Strathearn School
ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Approved By Board of Governors – May 2017

Signed :_____

(Chair of Governors)

Review Date	Amendment

Rationale:

Strathearn is an educational community which aims to promote a secure, pleasant and purposeful environment for all its pupils and staff. A central aim of the School is to establish an ethos based on mutual respect, consideration and positive interpersonal relationships, where the needs of each individual are recognised and where all members are treated fairly and as individuals, irrespective of socio-economic background, race, religious beliefs, age, sexual orientation or disability. The Anti-Bullying policy forms an integral part of our policy for pastoral care and must be read in association with our Child Protection, Pastoral Care and Discipline Policies.

Anti-Bullying Statement

Bullying is a breach of our responsibility code and will not be tolerated. All pupils have a right to be taught, and staff have a right to work in a safe, caring environment free from the threat of psychological and physical abuse. Everyone in the school community is valued and is entitled to have their rights protected. Everyone also has a responsibility to contribute to the protection and maintenance of such an environment. If an incident of bullying is reported, it will be dealt with promptly and appropriately. This School is completely opposed to bullying.

Aims of the Anti-Bullying Policy:

- To help all members of the school community understand what constitutes bullying and what procedures are in place to deal with it;
- To clarify for pupils, staff and parents that bullying is always unacceptable and is regarded by the school as a breach of our discipline policy;
- To enable pupils, parents and staff to work together to prevent bullying;
- To ensure that pupils and parents know how to raise a concern about bullying, in the confidence that any reported incidents will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated;
- To reassure anyone who reports a concern about bullying that their identity will not be disclosed without their permission;
- To develop strategies to create a bully-free ethos and environment, including those to help bullies modify their behaviour, and how these will be implemented.

Definition of Bullying:

In accordance with current legislation (*Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016),* **'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'.

It can be planned and organized, or it may be the result of actions where the implications are not fully realised. It may be carried out by individuals or by groups of people. It often happens when there is no one able to observe or intervene, but may also occur in public to humiliate.

Forms of Bullying:

Physical
- Kicking, punching, pushing, hitting, hair pulling, tripping, throwing objects at someone, spitting, poking, flicking, unwanted contact
- Hiding, taking or mistreating other people's belongings
- Demanding money
- Threatening with older brothers, sisters or friends

Emotional
- Being unfriendly, isolating others, for example, by agreeing not to speak to someone or excluding someone from groups
- Name calling (using language that humiliates people), taunting, teasing, mocking or making offensive remarks about a person's physical or racial characteristics, socio-economic background, religious beliefs, sexual orientation (homophobic bullying) or disability
- Unkind looks, sarcasm, starting or spreading hurtful and/or untruthful rumours, graffiti
- Stirring – encouraging others to fight
- Pressuring someone into anti-social behaviour, issuing threats

These actions can take place face to face, in written form, via third parties or via electronic means (see cyberbullying).

Electronic or Cyberbullying
Using electronic forms of contact, such as mobile phones and computers to send offensive, hurtful or degrading messages or images.

7 categories of cyber bullying have been identified:
- Text message bullying involves sending unwelcome texts that are threatening, make a person feel hurt or uncomfortable
- Picture/Video-Clip bullying via mobile phone or e-tablet cameras is used to make the victim feel threatened, embarrassed or insulted by images usually sent to other people. 'Happy Slapping' involves filming and sharing physical attacks
- Phone call bullying via mobile phone – uses silent calls or abusive messages. Sometimes the bullied person's phone is stolen to harass others who will then think the phone owner is responsible. The perpetrators often disguise their number or use someone else's phone to avoid being identified.
- Email bullying uses email to send menacing or threatening messages through use of pseudonyms or someone else's name

- Chatroom bullying involves sending offensive or threatening responses to children or young people when they are in a web-based chatroom
- Bullying through instant messaging whereby children or young people are sent unpleasant messages, photos or videos as they conduct real time conversations on line, e.g. Snapchat, WhatsApp, Instagram.
- Bullying via websites includes the use of defamatory blogs (web logs), personal websites, online polling sites. Social networking sites eg, Facebook, Twitter, Ask.fm, provide easy opportunities for cyberbullying.

Such inappropriate behaviour severely inhibits a pupil's ability to learn effectively and to develop her self-esteem, which is essential for personal fulfilment and success.

