Dominican College

Portstewart

Anti-bullying Policy and Procedures

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Please note, throughout this policy, the term 'parent' is used to refer to the parent or guardian of the student.

Section 1: General Information

1.1 Introduction

Dominican College, Portstewart is fully committed to creating an ethos which is caring, where pupils feel safe and secure to develop their human potential. We believe that every child and young person should be celebrated in their diversity. Bullying of any kind will not be tolerated. We are committed to a preventative, responsive and restorative anti-bullying ethos across the whole school. Our school 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.

This Anti-bullying policy is one of a number of inter-related policies concerned with student welfare, including the Child Protection Policy, the Drugs and Substance Misuse Policy and the Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy. The policy draws upon advice published by relevant bodies and sources.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies such as:

Dominican College Pastoral Care Policy
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
SEN / SENDO
NI Code of Practice
Dominican College Code of Conduct
Staff Code of Conduct
Health and Safety Policy
Educational Visits
Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy
E-Safety Policy
Acceptable Use of Internet Policy
Drugs and Substance Misuse Policy
Relationships and Sexuality Education
Mobile Phone Policy

1.2 Context

This policy should also be read and understood in conjunction with:

The Legislative Context:

- 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 and reviewed

- The Education and Libraries Order (Northern Ireland) 2003 (A17-19)

requires the Board of Governors to:
'Safeguard and promote the welfare of registered pupils' (A.17)

- 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 and 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)

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)

1.3 Rationale

The School recognises that learning takes place most effectively when students feel valued by their teachers, their peers and their family. Much emphasis is placed on the personal responsibility of each member of the school community, staff and students, for ensuring that relationships between staff and students and between the students themselves are positive and caring.

1.4 Aims

The aims of this policy are:

- To provide a supportive, friendly and safe environment for all students so that they can learn in a secure and relaxed atmosphere and achieve their academic potential
- To prevent antisocial and bullying behaviour as far as possible.

- To deal promptly and firmly with incidents when they occur. These should support and affirm the child who has been bullied and be positive in dealing with the person who displays bullying behaviour.

1.5 Objectives

- To ensure that governors, staff, students and parents understand what bullying behaviour is.
- To provide students with personal and social education about friendship, other relationships and social interactions so that they become more aware of the importance of their own responsibilities in maintaining good working relationships and personal friendships.
- To take preventative measures against harassment by including current research about bullying in the curriculum.
- To provide students, parents and staff with a clear set of procedures to be followed by staff if bullying is reported.
- To take action immediately if bullying arises.
- To help pupils who display bullying behaviour realise the consequences of their actions and to teach them different ways of behaving
- To support children who have been bullied and to provide them with guidance on how to deal with harassment.

1.6 Relevant Personnel

The School Safeguarding Team is comprised of:

- the Chairperson of the Board of Governors, Mr M Fleming;
- the Designated member of the Board of Governors for Child Protection, Mr R McCallum;
- the Principal, Ms R Ronan, who is responsible for overseeing the general welfare of students within the School
- Mrs A Heaney who is Pastoral Care Manager and Designated Teacher for Child Protection;
- the Vice-Principal, Mr G Lynch who is Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection;

Mr K Ramsay and Mr T Cloughley, members of the Senior Management Team, support this work.

The Heads of Year are:	Year 8	Mr K Ramsay
	Year 9	Ms R Ni Mhaolain
	Year 10	Miss E Anderson
	Year 11	Mrs C Conway
	Year 12	Mrs A Heaney
	Year 13	Mr R Carey
	Year 14	Mrs G Manson

Each member of staff has pastoral responsibility towards young people in their charge.

Each form group is allocated a Form Teacher. Selected members of Year 14 are appointed to the position of Prefects.

Dominican College Portstewart operates a counselling service run by Familyworks about which parents receive information when their child joins the school. Pupils can be referred by parents through the Form Teacher, Year Head, Key Stage Co-ordinator, DT, DDT or the Principal. Students may self-refer by filling in a form and leaving it with the office staff.

1.7 Policy Consultation

This policy has been revised in consultation with stakeholders in compliance with the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016.

- The nature of the consultation process is dynamic and may be inclusive of, for example: parental consultations carried out by sending a link to all parents to access the review of the policy through Teacher2Parents text messaging service and the school's social media platforms to invite feedback and comments via the school email address: moffice236@c2kni.net and any consultation responses forwarded to SMT;parental surveys; student consultations through Senior Prefects and Student Council; PD classes and consultative workshops with students; staff consultations, awareness-raising and on-going professional development; representative members of staff involved in writing anti-bullying policy; ratification by the Board of Governors.

