



St. Nicholas' Primary School  
Minorca Place  
Carrickfergus  
Co. Antrim  
BT38 8AU

# St. Nicholas' Primary School



## Anti-Bullying Policy

***'Inspiring Achievement, Fulfilling Potential!'***

In line with the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016  
Statutory Guidance for Schools and Boards of Governors 2019

Policy compiled by:

**Miss G Doherty, Principal, Mrs C Byrne (DT), Mrs L Moloney (DDT) & Safeguarding Team in consultation with Governors, Staff, Parents & Pupils of St. Nicholas' PS – March 2023**

**Next Review:**

**September 2026**

## Introduction

This is a policy statement for St. Nicholas' Primary School. It is a collaborative document compiled with the support of teaching and support staff and is regularly under review.

## General Aim

As a caring Catholic school, the staff in St. Nicholas' will not tolerate bullying and the diminishment of our Pastoral Policy.

**Our aim at St. Nicholas' is to develop each child's full potential in a climate of joy, challenge, co-operation and celebration, in partnership between Home, School and Parish as embodied in our motto,  
*"Inspiring Achievement, Fulfilling Potential"*.**

In order to achieve this, we must *act swiftly* when a case of bullying occurs. All members of staff share these values and work to ensure a child-centred approach in which caring is a shared responsibility of all staff. These values underpin and shape all our policies.

## Guiding Principles

Bullying in whatever form it is manifested is totally unacceptable and every effort will be made to resolve any problems that are identified. All members of our school community, pupils, parents and staff:

- have a right to learn and work in a safe and supportive environment, free from intimidation and fear;
- will be mutually respectful of everyone's right to be safe and will behave in ways which keep everyone else both emotionally and physically safe;
- have a responsibility to speak up when there is a bullying concern, safe in the knowledge that their concerns will be listened to and responded to with sensitivity;
- Will work together actively to promote and sustain a strong anti-bullying culture within the school; and
- will work collaboratively to promote the welfare and wellbeing of all its members.

## SPECIFIC AIMS OF ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

In St. Nicholas' PS, we aim:

- To maintain a safe, secure and happy environment for all our children and staff.
- To nurture, care and respect everyone as an individual.
- To enhance the self-esteem of all.
- To prevent and reduce, as far as possible, bullying in any form.
- To deal with any incidents consistently and promptly.
- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with teachers, pupils, parent/guardians;
- To enable pupils to articulate their fears and concerns and be confident that they will receive a sympathetic and supportive response from teachers and other adults within the school community;

- To create a school ethos which encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour;
- To develop and implement strategies to minimise the likelihood of incidents of bullying behaviour;
- To offer support for those who are victims of bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour;
- To seek to influence attitudes of pupils to bullying behaviour, in a positive manner, through a range of curricular initiatives;
- To respond to the concerns of parents
- To ensure that all pupils, staff and parents are aware of this policy.

### Links with legislation and other school policies:

This policy is informed and guided by current legislation and DE Guidance listed below:

#### The Legislative Context:

- Health and Safety at Work NI Order 1978 The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- **The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 Article 3 – see DE 1998/25**
- **WELFARE AND PROTECTION OF PUPILS EDUCATION AND LIBRARIES (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 2003**
- **THE EDUCATION (2006 ORDER) (COMMENCEMENT NO.2) ORDER (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2007**
- **The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010**
- **Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016**

#### DE Guidance:

- Pastoral Care in Schools: PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR DE, 2001
- Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools.  
A Guide for Schools, DE 2017 – to be read in conjunction with the following:  
*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's (SBNi) Policies and Procedures 2017*
- **Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 Statutory Guidance for Schools and Boards of Governors 2019**

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

- It links with the **Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy** in which the school outlines the steps it will take to protect children from harm and develop their personal safety strategies.
- It links with the **Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy** in which the school outlines the types of behaviour which are considered appropriate and inappropriate, together with the sanctions which will be used as part of the disciplinary process.
- It links with our **Online Safety Policy**.

