



# **MOUNTHORRIS PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Anti-Bullying Policy  
February 2023**

## **Abstract**

This Policy was created to outline the current provision for addressing anti-bullying in Mounthorris Primary. It was devised in line with relevant documentation, current practice and stakeholder consultation.

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## **Introduction**

In Mountnorris Primary School, we strive to create a caring, supportive and safe environment that promotes excellence in child centred education where the dignity of all is valued and where everyone can aspire, aim, achieve and experience success.

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, free from intimidation, fear and the threat of emotional or physical harm.

Mountnorris Primary School recognises our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. The welfare and well-being needs of all children are paramount and pupils' needs, whether pupils displaying bullying behaviour or pupils experiencing bullying behaviour, are our priority.

## **Context**

At Mountnorris Primary School we have based our Anti Bullying Policy on the following legislative and policy guidance:

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)

## **Consultation and Participation**

This policy has been developed in consultation with registered pupils and their parents/carers, in compliance with the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016.

Consultation with pupils:

- Class-based activities
- Discussion at School Council (February 2023)

Consultation with parents/carers:

- Engagement with parent groups (PSG)
- Consultation on the website (February 2023)

Consultation with other members of the school community:

- Staff survey for all staff
- Review of policy consultation

## **Policy Aims**

In Mountnorris Primary School, we:

- Ensure that each pupil feels valued, special and a member of the school community.
- Empower pupils in building and monitoring good relationships with pupils, teachers and others.
- Involve and inform parents and pupils of our Anti-Bullying Policy and procedures.
- Raise awareness and promote understanding of what constitutes bullying behaviour.
- Ensure an appropriate response to all reported instances of bullying behaviour.
- Provide support for pupils who experience bullying behaviour.
- Provide clear guidance in relation to procedures which should be followed.
- Provide updates for staff and governors.

## **Ethos & Principles**

In Mountnorris Primary School we have based our Anti Bullying Policy on our school ethos and principles which underpin everything we do:

- We are committed to a society where children and young people can live free and feel 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.

### **Definition – What is Bullying?**

In Mountnorris Primary School we take the legal definition for bullying from Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016:

Addressing Bullying in Schools Definition of “bullying”:

- (1) In this Act “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.

In order to make this applicable to our setting, and to clarify the phrase ‘is not limited to’, Mountnorris Primary School recognises that the terms ‘repeated use’ or ‘persistent’ will generally be required to denote an act of bullying. Bullying is behaviour that is usually repeated, which is carried out intentionally to cause hurt, harm or to adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others.

However, we are very aware that there are instances of one-off incidents that the school will consider as bullying. When assessing a one-off incident, to decide 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
- cognitive and SEN ability, imbalance of power, age and size

Any incidents which are not considered bullying behaviour will be addressed under the Positive Behaviour Policy.

The school understands the term, ‘omission’ to be defined as, when a pupil has been **deliberately** left out of a school-based activity and there is an intentional attempt to cause embarrassment, pain or discomfort. This term requires clear evidence of a failure to include a pupil on a regular basis for it to be construed as bullying.

## **Important Terms to Consider**

Bullying is an emotive issue; therefore it is essential that we ensure we use supportive, understanding language when discussing these matters.

Mountnorris Primary School will therefore use the following language when applying the policy: '**child displaying bullying behaviour**' and '**child(ren) experiencing bullying behaviour**'. Language including 'bully', 'victim' and 'perpetrator' is not considered appropriate and its use will not be accepted. It is important to avoid labelling and stereotyping individual children and to focus instead on the behaviours. Therefore, we would encourage all members of the school community to use them terms when discussing bullying incidents.

## **Motivating Factors**

At Mountnorris Primary School we recognise that there are various motivations behind bullying incidents. These include, but are not limited to:

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

## **Possible Bullying Acts**

At Mountnorris Primary School 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
- making threats to 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
- Spitting
- Nipping
- Material harm, such as taking/stealing money or possessions or causing damage to possessions
- Making signs and gestures

### *Omission (Exclusion)*

- Leaving someone out of a game, deliberately and repeatedly.
- Refusing to include someone in group work, deliberately and repeatedly.