1.8 Dissemination of the policy

The Anti Bullying Policy is available to the school community through the school's website and C2K. Copies are also available from the School Office, without charge. A pupil friendly definition and some guidance about how to deal with bullying is available in pupil diaries. Condensed information for teachers is available in the staff planner.

1.9 The Rights of the Child

Article 19 of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child states that 'Children have the right to be protected from all forms of violence; they must be kept safe from harm and they must be given proper care by those looking after them.'

These rights are enshrined in the Children Order (N.I.), 1995, a central focus of which is that the welfare of the child must be the paramount consideration. It is this essential principle which underpins the code of practice in Dominican College Portstewart.
Furthermore, the Convention states that a child 'who is capable of forming his or her own views [has] the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child'. Thus, students are

encouraged to speak out on matters such as bullying, and given opportunities to comment when a suspected bullying incident is being addressed.

Section 2: What is Bullying?

2.1 Clarification

Dominican College Portstewart draws a distinction between relationship difficulties and bullying behaviours. We do not call it bullying when teasing is done in a friendly or playful way, although it is recognised that this may be perceived by the recipient as being hurtful and restorative intervention by staff, prefects or mentors may prove helpful. We do not call it bullying when two students of about equal strength or power argue or disagree although, again, it is recognised that such behaviours may be hurtful and that staff, prefect or mentor intervention may prove beneficial in resolution of the situation. Likewise, anti-social behaviour may not necessarily be bullying behaviour, although such actions may invoke the Code of Conduct and Consequences. However, should unacceptable behaviour become recurrent, persistent, targeted with intent or involve a power imbalance, they may fall into the category of bullying behaviours. Students can experience friendship issues in the early years of secondary school. This is not necessarily bullying. These issues will come under the remit of the school's Pastoral Care Policy and the Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy.
Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour cannot be described as bullying even though they would be if they were repeated. These are considered as breaches of the Code of Conduct and will be dealt with accordingly.

2.2 Definition of Bullying

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 (hereinafter referred to as The Act) which was granted Royal Assent in May 2016 will be in operation from 1st September 2021.

The legal definition, as set out in the Act, is the primary definition of bullying:

Addressing Bullying in Schools Definition of "bullying":
1.—(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 usually the repeated and intentional use of physical, verbal, electronic, written or psychological acts or omissions, or any combination thereof, by one or more pupils against another pupil or group of pupils with the intention of causing hurt, harm, fear, distress or adversely affecting the rights or needs of that pupil or group of pupils.

DCP has used the following definition in the pupil diary to ensure a more workable, less legalistic definition for our pupils:

Bullying is usually repeated behaviour that intentionally hurts, harms or adversely affects the rights and needs of another or others.* (*Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum)

The Act contains a non-exhaustive definition of 'bullying' which applies only to pupil to-pupil bullying, i.e. bullying behaviour by a pupil or a group of pupils against another pupil or group of pupils.

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

The definition includes 3 key elements:
- Non-limitation to Repeated Behaviours
- Methods of Bullying
- Intention to Cause Harm

The Act states that the Anti-Bullying Policy will apply:
a. On school premises, during the school day
b. While travelling to and from school
c. When pupils are under the lawful control of school staff (eg. during a school trip)
d. When pupils are receiving education, arranged by the school, but delivered away from the school premises (eg. at another school in the Area Learning Community).

2.3 Language of Bullying

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 b 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.

2.4 Methods of bullying

In the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI), **"bullying" includes (but is not limited to) the repeated use**
of—
(a) any verbal, written or electronic communication,

These methods can be described as, but are not limited to, saying, writing or using

online contact and platforms to:

- say mean and hurtful things to, or about, others
- make fun of others
- call another pupil mean and hurtful names
- tell lies or spread false rumours about others
- try to make other pupils dislike another pupil/s
- extort from, blackmail or exploit another.
- purposely making another feel uncomfortable through, for example, staring or inappropriate facial expressions or by making offensive gestures;
- take another's possessions, or forcing her to hand over money;
- attacking another because of age, disability, gender, race, religious belief, sexual orientation, or socio-economic background;
- treating another in a hurtful manner
- misuse of the internet, mobile phone or any associated technology e.g. sending hurtful emails, texts or messages, using social networking inappropriately to hurt or upset another student (see 2.5 Cyberbullying)

Other methods of bullying behaviour commonly include physical bullying and can be described as, but are not limited to:

- hitting
- kicking
- pushing
- shoving around
- locking a pupil/s inside a room, locker etc.
- material harm such as taking/stealing money or possessions
- other direct/indirect acts

Omission

Methods of bullying behaviour include omission. This includes where a pupil is intentionally left out (e.g. 'they stopped him playing with them') and where there is a wilful failure to include a pupil (e.g. 'they purposefully did not ask
him to join the game').