Recognising Bullying

Signs or symptoms of a pupil being bullied may not always be obvious or may go unnoticed for a considerable time. However, a pupil who is a target of bullying may display some of the following:

- A pattern of physical illness, eg stomach pain and headaches, often accompanied by frequent visits to the Medical Room;
- Anxiety about travelling to and from school: wanting to be taken to and collected from school, avoiding regular times for travelling
- Changes in temperament or normal behaviour;
- Signs of anxiety, distress or depression – difficulty in sleeping, not eating, weeping, nightmares, become withdrawn from usual friends and family;
- Possessions and/or clothing damaged or missing;
- Increased requests for, and/or stealing money;
- Unexplained bruises or cuts;
- Deterioration in educational performance or loss of interest in school;
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling her;
- Stop using the computer, appear nervous or jumpy when an instant message or email appears, appears to be angry, depressed or frustrated after using the computer and avoid discussions of what they are doing on the computer (if being cyberbullied);
- Anxiety about attending school or reluctance or refusal to attend or talk about school.

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.

Anti-Bullying Strategies

In line with the school aims, the approach to bullying in Strathearn is proactive. The ethos of mutual respect and encouraging responsible behaviour, including the creation of a safe environment where bullying is not tolerated, is encouraged in three specific ways:

1.   Pastoral Provision

- Pastoral Team of Form Tutors, Year Heads, Heads of Key Stage, SENCos, Learning Support Staff and School Health Nurses under the leadership of Vice Principal (Pastoral) which supports pupils and staff;
- School Staff Safeguarding Team who are displayed around school;
- Peer Mentors* for junior classes;
- Familyworks Counselling Service available to all pupils in school;
- School Council – through which pupils are empowered and can contribute to the formulation of discipline and anti-bullying policies;
- Pupils trained as Anti-Bullying Ambassadors;
- Participation in Anti-Bullying week activities;

* [*Peer mentors are Senior pupils who will report concerns about bullying to the appropriate Form Tutor, Year Head/Head of Key Stage or Vice Principal (Pastoral).*]

2.   Curriculum Provision
- Personal Development element of Learning for Life and Work and Tutorial programmes, where social skills of assertiveness, negotiation, arbitration and intervention are practised and where pupils can help draw up rights, responsibilities and rules for their class. Talks from outside agencies such as Childline and PSNI, on aspects of bullying, form an integral part of this;
- Raising awareness of the issue of bullying, including cyberbullying, during discussion and debate in a variety of subjects such as ICT, English and Drama;
- Discussing the risks of new technologies and their consequences, and strategies to keep safe online in ICT.

3.   Working with Parents
- Raising awareness of the dangers of new technologies with parents;
- Giving advice on how parents should supervise/monitor use of the internet;
- Regularly consulting and sending out relevant policies to parents, or posting them on the school website .

AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

Board of Governors

Our Governors will:
- Ensure that policies to prevent bullying are pursued at Strathearn School;
- Determine the measures to be taken at Strathearn (including who should be responsible for these measures) in order to prevent bullying of a registered pupil –
    - I. On the premises of the School during the day;
    - II. While travelling to or from the School during the school term;
    - III. While the pupil is in the lawful control or charge of a member of the staff of Strathearn, or
    - IV. While the pupil is receiving educational provision arranged on behalf of Strathearn and provided elsewhere than on the School premises;
- Consider additional measures which should be taken in Strathearn to prevent bullying which
    - I. Involves the use of electronic communication
    - II. Takes place in circumstances other than those listed above and which is likely to have a detrimental effect on pupils' education at Strathearn;
- Review these anti-bullying measures –
    - I. At intervals of no more than 4 years; and
    - II. At such times as the Department of Education may direct;
- Consult the Principal, pupils and parents of Strathearn before determining or revising these anti-bullying measures as well as any guidance given by the Department of Education;
- Ensure that copies of the Anti-Bullying Policy and measures are made freely available to all parents and staff in the School and for general inspection;
- Ensure that the agreed Policy is implemented in Strathearn;
- Ensure that a record is kept of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying of pupils according to criteria set out in the *Addressing Bullying in Schools* legislation (i.e. including apparent motivation and method(s) of bullying as well as how the incident was addressed).

