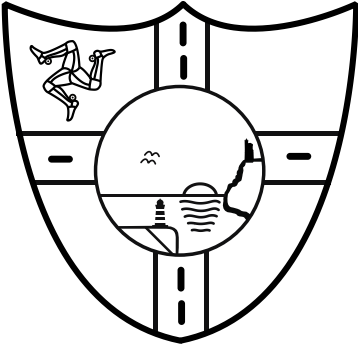


Rushen Primary School

Anti-Bullying Policy



Approved by:

Date: September 2022

Next review due by: September 2024

Introduction

Rushen Primary School is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all children so they can learn in a calm and secure atmosphere. Bullying is a behaviour that needs to be changed in someone. There are many reasons why people bully others, and there can be a range of consequences of it, but it is not all that defines a person and so we do not use the label 'bully' when referring to an individual child/group of children. It is the behaviour of the individual child or group that needs to be addressed and changed. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable. If bullying does occur, all children know to ask for help and that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to inform members of staff.

As children are learning and growing, they will inevitably disagree, fall out, hurt and upset each other and some will lose control. These are unfortunate, but normal experiences that children may encounter. Some children can be loud, boastful and boisterous and are unaware of the impact this behaviour might have on others. Some, as they learn to get along in a wider social circle, will only see a situation from their own perspective, and some may try to avoid taking responsibility for their part in an incident. Other children may feel awkward in different social settings, or may not have the social skills to be able to make friends or sustain friendships. This can inadvertently result in children displaying other unsociable behaviours, such as a perceived 'ownership' of a particular game at playtime, a friendship or group of friends. Some may choose to withdraw themselves for a short time while they work things out, while others may seek to 'sabotage' other's friendships. While we do all we can to help children avoid such responses and reactions in social situations, these are normal behaviours.

Rushen Primary School works collaboratively to help children build confidence, develop social skills, create a sense of worth as an individual and as part of a community, and facilitates independence as the children learn and grow. We encourage children to see themselves as part of a community beyond their own family and close friends. We teach children that they are responsible for their own choices and responsible for their own actions, to value each other, to speak the truth and to understand that all behaviours have consequences. Our aim is for all of our children to learn to develop empathy and we provide them with strategies for managing how to react to their feelings using our Learning Muscles, 6Rs, mindfulness and self-regulation strategies. Supporting children to form and maintain positive relationships through a restorative approach is 'what we do around here' and is the core principle of our Behaviour for Learning Policy.

Objectives of this Policy

- All staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All staff should know what the school's policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what the school's policy is on bullying, what they should do if bullying occurs and be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

What Is Bullying?

Bullying refers to a range of harmful **behaviours**, either physical or psychological or both. Bullying behaviour usually has the following four features:

1. It is **repetitive and persistent** — though sometimes a single incident can have precisely the same impact as persistent behaviour over time, for it can be experienced as part of a continuous pattern and can be extremely threatening and intimidating. This is particularly the case with racist bullying.
2. It is **intentionally harmful** — though occasionally the distress it causes is not consciously intended by all of those who are responsible.
3. It **involves an imbalance of power**, leaving someone feeling helpless to prevent it or put a stop to it.
4. It **causes negative feelings** of distress, fear, loneliness and lack of confidence in those who are on the receiving end.

Associated Issues

- A large part of the motivation for bullying, is to demonstrate power by creating fear and to gain a sense of being 'respected' by peers.

- It often happens that young people who engage in bullying have themselves been bullied in the past. Further, they may feel powerless in their own, current circumstances and are compensating for this by intimidating, or trying to intimidate, others.
- Bullying can be painfully obvious, but also can be surreptitious and subtle, and difficult to prove.
- Bystanders often show tacit acceptance or approval and in consequence, people at the receiving end see them as part of what they are up against.
- Bullying within a school is sometimes directly related to, and a consequence of, tensions and feuds within and between groups, families and communities in the local area.

What Bullying is not?

All of the following behaviours, while unpleasant and need to be addressed, should not be treated as bullying.

