St Ciaran's College Ballygawley

Anti-Bullying Policy
2021-22

Section 1 – Introduction and Statement

At St Ciaran's College we believe all forms of bullying behaviour are unacceptable, to any member of the school community, by any member of the school community. We believe that all pupils have the right to learn in a safe and supported environment.

Section 2 – Context

The policy has been developed in accordance with the applicable legislative and policy/guidance framework. This includes:

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 Education (NI) Order 1998
* The Education (2006 Order) (Commencement No. 2) Order (NI) 2007

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 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 (e.g. school trip)
      ❗ When receiving education organised by school but happening elsewhere (e.g. 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)

Section 3 – Ethos & Principles

By its very nature, bullying is anti-social and is in direct conflict with the aims of St. Ciaran's as a Catholic school; therefore, it will not and cannot be tolerated in our school.

✴ We are committed to creating a community where children and young people can live free and safe from bullying or intimidation.
✴ We believe in a society where bullying is unacceptable and where every child and young person is safe and fees safes from bullying.
✴ We believe pupils have a responsibility to respect each other's person, property, time and opinions.
✴ 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.

Section 4 – Consultation and Participation

Consultation with pupils:

- ✳ Class based activities.
- ✳ Focus group - the School Council.

Consultation with parents/carers:

- ✳ Questionnaires distributed to parents/carers (paper)

Participation

We aim to create "an ethos of participation" within the school community in order to maintain the school's anti-bullying culture.

- ✳ NIABF Anti-bullying week activities – class assemblies
- ✳ Anti-bullying charters for each class
- ✳ PD programme
- ✳ Buddy programme
- ✳ Break/lunch/after-school activities and clubs
- ✳ Promotion of positive behaviour through reward system
- ✳ Digital leaders programme – "Be Strong Online".
- ✳ PSNI anti-bullying assemblies

Section 5 – What is Bullying?

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 provides a legal definition which must be used.

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.

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.

Repeated behaviour may be three or more repetitious incidents involving the same target/s (It is important to note that an electronic post may be viewed/shared repeatedly).

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*

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

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 (insults)*
  - ○ *making fun of others, (jokes)*
  - ○ *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*
  - ○ *physical intimidation*
  - ○ *physical contact which may include use of weapons*
  - ○ *material harm, such as taking/stealing money or possessions or causing damage to possessions*

* ***Indirect***
    - a) ***Omission (Exclusion) – intentionally acting to stop others from joining in or wilful omission with the intentions of causing hurt:***
    - ○ ***Leaving someone out of a game (isolation)***
    - ○ ***Refusing to include someone in group work/talk/play/help***
    - b) ***Electronic Acts/cyber bullying***
    - ○ ***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***

The list above is not exhaustive and other behaviours which fit with the definition may be considered bullying behaviour. Discretion may be applied with regard to a pupil's capacity to understand the impact of their behaviour on others.

Other factors which will be taken into account when determining if bullying has occurred include:

* Imbalance of power
* Target's lack of resilience

Socially unacceptable behaviours, which are not necessarily bullying behaviours, will be dealt with in line with the school's Positive Behaviour Policies.
Socially unacceptable behaviours become bullying behaviours when the information gathered clearly demonstrates that the unacceptable behaviours meet the criteria listed below:

* Intentional
* Targeted at a specific pupil or group of pupils
* Repeated
* Causing physical or emotional harm
* Omission

There are various motivations behind bullying, including those named in the Act. These include, but are not limited to:

- Age
- Appearance
- Breakdown in peer relationships
- Community background
- Political affiliation
- Gender identity
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy
- Marital status
- Race
- Religion
- Disability / SEN
- Ability
- Looked After Child status
- Young Carer status

Language

Bullying is an emotive issue, therefore it is essential that we ensure we use supportive, understanding language when discussion 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 discussion bullying incidents.

Definitions of emotional and physical harm which as set out in the DE Guidance.

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.***

Section 6 – Preventative Measurers

St Ciaran's aims to prevent all bullying behaviour. The measures set out here aim to promote a strong anti-bullying ethos within St Ciaran's and the wider school community.

We always aim to prevent bullying and create a safe learning environment.

Examples of our preventative measures include:

* 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 e.g. inclusion of age-appropriate material specific to individual subject areas related to bullying, positive behaviour and inclusion
* "Be Strong Online" ambassadors present to all year groups at assemblies and engage with classes during PD lessons
* "Buddy" system – Post-16 pupils are aligned with classes in junior school to provide peer support/assistance
* School counsellor available to help pupil build confidence, self-esteem and resilience
* Addressing issues such as the various forms of bullying, including the how and why it can happen, through Citizenship/PD (e.g. sectarian, racist, homophobic, transphobic, disablist, etc.)
* Specialist assemblies from local PSNI community support officer
* 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, e.g. Safer Internet Day, Good Relations Week, etc.
* Development of peer-led systems (e.g. School Council) to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messaging within the school
* Development of effective strategies for playground management, e.g. training for supervisors, zoning of playgrounds for year groups, supervision of possible "hot-spots"
* Anti-bullying publicity around the school e.g. posters, homework diary
* Classroom management
* Supervision teams consisting of teachers and support staff on duty at specific points both inside and outside the school building
* Focused class assemblies to raise awareness and promote understanding of key issues related to bullying, timed to coincide with Anti-Bullying Week
* Development of effective strategies for the management of unstructured times, (e.g. break time, lunch) including zoned areas for year groups, separate canteens for specific year groups, lunch time clubs and activities for subjects and interests
* 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.

