Strathearn School

Anti-Bullying Policy

Approved by Board of Governors – June 2021

Signed :_____ (Chair of Governors)

Introduction

Strathearn School believes that pupils have the right to be educated in a safe and supportive environment. This environment should allow all pupils to feel valued and secure. Bullying in all its forms is unacceptable within such an environment and the school will take all possible measures to prevent bullying from occurring. Where instances of bullying do occur, these will be dealt with in an appropriate and robust manner as documented in this policy.

Legislation and Guidance

It is the belief of Strathearn School that bullying is unacceptable and sees measures to prevent it and deal with its occurrences is a moral responsibility and one that the school takes seriously regardless of legal obligation. Government legislation has been put in place to ensure that schools provide accountability with respect to preventing bullying. The *Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016* provides the main legal framework for anti-bullying policy and procedures within all schools in Northern Ireland. This act provides for guidance which schools should follow to ensure best practice with respect to complying with the legislation - The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 Statutory Guidance for Schools and Boards of Governors (DE, 2019)

The Legislation:

- 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. in another school in the ALC)
- Requires that the policy be updated at least every four years.

Other relevant legislation and guidance include:

The Legislative Context:

- The Education and Libraries Order (Northern Ireland) 2003
- The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010
- The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995

The Policy & Guidance Context

- Pastoral Care in School: Promoting Positive Behaviour (DE, 2001)
- Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: A Guide for Schools (DE, 2017 updated 2019)

- Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (Dept. of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, 2016)
- Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland Policies and Procedures (SBNI, 2017)

The International Context

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

Definition of Bullying

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 legal definition of bullying;

1. "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.

Strathearn School considers bullying as behaviour that is usually repeated, which is carried out intentionally to cause hurt, harm or to adversely affect the rights or needs of another or others. However, there may be instances of one-off incidents that the school may consider as bullying and deal with accordingly. When assessing a one-off incident, to make a decision on whether to classify it as bullying, the school will consider the following criteria:

- severity and significance of the incident;
- evidence of pre-meditation;
- impact of the incident on individuals (physical and 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 School's Positive Behaviour Policy.

Incidents associated with bullying behaviour

The following unacceptable behaviours*, when repeated, targeted or intentionally hurtful, may be considered a bullying behaviour:

Physical:

- Intentionally hurting a pupil causing injury. These can be caused by the following acts:
  Kicking, punching, pushing, shoving, hitting, hair pulling, tripping, throwing objects at someone, spitting, poking, flicking, intimidating/unwanted contact/any physical contact which may include use of weapons/throwing objects at someone/unacceptable gestures
- Material harm, such as hiding/taking/stealing/demanding money or possessions or causing damage to/defacing possessions
- Taking images without permission and/or sharing these with others

Verbal or written:

- Includes name calling, insults, unkind jokes
- Taunting, teasing, mocking another
- Using abusive language;
- Issuing threats including pressuring another pupil or group of pupils into doing so
- Starting or spreading hurtful and/or untruthful rumours about others

Emotional

- Being unfriendly, isolating others, for example, by agreeing not to speak to someone or excluding someone from groups
- Unkind looks, sarcasm, graffiti

Electronic:

- Using online platforms, mobile phones or other electronic communication to carry out many of the verbal or written acts identified in this document
- Impersonating someone online to cause hurt
- Unwelcome messages which make a person feel hurt or uncomfortable
- Sharing of images or videos to make the victim feel threatened, embarrassed or insulted.
- Making abusive or silent calls
- Emailing menacing or threatening messages through an anonymous account.

***This list is not exhaustive and other behaviours which fit the definition may be considered bullying behaviour.**

This policy also accepts the definitions of emotional and physical harm as set out in Department of Education (DE) guidance. In determining 'harm' we define:

- Emotional or psychological harm as intentionally causing distress or anxiety by scaring, humiliating or affecting adversely a pupil's self-esteem.
- Physical harm as intentionally hurting a pupil or group of pupils by causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts.

At Strathearn School, we acknowledge the various motivations behind bullying, including those named in the Act. These include, but are not limited to:

Age	**Appearance**	**Sexual orientation**	**Political affiliation**	**Religion**
Community background	**Disability / Special Educational Needs**	**Looked After Child status**	**Young Carer status**	**Breakdown in peer relationships**
Pregnancy	**Gender identity**	**Ability**	**Race**	**Marital status**

Bullying is an emotive issue and it is therefore 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 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.

