**BELMONT PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

**Rationale**

In Belmont Primary we are committed to providing a caring, safe and supportive environment for all our pupils, their parents and our staff. Our mission statement is “***inspiring educational excellence and self -belief***” and we strongly believe that this cannot be achieved without the highest levels of mutual respect and good behaviour. Bullying in any form is unacceptable and as a school we will take every step to maintain an anti-bullying ethos.

In accordance with the requirements of The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003, DE Circular 2003/13: Welfare and Protection of Pupils Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 and in respect of the “Addressing Bullying in School Act” (Northern Ireland) 2016 the school’s Board of Governors has adopted the following Anti-Bullying Policy within the framework of the school’s overall code of behaviour. This policy complies with the requirements of the Orders and Act in existence.

Specific articles of the 2003 legislation referring to the welfare and protection of pupils includes the following:

* Article 17 – Duty to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Pupils
* Article 18 – Child Protection Matters
* Article 19 – School Discipline: Measures to Prevent Bullying

Also, in addition to the 2016 Act, we have also been minded to take note of:

* Pastoral Care in Schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour (2001)
* Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools (2017)

**Aims of the Policy**

This policy aims to:

* Protect and support any child who is experiencing bullying behaviour
* Put in place strategies to assist the child displaying bullying behaviour, with the overall desire to change that behaviour.
* Maintain our ethos of openness, where pupils are listened to and their worries and feelings are taken seriously.
* Work in partnership with parents, creating open lines of communication
* Develop whole school procedures to ensure the safety and well being of all our pupils
* Develop a whole school approach to raise awareness of bullying and educate our pupils on acceptable and unacceptable behaviours and good choices
* Set down clear procedures to investigate and deal with incidents of bullying

**Definition of Bullying**

Bullying can be defined as “including (but not limited to) the repeated use of:

* Any verbal, written or electronic communication
* Any other act (including omission) or
* Any combination of those,

by a pupil or 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” *(Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016)*

Bullying is not usually a disagreement between two children and we are mindful that when dealing with young children, some behaviour can be attributed to early socialisation and lack of maturity and empathy. However, any incident that causes distress to another pupil will be thoroughly investigated and dealt with accordingly.

**Preventative Measures Promoted in School**

All schools have a basic responsibility to keep their pupils safe from harm and provide a secure learning environment and in Belmont we take this responsibility very seriously. It is the policy of this school that all staff will be vigilant and intervene promptly when there are signs of pupils behaving unkindly towards each other. All staff are aware that if unchecked, it can be damaging to the pupil experiencing the bullying behaviour in both short and longer term and can disrupt or impair the capacity to learn and develop.

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 states that schools must “determine the measures to be taken at the school”. This applies whether the pupil is:

* On the premises of the school during the day.
* Travelling to or from the school during the school term.
* In the lawful control or charge of a member of the staff of the school.
* Receiving educational provision arranged on behalf of the school and provided elsewhere.

In Belmont, we continually teach about appropriate behaviour. We do this through modelling by adults, work in class through our PDMU and RE programmes, themes in assembly, circle time activities, praise for kind and caring behaviour through our Book of Stars initiative, displaying posters and participating in Anti- Bullying week (which we prefer to call ‘Be Kind’ week) and regular talks about what to do/ who to talk to when worried. High levels of supervision in the playground and games which encourage co-operation reduce opportunities for unacceptable behaviour. Giving extra responsibility to Primary 3 pupils as Playground Pals also helps to remain vigilant at all times.

**The Four Levels of Intervention**

The Northern Ireland Anti Bullying Forum’s ‘*Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour”* document describe the four levels as:

**Level 1 Intervention - Low Level Bullying Behaviour (eg minor or first time occurences)**

Interventions at Level 1 are to help individuals to recognise/reflect on their unacceptable behaviour and to “get them back on track” while listening to and supporting/strengthening the pupil(s) experiencing bullying.