St Ciaran's expects all pupils to adhere to the school Positive Behaviour Policy both on the way to and going home from school during term time. This includes:

- **while wearing the school uniform to travel daily directly to school at the start of the school day and directly from school to home at the end of the school day when: on foot; on the school bus; on a "school" taxi to an off-site educational provider.**
- **while being under the lawful control of a member of staff – e.g. whilst on a school trip, a school visit, playing on a school team, attending another school/FE college.**

The following points are further preventative measures taken by St Ciaran's to prevent bullying behaviour at these times.

* Pupils are viewed as ambassadors for their school within the community. There are regular reminders of the positive behaviour expectations of pupils whilst travelling to and from school in form class and at assemblies. Pupil diaries also contain guidance on behaviour on buses and taxis.
* Pupils should challenge inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour of their peers during the journey to and from school. They can report incidents to the bus driver, parents or Year Head. Senior pupils/prefects on buses monitor behaviour and report concerns to the pastoral teachers.
* St Ciaran's has regular engagement with EA Transport and local bus companies to ensure effective communication and the early identification of any concerns.
* The local community (e.g. local shops, cafes, parents, residents) are aware that they can raise any concerns with the school
* Teachers are deployed at the bus pick-up area at the front of the school every day. Teachers monitor pupils and ensure that they board buses in a safe and respectful manner. Junior pupils are expected to sit at the front of buses, with Year 8 pupils on the front row, Year 9 behind and so on
* Risk assessments are carried out by teachers organising school trips/visits.

St Ciaran's also takes 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 the pupil's education at school. We aim to raise awareness of the nature and impact of online bullying and support pupils to make use of the internet in a safe, responsible and respectful way. These include:

* Addressing key themes of online behaviour and risk through PD, including understanding how to respond to harm and the consequences of inappropriate use.
* Participation in Anti-Bullying Week activities.
* Anti-bullying assemblies
* Participation in Online Ambassadors programme, "Be Strong Online".
* Engagement with key statutory and voluntary sector agencies (e.g. C2k, PSNI, 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 Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy, Mobile Phone Policy, Connected Devices Policy, etc.)

Section 7 – Responsibility

Everyone in the school community has responsibility for creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all members of the school communities.

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 – internal and external
✳ resolve difficulties in restorative ways to prevent recurring bullying behaviour and meet the needs of all parties

Section 8 – Reporting a Bullying Concern

Pupils, parents and anyone else with concerns can make these known to the school.

Pupils Reporting a Concern

Pupils can raise concerns with any member of staff they trust, including teaching and non-teaching staff. They may feel comfortable speaking with their Form Teacher or Year Head.

Pupils can raise concerns in a number of ways, including:

* Verbally- talking to a member of staff
* By writing a note to a member of staff (e.g. in a homework diary)
* By sending an email to a member of staff or to a dedicated email address
* 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. Through the preventative work previously outlined in Section 6, this message should focus on 'getting help' rather than 'telling'. As such, 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 can raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour with the school at the earliest opportunity. Parents/carers should encourage their children to react appropriately to bullying behaviour and to not do anything to retaliate or to 'hit back'.

Parents/carers can report bullying concerns the following ways:

* In the first instance, all bullying concerns should be reported to the Form 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 Head of Year or Assistant-Principal, as applicable.
* Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken by the Head of Year/Assistant-Principal to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to Principal.

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. It is important that this information is included within the Anti-Bullying Policy and that information on how to make this complaint is accessible to all parents.

While the majority of reports of bullying concerns will come from pupils and their parents/carers, the school must be 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 that 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.**

Section 9 – Responding to a Bullying Concern

The focus of any intervention is on responding to the bullying concern and restoring the wellbeing of those involved. Strategies for responding to bullying concerns concentrate on the prevention of any further incidents. Staff will respond to bullying behaviour promptly and effectively in line with the Positive Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies.

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…

- ✳ *Gather information - clarify facts and perceptions*
- ✳ *Check records (SIMS/BMM) for previous incidents – Complete BCAF*
- ✳ *Assess the incident against the criteria for bullying behaviour (check information against legal definition's criteria) and determine if bullying behaviour has taken place*
- ✳ *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*

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. These include interventions suggested in the Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour *resource.*

Where appropriate, school staff may implement sanctions/consequences 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.

Section 10 – Recording

In accordance with the **Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016,** t*he 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 on the online SIMS Behaviour Management Module, which is part of the C2k system in schools. 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.

Section 11 – Professional Development of Staff

- ✳ Staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school's ongoing CPD/PRSD provisions
- ✳ Amendments/inclusion to both the policy and its procedures will be presented to staff
- ✳ Opportunities for safeguarding training are afforded to Governors and all staff – teaching and non-teaching
- ✳ stating that CPD records are kept and updated regularly

Section 12 – Monitoring and Review of 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 the [date 4 years from now]. **The policy may also be reviewed following any incident which highlight the need for such a review. It must also be reviewed when directed to by the Department of Education and in light of new guidance.**

Section 12 – Links to Other Policies

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

* *Positive Behaviour Policy*
* *Pastoral Care Policy*
* *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*
* *Special Educational Needs Policy*
* *Health and Safety Policy*
* *Relationships and Sexuality Education*
* *E-Safety Policy & Acceptable Use of Internet Policy*
* *Mobile Phone Policy*
* *Educational Visits*
* *Staff Code of Conduct*