Preventative Measures

Strathearn School aims to create a safe learning environment. We strongly believe that pupils should never have to experience bullying during their time at school and will take all reasonable measures to try to prevent bullying from occurring within the school. As a school community we believe that the key to preventing bullying is to foster respect and kindness within our pupils. Our hope is that as they grow, they will become responsible adults who understand that their actions have consequences and they should always endeavour to show regard for the rights and feelings of others.

This policy aims to promote a strong anti-bullying ethos within the school. Under legislation, the focus for all anti-bullying work should be on prevention. Therefore, we seek to prevent bullying in the following ways:

- 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 focused assemblies, external organisations and LLW (e.g. sectarian, racist, homophobic, transphobic, disablist, etc.);
- involvement in meaningful and supportive shared education projects, supporting pupils to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity;

- through the preventative curriculum actively promote positive emotional health and wellbeing (e.g. resilience building);
- participation in the Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF) annual Anti-Bullying Week activities;
- engagement in key national and regional campaigns, e.g Safer Internet Day;
- development of peer-led systems (e.g. School Council) to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messaging within the school;
- development of effective strategies for supervision e.g. training for supervisors, zoning of playgrounds, identified boundaries;
- development of effective strategies for the management of unstructured times (e.g. break and lunchtime);
- provision and promotion of extra- and co-curricular activities, aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks, for example sporting activity, creative arts, leisure and games, etc.

We further seek to prevent bullying behaviour on the way to and from school through:

- Development of a culture where pupils take pride in their school and are viewed as ambassadors for their school within the community, including regular reminders of the positive behaviour expectations of pupils whilst travelling to and from school;
- Regular engagement with transport providers (e.g. Translink) to ensure effective communication and the early identification of any concerns;
- Appropriate deployment of staff to support the transition from school day to journey home (e.g. staff duty at school gate/bus stops during first week of Autumn term);

Strathearn School will also take 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. This includes:

- Addressing key themes of online behaviour and risk through PD/LLW, including understanding how to respond to harm and the consequences of inappropriate use;
- Participation in Anti-Bullying Week activities/assembly;
- Engagement with key statutory and voluntary sector agencies (e.g. C2k, PSNI, Public Health Agency, Safeguarding Board for NI e-Safety Forum) to support the promotion of key messages;
- 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 and e-Safety Policy).

Within the school a culture of respect is developed in specific focused strategies, lessons and activities but also generally within all aspects of the school life.

- Within the Personal Development element of Learning for Life and Work and Tutorial programmes, social skills of assertiveness, negotiation, arbitration and intervention are practised, and 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
- Assemblies will deal with a range of issues many addressing bullying directly but will also aim

to encourage pupils to think positively about the benefits of good behaviour rather than only deal with the negative aspects of bad behaviour.

- All adults in the school will be expected to model the behaviours of respect and kindness and be encouraged to challenge pupils where they see behaviour which is tending towards a lack of care of concern for the consequences towards another pupil or groups of pupils.

Responsibility

Everyone has the responsibility for creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all members of the school community. Pupils, their parents/carers and staff are expected to respect the rights of others to be safe. We all have a 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

Where a pupil or member of staff feels that there is a potential for bullying to occur, or a situation to escalate to become one of a bullying nature, there are various provisions in place which aim to prevent any such escalation:

- Pastoral Team of Form Tutors, Heads of Year, Senior Teacher (Pastoral), SENCo/Assistant SENCo, Learning Support Staff and School Health Nurses under the leadership of Vice Principal (Pastoral) which supports pupils and staff.
- Safeguarding Team.
- Peer Mentors for junior classes.
- Counselling Service is 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.

- Senior pupils trained as Anti-Bullying Ambassadors.

Strathearn School believes that tackling bullying is most effective if all the school stakeholders work together and will work with parents to achieve the aim of reducing the potential for a pupil to be bullied. The school will work with parents to:

- Encourage them to support the school's efforts to prevent bullying.
- Encourage them to have conversations with their children and report any fears about potential bullying to any of the pastoral team.
- Raise awareness of the signs that their child may be experiencing bullying behaviour.
- Raise awareness of the dangers of new technologies.
- Consult on anti-bullying policies and procedures.

All members of the school community will be encouraged to recognise bullying behaviour and to recognise if someone may be experience bullying behaviour.