## **CONTEXT: KEY LEGISLATION: DUTIES PLACED ON BOARDS OF GOVERNORS**

### **1. Addressing Bullying In Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016**

- Duty of Board of Governors to secure measures to prevent bullying.
- Duty to keep a record of incidents of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying involving a registered pupil at the school.

### **2. WELFARE AND PROTECTION OF PUPILS EDUCATION AND LIBRARIES (NORTHERN IRELAND) ORDER 2003 - DE Circular Number 2003/13 - which amends Article 3 of 1998 N.I. Order as follows:**

#### **Article 17 DUTY TO SAFEGUARD AND PROMOTE THE WELFARE OF PUPILS**

##### **The Board of Governors is required to:**

- **“safeguard and promote the welfare of all registered pupils** whether they are on the school premises or elsewhere while in the lawful control or charge of a member of staff of the school” (Article 17: 2)
- **consult with registered pupils** on the general principles which will be reflected in the school’s discipline policy (Article 19: 13 & 14)

##### **The Principal**

- when deciding on measures which will be used to encourage good behaviour in the school **must specifically include measures to prevent bullying among pupils** (Article 19:14)
- before deciding on measures to encourage good behaviour **must consult with pupils registered at the school and their parents**” (Article 19:14)

**Implications Arising** - “All schools will need to be satisfied that their current discipline policy deals with the **PREVENTION OF BULLYING** among pupils in a sufficiently clear and robust way to satisfy the new legal requirement “  
(Article 19:15)

#### **Definition of ‘Bullying’:**

**The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 defines bullying as follows:**

**1. “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, 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 as bullying, the school shall consider the following criteria:

- Severity and significance of the incident
- Evidence of premeditation
- Impact of the incident on individuals (Physical/Emotional)
- Impact of the incident 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 **Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy**.

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 other pupils mean and hurtful names
  - Telling lies or spreading false rumours about others
  - Try to make other pupils dislike another pupil or pupils
- **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

**Please note:** Whilst lists are included in this policy it should be noted that these lists are exemplified and not exhaustive and that other behaviours which fit with the definition may also be considered bullying behaviour.



There are various 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

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 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.***

Within this section schools will also need to include the definitions of emotional and physical harm which are 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***

## **Preventative Measures**

The focus of this section is to set out the measures taken by St. Nicholas' to prevent bullying behaviour, as defined in the section above.

Beyond this, the measures set out here aim to promote a strong anti-bullying ethos within the school and the wider school community.

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

In St. Nicholas', with the aim of preventing bullying and creating a safe learning environment. We;

- \* Raise awareness and understanding of positive behaviour expectations, as set out in our **Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy**.
- \* Implement clear **Class Rules**, ensuring rights and responsibilities are understood and communicated with the whole school community (**Parent/Carer Book**)
- \* Promote anti-bullying messages through the curriculum e.g. inclusion of age-appropriate material specific to individual subject areas related to bullying, positive behaviour and inclusion – particularly through the **NSPCC Keeping Safe Programme**
- \* Address issues such as the various forms of bullying, including the how and why it can happen, through **PDMU** (e.g. sectarian, racist, homophobic, transphobic, disablist, etc.)
- \* Involve our school community in meaningful and **supportive Shared Education projects with Sunnylands PS and Model PS**, supporting pupils to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity.
- \* Through our preventative curriculum actively promote positive emotional health and wellbeing (e.g. Relax Kids, **Take 10 Strategies**, Yoga, Counselling etc)
- \* Participate in the **NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities**.
- \* Engage in key national and regional campaigns, e.g. **Safer Internet Day, Good Relations Week, European Languages Day** etc.
- \* Develop **peer-led systems** (School Council, Eco- Council, Pupil Leadership Roles & Teams) to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messaging within the school.
- \* Have effective strategies for **playground management**, e.g. Regular training for supervisors, zoning of playgrounds, inclusion of specific resources (buddy benches), playground buddies and provision of a variety of play options to meet the needs of all pupils.
- \* Hold regular **focused assemblies** to raise awareness and promote understanding of key issues related to bullying.
- \* Have effective strategies for the **management of unstructured times** (e.g. break time, lunch).
- \* Provide and **promote a range of extra- and co-curricular activities**, aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks. For example, sports, creative arts, leisure and games, etc.