### *Electronic Acts (ON OUR SCHOOL PREMISES/PARENT RESPONSIBILITY OFF SITE)*

- 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 is not exhaustive and other behaviours which fit with the definition may be considered bullying behaviour.

## **Preventative Measures**

At Mountnorris Primary School we thrive to foster a strong anti-bullying ethos within the school and local community. The following measures have been implemented to prevent bullying incidents and ensure that pupils are in a safe and caring learning environment.

- Raising awareness and understanding of the positive behaviour expectations, as set out in our 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 (eg. 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.
- Participation in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities
- Engagement in key national and regional campaigns, eg Safer Internet Day, etc.
- 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. zoning of playgrounds, inclusion of specific resources (buddy benches), a buddy system and a variety of outdoor play equipment 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, sport activities, creative arts, leisure and games.

In addition to this, we also provide preventative measures to prevent bullying behaviour on the way to and from school:

- Development of a culture where pupils take pride in their school and are viewed as ambassadors for their school 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.
- Regular engagement with transport providers (eg. Translink, Quinn's Coaches, Rooney's Transport EA Transport (taxi), etc.) 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 eg. staff duty at school gate in morning and afternoons, staff member on bus duty each afternoon.

In relation to online safety, Mountnorris Primary School raise awareness of the nature and impact of online bullying and support our pupils to make use of the internet in a safe, responsible and respectful way, by:

- Addressing key themes of online behaviour and risk through PDMU 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.
- Providing internet safety training to parents/carers as part of our Internet Safety Day.
- Development and implementation of robust and appropriate policies in related areas eg. Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy.

The Anti-Bullying Policy is one of a number of policies in the wider pastoral care and safeguarding suite of policies. The measures set out here, to prevent bullying behaviour through the use of electronic communication, are also included in the school's E-Safety & Acceptable Use Policy.

## **Responsibility**

Everyone in the school community, including pupils, their parents/carers and the staff of the school are expected to respect the rights of others to be safe.

Everyone has the 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 – the school will work with all stakeholders in restorative ways, to prevent recurring bullying behaviour and meet the needs of all parties.

The Board of Governors should:

- Have an oversight of the Anti-Bullying Policy
- Ensure that the policy is effectively implemented
- Ensure that the policy is reviewed at least every four years
- Ensure there is a whole-school Anti-Bullying approach though determining the preventative measures to be taken to prevent bullying
- Ensure that preventative measures are kept under review and are fit for purpose and consult with students and parents/carers as part of this review process e.g. through surveys
- Engage with Governor training as appropriate
- Monitor Anti-Bullying measures and reported incidents through a standing item on agendas, using this to inform the School Development Plan where necessary
- Identify trends and patterns to inform further development of policy and practice

The principal should:

- Ensure that the school community, including children and parents/carers, are involved in the policy review process
- Ensure that all incidents of alleged bullying behaviours are recorded
- Ensure that records include motivation, method, how each incident was addressed and the outcomes
- Review the effectiveness of interventions used and their outcomes, amending them as required
- Ensure that the policy is as accessible to children and parent/carers as possible, in terms of language, content, placement and availability



- Ensure parents/carers are aware of the complaints process

Staff should:

- Proactively follow this policy and any associated guidelines.
- Provide role models for pupils through their own actions.
- Deal with incidents of bullying and negative behaviour.
- Inform the Principal of any concerns.
- Promote positive behaviour and avoid discrimination against anyone for reasons of race, colour nationality, ethnic or national origins, gender, disability, religion or belief or socioeconomic circumstances.

Pupils should:

- Treat others kindly and fairly without prejudice, discrimination or harassment.
- Attend and engage in their own learning as well as helping other pupils to learn.
- Tell staff about any bullying related incidents that occur.

Parents should:

- Support our school in its implementation of this policy.
- Follow and understand the school policy through their own behaviour.
- Ensure their children attend and engage in the learning.

### **Reporting a Bullying Concern**

At Mountnorris Primary School, we recognise the importance of the pupil's voice. Therefore, it is essential that pupils are encouraged to raise concerns with any member of staff, including teaching and non-teaching staff.