Reporting a concern

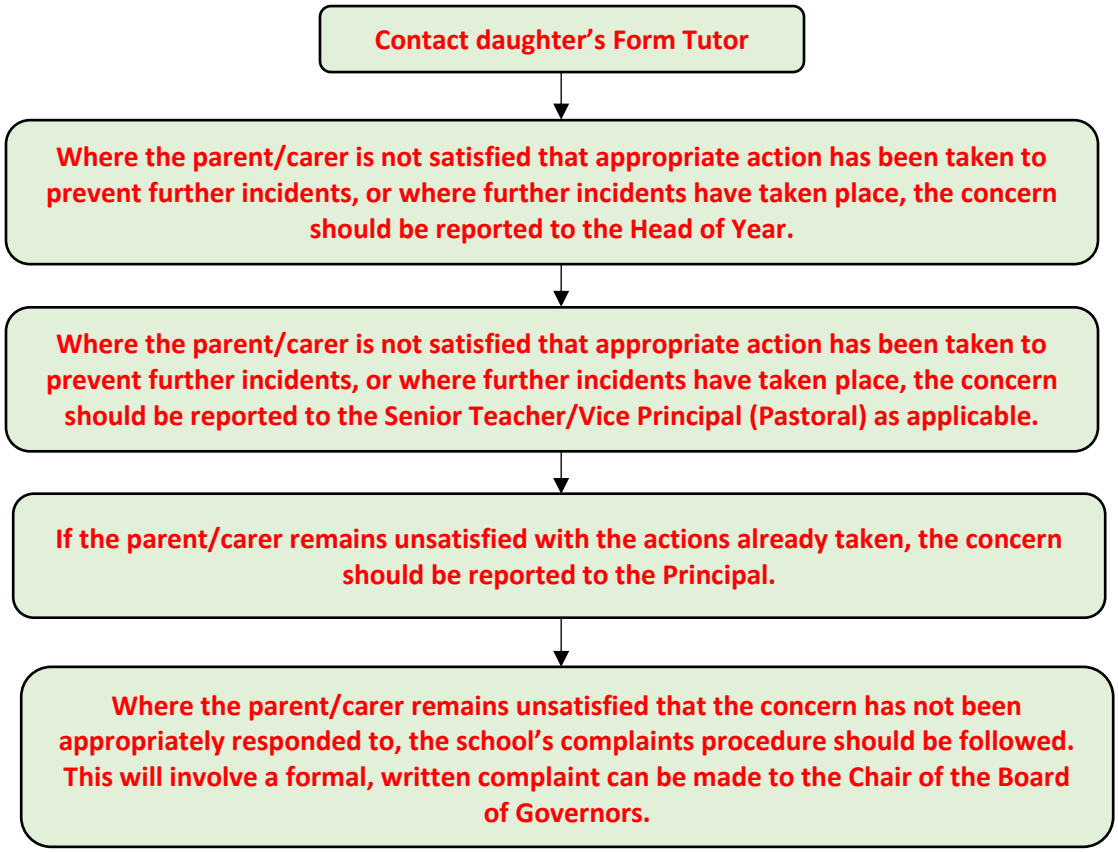
Pupils reporting a concern

Any pupil can report a concern of bullying. This does not have to be the pupil who is experiencing the bullying behaviour but may be another pupil who wants to help that person. Pupils are encouraged to raise concerns with any member of staff, including teaching and non-teaching staff. They can raise their concerns:

- Verbally – by speaking to a member of staff;
- By writing a note to a member of staff;
- By sending an email to a member of staff.

Parents/Carers reporting a concern

Parents and carers should raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour with the school at the earliest opportunity. They should encourage their child/children to react appropriately to bullying behaviour and not to do anything to retaliate or to 'hit back'. The process for parent/carers to report bullying concerns is outlined on the following page:



All reports of bullying concerns received from pupils and/or parents/carers will be responded to in line with this policy. Appropriate feedback will be given to the person who made the report. No information about action taken in relation to a pupil can be disclosed to anyone other than the pupil and their parents/carers.

Responding to a concern

The processes outlined below provide a framework for how Strathearn School will respond to any bullying concerns identified.

Using the NI Anti-Bullying Form's (NIABF) *Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour* resource, the member of staff responding to the concern will:

- clarify facts and perceptions
- check records (SIMS/BMM)
- assess the allegation 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.
- track, monitor and record effectiveness of interventions
- review outcome of interventions
- select and implement further intentions as necessary

The member of staff, receiving the report, should complete the *Bullying Concern Assessment Form* (Appendix 1).