- **Not liking someone** – While we encourage children to be prepared to play with all others, all children have the right to choose their own friendships and it is very natural that people do not like everyone around them and, as unpleasant as it may be to know someone does not like you, verbal and non-verbal messages of "I don't like you" are NOT acts of bullying.
- **Being excluded** - Again, it is very natural for people to gather around a group of friends and we cannot be friends with everyone, so it is acceptable that when children have a party or play a game in the playground, they will include their friends and exclude others. Often unaware of the consequences, we encourage children to reflect on their choices and consider the impact these may have in a social setting. It is very important to remind children that adults do the same thing sometimes too and, although exclusion is unpleasant, it is NOT an act of bullying in this instance.
- **Accidentally bumping into someone** - When people bump into others, the reaction depends mostly on the bumped person's mood. If they have had a bad day, they think it was an act of aggressive behaviour, but if they are in a good mood, they smile back and attract an apology. This is also relevant for playing sport, like when children throwing the ball to each other may hit someone on the head. It is very important for teachers and parents to explain that some accidents happen without any bad intention and it is important not to create a big conflict, because it was NOT an act of bullying.
- **Making other children play things a certain way** - Again, this is a very natural behaviour. Wanting things to be done our way is normal and is not an act of bullying. To make sure children do not fall into considering it as an aggressive or "bossy" behaviour, we need to teach them assertiveness. If a child comes home and complains that another child is very bossy and always wants things to be done their way', although it is not fun or pleasant, this is NOT bullying.
- **A single act of telling a joke about someone** - Making fun of other people is not fun for them, but the difference between having a sense of humour and making fun of someone is usually socially acceptable. It is important to teach children that things they say as jokes should also be amusing for the others. If not, they should stop. Unless it happens over and over again and done deliberately to hurt someone, telling jokes about people is NOT bullying.
- **Arguments** - Arguments are heated disagreements between two (or more) people (or groups). It is natural that people have different interests and disagree on many things. The argument itself is NOT a form of bullying. However, it is very important to distinguish between natural disagreements and bullying during an argument.
- **Expression of unpleasant thoughts or feelings regarding others** - Again, communication requires at least two players. Although it may be unpleasant to hear what someone thinks about you, it is NOT a form of bullying. In every communication, there are disagreements and some form of judgment about each other's attitude and behaviour. If someone says to you, "I think this was not a nice gesture" or "You insulted me when you said this," this is NOT bullying but an expression of thoughts and feelings.
- **Isolated acts of harassment, aggressive behaviour, intimidation, or meanness** - The definition of

bullying states that there is repetition in the behaviour. Bullying is a conscious, repeated, hostile, aggressive behaviour of an individual or a group abusing their position with the intention to harm others or gain real or perceived power. Therefore, anything that happens once or twice, for example, is NOT an act of bullying. It is important that **parents** pay attention to what **their** child is telling them and find out if things are happening more repeatedly.

Bullying can be, but not limited to:

- **Emotional:** Derogatory name calling of an insulting and/or personal nature. Persistent and deliberate exclusion from friendship groups. Demanding money, material goods or favours by means of threat or force
- **Physical:** Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence because of some perceived physical, economic, sexual, intellectual, cultural or racial difference
- **Racist:** racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- **Sexual:** Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- **Homophobic:** because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality. Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying is unacceptable
- **Verbal:** name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, abuse and threats
- **Cyber:** the use of digital technologies which can take place on social media, messaging platforms, gaming platforms and mobile phones.

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Children who exhibit bullying behaviour need to learn different ways of behaving.

Signs and Signals

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that they are being bullied. All adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from their school
- doesn't want to go into vulnerable areas of the school, e.g., toilets, library, dinner hall
- is unwilling to go to school
- becomes withdrawn, anxious
- changes behaviour

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

The School's Preventative Measures:

- A school leader is appointed as teacher responsible for behaviour and relationships policy and training
- An additional senior educational support officer (SESO) is employed by the school with a focus on relationships and well-being
- SENCo/AEN Leader liaises with external agencies, parents, teachers, support staff and children to create individual education plans (IEPs) and individual behaviour plans (IBPs)
- Whole school participation in Anti-Bullying Weeks or themes (assemblies, displays, classroom activities)
- Registered with Safer Schools App (for parents, children and staff)
- Acceptable Use Policy, e-safety Policy, Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Safer Internet Week (classroom activities, displays, assemblies about online safety)
- Mobile phones, smart watches and any other technology is not allowed in school so as to ensure the children do not have access to social media, personal messaging platforms, gaming sites, etc, during the school day.