Pupils and parents/carers with any concerns can make the school aware in the following ways:

Pupils Reporting a Concern

- Verbally- talking to a member of staff
- By writing a note to a member of staff
- By sending an email/Seesaw message to a member of staff
- By posting a comment in a 'worry box'

ANY pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing this behaviour. All pupils are encouraged to 'get help' if they have a concern about bullying that they experience or is experienced by another.

Parents/Carers Reporting a Concern

Parents and carers must raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour with the school at the earliest opportunity. Parents/carers must encourage their children to react appropriately to bullying behaviour.

- 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, Mr Foster.**

Where the parent/carer remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the school's complaints procedure should be followed. This involves making a **formal, written complaint, to the Chair of the Board of Governors**.

While the majority of reports of bullying concerns will come from pupils and their parents/carers, the school is open to receiving such reports from anyone.

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 the school 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
- 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 not listed in the Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource
- Track, monitor and record effectiveness of interventions
- Review outcome of interventions
- Select and implement further intentions as necessary

NIABF advocates a restorative approach to responding to bullying behaviour. Interventions suggested in the Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource focus on responding to the behaviour, resolving the concern and restoring the wellbeing of those involved.

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

## **Recording a Bullying Concern**

The legal requirement, as set out in the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016, is to maintain a record of all incidents of bullying and alleged bullying behaviour.

Mountnorris Primary 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.

Incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported to the school must be recorded. This will be done by the Class Teacher or Principal.

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 Records 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**

The Board of Governors at Mountnorris Primary School are committed to ensuring that staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school's ongoing CPD and PRSD provisions.

- Staff have the opportunity during training to input and make contributions towards both the policy and its procedures - e.g. amendments may be made, inclusions may be added.
- Opportunities for safeguarding training are afforded to all Governors and all staff – teaching and non-teaching CPD records will be kept and updated regularly
- Cluster training with various primary schools in our area.
- New and temporary staff will be made aware of the Anti-Bullying Policy and other practices in relation to this.

## **Links to other Policies**

In the development and implementation of this Anti-Bullying Policy, the Board of Governors of Mountnorris Primary School have been mindful of related policies, including:

- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- E-Safety Policy & Acceptable Use of Internet Policy
- Mobile Phone & Connected Devices Policy
- Educational Visits
- Complaints Policy

### **Policy Review/ Design/ Implementation**

It is the responsibility of the Board of Governors, in liaison with the Principal, to monitor the effectiveness of this 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

Designed	February 2023
Reviewed by Principal	-
Reviewed by Staff	February 2023
Reviewed by Parents/Guardians	February 2023
Reviewed by Pupils	February 2023
Reviewed by Governors	February 2023
Ratified by Governors	February 2023
Implemented	March 2023
Due for Review	February 2027

Chairperson: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



Mounthorrie Primary School  
**Bullying Concern Assessment Form**



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

<b>Is the behaviour intentional?</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Is the behaviour targeted at a particular pupil or group of pupils?</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Is the behaviour repeated?</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Is the behaviour causing physical or emotional harm?</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Does the behaviour involve omission? (may not always be present)</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>

