**Section 1 – Introduction**

At The Drelincourt School we believe all forms of bullying behaviour are unacceptable. We believe that all children have the right to learn in a safe, nurturing and supported environment. We repudiate bullying behaviour of any kind, to any member of the school community, by any member of the school community.

**Section 2 – Context**

This policy is informed and guided by current legislation and DE guidance as listed below.

The Legislative Context:

* [The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nia/2016/25/contents)
* [The Education and Libraries Order (Northern Ireland) 2003](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/2003/424/contents/made) (A17-19)
* [The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/annex-a-school-development-plans-regulations-2010.pdf)
* [The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1995/755/contents/made)
* [The Human Rights Act 1998](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents)
* [The Health and Safety at Work Order (Northern Ireland) 1978](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1978/1039)

The Policy & Guidance Context

* The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 Statutory Guidance for Schools and Boards of Governors (DE, 2019)
* [Pastoral Care in School: Promoting Positive Behaviour (DE, 2001)](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/pastoral%20care%20in%20schools.pdf)
* [Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: A Guide for Schools (DE, 2017)](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Safeguarding-and-Child-Protection-in-Schools-A-Guide-for-Schools.pdf)
  + [Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (Dept. of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, 2016)](https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/co-operating-safeguard-children-and-young-people-northern-ireland)
  + [Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland Policies and Procedures (SBNI, 2017)](https://www.proceduresonline.com/sbni/)

The International Context

* [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](https://downloads.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/UNCRC_united_nations_convention_on_the_rights_of_the_child.pdf?_ga=2.109765637.1827233515.1552648186-274690600.1552648186) (UNCRC)

The key points to note are:

* The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016:
  + Provides a legal definition of bullying.
  + Places a duty on the Board of Governors to put in place measures to prevent bullying behaviour, in consultation with pupils and parents.
  + Requires schools to record all incidents of bullying behaviour and alleged bullying incidents.
  + Sets out under which circumstances this policy should be applied, namely:
    - In school, during the school day
    - While travelling to and from school
    - When under control of school staff, but away from school (e.g. school trip)
    - When receiving education organised by school but happening elsewhere (e.g. swimming lessons)
  + Requires that the policy be updated at least every four years.
* The Education and Libraries Order (NI) 2003, requires the Board of Governors to:
  + ‘Safeguard and promote the welfare of registered pupils’ (A.17)
* The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) sets out every child’s right to:
  + Be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, maltreatment or exploitation. (A.19)
  + Be protected from discrimination. (A.2)
  + Express their views, in a supported and accessible way, on issues that affect them, and to have their opinions taken seriously. (A.12)
  + Education. (A.28)

**Section 3 – Ethos & Principles**

The Drelincourt School is deeply committed to an inclusive, kind, nurturing and up building community life. As such:

* We are committed to a society where children and young people can live free and safe from bullying.
* We believe in a society where bullying is unacceptable and where every child and young person is safe and feels safe from bullying.
* We believe that every child and young person should be celebrated in their diversity.
* We are committed to a preventative, responsive and restorative anti-bullying ethos across the whole school.
* We value the views and contributions of children, and we will actively seek these views and we will respect and take them into account.
* We understand that everyone in our school community has a role to play in taking a stand against bullying and creating a safe and welcoming environment for all.

**Section 4 – Consultation and Participation**

In compliance with the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016, this policy has been developed in consultation with our school community.

Our very young children are involved in developing our school anti-bullying ethos of ‘We choose kindness’. We feel this is an age-appropriate foundation to develop awareness of anti-bullying issues and is the focus of class based activities, assemblies etc, and our Anti-Bullying Policy.

***Consultation with pupils:***

* Consultative workshops with pupils
* Class-based activities ie. circle time

***Consultation with parents:***

* Parents were consulted at Parent/Teacher meetings as interpreters are available to explain the focus for our many newcomer families, enabling them to express their opinions

***Consultation with school community***

* As we are a small school all staff – teaching and non-teaching- are involved in the development of the anti-bullying policy and ‘we choose kindness’ focus.

**Section 5 – What is Bullying?**

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 provides a legal definition of bullying which must be used.

*Addressing Bullying in Schools Definition of “bullying”:*

*1.— (1) In this Act “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.*

The Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying also defines bullying as involving:

*“an imbalance of power, leaving someone feeling helpless to prevent it or put a stop to it.*”

Bullying is behaviour that is usually repeated, which is carried out intentionally to cause hurt, harm or to adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others, and may involve an imbalance of power.

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

While bullying is usually repeated behaviour, there are instances of one-off incidents that we will consider as bullying.

When assessing a one-off incident, to make a decision on whether to classify it 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 incidents 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 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 another pupil mean and hurtful names
  + telling lies or spread false rumours about others
  + try to make other pupils dislike another pupil/s
* 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 – these are listed but very unlikely to occur due to the young age of our children.
  + 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

It must be noted that these lists are not exhaustive and that other behaviours which fit with the definition may be considered bullying behaviour.

There may be 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
* Race/ethnicity
* 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 by 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.

In determining ‘harm’ we define:

* Emotional or psychological harm as intentionally causing distress or anxiety by scarring, 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.