Other examples include a pupil being excluded or left out of:

- a group of friends
- activities
- games
- group work in class

Exclusionary bullying behaviours are as serious as other verbal or physical acts.

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

The list of bullying behaviours is non-exhaustive and various methods of bullying behaviour can occur separately or together.

Bystanders to bullying behaviour may be guilty by association, perhaps providing the student displaying bullying behaviour with the attention she seeks, whilst deriving personal enjoyment from the perceived status of belonging to the group. Bystanders will, therefore, be subject to the disciplinary procedures of the school.

On certain occasions, when bullying takes place outside a school, the authority of the school may be restricted. On other occasions, external bullying may have direct impact within a school or potential to impair the welfare of a student; in such situations, Dominican College Portstewart will seek to take appropriate and proportionate action. Should parents/guardians become aware of any such instance, they are advised to inform the school of the situation so that action may be taken to reduce the impact of the bullying and to offer support to the students. There may be occasions when it is necessary and appropriate for staff to consult with EA Child Protection personnel, Social Services and/or the PSNI. On other occasions, parents/guardians may be advised to contact the relevant authorities themselves.

Bullying behaviours by staff towards students, or vice versa will not be condoned.

2.5 Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying has become an increasing problem in recent years.
The Act gives school the explicit power to take action to prevent cyber bullying which is taking place outside school, but which is likely to have an impact on the pupil's education in school. While this gives schools the option to take action, it does not place a duty on school to do so. Dominican College Portstewart will seek to take appropriate and proportionate action if it is deemed necessary. Any incidents of online bullying which take place in school during the school day, while travelling to or from school during the school term, while the pupils is in the lawful control or charge of a member of the staff of the school, or while in education provision on behalf of the school away from the school premises must be addressed through the Anti-Bullying Policy

Most technology is used very responsibly. Young people generally use the internet or mobile phone in a positive way as part of their personal, social and academic development. Unfortunately, technologies are also occasionally being used negatively. The school expects that its students will not use technology outside school as part of cyber-bullying and that both student and parents will co-operate with any reasonable investigation of that technology by the school. In line with the Code of Conduct possession or use of mobile phones is not permitted in school.

Cyber-bullying is defined as the use of technology deliberately to upset someone else. The following technology may be involved:-
Mobile phones, email, instant messenger, chatrooms and message boards, webcams, social networking sites, virtual worlds, video hosting sites, gaming sites and consoles, virtual learning environments.
The law has recognised that there is no longer a clear boundary between behaviour within a school and the external behaviour of its students. Unpleasant messages or images may be sent

outside school time. Naturally we would expect parents to play the main role in dealing with any out-of-school incidents. If there is clear link between behaviour at school and inappropriate behaviour when students are not on the school premises (and not under the charge of a member of school staff) we reserve the right to take such action as is reasonable with a view to regulating conduct. Any incidents of online bullying which take place in school during the school day, while travelling to or from school during the school term, while the pupils is in the lawful control or charge of a member of the staff of the school, or while in education provision on behalf of the school away from the school premises must be addressed through this policy.

2.6 How to prevent cyber-bullying:

Guidance to students

- Remember that anything you place on technology (examples listed above), can be made public within seconds. You have very little control over this. Nothing is guaranteed to stay private. Whatever you send to others can travel world-wide and could stay on-line for ever. University admissions officers and future employers may be able to view messages, films and photos posted years before.
- Be careful what you say on-line or in text messages. It is easy to upset someone by not reading carefully what you have written before pressing the SEND key. Be careful what images you send.
- If you receive a nasty or rude message about someone, or a photo of them, do not forward it to anyone. Doing this means that you will be taking part in the bullying behaviour. You could even be breaking the law.
- Keep your password to yourself. Do not let anyone see you key it in. Do not let anyone know it or use it. Change your password regularly. Choose hard-to-guess passwords with symbols or numbers. This makes it harder for others to hack into your account.
- Only give your mobile number or personal website address to loyal friends whom you trust completely. Remember also that some people change friends often, especially in the early teenage years.
- Choose the highest security settings on internet sites; do not rely on default settings.
- Use websites and services that let you block someone who is behaving badly or bullying you, and use the blocking facility.
- Use websites and services which allow you to report someone who is bullying.
- If you see cyber-bullying taking place, support the person who is experiencing bullying behaviour. Report the person who is carrying out the bullying behaviour. Bullying behaviour will continue if no one tells.

