



Ballyclare Secondary School

**ANTI-BULLYING
POLICY**

Introduction

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so that they can learn and achieve success in an ordered and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is anti-social, unacceptable and will not be tolerated at our school. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and in an appropriate manner.

Aims

- To raise and maintain the self-esteem of all pupils and to inform pupils of how to obtain help if bullying occurs
- To encourage a respect for the individual at all times and accept the differences among us
- To provide a safe and secure environment for our pupils
- To prevent bullying behaviour

What is bullying?

Bullying is any behaviour, usually repeated, which makes other people feel uncomfortable or threatened, whether this is intended or not. Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. It results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional – being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Physical – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Racist – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Homophobic – because of or focusing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal – name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber – all areas of the internet, such as email, internet chat room misuse. Threats made by mobile phone calls or texts. The misuse of cameras and video facilities.

Why is it important to respond to bullying?

Bullying hurts. No-one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everyone has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. Schools have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Objectives

- The whole school community, including governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- The whole school community should be aware of and implement the anti-bullying policy if bullying occurs.
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying and what they should do if bullying arises.
- To ensure a consistent approach towards bullying from teaching staff, non-teaching staff, pupils and parents.
- To provide effective strategies if bullying occurs.

Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate the signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- Is frightened of walking to or from school
- Does not want to go on the bus
- Changes their usual routine for getting to and from school
- Is unwilling to go to school
- Begins to truant
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- Shows a change in school work, generally child begins to do poorly
- Complains of feeling ill in the morning

-
- Has difficulty in getting to sleep at night
 - Comes home with clothes or possessions which are torn or dirty with no obvious reason
 - Has possessions that “go missing”
 - Constantly asks for money or complains that their money is “lost”
 - Comes home from school very hungry (money/lunch stolen)
 - Has unexplained cuts or bruises
 - Has a change of behaviour in that they become aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
 - Is reluctant to use their mobile phone

Note:

1. People react differently and it is not always possible to tell when someone is hurt or upset. Bullying is always unacceptable.
2. Petty squabbling is often misinterpreted as bullying – e.g. breakdown in relationships between friends. Such disputes must be resolved with the input and co-operation from all parties.

Preventing Bullying

We believe we must be pro-active in terms of preventing the occurrence of bullying. The school promotes mutual respect between all individuals. We encourage co-operative behaviour; teach children that bullying is wrong and deliver the message that it can be dealt with effectively in the following ways:

- Through the pastoral system
- Maintaining good home/school links
- Through assembly, class assembly and year assembly
- By encouraging pupils to have a voice through the school forum
- By vigilance in the classroom
- By vigilance outside the classroom, e.g. before school, at break-time and lunch-time, by providing good supervision to ensure that pupils feel safe within school
- Through Personal Development, by teaching children (a) how to build good relationships, (b) some strategies for dealing with a bully and (c) to understand the nature and causes of bullying and some of the problems of the bully.
- By encouraging prefects to support other pupils.
- By encouraging pupils to take part in extra-curricular activities

Reporting Bullying

Ballyclare Secondary is a “telling school”. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is going on should tell an adult.

To whom should pupils report bullying?

Pupils may speak to any member of staff, teaching or non-teaching including:

- Principal, Vice-Principals, Assistant Vice-Principals
- Boys/Girls Tutor
- Heads of Year
- Class Teachers
- Subject Teachers
- Class Assistants
- Prefects
- Secretarial, supervisory, caretaking or cleaning staff
- Parents

Parents who have become aware of their child being bullied should contact the Head of Year in the first instance or any of the Senior Staff, Vice Principals or the Principal.

Responding to Bullying

All staff, teaching and non-teaching, have a collective responsibility to be alert to signs of bullying and to listen carefully if a child reports that he/she is being bullied. Bullying is very different from other disciplinary situations and requires sensitive handling. The adult who detects bullying should:

Listen with understanding to the pupil and encourage accuracy in giving details.

Reassure the pupil that the matter will be dealt with sensitively and give support.

Refer the matter to the Head of Year, Assistant Vice Principals, Vice Principals or Principals.

Continue to support the pupil through regular contact as necessary.

Dealing with the Bully

A bully undervalues, undermines and intimidates others. There are consequences for bullying behaviour as with all discipline issues in school. However bullying cannot be resolved by simply reprimanding and punishing the bully – this may result in resentment and retaliation. Therefore disciplinary action for bullying will be applied in conjunction with counselling.

Types of disciplinary action which may be taken include:

- Intensive monitoring in class and at changeovers
- Extra supervision at break-time and lunch-time
- Formal reprimand
- Behaviour support materials to complete at home
- Detention
- Withdrawal from class
- Suspension
- Expulsion

Note: The school will involve the parents fully in the disciplinary process as well as follow through work

- Children who have been bullied will be supported to rebuild lost self-esteem, to feel safe and to move forward.
- Children who bully will be given the opportunity to identify the underlying cause of their behaviour and offered behaviour management support. They will be helped to realise that this behaviour is not acceptable and that they can change. They need to be fully aware that there are consequences for their actions.

Outcomes

1. The bullying behaviour will stop and the bully will genuinely apologise for his/her actions
2. If possible, in time, the pupils can be reconciled
3. The school will continue to monitor the situation to ensure that further bullying does not reoccur
4. All bullying incidents will be recorded on school systems

Where to find help

Childline	Tel: 0800 1111
Samaritans	Tel: 028 25 650000
New Life Counselling	Tel: 028 9074 6184

Ballyclare Secondary School

Doagh Road | Ballyclare | Co. Antrim | BT39 9BG

T: 028 9332 2610 | **F:** 028 9334 9404

www.ballyclaresecondary.co.uk