological developments. As such, follow up is aligned to the wider policy suite.

In Carrickfergus Model we aim to prevent electronic bullying type behaviour by:

- Addressing key themes of electronic online behaviour and risk through curriculum content;
- Engaging with statutory and voluntary sector agencies and resources (eg Safeguarding Board NI, PSNI, Public Health Agency, Safer Schools App) to support the promotion of key messages;
- Participating in Safer Electronic / Online / Cyber Campaigns to promote key messages;
- Addressing reported safeguarding concerns in relation to the misuse of electronic communication and provide timely support and intervention;
- Providing reporting mechanisms for school and wider community to report concerns confidentially;
- Creating, agreeing and implementing an Acceptable Use Agreements; and
- Ensuring all staff regularly have on-line safety training.

Methods and Motivations of Socially Unacceptable or Bullying Type Behaviour

The following are methods of socially unacceptable behaviour which, when **targeted, repeated, intentional** and **causing psychological/physical** harm, may be considered as bullying type behaviour:

Physical Acts – negative physical contact, material harm such as damaging or taking possessions without permission.

Verbal or written acts – unpleasant comments, written, verbal gestures.

Social / Relational – negatively influencing the actions of others to cause psychological or physical harm.

Omission (Exclusion) – excluding someone / others from eg game, activity, group work.

Electronic Acts – Misuse of online platforms or other electronic communications to cause psychological upset.

Our school acknowledges various motivations for bullying type behaviour which we address through our preventative curriculum and responsive approaches. This includes all identity or prejudice motivated bullying type behaviour related to those characteristics protected through Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Motivations include but are not limited to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability - Age - Appearance - Child Looked After / Care - Community Background - Cultural - Disability - SEN - Family circumstances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Economic Status/FSM - Gender / Gender Identity / Perceived Gender - Newcomer / Migrant Status - Peer Relationship Breakdown - Political affiliation / sectarianism - Race - Religion - Sexual Orientation
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Rights, Roles and Responsibilities

In this school, we believe that all members of our school community have the right to be educated in a safe, supportive, learning environment. We acknowledge that all members of our community have a role to play and responsibility to prevent and address bullying type behaviour.

The Safe-guarding Team and SLT will support the Principal and Board of Governors with the ongoing review processes.

Preventative Measures

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (N.I.) 2016, requires schools to focus on preventative measures to help reduce bullying type procedures. The focus of this section is to set out the approaches taken by our school to help prevent bullying type behaviour effectively.

In Carrickfergus Model we scaffold and promote a positive, relational learning environment where all members of the school community feel safe, included and valued. Our preventative measures help avoid bullying type behaviour and contribute to support plans for pupils. They are evident in all domains of school life and include, but are not limited to:

WHOLE SCHOOL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SEND, Addressing Bullying, Positive Behaviour, Safeguarding, Pastoral Care, Inclusion and Diversity policies - Visible school ethos and essential agreements, displays, visual cues, celebrations, positive expectations - Positively framed, agreed and communicated rights, roles and responsibilities for all school community members - Peer / student leadership teams - Adults modelling self-regulation, inclusive language and positive relationships - Restorative practice approaches embedded - Trauma informed and nurture principals - Celebration of diversity, equity and inclusion - Newsletters - Shared Education Projects - Assemblies - Anti-Bullying Week - Internet Safety Day - Random Acts of Kindness Day - PATHS programme - Sensory Room

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nurture Room - Nando - Play resources outside for lunch time - Staggered break and lunch times - Good transition and handover information - Centrally held PDMU and Anti-Bullying resources in the staff folder - Good staff-ratios in the playground - Posters around school
CLASSROOM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PDMU Curriculum - Pastoral time each morning between 8.30am – 8.45am - Digital citizenship and digital ambassadors - Circle time - Brain Breaks - Bystander / upstander education - Agile groupings and seating arrangements - Conflict resolution discussion - Jobs / responsibilities
NON-CLASSROOM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supervision and transition arrangements including buses / after-school activities - Buddy strategies - Social and extra-curriculum opportunities - Good communication between teaching and non-teaching staff - Professional development / training for staff - Mixture of structured and non-structured play - Designated safe, quiet, reflective, nurture, extra zones created - Breakfast club - Structures to facilitate reporting concerns
PEER SUPPORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student council, anti-bullying ambassadors, prefects etc - Pupils trained and supported by staff regarding roles, responsibilities - 'Bee's Buddies' - Bystander / Upstander Training - Peer Mediation / Problem Solving

Professional Development of Staff

In Carrickfergus Model, we recognise the need for effective, updated and ongoing training for all staff within our preventative measures. As such, we are committed to:

- Ensuring that all staff and Governors complete relevant Safeguarding, Child Protection, SEND and Addressing Bullying in Schools training.
- Reviewing and amending the content of the Addressing Bullying Policy following training, complex case review or as directed by DENI.
- Keeping and regularly updating continued professional development records

To this end:

- Our teaching staff and support staff have completed Addressing Bullying in Schools. All teaching staff have completed the EA Level One Training.
- All members of the Board of Governors have completed the EA Addressing Bullying in schools training
- The Principal has completed the EA Level Two Training and a Foundational Level in Restorative Practice.