2.7 How to respond if you are experiencing cyber bullying:

Advice to students

- Do not reply to bullying messages.
- Do not retaliate by sending unpleasant messages back.
- Use the blocking and reporting facilities of the website.
- If necessary, change your contact details such as your instant messaging identity or

your mobile number.

- Save the evidence. Keep copies, records and dates of offending messages, pictures and on-line conversations. Evidence will be needed by school, internet service providers and mobile phone companies. If cyberbullying breaks the law, the evidence may be needed by the police for an investigation.
- Note that internet service providers will remove text or photos only if they break the law or the company's own terms and conditions.

To get help:-

Tell a parent, teacher or adult you trust
Call a helpline like Childline on 0800 11 11
Check the provider's website to see how to report incidents
Ask your school for support and advice
If the cyber-bullying breaks the law, your parents may decide to contact the police.

We hope that the guidance given above is helpful to parents. We advise you to be alert to signs of upset or withdrawn behaviour after your child has used the internet or a mobile phone.

2.8 One-off acts of bullying behaviour

Repetition is internationally recognised as an important element in establishing bullying behaviour and is one way of establishing intention to harm. However, one-off acts or exclusionary behaviour can be defined as a bullying behaviour. (The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 does not require repetition for behaviours to be defined as bullying). One-off incidents, in certain circumstances, can be treated as such, depending on a range of factors.

Criteria to be used by school staff to assess whether the incidents will be addressed through the Anti-Bullying Policy or Positive Behaviour Policy may include:

- 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 individual

Whether a one-off incident should be treated as bullying is a decision for the school alone. When alleged incidents fail to meet the criteria for bullying behaviour, the school will use its Positive Behaviour Policy to address unacceptable behaviour.

2.9 Intention to Cause Harm

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

Intention
Intention to cause harm is a deliberate act (an 'intentionally aggressive act', **Understanding School Bullying, its nature and prevention strategies**, Peter K Smith 2014) carried out with the awareness that the action will result in the harm suffered by the targeted person/persons.

Repetition is one way of establishing intention to harm, particularly if the bullying behaviours have not stopped after an intervention by the school.

Harm is defined as:

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.

In determining intent to cause harm, school will use its discretion in assessing an individual pupil's capacity to understand the impact of their behaviours, e.g. due to development age, disability or delay.

If otherwise unacceptable behaviours are not determined to constitute bullying behaviours, they will be managed through the school's Positive Behaviour Policy.

2.10 Motivations behind bullying

Anyone can be subjected to bullying but no-one deserves to be bullied. Some may be bullied because they are considered to be 'different', whilst others are bullied for no obvious reason. Sometimes, young people bully others because the opportunity is there.

Various motivations behind bullying, including those named in the Act, 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

Bullying hurts; it is distressing and frightening and young people can become isolated and feel lonely. Over a period of time, self-esteem can be affected. A young person who is experiencing bullying may begin to feel demoralised and powerless, perceiving the problem to be their fault. Schoolwork can be affected, as concentration diminishes, lessons are missed or attendance affected. The effects of bullying can continue into adult life.

Young people can be affected by witnessing bullying. They may feel afraid to intervene in case the bully targets them, but they may also feel helpless and guilty for not doing so. They may not want to tell an adult, for fear of being accused of telling tales.

Section 3: Addressing the issue of Bullying

3.1 Prevention of Bullying

In Dominican College Portstewart, we strive to create and maintain a safe environment for students and staff and acknowledge the support which parents provide in meeting this aim. Parents and teachers may assist in the prevention of bullying by teaching students to have control over their words and actions.

Within the school community it is important that:

- students who are being bullied, or others who know about it, feel that they will be listened to and that that any action taken will be sensitive and appropriate;
- good behaviour is valued and bullying behavior is considered unacceptable;
- a proactive approach is taken and, when possible, early intervention occurs;
- premises are monitored regularly;
- students are taught to assume responsibility for self and for others;
- good relationships are encouraged and that, through both the academic and the pastoral curriculum, students are taught about caring and empathic relationships;
- aggression control is encouraged and acts of aggression are not tolerated; and
- sensitive, empowering help and support is provided for students when required.

3.2 Special Educational Needs, Disabilities or English as a Second Language

Students with Special Educational Needs, disabilities or those who are not fluent in English may be especially vulnerable and should be safeguarded in the same manner as other students. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator may have an important role to play in this context. Extra care should be taken to ensure that these students feel confident and are able to discuss any matters that might be worrying them.

