



BALLYCASTLE HIGH SCHOOL

Anti-Bullying Policy

- *Approval by the Board of Governors – 19 October 2021*
- *The implementation of this policy will be monitored by: Senior Leadership Team*
- *This policy will be reviewed every four years*





Rationale:

Ballycastle High School welcomes difference, inclusion and diversity and has a zero tolerance attitude toward bullying behaviour. Bullying is not an inevitable part of school life or a necessary part of growing up, and it rarely sorts itself out. It is clear that certain jokes, insults, intimidating/threatening behaviour, written abuse, online abuse and violence are to be found in our society. No one person or group, whether staff or pupil, should have to accept this type of behaviour. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed, will a child best be able to benefit from the opportunities available at the School.

Principles:

Ballycastle High School believes that its pupils have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being bullied.

All institutions, both large and small, contain a number of individuals with the potential for bullying behaviour. We believe that our school is well disciplined and organised and it can minimise the occurrence of bullying behaviour. We have a clear policy on the promotion of Positive Behaviour, wherein it is made clear that bullying is a form of anti-social behaviour. It is wrong and will not be tolerated.

We have a clear written policy to promote these beliefs, where both pupils and parents/guardians are fully aware that any bullying concerns will be dealt with firmly, fairly and promptly.

All those involved in an alleged bullying incident will be listened to.

Definition of Bullying:

In accordance with the definition adopted by EA and the legal definition as outlined in the Addressing Bullying In Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 Ballycastle High School adopts the following guidance in defining 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 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.



In practice, Ballycastle High School has adopted the following definition:

Bullying is usually repeated behaviour that intentionally hurts, harms or adversely affects the rights and needs of another or others.

For the avoidance of doubt, bullying behaviours involving or concerning a member or members of staff is covered within our Staff Code of Conduct.

While repetition is internationally recognised as an important element in establishing bullying behaviour, this is not always the case. One-off incidents, in certain circumstances, may be treated as bullying behaviour. The Anti-Bullying Team will assess whether the incidents will be addressed through the Anti-Bullying Policy or the Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy. The Anti-Bullying Team may take into consideration:

- Severity and significance of the incident
- Evidence of pre-meditation
- Impact of the incident on individuals (physical / emotional)
- Impact of the incidents on the wider school community
- Previous relationships between those involved
- Any previous incidents involving the individuals

When alleged incidents fail to meet the criteria for bullying behaviour, the school will use their Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy to address unacceptable behaviour.

In determining 'harm' the School defines:

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

Circumstances where the Anti-Bullying Policy should be applied:

- on the premises of the school during the school day
- while travelling to and from school during the school term
- when a pupil is in lawful control of a member of staff of the school eg. School trips, external events
- Education provision arranged on behalf of the school and provided away from the school premises eg. In Cross and Passion College, home (exceptional teaching arrangements), Further Education College



Examples of bullying behaviour include, but are not restricted to:

a). PHYSICAL ACTS

- Hitting
- Kicking
- Pushing
- Shoving
- Material harm, such as taking / stealing money or possessions or causing damage to possessions.
- Unwanted advances

b). 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 spreading false rumours about others
- Trying to make other pupils dislike another pupil/s
- Harassment

c). EXCLUSION (OMISSION)

- Leaving someone out of a game
- Refusing to include someone in group work

e). 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 (eg photographs or videos) online to embarrass someone

Ballycastle High School operates an 'Acceptable Use of the Internet' Policy to which pupils sign up when using the Internet on school premises. Pupils who infringe this policy may face consequences.



Whilst it is not possible for school to monitor or control student use of technology outside of school, pupils are made aware of the personal risks involved and of the potential legal consequences of their actions. Ballycastle High School will seek, where appropriate and practicable, to respond to instances adjudged to be cyberbullying which are deemed likely to have an impact on the pupil's education in school. If evidence is available, the parents/carers of the person alleged to be cyberbullying may be invited to meet with the Principal, Vice Principal and other member of the Senior Leadership Team to resolve the situation. Consequences in line with the school's Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy, may be enacted.