A requirement of the new legislation, is that schools must state preventative measures they will put in place to prevent bullying behaviour on the way to and from school.

Whilst most of our pupils in St. Nicholas' PS travel privately with parents, a small number travel on the Whitehead, Sunnylands and Victoria buses, we still aim to promote the development of an anti-bullying culture at all times.

Therefore, we maintain a commitment to:

- \* Develop 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 or when on trips/excursions or in public.
- \* Empower pupils to challenge inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour of their peers during the journey to and from school.
- \* Engage with transport providers (e.g. Translink, EA Transport, etc.) to ensure effective communication and the early identification of any concerns.
- \* Promote key anti-bullying messages and awareness of behaviour expectations of pupils amongst the local community (e.g. local shops, cafes, service providers, residents, etc), including information on how to raise any concerns with the school.
- \* Deploy staff to support the transition from school day to journey home (e.g. staff duty at school gate / bus duty).

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.

In considering how to raise awareness of the nature and impact of online bullying and best support our pupils to make good use of the internet in a safe, responsible and respectful way, St. Nicholas' PS staff will;

- \* Address key themes of online behaviour and risk through **PDMU and UICT lessons** including understanding how to respond to harm and the consequences of inappropriate use.
- \* Participate in **Anti-Bullying Week** activities.
- \* **Engage with key statutory and voluntary sector agencies** (e.g. C2k, PSNI, Public Health Agency, Safeguarding Board for NI e-Safety Forum) to support the promotion of key messages.
- \* Participate in annual **Safer Internet Day** and promote key **eSafety messages throughout the year.**
- \* Develop and implement **robust and appropriate policies** in related areas (e.g. Online Safety Policy, C2K Filtering and Blocking Policy) and share/promote these regularly with the school community.

It is important to remember that this Anti-Bullying Policy is one of a number of policies in the wider pastoral care and safeguarding suite of policies.



As such, we always seek to ensure that policies align and provide consistent message. For example, the measures set out here to prevent bullying behaviour through the use of electronic communication are also included in the school's Online Safety Policy.

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## **Responsibility**

In St. Nicholas' PS, everyone has responsibility for creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all members of our school community.

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.

## **Reporting a Bullying Concern**

**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.

Whilst St. Nicholas' PS has identified key staff with responsibility for bullying; (**Miss Doherty, Mrs Byrne, Mrs Moloney**), we also make known and stress to all pupils that it is essential that they **raise concerns with any member of staff**, including teaching and non-teaching staff.



Principal



Designated Teacher



Deputy Designated Teacher

Pupils can raise concerns, communicate with staff and can report bullying concerns, in any way they find appropriate including:

- \* Verbally- talking to a member of staff
- \* By writing a note to a member of staff (e.g. in a homework diary)
- \* By sending an email to a member of staff or to a dedicated email address
- \* 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.

All pupils will be encouraged to '**get help**' if they have a concern about bullying that they experience or witness experienced by another.

PLACE	TIME	STAFF MEMBERS
School Entrance Arrival	Morning	Teacher on duty
Classroom	Class hours	Class teacher
Playground/Hall	Break time	Staff on duty
Playground/Hall	Lunch time	Staff on duty
School Entrance Leaving After-School Activity	2.00-4.00pm	Teachers on duty Facilitator for After-School Activity.

**It doesn't matter who – it matters to TELL!**

### **Parents/Carers Reporting a Concern**

This section lays out the responsibilities of parents and carers to raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour with the school at the earliest opportunity.