3.3 Roles and responsibilities

It is the responsibility of **all staff** to be alert to possible harassment of students, to deal with incidents of bullying as the highest priority and to follow the principles and procedures in this policy when following up cases of bullying.

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

Other specific responsibilities are stated
below.

The Governors will be involved in developing, evaluating and reviewing the anti-bullying policy, ensuring its effective implementation. The policy will be reviewed at least every four years,
or sooner if it is deemed necessary, for example|:

- to correspond with the annual review of safeguarding arrangements,
- when reviewing other associated policies,
- when there has been a serious incident of bullying behaviour,
- in response to a recommendation by the Education and Training Inspectorate
- in response to relevant circulars from the Department of Education

The Governors will ensure that it is non-discriminatory. When developing or reviewing the policy, Governors will have due regard to guidance from the Department of education, for example, Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 Statutory Guidance for Schools and Boards of Governors.

The **Principal and Senior Management Team** will review and amend the policy, using staff experience of dealing with bullying incidents in the previous year to improve procedures and taking account of new legislation and government guidance and will ensure that staff receive regular training updates

The **Pastoral Team** will assist with the review of the Anti-Bullying policy and work to ensure its successful implementation. The team will provide resources on bullying issues, and will ensure that there are PD sessions on the nature of bullying and how to deal with harassment within the programme at appropriate stages of student development. Careful monitoring, recording and evaluation of procedures will be ongoing.

Subject teachers will ensure that:
they are alert to possible bullying situations, particularly exclusion from friendship groups, and that they inform the Form Teacher/Year Head of such observations
they select working groups and pairs so that students have the opportunity to work with a variety of peers, not only friendship groups, throughout the year
the composition of groups shows sensitivity to those who have experienced bullying behaviour.

The **Office and Ancillary staff** are often the first people to receive reports of bullying, will offer emotional support to those who have experienced bullying behaviour, and will alert the relevant Head of Year/Key Stage Coordinator and Form Teacher.

Parents are asked to inform the form teacher or Head of Year/Key Stage Co-ordinator if they are concerned that their child might be experiencing bullying behaviour.

Students are asked to tell a member of staff immediately if they are bullied or if they witness bullying of any other pupil.

Section 4: Reporting a Bullying Concern

4.1 Pupils Reporting a Concern

Children and young people have told NIABF that when they have a concern about a potential bullying situation, they would like the opportunity to discuss this with a member of staff that they trust. Our pupils are encouraged to raise concerns with any member of staff, including teaching and non-teaching staff.
Pupils can report bullying concerns in various ways:

- Verbally- talking to a member of staff
- By writing a note to a member of staff (eg. 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 we do as a school, the message to pupils is about ‘getting help’ rather than ‘telling’. All pupils are encouraged to ‘get help’ if they have a concern about bullying that they experience or is experienced by another.

4.2 Parents/Carers Reporting a Concern

It is important that parents/carers encourage their children to react appropriately to bullying behaviour and to not do anything to retaliate or to 'hit back'.

If a parent/carer needs to report a bullying concern they should:

- In the first instance report to the Class Teacher/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 Head of Pastoral Care, as applicable.
- Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken by the Head of Year/Head of Pastoral Care 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 feedback will be made to the person who made the report**.**

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 5 Dealing with Bullying Incidents

5.1 Anti-bullying Principles

• Students will be informed of anti-bullying procedures.

• Parents will be informed of procedures.

• The anti-bullying policy will be available on the staff shared folder on SIMS, from the school office and on the school website.

• Staff will treat reports by students of bullying very seriously.

•All reported incidents of bullying behaviour will be acknowledged and recorded.

• Unpleasantness by one student towards another will always be challenged and never ignored.

• Staff will take action immediately. This applies to all staff, not only teaching staff.

• Students will be encouraged to report all incidents of bullying to the Form Teacher, Head of Year, Ancillary Staff or another trusted member of staff immediately.

• Staff will keep a record of each bullying incident, to be passed to the appropriate Head of Year who will alert the Head of Pastoral/DT, Vice Principal, who is DDT, or the Principal

• Staff will respect a student's request that information is not discussed with other students.

• Those who have experienced bullying behaviour will be supported in the weeks following the reported incident, to ensure that the bullying has stopped.