**Section 6 – Preventative Measures**

There are a range of key actions with the aim of preventing bullying and creating a safe learning environment. Examples of these include:

* Raising awareness and understanding of the positive behaviour expectations, as set out in the Positive Behaviour Policy
* Promotion of 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
* Addressing 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.)
* Involvement in meaningful and supportive extended school’s projects, supporting pupils to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity i.e. Ulster Scots Society.
* Through the preventative curriculum actively promote positive emotional health and wellbeing (e.g. mindfulness training, Mental Health Week, Take 5, Neuronimo Program)
* Participation in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities
* Engagement in key national and regional campaigns, e.g. Safer Internet Day
* Development of effective strategies for playground management, e.g. training for supervisors, zoning of playgrounds, inclusion of specific resources (buddy benches, play bus stops) and provision of a variety of play options to meet the needs of all pupils.
* Focused assemblies to raise awareness and promote understanding of key issues related to bullying eg. NSPCC Childline
* Development of effective strategies for the management of unstructured times (e.g. break time, lunch)
* Provision and promotion of co-curricular activities, aimed at supporting the development of effective peer relationships and networks. For example, sporting activity, creative arts, leisure and games, etc.

A very key aspect of our preventative curriculum is the implementation of the Barnardos PATHS Programme which is a comprehensive curriculum to promote alternative thinking skills. This is taught weekly, with daily compliments and child of the day focus and is fully integrated into the anti-bullying ethos of the school.

As all our young children are brought to school by a parent/guardian, issues with journeying to and from are not common.

* We promote the development of 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 with their parents.
* Promotion of 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.

While it is not anticipated that our young children will be high users of social media we take active (age appropriate) 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.

We raise awareness of safe internet practice and online bullying through a variety of ways

* Addressing key themes of online behaviour and risk through PDMU, including understanding how to respond to harm and the consequences of inappropriate use.
* Participation in Anti-Bullying Week activities.
* Using child friendly materials i.e. Clicking Chicken and DigiDuck to demonstrate key concepts.
* Participation in annual Safer Internet Day and promotion of key messages throughout the year.
* Development and implementation of robust and appropriate policies in related areas (e.g. Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy, Filtering and Blocking Policy, Mobile Phone Policy, Connected Devices Policy, etc.)

The Anti-Bullying Policy is one of a number of policies in the wider pastoral care and safeguarding suite of policies, as set out in section 13 of this policy.

Given the nature of technology, as constantly changing and developing, we will monitor policy and messages and make changes when necessary.

**Section 7 – Responsibility**

In The Drelincourt School everyone has responsibility for creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all members of the school communities.

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

**Section 8 – Reporting a Bullying Concern**

Pupils Reporting a Concern

We know that when children have a concern about a potential bullying situation, they like the opportunity to discuss this with a member of staff that they trust. The Drelincourt School is a small and caring family and as such pupils know and are encouraged to raise concerns with any member of staff, including teaching and non-teaching staff. To reinforce and inform this message all staff photos are on the ‘Caring and Sharing’ board with DT and DDT.

Pupils can raise concerns in a variety of age appropriate ways including:

* Verbally- talking to a member of staff
* By posting a worry emoji picture in a ‘worry box’

Any pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing this behaviour. Through our preventative work taken forward under Section 6, the message we focus on is always ‘getting help’ rather than ‘telling’. As such, all children are encouraged to ‘get help’ if they have a concern about bullying that they experience or is experienced by another.

Parents/Carers Reporting a Concern

It is the responsibility of parents and carers to raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour with school at the earliest opportunity. Parents/carers need to encourage their children to react appropriately to bullying behaviour and to not do anything to retaliate or to ‘hit back’.

Process:

* 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 Principal
* If the parent/carer is unsatisfied that the concern has been appropriately responded to then the school’s complaints procedure should be followed. This is available on the school website
  + [www.drelincourt.org](http://www.drelincourt.org)

While the majority of reports of bullying concerns will come from pupils and their parents/carers, the school is open to receiving such reports from anyone.

All reports of bullying concerns received from pupils and/or parents/carers will be responded to in line with this policy and feedback will be made to the person who made the report. However, 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.

**Section 9 – Responding to a Bullying Concern**

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 member of staff responsible shall…

* Clarify facts and perceptions
* Check records (SIMS/BMM)
* 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
* Select and implement further intentions as necessary

In line with guidance by the NIABF we advocate 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.

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.

**Section 10 – Recording**

In accordance with the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016, The school will centrally record 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.

Records will be kept on the online SIMS Behaviour Management Module, which is part of the C2k system in schools. 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.

**Section 11 – Professional Development of Staff**

The Drelincourt School is committed to the professional development of all staff

* staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school’s ongoing CPD/PRSD provisions
* the impact of the training given on both the policy and its procedures - e.g. any amendments made, inclusions added etc.
* opportunities for safeguarding training are afforded to Governors and all staff – teaching and non-teaching
* CPD records will be kept and updated regularly

**Section 12 – 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 a report 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

This Anti-Bullying Policy shall be reviewed as required, in consultation with pupils and their parents/carers, on or before 2025

**Section 13 – Links to Other Policies**

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

* Positive Behaviour Policy
* Pastoral Care Policy
* Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
* Special Educational Needs Policy
* Health and Safety Policy
* Relationships and Sexuality Education
* E-Safety Policy & Acceptable Use of Internet Policy
* Mobile Phone Policy
* Retention and Disposal of Records
* Educational Visits
* Staff Code of Conduct

Care must be taken to ensure that all policies are consistent.