

## Anti-Bullying Policy

### Aim

The aim of this Anti-Bullying Policy is to ensure that everyone in Fleming Fulton School has the opportunity to work and learn and teach in a supportive environment without the fear of being bullied.

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse which we do not tolerate. It is made clear to everyone that this is a form of anti-social behaviour contrary to our ethos of being a Rights Respecting School.

**(Article 19 protection from and being hurt and mistreated).**

We believe that every member of Fleming Fulton School community has the right to:

- Feel safe **(Article 24 right to a safe environment);**
- Be treated respectfully, regardless of gender, race, religion or ability **(Article 2 right to not be discriminated against);**
- Be able to learn and work; **(Article 28 right to an education)** and
- Be valued as a member of the school community **(Article 29 right to develop talents and abilities).**

Bullying behaviours of any kind are unacceptable within our school. If bullying does occur, everyone and especially pupils should be able to report incidents and feel confident that their concerns will be dealt with promptly and effectively **(Article 12 right to an opinion).**

This Anti-Bullying policy advises pupils what to do if they feel that bullying, whether alleged or observed, is happening. Anyone who witnesses a bullying incident is expected to tell a member of staff as soon as possible and all staff are expected to be vigilant and keep a record of alleged/observed incidents.

As a **Rights Respecting School** we value diversity and teach our pupils to celebrate differences. When pupils experience incidents of bullying behaviours which appear to be based on discriminatory motives (race, sexuality, disability, gender, religion and home circumstances), we will record this using the **Bullying Concern Assessment Form**, as advised in the '**Addressing Bullying in Schools Act**' (2016).

### Definition of Bullying

The Department of Education defines bullying as:

"Deliberately hurtful behaviour repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for the victim to defend him or herself" (*Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection*).

The four main types of bullying are:

1. **Physical** – punching, kicking, hitting.
2. **Emotional** – hurting people's feelings, leaving people out.
3. **Verbal** – name calling, teasing.
4. **Cyber** – sending nasty text messages, emails or messages.

The term bullying refers to a range of harmful behaviour, both physical and psychological.

Bullying behaviour usually has the following four features:

1. **It is repetitive and persistent** – though sometime a single incident can have the precise same impact as persistent behaviour over time.
2. **It is intentionally harmful** – though occasionally the stress it causes is not consciously intended by all those who are responsible.
3. **It involves an imbalance of power** – leaving someone feeling helpless to prevent it or to put a stop to it.
4. **It causes feelings of distress, fear and loneliness** – leading to a lack of confidence in those who are at the receiving end.

It is important that everyone, pupils, parents/carers, governors and staff in Fleming Fulton School

- recognise the importance of distinguishing between those behaviours which, while undesirable and unacceptable, do not constitute bullying from those which are proven to be bullying because they are deliberate, targeted and repeated over a period of time.
- Are sensitive to different perspectives.
- Understand bullying can take many forms from teasing and spreading rumours, to causing physical harm. It includes name calling and verbal abuse (face to face, in writing, through mobile phones, online, writing text messages to making comments on social networking sites), mocking or taunting, hitting, writing or drawing offensive graffiti, excluding people from groups, and threatening others including demanding money.

## Identifying bullying

A pupil who is being bullied may display some of the following signs and symptoms:

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school;
- A pattern of physical illness, for example headaches;
- Changes in temperament and or behaviour;
- Signs of anxiety or distress - difficulty in sleeping, not eating, crying etc.
- Possessions and clothing damaged or missing;
- Unexplained bruising or cuts;
- Deterioration in educational performance or loss of enthusiasm and interest in school;
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him or her.

Individually, these signs and symptoms do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied. However, if there is a combination or repetitive occurrence of these, then further investigation is needed in order to determine what is affecting the pupil.

## Procedures in Fleming Fulton School

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 target and to discipline the pupil/pupils who has/have displayed bullying behaviours. In some cases, parents/carers of both victim and pupil who have displayed the bullying behaviours will be contacted by the school. **(Article 19 protection from violence and being mistreated).**

Any complaint by a parent that their child is, or may be, being bullied will be fully investigated and team action will be taken to protect the target should bullying be identified.