•Those who have displayed bullying behaviour will also be supported in the weeks following the reported incident
•Parents/carers of those involved in the reported incident will be contacted in the weeks following the incident to ensure the matter has been resolved and there has not been a repeat of the bullying behaviour

5.2 Framework

Bullying incidents will be dealt within the following framework

- Form Teacher- minor incidents and friendship issues
- Head of Year/ Key Stage Coordinator - More serious incidents
- Head of Pastoral Care/DT or Vice-Principal/DDT -Very serious incidents
- Principal - Bullying incidents requiring suspension or expulsion

All reported incidents will be recorded in keeping with The Act and this policy

5.3 Staff guidance

If bullying is reported, or if staff notice a bullying incident, action will be taken immediately Minor incidents will be reported to the student's Form Teacher, who should investigate the incident and inform the Head of Year.
The Head of Year will then work with the Head of Pastoral Care to decide on the next stages and levels of intervention. Parents of all involved will be contacted by either the Head of Year or Head of Pastoral and informed of the incident.
The student's pastoral team will work collectively to support those involved and work to reach a satisfactory outcome

For serious incidents of bullying, staff will inform the Head of Pastoral Care/Vice-Principal who will then notify the Principal.

It is important that written evidence at every stage is kept and maintained.
Year Heads and Form teachers should maintain a confidential record of all incidents relating to their year group/form class.

5.4 Procedures to be followed by staff:

The processes outlined below provide a framework for how the school will respond to any bullying concerns identified.

If a report of a bullying concern is made:

- Listen carefully to details in a non-confrontational, non-judgemental way
- Reassure the pupil you will take their concerns seriously and access the right help
- You may not be able to write down details there and then but try to remember key details, including dates, to pass on
- If possible, use a room that allows you to interview in privacy. A witness is recommended for serious incidents.
- If a student is injured, take the student immediately to a member of ancillary staff or a first aid trained teacher for a medical opinion of the extent of the injuries.
- If you need to contact another key member of staff to assist, then do so as soon as you can
- If the details can be passed to the FT/Year Head after your discussion with the pupil, then do so as soon as you can. Written details on a Note of Concern will be useful
- A form teacher/ Year Head will then need to investigate further and ascertain the full facts through further a further interview
- Pupils should be spoken to separately, unless there is someone else there in a supportive role
- Ask additional witnesses/bystanders for information, preferably written.

In order to maintain consistency and to ensure effective communication, FT and Year Heads should be kept informed as they will be the main support for pupils affected. The FT and Year Head may work together to complete the criteria on the Bullying Concern Assessment Form (Appendix 1) in order to determine if bullying has taken place. At any stage the Pastoral Head or SLT can be consulted. Class teachers can also be involved in the process but it is important to update the relevant key staff as you proceed. Copies of all written information and evidence must be kept.

Using the NIABF Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource (Appendix 2), the member(s) of staff responsible will:

- Clarify facts and perceptions
- Check records (SIMS/BMM)
- 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

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.

Imbalance of power is a long-standing element of bullying behaviour and internationally recognised by leading academics. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways:

- physical
- psychological (knowing what upsets someone),
- intellectual
- group / more than one individual.

It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online The'imbalance of power' as a factor may also be considered by school when responding to alleged bullying behaviour.

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

5.5 Sanctions

Once behaviour has been adjudged to be bullying behaviour, the Year Head along with a key member of staff will determine the severity of the incident level and the appropriate level of response. In determining the level of severity, a number of factors will be considered, for example: nature; frequency; duration; perceptions of the targeted student; whether or not the targeted student acted provocatively. It should be noted that each suspected bullying incident should be individually assessed and an intervention selected which best meets individual student needs. Certain actions, such as assault, have a particular legal status.

Thereafter:

- the student/s who displayed bullying behaviour will be warned of the implications of their actions; it may be deemed appropriate to apply sanctions. This may include making amends as well as the application of sanctions as laid out in the Code of Conduct and Consequences. As each case will be different, sanctions applied will be tailored to suit the situation;

- relevant intervention strategies will be implemented;

- the situation will be monitored by relevant staff member/s;

- if bullying behaviour recurs, parents/guardians of the student/s will normally be asked to attend for interview and further sanctions may be applied;

- if the bullying behaviour persists, the parents/guardians of the student/s will be asked to attend an interview with the Principal and suspension of the student will be considered.

- A one-off event of bullying which is deemed very serious will invoke a suspension or suspension leading to expulsion.

5.6 Monitoring and Review of the Situation

The Head of Pastoral Care and/or Form Teachers and Heads of Year will normally have responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the situation. On occasion, they may delegate this to other relevant members of staff. Communication should be coherent and transparent so all those working together are aware of each stage of the process.

- Relevant teaching staff or staff on duty may be asked to observe behaviours in an unobtrusive manner and to report back to the relevant staff member.

