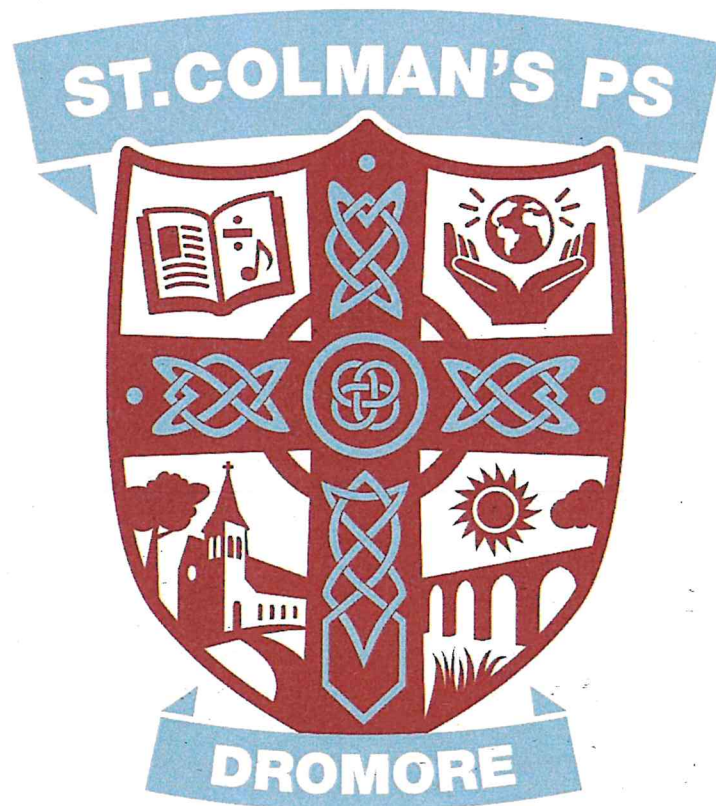


# St. Colman's P.S



## Anti-Bullying Policy

**Revised: September 2021**

**Date Ratified by B.O.G: February 2022**

**Review Date: September 2025**

## **Rationale**

***At St. Colmans' P.S we believe all forms of bullying behaviour are unacceptable. We believe that all pupils have the right to learn in a safe and supported environment.***

## **Vision Statement**

***St. Colman's P.S is a living, celebrating Catholic school where every child is valued and encouraged to achieve their best in a warm and welcoming environment.***

## **Mission Statement**

- ❖ At St. Colman's we nurture the emotional, social, physical and spiritual needs of all our children. Pupil's voices are heard and responded to in a positive and caring way through a range of ways, including our Student Council.
- ❖ We are a school that works together to build effective relationships and to ensure every child is valued and respected in an inclusive community that celebrates diversity and promotes mutual understanding. We provide high quality teaching and learning experiences across a broad and balanced curriculum.
- ❖ At St. Colman's we provide an enriching and extending curriculum. Every child matters and we recognise and celebrate success in everyone. Relationships with staff and pupils are nurtured to be warm and respectful, providing opportunities for our children to grow and achieve their best.
- ❖ St. Colman's provides a vibrant, happy and safe learning environment which enables every child to achieve the best they can. Our curriculum and ethos promotes in every way the social, emotional and spiritual development of our children. We provide programmes and activities which promote the physical and mental health of our children.
- ❖ The Board of Governors in St. Colman's works collaboratively, sharing power, decision making and communication. They are committed to ensuring we achieve the highest standards across all aspects of school.
- ❖ At St. Colman's, we are committed to building strong and collaborative partnerships with families, the Church and the wider local community to enhance the experiences of our children. We communicate effectively with parents and provide them with opportunities to have their views heard and to be involved in their child's learning.
- ❖ At St. Colman's our Catholic faith underpins everything we do and is reflected in all aspects of school life. Our children are nurtured to develop their faith and to deepen their relationship with God.

## **Context**

This policy has been developed, in line with the following policies and legislation:

### **The Legislative Context:**

- \* [The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2016](#)
- \* [The Education and Libraries Order \(Northern Ireland\) 2003 \(A17-19\)](#)
- \* [The Education \(School Development Plans\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2010](#)
- \* [The Children \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1995](#)
- \* [The Human Rights Act 1998](#)
- \* [The Health and Safety at Work Order \(Northern Ireland\) 1978](#)

### **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 \(DE, 2001\)](#)
- \* [Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: A Guide for Schools \(DE, 2017\)](#)
  - [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 \(UNCRC\)](#)

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 (eg. school trip)
    - ! When receiving education organised by school but happening elsewhere (eg. in another school in the ALC)
  - 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)



## **Principles**

- \* 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 young people, 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.