When responding to a bullying concern, school staff will implement interventions aimed at responding to the behaviour, resolving the concern and restoring the wellbeing of those involved. Where appropriate, school staff may implement sanctions for those displaying bullying behaviour. Relevant sanctions may include:

- verbal reprimand from Head of Year/Senior Teacher/Vice Principal/Principal
- verbal or written apology
- detention
- extended detention
- suspension
- expulsion

Recording Incidents of Bullying

The Addressing Bullying in Schools (Northern Ireland) Act requires the school to record all allegations and incidents of bullying behaviour involving a registered pupil. This relates to allegations/incidents that occur:

- on the premises of the school during the school day
- while travelling to or from school during the school term
- while the pupil is in the lawful control or charge of a member of the staff of the school
- while the pupil is receiving educational provision arranged on behalf of the school and provided elsewhere than on the premises of the school

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 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 (GDPR) 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.

Professional Development of Staff

Strathearn School recognises the need for appropriate and adequate training for staff, including teaching and non-teaching staff. As part of regular required child protection training staff will be made aware of the policy and procedures for dealing with concerns of bullying behaviour.

Monitoring and Review of Policy

To monitor the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy the Board of Governors will:

- 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 at intervals of no more than four years. However, the policy will also be reviewed:

- following any incident which highlights the need for such a review
- when directed by the Department of Education and in light of new guidance

It is the responsibility of the Vice Principal (Pastoral) to consider the effectiveness and application of this policy. This will be done in consultation with the Principal, Senior Teacher (Pastoral) and the Heads of Year. To assist this review the Vice Principal (Pastoral) may seek the views of pupils (via the School Council), parents and staff. Any revisions will be discussed with the:

- Senior Leadership Team
- Board of Governors Safeguarding sub-committee
- Board of Governors Curriculum sub-committee

Once passed by the above, it will be presented to the Board of Governors for approval.

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 the Pastoral Care Policy, Positive Behaviour Policy and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Useful Contacts

Pupils and parents can contact the following organisations for information and support:

Organisation	Contact information	Details
Childline	0800 1111 www.childline.org.uk	Provides confidential advice to young people via telephone and online.
BullyingUK	www.bullying.co.uk	Offers advice to pupils, parents and schools on how to deal with bullying.
Kidscape	020 7730 3300 www.kidscape.org.uk	Offers advice to pupils, parents and schools on how to deal with bullying. Provides information on cyber bullying.
Parents' Advice Centre	028 9023 8800 www.pachelp.org	Provides help and support to parents facing any family difficulty including bullying.
Stop Text Bully	www.stoptextbully.com	Designed to offer advice to pupils, parents and schools on dealing with text bullying.
Chat Danger	www.chatdanger..com	Designed to educate young people about the potential dangers of mobile phones, chat rooms, messenger websites and email.
CEOP	www.ceop.police.uk	Part of the UK police, the Centre for Exploittion and Online Protection (CEOP) is responsible for protecting young people from online abuse.
NSPCC	0808 800 5000 www.nspcc.org.uk	Provides general advice on how to deal with bullying.
UrZone	www.urzone.com	A PSNI website which offers advice to young people on issues of importance.
NIABF	028 9087 5006 www.niabf.org.uk	Hosted by Save the Children and funded by the Department of Education, the NI Anti-bullying forum offers advice to pupils, parents and schools on how to deal with bullying.
Thinkuknow	www.thinkuknow.co.uk	Support website from NCA and CEOP which aims to protection young people both online and offline.
PSNI	101 www.psni.police.uk	Provides support for young people with information relating to cyber bullying.
Parenting NI	0808 8010 722 www.parentingni.org	Provides parenting support in relation to cyber bullying.
FamilyWorks counselling	028 9182 1721 www.familyworksni.com	Provides private counselling for pupils in schools.
Lifeline	0808 808 8000 www.lifelinehelpline.info	Crisis response helpline service for people who are experiencing distress or despair.

Appendix 1 – Bullying Concern Assessment Form

Incident Date:

Pupils Involved	Role	Incident Date	Gender	DOB	Year and Reg

Incident	Comments
Bullying Concern	

PART 1 - Assessment of Concern Date:

Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 defines bullying as follows:

''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.

	Name(s)	Gender	DOB/Year Group
Person(s) reporting concern			
Name of pupil(s) experiencing alleged bullying behaviour			
Name of Pupil(s) demonstrating alleged bullying behaviour			

Check records for previously recorded incidents

Outline of incident(s): Attach all written accounts/drawings of incident(s) completed by targeted pupil, witnesses (i.e. other pupils, staff) including date(s) of events, if known, SIMS record.