The Responsibilities of Staff

Our staff will:
- Foster in our pupils self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others;
- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils;
- Practise effective classroom management to create a positive, caring ethos and reduce the possibility of bullying occurring within the classroom;
- Address bullying through our Personal Development programme and in Assemblies so that every pupil learns about the damage it causes and realizes the importance of reporting bullying when it happens;

- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying both inside and outside the classroom;
- Listen to children who claim to have been bullied, take what they say seriously and follow appropriate procedures;
- Report suspected cases of bullying immediately to Form Tutor or Head of Year/Head of Key Stage, as appropriate, (see Appendix 1 for proforma);
- Closely liaise with parents over any incidents of bullying behaviour, including following up concerns raised by parents about bullying and reporting back fully and promptly on the action that has been taken;
- Deal with observed instances of bullying promptly and in accordance with agreed procedures;
- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of the bullied pupil, witnesses and those involved;
- Make a continuing and concerted effort to eradicate bullying from the school community;
- Regularly monitor and review anti-bullying policy implementation.

The Responsibilities of Pupils

We expect our pupils to:
- Behave in a caring and respectful manner towards other members of the school community;
- Help create a climate where bullying is not accepted;
- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity;
- Help and offer support, where appropriate, to any pupil who is being bullied;
- If confident enough, tell those involved in bullying that they do not like what they are doing and ask them to stop. Confronting bullies, however, is not advisable;
- Report to a member of staff or peer mentor and their own family, any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying to dispel any climate of secrecy and help prevent further instances. Not telling means the targeted individuals may continue to suffer.

The Responsibilities of Parents

We ask our parents 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 on strategies to deal with pupils acting inappropriately towards them;
- Advising and reminding their children to report bullying to their Form Tutor/Head of Year or Key Stage, and explaining the implications of allowing bullying to continue unchecked for themselves and for other pupils;
- Advising and reminding their children not to retaliate violently to any form of bullying;
- Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken by the School;
- Keeping a written record of any reported instances of bullying;
- Informing the Vice-Principal (Pastoral) of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved;

- Co-operating with the School if any of their children are accused of bullying, trying to ascertain the truth, and pointing out the implications of bullying, both for the children who are targeted and for those exhibiting the behaviour;
- Monitoring their children's use of the Internet and mobile phones if concerned about cyberbullying and keeping any messages on the computer or mobile phone which may be used as evidence;
- Not confronting pupils who have allegedly bullied, or their families, as this may exacerbate the situation.

Procedures to be followed when reporting and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour

Our approach in Strathearn is to support and protect the target of bullying behaviour and to focus on changing the behaviour of those engaged in it and those who collude with her/them, either tacitly or openly. This approach seeks to recognize the importance and power of the peer group and attempts to use this to build constructive relationships.

Pupils would say it does not help "being told to ignore the bully/bullying" or "being told to stand up for yourself."

It is also generally recognised that publicly naming or humiliating bullies is not recommended since it generally has the effect of:

- Driving bullying behaviour underground only to re-emerge in more insidious forms
- Leading to a cycle of punishment and control

If an incident is reported to a member of staff:

- The details should be recorded immediately and passed to the appropriate Form Tutor, Head of Year/Head of Key Stage (see Appendix 1 for proforma);
- The report of alleged bullying will be investigated by a member of staff appropriate to the seriousness or nature of the matter and written records will be kept;
- The incident may be reported to parents at this stage, if deemed appropriate.

It is important to remember when investigating a reported bullying incident:
- Each case will be different and the solution must be tailored to suit the problem;
- To remain impartial - do not attribute blame;
- The aim is to help both the target of bullying behaviour and those exhibiting such behaviour;
- Bullying behaviour has been 'learned' from life experience, so it can be challenged and with appropriate support can be replaced by acceptable behaviour;
- Some reported incidents of bullying may turn out not to be. In these cases pupils may require help from a Peer Mentor, a Form Tutor or other member of the pastoral staff to overcome their difficulties.

Sanctions

It is crucial to establish whether bullying has taken place, the nature of an incident as well as its seriousness, before sanctions are imposed. If required, these will be applied in line with the School's Positive Behaviour Policy.

Since there are many different types of behaviour which can be categorized as bullying, each will require an appropriate and individual response.

Parents/carers of pupils who are being bullied, as well as of those pupils who are exhibiting bullying behaviour, will normally be contacted.

Targets of bullying need help and support. They need protection and confidentiality in the first place but they also need to be empowered. Such pupils often lack self-esteem and have a negative self-image, so it is important to build up their confidence as well as giving them sound practicable strategies to use in the face of on-going bullying.

Bullying is learned behaviour; so, given the right attention and learning environment, bullies can change their behaviour. Attempting to frighten, scare or intimidate bullies into stopping their behaviour by shouting at them will only compound the problem.