- All children are expected to wear school uniform; no designer trainers, jewellery, elaborate hair accessories/extensions/colours/styles, etc.
- Personal items must not be brought to school, unless at the request of the school; no games, toys, cards, electronics, sporting equipment, pencil cases/stationery, money, etc.
- Teaching children positive behaviour management strategies emphasising de-escalation in conflict situations
- Teaching children that we are all unique, to embrace our differences and to be proud of who we are as individuals and collectively
- Whole staff training in supporting and managing behaviour and relationships (Behaviour for Learning Policy)
- Shared policies and key messages with parents, staff and visitors (website, leaflets, meetings, assemblies, stay and learn sessions, tours of the school, newsletters, etc.)
- Key staff members attend Team Teach/Positive Handling training
- Children are encouraged to take leadership roles and responsibilities and to share their views on 'what we do around here' through pupil voice (e.g. Prefects, School Council, Librarians, clubs, World Kindness representatives, class responsibilities, school video, etc.)

Partnerships

Partnerships with other professionals, recognised external agencies and registered charities are used to support the children of the school in many different ways (personal safety, physical activity, well-being, building self-esteem, broad and balanced curriculum, 6Rs, Learning Muscles, growth mindset, mindfulness, etc.). Some of our partners include: Manx Sport and Recreation (MSR), Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Educational Psychologist (EP), Play therapy, Educational Support Centre (ESC), Isle Listen, NSPCC, Beach Buddies, Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI), Kidz Rock, police, St John's Ambulance, Cycling Proficiency, Crucial Crew).

Parents

If you believe your child is being bullied at school:

Don't

- minimise, rationalise, or explain away the behaviour of those who are responsible
- rush in to solve the problem for your child
- tell your child to avoid the child/children who are responsible
- tell your child to fight back
- confront the child/children responsible or their parents

Do

- say, 'I hear you', 'I'm here for you', 'I believe you', 'You are not alone in this'
- say 'There are things you can do'
- say 'Talk to an adult at school'
- report your concerns to your child's class teacher

Staff Responsibilities

- To implement procedures to confront bullying of any form
- To listen to all parties involved in incidents through the restorative approach
- To investigate incidents in a timely manner and as fully as possible
- To take appropriate action and to refer to a senior member of staff
- To share with parents of the hurt child and the child/children responsible, incidents of serious and/or persistent bullying
- To promote the use of a range of learning styles and strategies which challenge bullying behaviour
- To promote open leadership styles which facilitate communication and consultation within school and relevant agencies when appropriate
- To promote the use of interventions which are least intrusive and most effective

School Procedures

1. Report bullying incidents to the Headteacher/senior members of staff
2. In particular cases of bullying, the incidents will be recorded by staff
3. In particular cases parents will be informed and will be asked to come to a meeting to discuss the issue
4. If necessary and appropriate, the police will be consulted
5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly

Outcomes

- The child/children responsible may be asked to genuinely apologise.
- An attempt will be made to help the child/children responsible change their behaviour and may require an individual behaviour plan (IBP)
- The hurt child may need support with building self-esteem, assertiveness, improving well-being
- There may need to be involvement of external agencies
- Formal recording (racism/homophobia)
- Suspension or even exclusion may be considered
- An attempt to create a positive relationship between the children, through a restorative approach will take place when appropriate
- After the incident/incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

Equality and Inclusion

When supporting children in managing their behaviour and relationships with others, we take into account the abilities and needs of all. We implement our Anti-Bullying Policy without prejudice of age, disability, race, ethnic or national origin, gender, religion and belief or sexual orientation. It is our aim that all children feel safe in school and know that their contributions are valued, that the children appreciate and value the differences they see in others, and take responsibility for their own actions. We use materials that reflect a range of social and cultural backgrounds without stereotyping and expect all of the children to fully participate in the restorative process, regardless of their individual needs.

Safeguarding & Child Protection

Safeguarding refers to the daily practices in place which aim to keep children safe such as risk assessments, first aid, Relationships and Sex Education curriculum, e-safety sessions, etc. Safeguarding is to prevent harm; child protection is how we respond to it.

All staff employed by DESC have a current DBS check. We believe that the welfare of the child is paramount in all that we do, and we understand our responsibilities to safeguard and protect children from harm. All staff are familiar with child protection arrangements and know the reporting procedures. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) keeps child protection information and records securely and passes on concerns to the relevant authorities.

This policy is implemented in conjunction with the following school policies:

Behaviour for Learning policy
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
e-Safety Policy
Acceptable Use Policy
Health and Safety Policy