Date	Information gathered	Location (stored)

Socially unacceptable behaviour becomes bullying behaviour when, on the basis of the information gathered, the criteria listed below have been met: **The school will treat any incident which meets these criteria as bullying behaviours**.	
Is the behaviour intentional?	**YES / NO**
Is the behaviour targeted at a specific pupil or group of pupils?	**YES / NO**
Is the behaviour repeated?	**YES / NO**
Is the behaviour causing physical or emotional harm?	**YES / NO**
Does the behaviour involve omission? (*may not always be present)	**YES / NO**

YES the above criteria have been met and bullying behaviour has occurred.	**NO the above criterial have not been met and bullying behaviour has not occurred.**
The criteria having been met, proceed to complete Part 2 of this Bullying Concern Assessment Form	The criteria having not been met, proceed to record the details in the Behaviour Incident section of this Behaviour Management Module. Refer to the Positive Behaviour Policy of your school, continue to track and monitor to ensure the behaviour does not escalate .

Agreed by _____

Status _____

On ___/___/___

PART 2

2:1 Who was targeted by this behaviour?

Select one or more of the following:

☐ Individual to individual 1:1 ☐ Individual to group ☐ Group to individual ☐ Group to group

2.2 In what way did the bullying behaviour present?

Select one or more of the following:

☐ Physical (includes for example, jostling, physical intimidation, interfering with personal property, punching/kicking
☐ Any other physical contact which may include use of weapons)
☐ Verbal (includes name calling, insults, jokes, threats, spreading rumours)
☐ Indirect (includes omission, isolation, refusal to work with/talk to/play with/help others) ☐ Electronic (through technology such as mobile phones and internet)
☐ Written
☐ Other Acts
Please specify:_____-

2.3 Motivation (underlying themes): **this is not a definitive list**

Select one or more of the following:

☐ Age
☐ Appearance
☐ Cultural
☐ Religion
☐ Political Affiliation
☐ Community background
☐ Gender Identity
☐ Sexual Orientation
☐ Family Circumstance (pregnancy, marital status, young carer status)
☐ Looked After Status (LAC)
☐ Peer Relationship Breakdown
☐ Disability (related to perceived or actual disability)
☐ Ability
☐ Pregnancy
☐ Race
☐ Not known
☐ Other _____

Bullying Concern Assessment Form

Part 3a

RECORD OF SUPPORT AND INTERVENTIONS FOR PUPIL EXPERIENCING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR:

Pupil Name: **Year Group/Class:**

REFER TO SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY AND TO LEVEL 1-4 INTERVENTIONS IN EFFECTIVE RESPONSES TO BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Parent/ carer informed: **Date:** **By whom:**
Staff Involved:

Date	Stage on Code of Practice	Intervention	Success Criteria	Action taken by whom and when	Outcomes of Intervention	Review

Record of participation in planning for interventions

Pupil:

Parent/carer:

Other Agencies:

Continue to track interventions until an **agreed** satisfactory outcome has been achieved

Bullying Concern Assessment Form

Part 3b

RECORD OF SUPPORT AND INTERVENTIONS FOR PUPIL DISPLAYING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR: **Pupil Name:** **Year Group/Class:** **REFER TO SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY AND TO LEVEL 1-4 INTERVENTIONS IN EFFECTIVE RESPONSES TO BULLYING BEHAVIOUR**

PART 4 - REVIEW OF BULLYING CONCERN AND ACTIONS TO DATE

Date of Review Meeting:

4a- Following the Review Meeting, to what extent have the success criteria been met?

☐ 1 – Fully

☐ 2 – Partially

☐ 3 – Further intervention/support required

Give details:

_____

_____

Part 4b- If the success criteria have not been met, continue to:

☐ Re-assess Level of Interventions and implement other strategies from an appropriate level

- ☐ Track, monitor and review the outcomes of further intervention
- ☐ Keep under review the Stage of Code of Practice each pupil is on
- ☐ Follow Safeguarding Policy
- ☐ Seek multi-agency input (EA, Health and Social Services etc.)
- ☐ Engage with Board of Governors

Agreed by:	
School	**Signed:** **Date:**
Parent	**Signed:** **Date:**
Pupil	**Signed:** **Date:**

Draft