Treating a pupil exhibiting bullying-type behaviour with respect and dignity, as well as trying to get them to understand that their behaviour has been hurtful and needs to be changed, is very important, and the best way forward for long term success.

The 3 steps for dealing with reported incidents of bullying are:

- ➢ Step 1: Investigating the Report
- ➢ Step 2: Taking Action
- ➢ Step 3: Monitoring and Reviewing the situation

More advice is available online at:- http://www.endbullying.org.uk/gallery/effective-responses-to-bullying-behaviour

Step 1: Investigating the Report

The Form Tutor/Head of Year/Head of Key Stage should interview the victim, the alleged bully (bullies) and any witnesses to the incident separately to establish whether bullying has indeed taken place. In more serious cases the Vice Principal (Pastoral) may be involved in interviewing from the beginning of the investigation. From the start all interviewees need to know that written records will be kept. All interviews should take place confidentially in a secure and appropriate environment.

(a)   Interviewing the Target of Bullying Behaviour

1. Listen to the person's story in a calm, non-judgemental way.
2. Indicate from the start that the incident is being taken seriously.
3. Assure the person that she has done the right thing by reporting the incident. Do not make her feel she is wasting your time or that her complaint is trivial.
4. Allow the person to explore her feelings about the incident.
5. It may not be advisable to find out all the facts immediately as this may only increase the stress; find out if there were any witnesses to the incident.
6. Make clear that the person is not being blamed for the situation.
7. Praise her for seeking help.

(b)   Interviewing the Pupil(s) Exhibiting Bullying Behaviour

Pupils who are perceived to be engaged in bullying behaviour also have the right to be heard. The investigating member of staff (Head of Year / Head of Key Stage) should meet with these pupils as soon as possible after interviewing the subject of the report and any witnesses.

1. Interview separately the individual or the individual members of the group identified in the bullying report
2. Do not disclose the source by respecting the confidentiality of all concerned, including witnesses
3. State that all reported incidents of inappropriate behaviour are taken seriously
4. Speak in a calm manner
5. Remain neutral and listen in a non-judgemental way
6. Give the pupil(s) an opportunity to give her/their point of view and explain her / their actions.

Step 2:   Taking Action

Staff investigating the report, including those interviewing witnesses, may need to take advice from a more senior member of staff such as the Vice Principal (Pastoral) to establish whether bullying has indeed taken place and if so, the intervention and support to be put in place.

(a)   **Supporting the Target of Bullying Behaviour**

It is very important for an individual who has been targeted to be confident that something will be done immediately to relieve her distress and that intervention by staff will not make the situation worse. This reassurance is needed as well as involving bullied pupils in longer term strategies.

1. Reassure the targeted pupil that all possible steps will be taken to resolve the issue.
2. Discuss and agree with the pupil how she will be supported. Involve her in helping to arrive at constructive methods for resolving the situation. Such methods may include –
    - identifying a member of staff and/or peer mentor who will act as a point of referral for the pupil

- finding a reliable friend or 'circle of friends' who will accompany her and report any incidents
- identify times and places of bullying and minimize opportunities by ensuring supervision
- providing specific advice to staff on strategies to prevent incidents of bullying, eg seating arrangements in class
- involving the harmed pupil in longer term strategies to develop her coping skills, eg assertiveness skills training, inclusion in a programme to build up self-esteem, offering professional counselling, self-help through accessing anti-bullying websites on the internet or telephone helplines (see Appendix 2).

3. Agree acceptable targets for making the situation acceptable.
4. Agree a review date.
5. Implement the agreed support plan
6. Contact parents/carers of the targeted pupil. (She may request that her parents/carers are not contacted, in which case the designated staff member may use his/her discretion. This should be noted in the written records). Enlist parental support to ensure they are aware of and in agreement with the support plan and targets set. (Parental contact may be done by telephone, or, if more appropriate, at an interview).
7. Ensure that the Form Tutor, Head of Year/Head of Key Stage and Vice Principal (Pastoral) and if necessary individual subject teachers are made aware of the incident(s). Pupils have the right to know which members of staff have been informed.

(b)   Supporting the Pupil(s) Exhibiting Bullying Behaviour

Some pupils who bully have low self-esteem, which may manifest itself in aggressive behaviour. Pupils who exhibit bullying behaviour need to be helped to learn more socially acceptable forms of behaviour. They also need to acknowledge what they have done is wrong and understand that there are consequences for their actions.