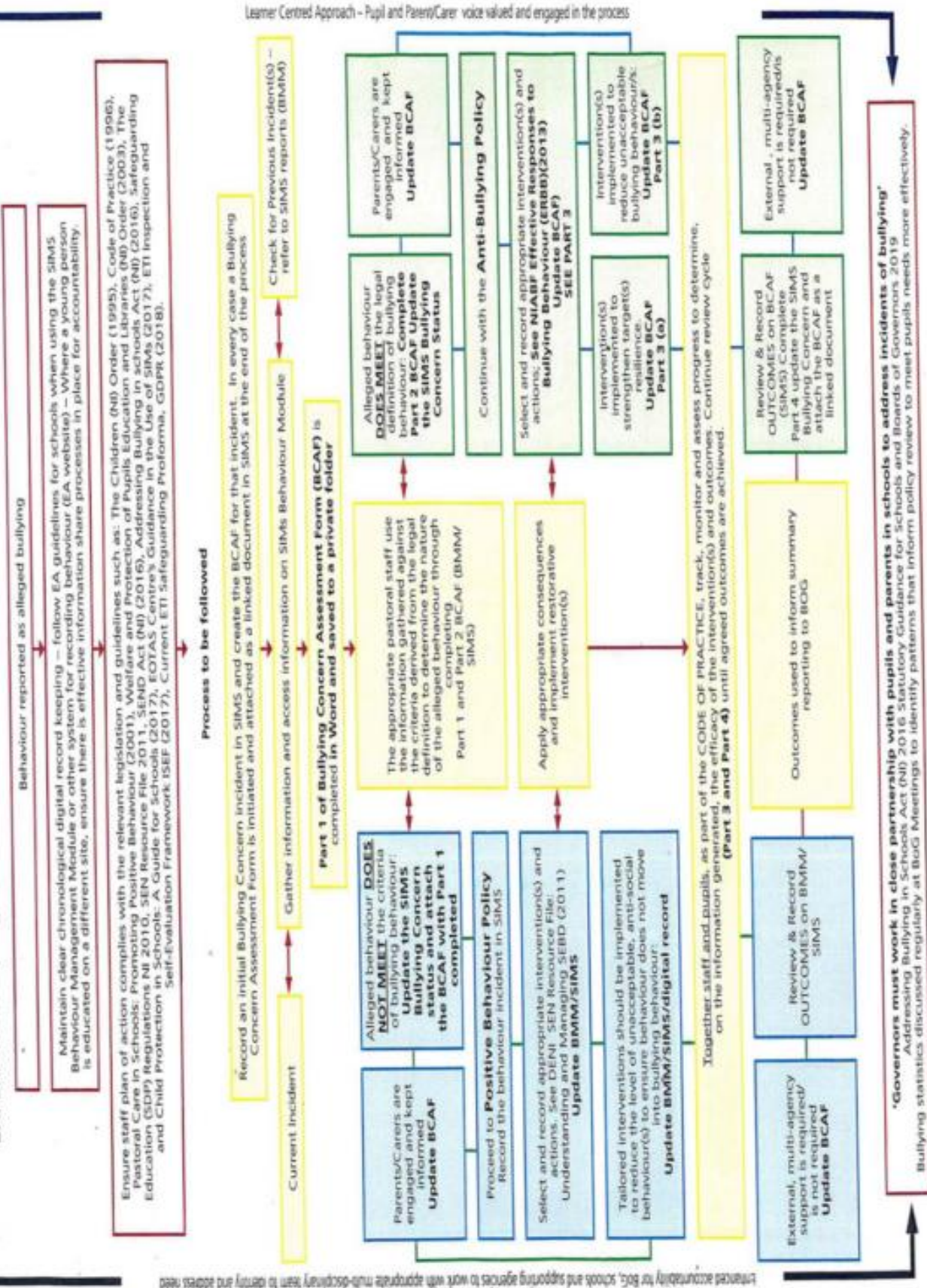
<b>YES</b> the above criteria have been met and bullying behaviour has occurred.	<b>NO</b> the above criteria have not been met and bullying behaviour has not occurred.
The criteria having been met, proceed to complete Bullying Concern Assessment Form below.	The criteria having not been met, proceed to record the details in the Class Incident Report. Please refer to the Positive Behaviour Policy for the appropriate sanction. Continue to track and monitor to ensure the behaviour does not escalate

<b>Incident Date:</b>	<b>Pupils Involved &amp; Class</b>
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**Incident Report (Where, Why, When, Who Witnessed):**

<b>Teacher's Signature:</b>	<b>Principal's Signature:</b>	<b>Parent Informed:</b>
		<b>Date:</b>

# OVERVIEW ILLUSTRATING THE PROCEDURES INVOLVED WHEN SUPPORTING PUPILS WHO ARE EXPERIENCING (Target) OR DISPLAYING BULLYING OR ALLEGED BULLYING BEHAVIOURS



Enhanced accountability for BOG, schools and supporting agencies to work with appropriate multi-disciplinary team to identify and address need