## **Aims**

### **This policy aims to:-**

- Create a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- Promote a 'whole school' approach, where signs of bullying are identified and swift and effective action is taken in line with strategies outlined in '*Effective Responses to Bullying*' NIABF.
- Show commitment to overcoming bullying.
- Promote a secure and happy environment free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure all school community, pupils and parents have an understanding of what bullying is, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- Inform children and parents of the school's expectations and to foster a productive partnership, which helps maintain a bully-free environment.
- Assure pupils and parents that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Assist in the provision of a positive and supportive atmosphere - for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- Develop procedures for noting and reporting incidents of bullying behaviour.
- Promote Restorative Strategies in order to achieve the necessary changes in behaviour and to restore relationships between the pupils involved, consistent with the NIABF document.

## Consultation

Children from KS2 completed an online questionnaire. Parents and staff were also consulted by way of an online survey.

The revised policy was presented to all staff for their approval, before being ratified by the Board of Governors.

## Definition of Bullying

The definition of bullying our school has adopted comes from the Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF) which defines bullying as **behaviour, that is usually repeated, which is carried out intentionally cause to hurt, harm or to adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others.**

This definition statement is based on the definition of bullying as laid out in the 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.***

***(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), “act” includes omission.***

Bullying is a form of unacceptable behaviour, but not all unacceptable behaviour can be considered bullying. **Any incidents which are not considered bullying behaviour will be addressed under the Positive Behaviour Policy.**

While bullying is usually repeated behaviour, there are instances of one-off incidents that the school 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 pre-meditation***
- \* 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***

## **Bullying Behaviours**

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**

- ☐ 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

This list of bullying behaviours is not exhaustive; other behaviours which fit with the definition may be considered bullying behaviour.

## Motivations

There are a wide range of motivations behind some bullying behaviour, these include, but are not limited to:

- \* Age
- \* Appearance
- \* Breakdown in peer relationships
- \* Community background
- \* Political affiliation
- \* Gender identity
- \* Sexual orientation
- \* Race
- \* 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 scaring, 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.



## **Preventative Measures**

**The focus for all anti-bullying work should be on preventing bullying behaviour and creating a safe learning environment. In St. Colman's P.S we do this by:**

- \* 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 eg. 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/PATHS and RE (Grow in Love Programme)
- \* 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 (PATHS Programme/Neuronimos Programme)
- \* Participation in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities
- \* Engagement in key national and regional campaigns, eg Safer Internet Day
- \* Development of peer-led systems (eg. School Council) to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messaging within the school
- \* Development of effective strategies for playground management, eg. training for supervisors, zoning of playgrounds, inclusion of specific resources and provision of a variety of play option to meet the needs of all pupils.
- \* Focused assemblies to raise awareness and promote understanding of key issues related to bullying.
- \* Development of effective strategies for the management of unstructured times (eg. break time, lunch)
- \* 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.



### **Preventing Bullying Behaviour on the Journey to and from School:**

- \* Development of a culture where pupils take pride in their school and are viewed as ambassadors for St. Colman's P.S within the community. This includes regular reminders of the positive behaviour expectations of pupils whilst travelling to and from school.
- \* Measures to empower pupils to challenge inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour of their peers during the journey to and from school. This may include the implementation of peer monitoring systems for those walking.
- \* 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.
- \* Appropriate deployment of staff to support the transition from school day to journey home (e.g. staff duty at school gate.)

### **Preventing Online Bullying**

The school has authority to 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 a pupil's education at school.