A parent making a complaint about bullying will have a response from the school, normally within one week of making the complaint. This response will indicate the outcome of any investigation and if it was necessary to take action. **(Article 3 the best interests of the child).**

The sanctions taken against a pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case, but may include one or more of the following:

- Being subject to careful monitoring of behavioural /social interaction until staff members are satisfied the problem has stopped.
- Losing any privileges or positions of responsibility he/she holds in the school. For example, School Council Member
- Being placed on a daily report sheet.
- Being suspended in accordance with Education Authority's procedures.

Depending on the needs of the pupils, it may be appropriate to provide support in the form of behaviour management programmes such as anger management or social skills. **(Article 23 right to a special education).**

### **The responsibilities of the staff**

Our staff will:

- Educate our pupils about their rights in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Pupils will know their right and understand their behaviour must not infringe on anyone else's rights.
- Be consistent in approach when dealing with bullying concerns/behaviour.
- Foster in our pupil's self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others.
- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils.
- Discuss bullying with all classes, so that every child learns about the damage it causes to both the child who is bullied and to the child carrying out the bullying behaviours. Staff members will outline the importance of telling an adult about bullying when it happens.
- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying.
- Listen to children who have been bullied, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them.
- Deal with observed instances of bullying promptly and effectively.
- Keep a record of alleged/observed incidents on CPOMS
- Check all the facts before determining whether or not bullying has taken place.

- Keep parents informed.
- Use the curriculum to address issues of bullying and how pupils can deal with it.
- Bullying will be addressed in Personal Development and PDMU.
- Use assemblies to inform pupils how to deal with bullying, who to talk to and also make them aware of Social Media dangers.
- Make use of the NIABF's resources, particularly during Anti-Bullying Week and participate in the Anti-Bullying Week yearly challenge.
- Access agencies as required to support the school's position in trying to eradicate instances of bullying.

### **Designated Teacher for Safeguarding and Child Protection**

Mr M McKenna

### **Interim Deputy Designated Teacher for Safeguarding and Child Protection**

Mrs N Bittle

### **The Responsibilities of Pupils**

We expect our pupils to:

Read and follow the Rights Respecting School Charter.

Report concerns of bullying to staff at once, or as soon as practical. This will help staff to investigate concerns quickly and without information being potentially distorted.

Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity.

Intervene to protect the pupil who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so.

Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and to help prevent further instances.

Use the **Feeling Safe Box** if they feel they cannot speak to a member of staff directly.

**Anyone who becomes the target of a bully / bullies should tell an adult or friend. If a target feels they cannot speak to a member of staff directly they should use the **Feeling Safe Box**. By having the courage to speak out they will help put an end to the suffering, of not just their own but of other potential targets too.**

**(Article 12 Every child has the right to voice their opinion and for adults to listen and take their views seriously).**

### **The Responsibilities of Parents /Carers**

We ask parents and guardians to support their children and the school by:

Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children, which might be evidence of bullying.

Advising their children to report any concerns to a member of staff as soon as possible.

Parents should also explain to their children the implications of allowing the bully to continue unchecked, for themselves and other pupils.

Advising their children to not retaliate violently to any form of bullying.

Being sympathetic and supportive to their children and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken.

Informing the school of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved.

Checking all the facts before determining whether bullying has occurred i.e. that the behaviour constitutes bullying as defined in this policy.

Co-operating with the school, if their children are accused of bullying, try to ascertain the truth and point out the implications of bullying, both for the children who are bullied and the bullies themselves.

Respond to consultations with regards to this Anti-Bullying policy and other initiatives

### **The responsibilities of all**

**Everyone should work together to combat bullying.**

### **Links with other policies**

This policy is linked with the schools Behaviour for Learning Policy, Pastoral Care Policy and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Senior Management Team and the Board of Governors.

The Vice Principal will collate and review all documentation relating to bullying on a termly basis. This will allow the school to identify trends.

The Senior Management Team will then be able to provide feedback to the Board of Governors regarding changes in procedures, sanctions, supervision levels, the effectiveness of bullying etc.

The whole school, including staff, pupils and parents will be consulted about the Anti-Bullying Policy in June 2025 (**Article 12 right to an opinion**).

Every year the whole school participates in Anti-Bullying Week which involves an assembly and display board.

The School Council provides children with the opportunity to highlight concerns and collaborate with adults when discussing how bullying can be reduced or dealt with (**Article 12 right to an opinion**).