- The Year Head or delegated staff member will, at the agreed interval/s, interview the child who has experienced bullying behaviour and the child who has exhibited bullying behaviour individually to review progress made. If the matter has been resolved, notes will be kept confidentially in the Pastoral Co-ordinator's diary or written up in a Bullying proforma, all of which will be securely filed. If the matter has not been resolved, new targets will be set and the procedure repeated.

- The Year Head or delegated staff member will make contact with parents/guardians of both the child alleged to have experienced bullying behaviour and the student alleged to have displayed bullying behaviour to ascertain their view on progress made and apprise them of the School's position. Home Links appointments may be used for this purpose.

- Staff members will review the effectiveness of strategies implemented and, if required, modify them.

Parents

- Most concerns about bullying will be resolved through discussion between home and school. Parents are encouraged to liaise closely with form teachers Year Heads and the Heads of Key Stage.
- Where a parent feels their concerns have not been resolved, they may use the school's Formal Complaints procedure.
- Where a pupil is involved in bullying behaviour of others outside school, eg on the way to or from school or through use of the internet at home, parents will be asked to work with the school in addressing the child's behaviour

Section 6 Recording

6.1 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 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.

Any reports provided to Boards of Governors, to allow them to fulfil their obligations under the Act, should be suitably anonymised.

Section 7 – Preventative Measures and Curriculum support

7.1 School will ensure measures are taken to prevent anti-bullying behaviour. These measures aim to promote and strong anti-bullying ethos within the school and the wider school community. Included are:

- 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 PD/LLW (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 (eg. mindfulness training)
- Participation in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities
- Engagement in key national and regional campaigns, eg Safer Internet Day, Good Relations Week, 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. training for supervisors, zoning of playgrounds, inclusion of specific resources (buddy benches).
- 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)
- Use peer mediation to resolve conflict if appropriate
- Provide a peer mentor.
- Use drama performances/workshops on bullying to raise awareness and invite relevant outside agencies in to help with our preventative curriculum
- 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.
- Opportunities to extend friendship groups and interactive skills will be provided through participation in special events such as drama productions, Theme Days, John Paul II Award, concerts, charity and social event and also by involvement in extracurricular activities.

While many of the measures outlined above will support the development of an anti-bullying culture, there are a number of ways schools can further build upon this related specifically on the journey to and from school. This includes:

- 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. This may include the implementation of peer monitoring systems on buses, trains etc, and for those walking.
- If bullying is by students from another school, the Head of Year/Head of Pastoral/Principal should telephone the relevant Head of Year/Key Stage Coordinator of the other school and ask for a return call on the result of their investigation.
- Regular engagement with transport providers (eg. Translink, EA Transport, etc.) to ensure effective communication and the early identification of any concerns.
- Promotion of key anti-bullying messages and awareness of behaviour expectations of pupils amongst the local community (eg. 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 (eg. staff duty at school gate/bus stops, where appropriate)

The new legislation also gives our school the 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 the pupil's education at school. Some of the ways we 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 include:

- Addressing key themes of online behaviour and risk through PD/LLW, 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, Mobile Phone Policy and E-Safety Policy.)

Section 8 Professional Development of Staff

8.1 Our school recognises the need for appropriate and adequate training for staff, including teaching and non-teaching school staff. This may include:

- stating a commitment to ensuring that staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school's ongoing CPD/PRSD provisions
- noting the impact of the training given on both the policy and its procedures - e.g. any amendments made, inclusions added etc.
- ensuring that opportunities for safeguarding training are afforded to Governors and all staff – teaching and non-teaching
- stating that CPD records will be kept and updated regularly.

Section 9 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 20th September 2021.

Section 5: Appendices

Appendix 1

Bullying Concern Assessment Form (BCAF)

https://www.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-10/BCAF%20Bullying%20Concern%20Assessment%20Output%20from%20SIMS%20changes%20June%202019.docx

Appendix 2 NIABF resource

Choosing an Appropriate Intervention

When children and young people are involved in incidents of bullying, 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. A number of new hybrid approaches have been developed which incorporate aspects of two or more practices. Whilst many school staff will welcome the availability of a plethora of interventions, this diversity raises some important questions, most notably 'which is the most appropriate for this case?' Inappropriate interventions could risk further harming individuals who are already vulnerable or victimised.

Schools should ensure that their Anti-Bullying policy contains a description of the different interventions which will be used to respond to a bullying situation. There is no best method in the sense that one is always preferable. It depends on the nature of the bullying, the availability of resources, the skills level of staff and the readiness of the school community to support the chosen approach. Remember, the main aim of any intervention is to **RESPOND** to the bullying that is taking place, **RESOLVE** the concern and **RESTORE** the well-being of all those involved.