At St. Colman's P.S we raise awareness of the nature and impact of online bullying and support the pupils to make use of the internet in a safe, responsible and respectful way. We do this by:

- \* Addressing key themes of online behaviour and risk through PDMU/ICT/PATHS, including understanding how to respond to harm and the consequences of inappropriate use.
- \* Participation in Anti-Bullying Week activities.
- \* Engagement with key statutory and voluntary sector agencies (eg. 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 (eg. Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy, E-Safety Policy)

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **The Responsibilities of Staff**

#### **Our staff will:**

- Foster in our pupils self-confidence, self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others.
- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils.
- Discuss bullying with all classes, so that every pupil learns about the damage it causes to both the child who experiences bullying behaviour and to the child who is displaying bullying behaviour.
- Staff will continually reinforce the importance of telling an adult about bullying when it happens.
- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying.
- Listen to children who report that they have experienced bullying behaviour, take what they say seriously and provide reassurance that appropriate action will be taken.
- Report suspected cases of bullying to the Principal who will record and take appropriate action.
- Follow up any concern by a parent about bullying, and report back promptly and fully on the action which has been taken.
- Deal with observed instances of bullying promptly and effectively, in accordance with agreed procedures.
- Use PATHS, PDMU, RE, Circle time to promote opportunities to discuss issues around bullying.

### **The Responsibilities of Pupils**

#### **We expect our pupils to:**

- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying behaviour.
- Follow school rules.
- Intervene to protect the pupil who is experiencing bullying by reporting the incident to an adult.
- Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying.
- Value and respect others.

### **What Pupils Need to Recognise about Bullying.**

#### **Pupils need to understand:**

- That they have a right not to experience bullying at school.
- That they are not to blame if they experience bullying.

- That they need to speak out and should trust the adults to take their concerns seriously and to help them.
- That they are not alone.

### **The Responsibilities of Parents**

**We ask parents to support their children and the school by:**

- Advising their child to report any bullying behaviour to their class teacher/adult in school.
- Advising their child not to retaliate to any form of bullying.
- Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken.
- Informing the school of any suspected bullying, even if their child is not involved.
- Co-operating with the school, if their child is displaying bullying behaviour or experiencing bullying behaviour.

**Parents must not approach another child about behaviour matters or an incident of bullying at St. Colman's P.S. All concerns must be brought directly to school staff in line with school policy.**

### **The Responsibilities of All**

**Everyone should:**

- \* 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

## **Reporting a Bullying Concern**

### **Pupils Reporting a Concern**

Any pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing this behaviour. Our message will focus on 'getting help' rather than 'telling.' As such all children will be encouraged to, 'get help' if they have a concern about bullying that they experience or is experienced by another pupil.

Pupils can report bullying concerns by:

- \* Verbally - talking to a member of staff
- \* By writing a note to a member of staff (e.g. in a homework diary)
- \* By posting a comment in a 'worry box'

### **Parents/Carers Reporting a Concern**

Parents/Carers have a responsibility to raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour with the school at the earliest opportunity. Parents are reminded to encourage their child to react appropriately to bullying behaviour and to not do anything to retaliate or to 'hit back'.

- \* 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, Ms Savage.
- \* Where the parent/carer remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the school's complaints procedure should be followed. This usually involves making a formal, written complaint, to the Chair of the Board of Governors. A copy of the School's complaints procedure can be found on the school website or a hard copy can be requested from the school office.

While the majority of reports of bullying concerns will come from pupils and their parents/carers, the school will be open to receiving such reports from others not directly involved with the school.

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.

### **Responding to a Bullying Concern**

The processes outlined below provide a framework for how St. Colman's P.S 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
- \* Assess the incident against the criteria for bullying behaviour

If bullying behaviour is identified:

- \* 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
- \* Track, monitor and record effectiveness of interventions
- \* Review outcome of interventions
- \* Select and implement further intentions as necessary

When responding to a bullying concern, school staff shall 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.

As previously stated information regarding any action taken regarding a pupil cannot be disclosed to anyone other than that pupil and his/her parents/carers.

### **Recording**

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 securely. 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.

### **Professional Development of Staff**

- We are committed to ensuring that staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school's ongoing CPD/PRSD provisions.
- Opportunities for safeguarding training are afforded to Governors and all staff – teaching and non-teaching.
- CPD records will be kept and updated regularly.

### **Monitoring and Review of Anti-Bullying 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 September 2025.

### **Links with Other School Policies**

This policy forms part of the overall pastoral care provision in our school and therefore links and works alongside the following policies:

- Pastoral Care Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- ICT Policy and Acceptable Use of Internet Policy
- Positive Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- PDMU Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- SEN Policy

Signed: N. Swire (Principal)

Date: 8.02.22

Signed: Frederick T.H. (Chair of Board of Governors)

Date of Ratification by Board of Governors: 8<sup>th</sup> Feb 2022