It reminds parents/carers of the need to encourage their children to react appropriately to bullying behaviour and to not do anything to retaliate or to 'hit back'.

**The process of parents/carers reporting bullying concerns is:**

In the first instance, all bullying concerns should be reported to the **Class Teacher**.

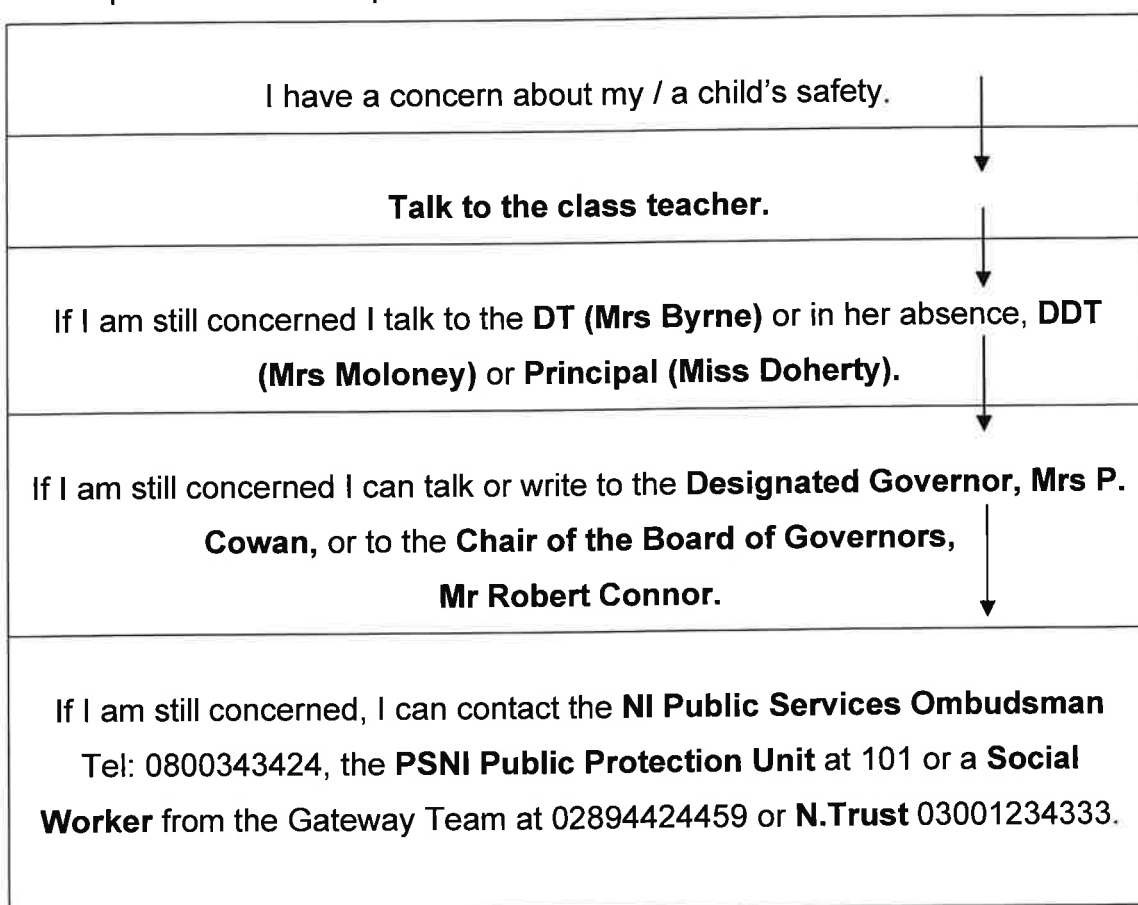
- \* Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to the **DT, Mrs Byrne or DDT, Mrs Moloney**.

- \* Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken by the Designated Teacher(s) to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to the **Principal, Miss Doherty**.
- \* Where the parent/carer remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the school's complaints procedure should be followed. This involves making a formal, written complaint, to the **Designated Governor, Mrs P. Cowan** or to the **Chair of the Board of Governors, Mr Robert Connor**.