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

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 or personal pro-social behaviour
- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying behaviour

Stakeholder Responsibilities:

The Responsibilities of Staff

Our Staff will:

- Help to foster pupil's self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others.
- Create a caring society within the school community in which staff and pupils learn to live and work together in mutual respect, and in which the problems of others will receive a sympathetic and understanding hearing.



- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour which we expect of our pupils.
- Use any opportunity to discuss aspects of bullying, preventative measures and the appropriate way to behave towards each other. This includes delivering information through the Personal Development and pastoral programmes as appropriate.
- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying.
- Deal immediately with any observed instances of bullying.
- Listen attentively to the pupil(s) experiencing bullying behaviour, reassuring them that their complaints are being taken seriously.
- Act promptly to report any allegation of bullying to the Form Teacher, Head of Year or member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Follow up any complaint by a parent or guardian about bullying, and report back on the action which has been taken.
- Provide ongoing support to all those involved in a bullying incident.
- Treat bullying as a serious offence and take every possible action to eradicate it from our School.
- Effectively record instances of bullying behaviour.

The School will cooperate fully with the PSNI if an external complaint has been made to them.

The Responsibilities of Pupils

Pupils are expected at all times to:

- Treat all other members of the school community with respect.
- Avoid becoming directly involved in any form of bullying.
- Avoid giving the impression of supporting bullying by their silence or inaction.
- Intervene promptly to support the pupil(s) experiencing bullying behaviour, unless it is unsafe to do so.
- Report the incident as soon as possible to a member of staff.

An advice sheet for pupils is included as Appendix 1- this can be posted in classrooms or shared as part of the PD programme.



The Responsibilities of Parents / Guardians

We ask parents to help us to combat bullying by:

- Looking out for unusual behaviour in their children. For example, a child who is being bullied may suddenly not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to his/her normal standard.
- Actively enquiring about their child's education. Enquire how his/her day has gone, who he/she has spent time with, how lunch time was spent etc.
- Informing the School immediately that bullying is suspected. All such complaints will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow. The first point of contact will normally be the Form Teacher but it could be the Head of Year, Designated Teacher for Child Protection, Vice Principal or Principal.
- Advising children not to fight back physically, it can make matters worse.
- Encouraging their child to report any bullying incident to a member of staff- it is important to reassure him/her that he/she does not have to suffer in silence: speaking out will not only help to end his/her own distress but will also help to protect other potential victims.
- Telling their child that there is nothing wrong with him or her; that it is not his or her fault that they are being bullied.
- Actively monitor their child's online presence and activity

Preventative Measures:

- All members of the school community are expected to promote an ethos of mutual respect and tolerance.
- Raising awareness and understanding of the positive behaviour expectations, as set out in the Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy
- Consistent implementation of the Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy.
- Pupils are encouraged to share their concerns promptly with their Form Teacher or any other member of staff in the knowledge that those concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon.
- Mentoring support from the Pastoral Team, SENCo and other appropriate staff.
- The promotion of positive behaviour is one of the cornerstones of the Personal Development and pastoral programmes throughout the School.



- Active involvement of the Student Council in the development of pastoral/preventative curriculum.
- Active whole-school participation in NIABF's Anti-Bullying Week activities and promotion of key topics in assemblies.
- Participation in annual Safer Internet Day and promotion of key messages throughout the year.
- Engagement with key statutory and voluntary agencies (eg. C2k, PSNI, PHA, SBNI) to support the promotion of key messages.
- Good classroom management will help to deter instances of bullying.
- The effective supervision of pupils outside of lessons and arrangements for 'hot spots' to minimise the incidence of bullying.
- Senior pupils have a valuable role to play in supporting younger students.
- All pupils are made aware that bullying is a serious offence and who to speak to if they have any concerns.
- Provision and promotion of extra-curricular activities aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks.
- Collaboration with transport providers, e.g. Translink.
- Appropriate deployment of staff to support the transition from school day to journey home (eg. Staff on bus duty at the end of the school day).