Statutory Systems and Processes for Reporting, Responding and Recording

As a school we recognise that reporting a concern of bullying type behaviour can be difficult. For this reason, we have systems in place to enable pupils, parents and any other person to share concerns discreetly and efficiently with a trusted adult. All concerns of bullying type behaviour will be responded to in line with legislative processes as outlined in this policy.

Pupils reporting a concern

Pupils may report bullying type concerns in the following ways:

- Verbally sharing with a staff member
- By writing a note to a staff member
- Using Seesaw or Google Classroom
- Placing a concern in a 'worry-box'
- Telling a friend
- Leaving a note on their teacher's desk
- Telling an Anti-Bullying Ambassador

All pupils are encouraged to share concerns regarding socially unacceptable or bullying type behaviour that they experience, display or witness. They should not view this as 'telling' but rather 'talking about concerns' with the emphasis on 'getting help.'

SKILLS FOR EFFECTIVE LISTENING

- Invite and encourage talk
- Consider your body language – sit down and make eye contact
- Return and clarify what the young person tells you
- Be comfortable with silence
- Summarise the problem
- Encourage the young person to come up with ideas about next steps

Parents / Carers or Others Reporting a Concern

In the first instance, parents / carers or others report concerns to their child's class teacher (in the first instance) or Head of Key stage (in the second instance) in one of the following ways:

- Please remember that we are here to help. We are as anxious as you are to resolve this problem. It is always going to be more helpful if we work in partnership.

- In most instances please contact the school to initially speak to the **Class Teacher** or **Head of Key Stage**.
- Tell us how your child has been affected, what he or she is afraid of and what he or she feels might help. Describe to us the facts about the bullying.
- We will listen and give you assurance that the matter will be responded to, dealt with and that you will be kept informed.
- If there is anything that you are not sure about please ask for a clearer explanation.
- We will stress the importance of keeping us informed of any further concerns or incidents.
- We will give you the opportunity to establish on-going communication with the school to monitor the progress of the situation.
- If you feel that the situation is not resolved, please make an appointment with the Principal.

Responding to and recording a bullying type concern

It is the responsibility of all staff (including teachers, teaching assistants, wider support staff, office staff, supervisors etc) to report any bullying type of behaviour concerns. All allegations of bullying type behaviour will be responded to using the Statutory Process Flowchart, recorded on a Bullying Concern Form and stored in a central area in school.

Upon receipt of bullying type behaviour, staff will:

- Clarify facts and perceptions
- Check records and previous assessments
- Collaboratively assess the incident using the TRIP criteria

Where bullying type behaviour has been concerned and in consultation with pupils involved and their parents / carers. Designated staff will ensure that the following is recorded:

- Methods and potential motivating factors
- Relevant level of support and intervention
- Select appropriate support and interventions for all pupils involved
- Ensure selected approaches are aligned to and in the context of wider safeguarding, SEND etc
- Implement, track, monitor and record effectiveness of supports and interventions
- Review outcome of interventions
- Select and implement further interventions as necessary
- Based on the level or progress, proceed case to closure

Please note that the Board of Governors have agreed that under GDPR, details of support and intervention plans cannot be disclosed to anyone other than that pupil and their parents / carers. Details of any sanctions given to a pupil / group of pupils will also not be disclosed to other parents / carers.

SAMPLE STRATEGIES / INTERVENTIONS THAT CAN BE USED IN SCHOOL OR BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL CAN BE FOUND ON THE SCHOOL WEBSITE. IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THE STRATEGIES WILL DEPEND ON WHAT SUITS THE SITUATION OR CHILDREN INVOLVED BEST. EACH SCENARIO

SHOULD BE TREATED INDIVIDUALLY BUT COMMON STRATEGIES MAY BE USED THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL AND IN LINE WITH OUR VALUES AND ETHOS.

Monitoring and Review of Policy

The Act places responsibility on the Board of Governors, in consultation with the Principal, to monitor the effectiveness of the Addressing Bullying Policy. To this end, the Board of Governors will:

- maintain a standing item on the agenda where a report on bullying type behaviour is presented by the Principal
- appoint a lead Governor to liaise with the Principal
- minute the number of incidents including methods, motivations and how they are addressed
- identify trends and patterns to inform future policy and practice development and review
- record written responses to relevant pupils, parents / carers when appropriate

The Addressing Bullying Policy will be reviewed in consultation with all school community stakeholders:

- at intervals of no less than four years
- following any complex incident which highlights the need for such a review
- when reviewing other associated policies
- in response to a recommendation by ETI
- following new guidance as directed by DENI

FURTHER INFORMATION, ADVICE AND SUPPORT

NSPCC

www.nspcc.org.uk

Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum

<http://www.endbullying.org.uk>

Anti-Bullying Alliance (includes advice for those with Special Educational Needs)

www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

Childnet (cyber-bullying)

<http://www.digizen.org/cyberbullying>

Stonewall (tackling homophobic bullying)

www.stonewallorg.uk