**Level 2 Interventions - Intermediate Level Bullying Behaviour (when behaviours continue)**

While interventions at Level 2 involve continuing with the above, there is shift from individual support to group interventions.

**Level 3 Interventions – Complex Bullying Behaviour (when behaviour continues despite significant work)**

Interventions at Level 3 will often involve the Pastoral Coordinator, SENCO, and other senior managers, in collaboration with pupil(s) and parents to determine the way forward in affecting change.

**Level 4 Interventions - High Risk Bullying Behaviour**

Bullying behaviours assessed as Level 4 are severe and involve a significant threat to the safety and welfare of any or all of the pupils involved. Such severe bullying concerns may be new or may have proved resistant to earlier school interventions and have now been assessed as high risk. Incidents at this level must be assessed in relation to the risk posed to any/all of the pupils involved. As such, the school’s Child Protection policy and safeguarding procedures will need to be invoked. Advice and support will be available to schools through the Child Protection Support Service for Schools.

**Procedure for Dealing with Incidents of Bullying**

Where staff detect or are made aware of early signs of this behaviour they will:

1 react promptly and withdraw the child to talk the situation through explaining why the behaviour is unacceptable;

2 reassure and comfort the other child and ensure that s/he is placed with another supportive child or an adult;

3 withdraw the first child from the situation and put strategies in place to address behaviour

4 refer the matter to the principal or vice-principal, who will complete the pro forma and decide on the course of action;

5 inform parents and agree a strategy if necessary;

6 take advice from outside agencies if necessary.

7. review the strategies put in place and check regularly that the issue has been addressed and the bullying behaviour has ceased.

In Belmont, we will:

1. **Find Out the Facts**

This will include speaking to pupils involved, other pupils who may have witnessed the behaviour, staff and parents as appropriate.

1. **Support the Child Experiencing the bullying behaviour**

Reassure the child concerned that they are safe

Listen to and reassure the child that they were right to speak up

Ensure an apology is given to the child from the child displaying the bullying behaviour

Make staff aware of the incident so that ongoing monitoring can occur

Check regularly that the incident has not been repeated (Allowing the child to choose a trusted adult in school to report to)

Contact the parents to raise awareness, in all but minor incidents.

Monitor the effectiveness of the strategies put in place

1. **Work with the child displaying the bullying behaviour**

React calmly and fairly, explaining why the behaviour is unacceptable

Take actions to modify behaviour

Use the five restorative questions:

What has happened?

What made you behave that way?

Who has been affected by what you have done?

How has the person been affected/ How do you think they feel?

What can we do to put this right?

Contact the parents to raise awareness in all but minor incidents.

1. **Apply sanctions as appropriate**

Discussion with the pupil displaying bullying behaviour to develop their understanding, followed by a short time out

Withdrawal of privileges, such as playground, golden time etc for an appropriate length of time (determined by the school)

Exclusion from high risk times such as school trips, lunchtimes in general etc

Suspension from school

Expulsion from school

All of the above will be recorded using our Anti Bullying Pro-forma, which details the incident, the action taken and the follow up checks that are in place. These forms will be stored/ retained in line with our Disposal of Records policy.

In the experience of the school it has usually been possible to intervene at an early stage and prevent further incidents. The open and positive ethos within classrooms and the good relationships between pupils, parents and staff have allowed both children and parents to talk to the school about any difficult situations. Staff know pupils well and can identify if a child is behaving out of character. This will always be investigated. Because of the good relationships, our pupils will usually open up to staff if they are worried about anything, our parents know that we listen to their concerns and the necessary support will be immediate.

Most recent review: January 2019

Next review January 2022

**Level 3 Interventions - Complex Bullying Behaviour**

Interventions at Level 3 will often involve the Pastoral Coordinator, SENCO, and other senior managers, in collaboration with pupil(s) and parents to determine the way forward in affecting change.