Procedures for dealing with instances of bullying behaviour

If bullying is suspected relevant members of staff talk to the suspected pupil(s) experiencing bullying behaviour, the suspected pupil displaying bullying behaviour and any witnesses. If any degree of bullying is identified, the following action will be taken:

Help, support and counselling will be given, as appropriate, to both the victims and the pupils displaying bullying behaviour.

We support the pupil(s) experiencing bullying behaviour in the following ways:

- by offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about the experience with their Form Teacher, or another teacher if they choose.
- by informing the pupil(s) experiencing bullying behaviour parents/guardians.
- by offering continuing support when they feel they need it.
- by taking one or more of the sanctions described below to prevent more bullying.

We also use appropriate sanctions, yet try to help the pupil(s) displaying bullying behaviour in the following ways:



- by talking about what happened, to discover why they became involved.
- by informing the pupil(s) displaying bullying behaviours' parents/guardians.
- by continuing to work with the pupil displaying bullying behaviour in order to get rid of prejudiced attitudes as far as possible.
- by taking one or more of the school sanctions described in the Positive Behaviour Policy, depending on the severity and frequency of the bullying behaviour.

Support and Interventions

The ethos within the school will encourage all pupils to report incidents of bullying to an appropriate adult or another pupil.

When children and young people are involved in incidents of bullying behaviour, adults need to intervene. In practice there is a wide range of possible interventions available and there are significant differences in these in terms of the purpose of the intervention and the needs being addressed. There is no one best method that is preferable.

The main aim of any intervention is to RESPOND to the bullying behaviour that has taken place, RESOLVE the concern and RESTORE the well-being of all those involved.

The Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (2013) suggests four levels of intervention, however it must be remembered that every incident should be individually assessed and the intervention strategies chosen must be best suited to the pupils involved and the unique circumstances of the incident.

Level 1 Intervention – Low Level Bullying Behaviour

To help individuals to recognise/reflect on their unacceptable behaviour and “get them back on track” while listening to and supporting/strengthening the pupil(s) experiencing bullying behaviour. If appropriate, parents may be informed.

Level 2 Intervention – Intermediate Level Bullying Behaviour

While continuing with Level 1, there is a shift from individual support to group interventions.

Level 3 Intervention – Complex Bullying Behaviour



This will often involve the VP, Head of Pastoral Care, SENCo or other Senior Leaders, pupil support/counselling in collaboration with pupil(s) and parents to determine the way forward in affecting change.

Level 4 Intervention – High Risk Bullying Behaviour

Bullying behaviours assessed at Level 4 are severe and involve a significant threat to the safety and welfare of any or all of the pupils involved. Such severe bullying concerns may be new or may have proved resistant to earlier school interventions and have now been assessed as high risk.

Recording

Staff will record incidents of bullying behaviour on a Bullying Concern Form (see Appendix 2) when an incident is reported to them. This will be passed to the Head of Year in the first instance. The Head of Pastoral Care and the Vice Principal may use this to continue to monitor incidents and report to the Principal.

Sanctions

It should be remembered by all that bullying is not fixed by a sanction - pupils on both sides require support (DE, May 2019).

However, pupils who display bullying behaviour need to be shown clearly that their behaviour is wrong. The sanctions will be fair, consistent and reasonable and will take into account the motivation behind the bullying behaviour. The purpose of the sanction is to stop the bullying behaviour with immediate effect. The sanctions will focus on the bullying behaviour and not refer to the pupil as a bully. See the Positive Behaviour Policy for the range of sanctions that may be used.

Continuous Professional Development of Staff

The School is committed to providing relevant training and support for all staff in the implementation of this policy. This may be provided on a group basis or at an individual level.



Monitoring and Review

The policy will be monitored continuously by the Senior Leadership Team in order to ensure that it remains fit for purpose. It will be reviewed at least every four years.

