

11th February 2023

RE: Addressing Bullying Policy – Stakeholder Consultation

Dear parent / carer,

I hope you are keeping well.

I would like to invite all parents and carers to be part of a full review of our school's Anti-Bullying policy. The redefining of this policy will not only address legal impetus being placed on schools across the province, but it will redefine how we address concerns that arise from pupils, parents, and staff. Moreover, it will energise us in how we deliver messages through the taught pastoral curriculum on an anti-bullying culture, a culture formed from the belief that all types of bullying behaviour are frankly unacceptable.

Last academic year staff in our school were involved in information sessions (delivered by me), following the implementation of the *Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016*. As a school we are looking for parents and carers to contribute to the shaping of our updated policy. This academic year we will also be consulting with our young people; we are committed to seeking the views from the young people to whom this redefined policy will inevitably benefit. IN addition to this, our policy draft will be shared with the external professionals that we work with, for them to consider and advise on its structure and content.

Moving forward, our school will have a collective commitment to promoting an anti-bullying ethos, commensurate with the legislative context that should protect all of our young people. Unquestionably, parents and carers too play a vital role in this promotion; parents and carers need to familiarise themselves with the legal definition of bullying, whilst marinating over the key actions and preventative measures that will be implemented.

The *Addressing Bullying In School Act (NI) 2016* now provides a legal definition of bullying, something that has not existed up to this point. Alongside this letter I have provided you with a few key documents for consideration, one of which is the Act itself. It would be remiss of me to try and condense a very detailed policy proposal into the contents of this letter, so I would ask that you read the proposed policy carefully and discuss it as a family. Our new policy will be titled – *Addressing Bullying Policy*.

This is certainly a positive step forward for all schools in Northern Ireland and whilst we desire as much detailed feedback as is on offer, please avoid detailing any personal experiences or sensitive material in your response; please focus your commentary on the interests of shaping a policy that

can be robustly and consistently followed by all. Responses will be accepted up to Monday 20th of February 2023. I will then examine the feedback and provide the final draft of the policy to our Board of Governors who will ratify.

I very much look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'A. Nicholl', with a stylized flourish at the end.

A.Nicholl (Mr)

Vice Principal – Pastoral Care (Acting)
Designated Teacher for Child Protection