In selecting an intervention schools should take account of:

The level of severity, using this as a guide to select appropriate intervention(s).

The legal status of the act e.g. assault.

The age and ability of those involved.

Whether an individual pupil or a group is involved.

The level of staff agreement, confidence and competence in adopting a restorative, behaviour changing approach.

The agreement and support of the parents/carers in adopting a restorative, behaviour changing approach.

Whether the pupil(s) displaying bullying behaviour acknowledge(s) the unacceptable behaviour and can be enabled to feel empathy for the pupil experiencing bullying, and act appropriately.

The willingness to engage in a group intervention such as the Support Group Method (see p30).

Whether it is realistic to expect that the bullied pupil can be strengthened adequately to deal with the situation.

Whether or not the pupil experiencing bullying has acted provocatively.

Refer to NIABF **Bullying Concern Assessment Form**

(Adapted from 'BULLYING IN SCHOOLS, Six Methods of Intervention, A User's Guide', Ken Rigby, 2009)

*For more information see www.loggerheadfilms.co.uk*14

Understanding the Levels of Intervention

Levels suggested within this document are for guidance only, and schools are advised to consider a range of interventions from across all levels. It is important to remember that every bullying incident should be individually assessed and an intervention chosen which best meets the individual pupil needs.

Level 1 Intervention - Low Level Bullying Behaviour
Interventions at Level 1 are to help individuals to recognise/reflect on their unacceptable behaviour and to "get them back on track" while listening to and supporting/strengthening the pupil(s) experiencing bullying. **NEVER ignore low level bullying behaviour.**
Staff should;
Explain the inappropriateness of the behaviour in line with the school's values.
Identify possible consequences if the bullying behaviour continues.
Point out the level of distress experienced by the bullied pupil.
Talk with the pupil being bullied to explore whether he/she has in any way provoked the bullying behaviour.
Help the bullied pupil to identify ways in which he/she may be strengthened and supported, e.g. peer support.
Encourage reparation to be made, if appropriate.
Monitor the situation carefully.
Be prepared to intervene with a higher response level if the situation persists or deteriorates.

Level 2 Interventions - Intermediate Level Bullying Behaviour
While interventions at Level 2 involve continuing with the above, there is shift from individual support to group interventions. To be effective small group work needs:
The consent and involvement of the pupil being bullied.
To be planned and timetabled, session length dependent on age and ability.
Parental / carer consent and agreement from participating pupils.
Carefully selected group membership.
To take place in a suitable and comfortable environment.
To be uninterrupted.
To be facilitated in a positive manner, ideally by two adults whose roles may alternate allowing one to participate and one to observe.
Structured and focused activities using active learning approaches to stimulate discussion and debate amongst members and develop group identity.
Decision and outcomes to be agreed and recorded, e.g. on a flipchart.
To facilitate the development of empathy amongst pupils.
A solution focused approach to the situation.
To provide opportunities for pupils to take responsibility.
Regular meetings of the group.
Regular meetings with the bullied pupil to assess ongoing effectiveness of agreed actions.
To ensure regular feedback is given on agreed actions.

Level 3 Interventions - Complex Bullying Behaviour

Interventions at Level 3 will often involve the Pastoral Coordinator, SENCO, and other senior managers, in collaboration with pupil(s) and parents to determine the way forward in affecting change. Schools may use their individual Risk Assessment procedures which will determine a plan of intervention and risk management that will be communicated to all.

This planning may occur through a multi-agency discussion, involving ELB Services and other external support agencies. The manner in which teachers and others are involved in planning and how they are kept informed about the implementation of the plans will vary.

Bullying at this level often involves complex group dynamics, where a number of roles are evident, such as those displaying bullying behaviour, bystanders and pupils experiencing bullying. Consequently interventions may require one-to-one meetings, small group work and whole class involvement. These will often require group interventions as discussed in Level 2 (see Support Group Method, p30) and/or The PIKAS Method of Shared Concern (see p40), along with individual support and strength building programmes.

Level 4 Interventions - High Risk Bullying Behaviour

Bullying behaviours assessed as 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. Incidents at this level must be assessed in relation to the risk posed to any/all of the pupils involved. As such, the school's Child Protection policy and safeguarding procedures will need to be invoked. Advice and support will be available to schools through the Child Protection Support Service for Schools.

In addition to safeguarding procedures and practices including referral to external support services, the school's interventions at Level 4 should continue to implement interventions detailed at Level 3 as appropriate.

Appendix 3 Flow Chart – Dealing with a Bullying Concern

https://www.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-05/Bullying%20flow%20chart%20final.pdf