This policy is informed and guided by –

Relevant NI legislation:

- The Children's (NI) Order 1995
- The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003

DE Guidance:

- The Education (Northern Ireland) Order (1998) Article 3 - see DE 1998/25
- Pastoral Care in Schools: PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR DE, 2001
- Welfare and Protection of Pupils Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order, 2003 - see DE 2003/13
- Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools. A Guide for Schools DE 2017
- Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 Statutory Guidance for Schools and Boards of Governors 2019 (DE notified schools of a temporary pause in the planned implementation process on 29 August 2019. The Act therefore did not come into effect on 2 September 2019, awaiting further guidance from DE)
- The Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum: Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour. This policy reflects the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child adopted as legally binding in 1999.

Links with other school policies

The Anti-Bullying Policy is supported by other School policies:

- Acceptable Use of the Internet
- Child Protection
- E-Safety
- Mobile Phone
- Pastoral Care
- Positive Behaviour



Appendix 1

Advice to Pupils

WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU ARE BEING BULLIED?

Remember that your silence is the pupil(s) displaying bullying behaviour's greatest weapon!

1. Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be experiencing bullying behaviour, and that it is **WRONG!**
2. Be proud of who you are. It is good to be an individual.
3. Try not to show that you are upset. It is hard, but a pupil displaying bullying behaviour thrives on someone's fear.
4. Stay with a group of friends/people. There is safety in numbers.
5. Be assertive - shout "No!" Walk confidently away. Go straight to a teacher or member of staff.
6. Although you have a right to defend yourself, fighting back may make things worse. Always try and talk to a teacher or parent/guardian first.
7. Generally it is best to tell an adult you trust straight away. You will get immediate support.
8. Keep a record of any instances of bullying behaviour along with the names of any witnesses. Show any evidence to a parent/guardian/teacher. This is particularly important if the use of the internet or a mobile phone is involved.

Teachers will take you seriously and will deal with pupils displaying bullying behaviours in a way which will help to end the bullying and will not make things worse for you.

IF YOU KNOW SOMEONE IS EXPERIENCING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR:-

1. **TAKE ACTION!** Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the pupil(s) displaying bullying behaviour. It makes the victim feel more unhappy and on their own. Let the victim know that they have your full support.
2. If you feel you cannot get involved, tell an adult **IMMEDIATELY**. Teachers have ways of dealing with the pupil(s) displaying bullying behaviour without getting you into trouble.
3. Do not be, or pretend to be, friends with a pupil(s) displaying bullying behaviour.

Appendix 2

Bullying Concern Form

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 of Pupil (s) allegedly <i>experiencing</i> bullying behaviour & year group:	
Name of pupil (s) allegedly <i>displaying</i> bullying behaviour & year group:	
Date & time of incident(s)	Nature of incident(s)

Signed (member of staff): _____ Date: _____

Refer to relevant Head of Year

To be completed by Head of Year

Received – date: _____

Parties involved, including any witnesses to an event and what was said or done and by whom:

Socially unacceptable behaviour becomes bullying behaviour when, on the basis of the information gathered, the criteria listed below have been met:

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 involved omission? (*may not always be present) YES / NO

If the criteria above has been met (YES to at least first 4 questions above) – please refer to 4 levels of intervention in Anti-Bullying Policy.

If the criteria has not been met, refer to the Positive Behaviour Policy, but continue to track and monitor to ensure the behaviour does not escalate.

Head of Year intervention: (please note level (1-4) used).

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Appendix 3: Procedure for dealing with a bullying concern

Head of Year: <input type="checkbox"/> Create the initial record – Bullying Concern, type, incident date, status, pupil names, roles and motivation.	Incident status: Bullying Concern Raised
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Head of Year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate a BCAF, complete part 1 and save. • Pass to SLT Anti-Bullying Team 	Incident status: Bullying Concern Raised
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SLT Anti-Bullying Team: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the incident meet the legislative definition of bullying? 	Incident status: Bullying Concern Raised
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↙ No

Yes ↘

SLT Anti-Bullying Team: Attach the BCAF to the incident. (part 1 complete)	Incident Status: Bullying Concern Investigated Criteria Not Met	SLT Anti-Bullying Team: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open the BCAF and complete parts 2 & 3. • Record Bullying Concern Intervention Actioned 	Incident status: Bullying Concern Investigated Criteria Met
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