## **HOW A PARENT CAN MAKE A COMPLAINT / RAISE A CHILD PROTECTION**

### **CONCERN**

If a parent has a child protection concern they can follow the guide below:



While the majority of reports of bullying concerns will come from pupils and their parents/carers, as a listening, caring school, St. Nicholas' remains open to receiving such reports from anyone.

**Please note:** Whilst all reports of bullying concerns received from pupils and/or parents/carers will be responded to in line with this policy and feedback given to the person who made the report, 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**.

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### **Responding to a Bullying Concern**

Upon receipt of a report of alleged bullying behaviour, or any concerns identified, St. Nicholas' PS will seek to respond in a way that both addresses the bullying concern and restores the wellbeing of all those involved.

Our aim is always to prevent the occurrence of any such further incidents.

***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 St. Nicholas' PS member of staff responsible shall...***

- \* Listen carefully to all pupils involved
- \* Assure those reporting the incident that the matter will be dealt with asap.
- \* Remove children who are being bullied from any bullying situations
- \* Inform class teacher and seek the guidance of the DT/DDT
- \* Clarify facts and perceptions
- \* Check Pupil Pastoral File records
- \* Record the incident in the DT's Incident File and Pupil Pastoral Profile.
- \* 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 and update records
- \* 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. St. Nicholas' PS adopts this approach.

Where staff deem it necessary to employ a more consequential approach, including consequences and sanctions, St. Nicholas' approach is reflected within our **Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy**.

***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.***

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

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## **Recording**

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

***St. Nicholas' PS will centrally record within Pupil Pastoral records 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.

Whilst the Department of Education encourages the use of the SIMS Behaviour Management Module for record keeping, \*at this time, St. Nicholas' will use the Bullying Concern Assessment Form (BCAF – attached). \*This will be kept under review.

Records will be kept in Pupil Pastoral Records as appropriate and when escalated, shall be recorded under Anti-Bullying Records held under lock and key by the DT & DDT.

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.

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## **Professional Development of Staff**

St. Nicholas' PS fully recognises the need for appropriate and adequate training for staff, including teaching and non-teaching school staff. This takes the form of:

- ✳ An ongoing commitment to ensuring that staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school's ongoing CPD/PRSD provisions
- ✳ 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
- ✳ Ensuring that CPD records are 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 matters of Pastoral Care/safeguarding (including a report \*as apt 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 this Anti-Bullying Policy be reviewed at intervals of no more than four years. However, St. Nicholas' PS commits to review at least every three years or following any incident which highlights the need for review.

The policy will also be reviewed when directed by the Department of Education and in light of any new guidance.

***This Anti-Bullying Policy shall be reviewed as required, in consultation with pupils and their parents/carers, on or before March 2026.***

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## Links to Other Policies

This Anti-Bullying Policy forms part of our suite of policies dedicated to the welfare and wellbeing of our pupils.

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

- \* Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy
- \* Pastoral Care & Safeguarding Policy
- \* Special Educational Needs Policy
- \* Health and Safety Policy
- \* Relationships and Sexuality Education
- \* Online Safety Policy
- \* Staff Code of Conduct

Great care has been taken to ensure that all policies are consistent and a programme of review is in place.

### Consultation:

This Policy has been compiled in consultation with the whole school community of St. Nicholas' PS through questionnaires and consultation groups.

### Governor Ratification:

This Policy was ratified by the Board of Governors of St. Nicholas' PS

On: **28<sup>th</sup> March, 2023**

Signed: *R. J. Byrne*

### Policy compiled by:

**Miss G Doherty, Principal, Mrs C Byrne (DT), Mrs L Moloney (DDT) & Safeguarding Team in consultation with Governors, Staff, Parents & Pupils of St. Nicholas' PS – March 2023**

**Next Review:**

**March 2026**