Ballyclare Secondary School

Addressing Bullying In School Policy

"Every child deserves a rewarding educational experience."

Date of last review	January 2023
To be reviewed by	January 2025

Contents

At *Ballyclare Secondary School* we believe all forms of bullying behaviour are unacceptable. We believe that all pupils have the right to learn in a safe and supported environment.

Context of Policy Development:

The Legislative Context:

- The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016
- The Education and Libraries Order   (Northern Ireland) 2003 (A17-19)
- The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010
- The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Health and Safety at Work Order (Northern Ireland) 1978

The Policy & Guidance Context

- The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 Statutory Guidance for Schools and Boards of Governors (DE, 2019)
- Pastoral Care in School: Promoting Positive Behaviour (DE, 2001)
- Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: A Guide for Schools (DE, 2017)
- Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (Dept. of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, 2016)
- Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland Policies and Procedures (SBNI, 2017)

The International Context

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

The key points to note are:

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)

Ethos & Principles:

We are committed to a society where children and young people can live free and safe from bullying.

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 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.

Consultation and Participation:

This policy was prepared in consultation with the school's Board of Governors, Safeguarding Team, Teaching and Non-Teaching staff. This includes but is not limited to:

- Consultative meetings with Board of Governors;
- Staff feedback following whole school training on the enactment of the Act (paper-based);
- Whole school questionnaires distributed to all pupils (online);
- Whole school questionnaires distributed to all parents/carers (online);
- Engagement with our external support agencies that provide us regular support (Education Psychology / Education Welfare / AAIS / Behaviour Support Service / Family Works Counselling Service);
- Consultative meetings with our School Forum / Year Forum.

What is Bullying?

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

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 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.

The policy should show that, while bullying is usually repeated behaviour, there are instances of one-off incidents that the school will consider as bullying. This policy does not list the incidents that will be considered bullying (as advised); rather it lists the criteria which it will judge an incident against.

When assessing a one-off incident, to decide on whether to classify it as bullying, the school shall consider the following criteria:

- severity and significance of the incident;

- evidence of pre-meditation;
- impact of the incident on individuals (physical/emotional);
- impact of the incidents on wider school community;
- previous relationships between those involved;
- any previous incidents involving the individuals.

Any incidents which are not considered bullying behaviour will be addressed under our suite of pastoral policies, namely our Promoting and Sustaining 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;
  making fun of others;
  calling another pupil mean and hurtful names;
  telling lies or spread false rumours about others;
  try to make other pupils dislike another pupil/s.
- Physical acts:
  hitting;
  kicking;
  pushing;
  shoving;
  material harm, such as taking/stealing money or possessions or causing damage to possessions.
- Omission (exclusion):
  leaving someone out of a game;
  refusing to include someone in group work.
- 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 (e.g. photographs or videos) online to embarrass someone.

Where such lists are included in the policy it should be stressed that the list is not exhaustive and that other behaviours which fit with the definition may be considered by the school as bullying behaviour.

Some 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.

The use of the terms 'bully' and 'victim' should be avoided by all in our school community.

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.

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.

Preventative Measures:

Beyond this, the measures set out here should aim to promote and strong anti-bullying ethos within the school and the wider school community.

Under the legislation, the focus for all anti-bullying work should be on prevention. As such, this section is the key lynchpin of the policy document.

With the aim of preventing bullying and creating a safe learning environment we plan on (the):

- Raising awareness and understanding of the positive behaviour expectations, as set out in the suite of pastoral policies;
- 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;
- Addressing issues such as the various forms of bullying, including the how and why it can happen, through PDMU/PD/LLW (e.g. 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 (e.g. mindfulness training);
- Participation in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities;
- Engagement in key national and regional campaigns, e.g. Safer Internet Day, Good Relations Week, et;
- Development of peer-led systems (e.g. School Forum / Year Forum) 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, inclusion of specific resources (buddy benches, play bus stops) and provision of a variety of play option to meet the needs of all pupil;
- Focused assemblies to raise awareness and promote understanding of key issues related to bullying;
- Development of effective strategies for the management of unstructured times (e.g. break time, lunch);
- Provision and promotion of extra- and co-curricular activities, aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks. For example sporting activity, creative arts, leisure, and games, etc.

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, and ferries, and for those walking;
- Regular engagement with transport providers (e.g. 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 (e.g. 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 (e.g. staff duty at school gate/bus stops, where appropriate).

The new legislation also gives schools 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. This may include:

- Addressing key themes of online behaviour and risk through PDMU/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 (e.g. 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 (e.g. Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy, Filtering and Blocking Policy, Mobile Phone Policy, Connected Devices Policy, etc.)

It is important to remember that this Addressing Bullying Policy is one of a number of policies in the wider pastoral care and safeguarding suite of policies. As such, it is essential that these policies align and provide consistent message.

Given the nature of technology, as constantly changing, and developing, it is important that we monitor policy and message and make changes when necessary.

Responsibility:

Everyone 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.

Reporting a Bullying Concern:

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. At Ballyclare Secondary School we respect this finding. Our pastoral structure is in place to support all.

Pupils can raise concerns to any member of staff in school, ideally to their Class Teacher in the first instance. This member of staff knows that pupil the best. Pupils can report their concerns:

- 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.

ANY pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing this behaviour. Through the preventative work taken forward under Section 6, this message should focus on 'getting help' rather than 'telling'. As such, all pupils should be 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 have a responsibility to 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 and carers should actively discuss the definition of bullying with their young person(s), so as to support the on-going work of understanding the difference between anti-social behaviour and bullying, as prescribed in the Act.

- In the first instance, all bullying concerns should be reported to the Class Teacher;
- Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to Head of Year;
- Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to the Head of Pastoral Care;
- Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken by the Head of Year/ Head of Pastoral Care / Vice-Principal to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to Principal.

The above structure of reporting your concerns is in keeping with our school's pastoral structure. That said, Ballyclare Secondary School has nominated our Head of Pastoral Care as the designated member of staff who will record, guide, and oversee the actions taken by others in the structure. When a concern is reported to any member of staff, Mr Nicholl should be kept informed by that member of staff so that the steps outlined in section nine can be followed accordingly. The Head of Pastoral Care may not be the member of staff who actions all reasonably identified steps.

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.

While the majority of reports of bullying concerns will come from pupils and their parents/carers, we are 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.

Responding to a Bullying Concern:

It must be remembered that the focus of any intervention must be on responding to the bullying concern and restoring the wellbeing of those involved. As such, any strategy for responding to bullying concerns must concentrate on the prevention of any further incidents.

The processes outlined below provides a framework for how our school will respond to any bullying concerns identified:

Regardless of who the concerns are reported to (staff), Mr Nicholl, Head of Pastoral Care will be informed, and he will begin the process of investigation, clarification, and restoration, this may include but is not limited to the delegation of tasks to various other members of staff.

Using the NIABF Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource, our school will:

- **Clarify facts and perceptions (as is reasonable and practicable);**
- **Check records (SIMS/BMM);**
- **Assess the incident against the criteria for bullying behaviour;**
- **Discern if the incident / concern meets the legal definition and respond accordingly, pursuant to EA's flowchart (Appendix 1);**
- **Identify any themes or motivating factors;**
- **Identify the type of bullying behaviour being displayed;**
- **Identify intervention level;**
- **Select and implement appropriate interventions for all pupils involved, including appropriate interventions, consequences and sanctions not listed in the Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource;**
- **Track, monitor and record effectiveness of interventions;**
- **Review outcome of interventions;**
- **Select and implement further intentions as necessary.**

NIABF advocates a restorative approach to responding to bullying behaviour. Interventions suggested in the Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource focus on responding to the behaviour, resolving the concern, and restoring the wellbeing of those involved. As a school, we aim to follow this guidance, as is proportionate, reasonable, and practicable. We will also consider our actions, pursuant to our suite of pastoral policies, executive judgement, and experience.

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.

In this section we would like to reiterate that information regarding any action taken regarding a pupil cannot be disclosed to anyone other than that pupil and his/her parents/carers.

Recording:

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

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. Access will be granted by either the Head of Pastoral Care and/or the Vice Principal(s) / Principal. The use of this recording system is effective from the implementation of this policy. Prior to the enactment of this policy various other mechanisms were used for recording incidents of bullying and alleged bullying behaviour, pursuant to legal requirement.

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 addressing bullying policy and practice within the school.

Professional Development of Staff:

There is a need for appropriate and adequate training for staff, including teaching and non-teaching school staff. At Ballyclare Secondary, this includes:

- ensuring that our 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. As best practice, Ballyclare Secondary School holds

whole school safeguarding training annually, that includes: teaching staff, non-teaching staff, cleaners, caretakers, canteen staff and auxiliary staff;

● ensuring that our CPD records will be kept and updated regularly.

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 Addressing Bullying Policy.

To appropriately monitor the effectiveness of the Addressing 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.

It is a legal requirement that the Anti-Bullying Policy be reviewed at intervals of no more than four years. However, the policy should be reviewed following any incident which highlights 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.

This Anti-Bullying Policy shall be reviewed as required, in consultation with pupils and their parents/carers, on or before November 2026.

Links to Other Policies:

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

● Promoting and Sustaining Positive Behaviour Policy;
● Pastoral Care Policy;
● Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
● Special Educational Needs Policy;
● Diversity & Inclusion Policy;
● Health and Safety Policy;
● Relationships and Sexuality Education;
● E-Safety Policy & Acceptable Use of Internet Policy
● Mobile Phone Policy;
● Educational Visits Policy;
● Staff Code of Conduct.

Appendix 1

PROCESS TO FOLLOW WHEN SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE EXPERIENCING OR DISPLAYING BULLYING TYPE BEHAVIOURS

Behaviour reported as alleged bullying

In all cases a Bullying Concern Assessment Form is initiated and attached as a document to digital Behaviour Management System e.g. SIMs

Judgment made by appropriate Pastoral staff to determine whether situation constitutes bullying using legal 'bullying' definition and following processed on bullying Concern Assessment Form

Ensure staff plan of action complies with relevant legislation and guidelines such as: The Children (NI) Order (1995), Data Protection Act (1998), Code of Practice (1996), Freedom of Information Act (2000), Pastoral Care in Schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour (2001), Welfare and Protection of Pupils ELB (NI) Order (2003), SENDO (2005), SEND Act (NI) (2016), Addressing Bulling in schools Act (NI) (2016), Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: A Guide for Schools (2017), Guidance in the Use of SIMs (2017) GDPR (2018)

REFERRED THROUGH

Allegation of Bullying Behaviour is received

| Current Incident | ← | Allegation of Bullying Behaviour is received | → | Check for Previous Incident /s |

Page 1 of **Bullying Concern Assessment Form (BCAF)** is completed (BMM/SIMS)

On the basis of the information gathered, the nature of the alleged behaviour is determined against the **legal definition of what constitutes bullying behaviour/s** on Pg.1 BCAF (BMM/SIMS)

Parents/ Carers kept informe

Alleged behaviour **DOES NOT MEET** the Legal Definition of Bullying Behaviour: Complete BCAF (BMM/SIMS)

Alleged behaviour **DOES MEET** the Legal Definition of Bullying behaviour: Complete BCAF (BMM/SIMS)

Parents/Carers kept informed

Positive Behaviour Policy: Select appropriate intervention/s. Update Behaviour Management Module (BMM/SIMS)

Positive Behaviour Policy: Appropriate sanctions/consequences applied. RESTORATION INTERVENTION/s Complete BCAS Recorded in BCAF

Anti-Bullying Policy: Select appropriate intervention/s. (ERBB) Update BCAF (BMM/SIMS)

Intervention/s applied to reduce unacceptable anti-social behaviour/s & ensure behaviour does not move into bullying behaviour: Update BMM/SIMS)

Code of Practice Tailored support provided: Complete BCAF (BMM/SIMS) SUPPORT

Intervention/s applied to reduce unacceptable Bullying Behaviour/s: Update BCAF (BMM/SIMS)

Intervention/s applied to strengthen target/s resilience. Update BCAF (BMM/SIMS (SIMS)

CODE OF PRACTICE: SUPPORT OUTCOMES
Together staff & pupils track, monitor & assess progress to determine efficacy of the intervention/s (Compile evidence files)

Record PROGRESS on BMM/SIMS

Record PROGRESS on BCAF (SIMS)

BoG

Bullying statistics discussed regularly at BoG Meetings
Macro tracking – statistics used to identify patterns to inform policy review to meet the needs of the young person more

Implement appropriate intervention to meet the needs of both those Experiencing Bullying Type Behaviours & displaying Bullying Type Behaviours using NIABF Resource (or other social emotional and behavioural needs if appropriate). Proceed through stages in the bullying concern assessment form (attached documents on SIMs) or behaviour plan if appropriate via Positive Behaviour Policy/Code of Practice

Maintain clear chronological digital Record Keeping – follow EA Guidance Documents on the appropriate use of SIMs? – Where a young person is educated on a different site ensure there is effective information share processes in place for accountability

Left margin (vertical): Enhanced Accountability for BoG, schools and supporting agencies to work with appropriate multi-disciplinary team to identify & address need

Right margin (vertical): Child Centred approach – Pupil and parent voice valued. Young Person and Parent/ Guardian engaged in the process