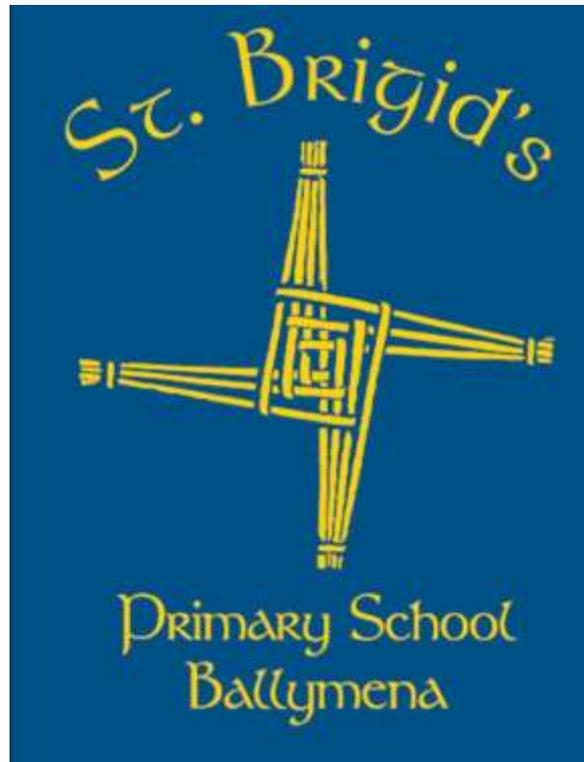


St. Brigid's Primary School



"Growing in Mind, Body and Spirit"

Anti-Bullying Policy

Definition

Bullying can be described as ‘a deliberate repetitive act done to cause distress solely to give a feeling of power, status or other gratification to the bully’.

It can range from ostracising, name -calling, teasing, threats and extortion, through to physical assault on persons and/or property. It can be an unresolved single frightening incident which casts a shadow over a child’s life.

Bullying, either verbal, physical or indirect will not be tolerated. It is everyone’s responsibility to aim to prevent occurrences of bullying and to deal with any incidents quickly and effectively. Research has shown that the extent of bullying is underestimated and in St. Brigid’s P.S. we are ever vigilant. (See Policy on Child Protection).

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in St Brigid’s. All staff are vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring, and will take immediate steps to stop it happening, to protect and reassure the victim and to deal with the bullying behaviour. We appreciate the importance of dealing with both victim and bully and therefore ensure that parents of both are personally contacted immediately bullying behaviour is identified. We work closely with the victim to support them with due emphasis placed on ensuring they know they were correct to report the incident(s), that staff will work hard to ensure that the behaviour is dealt with and monitored in the future and in rebuilding their trust of peers and feelings of safety in and out of school. We also recognise that the bully has needs as well. They require support to help them see that their behaviour is unacceptable, has repercussions for the victim and for themselves and to enable them to learn from the experience, display empathy and greatly reduce the possibility of them becoming involved in such activity again. At all times the bullying activity will be monitored by a range of people almost certainly involving the class teacher at all times and possibly some of those listed here: Vice-principal and Principal, Key Stage Heads, Pastoral Care coordinator and other staff such as lunchtime supervisors and classroom assistants.

Any complaint by a parent that their child is, or may be, being bullied will be fully investigated by the school principal in consultation with the designated teacher for child protection, and team action will be taken to protect the victim. This will usually include ensuring that another child or small group of children befriends and supports, during the school day, the child being bullied. A parent making a complaint about bullying will have a personal response from the principal or designated teacher within one week of making the complaint, indicating the investigation which has been carried out and the action being taken. This contact is usually made by phone and a record kept.

The sanctions taken against the pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case but will include the loss of privileges or position of responsibility s/he holds in the school. His/her behaviour will be carefully monitored until staff is satisfied that the problem has stopped. At all times the approach will be to deal with the behaviour and not the child. It may be an indication of a deeper problem.

Strategies for dealing with bullying

The following list of strategies is available to staff depending on the individual situations.

- Discussion at length with the victim. This will require patience and understanding. Remember — listen, believe and act.
- Identify the bully/bullies. Obtain witnesses if possible. Advise the Principal.
- Discussions with the bully. Confront them with the details and ask them to tell the truth about the situation/incident. Make it clear bullying is not acceptable in this school.
- If they own up, follow the procedures outlined below.
- If they do not own up, investigate further. Normally children own up if presented with the facts.

Procedure

- Separate discussions with parents of bully and victim.
- Help for both the bully and the victim is available if needed.
- As the behaviour of the bully improves then favoured activities can be reinstated and the child praised for good behaviour. This will rebuild self-esteem which may have been damaged.
- Sanctions for the bully must be carried out and must include withdrawal from favoured activities, loss of playtimes, exclusion from school. The sanction chosen will depend on the perceived severity of the incident.
- Continue to monitor the situation through observation at playtimes/lunchtimes and having discussions with the victim to ensure no repetition has occurred.

Preventative Action

- All staff watch for early signs of distress in pupils.
- **All** staff listen, believe, act and refer.
- The Childline telephone number is clearly displayed in school.
- Circle Time is encouraged and carried out by all staff at both Key Stages.

Behaviour Management

Definition of discipline:

We believe that school discipline is part of the functioning of the school through a system of relationships, rewards, rules and sanctions designed to help in the development of the child's self-discipline and independence.

Behaviour management is seen as part and parcel of the Pastoral Care system in this school.

Care of the whole person is sustained by all staff as a means of facilitating learning, enabling children to obtain and master the coping skills, to develop values and attitudes and help the cope with effective understanding and in relationships with others.

Good Discipline practices are encouraged so that effective learning can take place. (See Discipline Policy).

Every year we register with Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum. We receive a range of resources including assemblies, circle time activities, classroom activities PowerPoint presentations and posters. Each class plans activities during Anti-Bullying Week to highlight and emphasise important messages. Special Key Stage assemblies were also held to deliver "Key" messages. It is the intention of the school to participate in Anti-Bullying week each year.