1. Make it clear to the individuals that her/their behaviour is unacceptable and must stop immediately. Reaffirm the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and communicate clear expectations of acceptable behaviour.
2. Provide the individuals with the opportunity to take responsibility for any harm/hurt/damage caused and show concern for the targeted pupils.
3. Discuss with the individual/group ways of seeking a constructive solution that could restore the harm caused, in a manner that is acceptable to the targeted individuals, and prevent further bullying incidents from taking place. Accept any reasonable suggestions.
4. Highlight any good behaviour the individual(s) has/have already demonstrated.
5. Communicate and carry out sanctions in line with the School's Positive Behaviour Policy.
6. Set agreed behaviour targets for the individuals and make her/them aware that the progress of the plan will be monitored. If it is appropriate to inform some members of staff of a pupil's bullying behaviour, the pupil has a right to know who has been informed.

7. If it is deemed appropriate, include the pupil(s) exhibiting bullying behaviour in longer term strategies to help her / them behave in a more positive way. These strategies could include a programme of social skills and the offer of professional counselling.
8. Parents should be contacted to enlist their support and to inform them of, and ensure they are in agreement with, the targets set and the support plan to be implemented.

Step 3 – Monitoring & Reviewing the Situation

The progress of the support plan for both the target of bullying behaviour and those exhibiting bullying-type behaviour, needs to be monitored and reviewed.

1. Staff who teach the pupils or are on duty around the school may be requested to observe their behaviour in an unobtrusive way and report back to the designated teacher. Peer Mentors may also be asked to monitor their behaviour and progress.
2. At the agreed interval(s) or date(s) interview both parties individually to review the progress made.
3. If the matter has been resolved, file copies of the incident with each pupil's records.
4. If the matter is not resolved, set new goals and repeat the procedure.
5. Contact parents to ascertain their view on progress and keep them informed of the School's position.
6. Monitor and review until the situation is resolved.
7. Staff involved in the incident should review the effectiveness of their strategies in dealing with the situation and if required, modify them.

Policy Review

It is the responsibility of the Vice Principal (Pastoral) to conduct a formal review of the policy at regular intervals (the minimum is once every four years). The policy will be updated on an annual basis.
The views of pupils, parents and staff are welcome at any time and should be directed to the Vice Principal (Pastoral), Mrs L Myers.

STRATHEARN SCHOOL

REPORT OF ALLEGED BULLYING

Please complete this form and pass it to the Form Tutor/Head of Year/Head of Key Stage of any girl reported to have been involved in any suspected incident of bullying. The Form Tutor/Head of Year/ Head of Key Stage will ensure that it is dealt with and that you are kept informed.

Name of pupil(s) _____   *Form Class:* _____

Date: _____   *Time:*   _____

Details of Incident

Signed: _____

Action taken by Form Tutor/Head of Year/Head of Key Stage

Signed:_____   Date: _____

Pastoral VP comments/action:

Signed: _____   Time: _____

Additional Resources and Useful Contacts

There exists a wide range and variety of resources available on the topic of Bullying. Listed below are additional resources and useful contacts for your information.

- HMSO, (2016) *Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016,* Stationery Office Limited
- Herbert, C (1996) *Stop the Bullying. A Guide for Parents*
  Carrie Herbert Publishing
- Elliott, M (1997) *101 Ways to Deal with Bullying. A guide for parents.*
  Hodder & Stroughton Publishing
- Pastoral Care in Schools (2001) *Promoting Positive Behaviour*
  Department of Education
- Combating Bullying (2002) *Focus on Bullying, Guidance and Resources for Post Primary Schools,* Save the Children

Childline (08001111) www.childline.org.uk provides confidential advice for young people
Contact Youth helpline (Lifeline 0808 808 8000) provides 24/7 confidential advice for people of all ages if you, or someone you know is in distress or despair.

The following websites provide information about bullying and advice about how it can be tackled. Some are specifically about the potential dangers of interactive online services.

1. Anti-Bullying Network (www.antibullying.net)
2. Anti-Bullying Alliance (www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)
3. Beatbullying Young People Site (www.bbclic.com)
4. Bullying UK (www.bullying.co.uk)
5. Chatdanger (www.chatdanger.com)
6. Kidscape (www.kidscape.org.uk)
7. Kidsmart (www.kidsmart.org.uk)
8. Parentlineplus (www.parentlineplus.org.uk)
9. Stop Text Bully (www.stoptextbully.com)
10. There 4 Me (www.there4me.com) (NSPCC site for 12-16 year olds)
11. ThinkuKnow (www.thinkuknow.co.uk) (Information provided by Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre).