



BALLYCASTLE HIGH SCHOOL

Anti-Bullying Policy

- *Approval by the Board of Governors: 25 June 2015*
- *The implementation of this policy will be monitored by: Senior Management Team*
- *This policy will be reviewed every two years*



Rationale:

Bullying may be defined as the repeated use of power by one or more people intentionally to harm, hurt or adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others. In Ballycastle High School we seek to provide for our pupils a safe and caring environment where bullying will not be tolerated.

The welfare of all pupils is paramount and pupils' needs, whether the pupil displaying bullying behaviour or targeted pupil, should be separated from their behaviour. In Ballycastle High School we do not want to label pupils unfairly so we will use the term 'pupil who has been bullied' or 'target of bullying' instead of 'victim'. Instead of 'bully' we will use the term 'pupil who is displaying bullying behaviour'.

When bullying concerns are identified we will work in a restorative and solution-focused way to achieve the necessary change.

1. Pupils who are targeted will be listened to, supported and strengthened.
2. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour will be listened to and support to accept responsibility and change their behaviour.

The 2003 Statutory Requirements (Education and Libraries NI Order) requires schools to use measures to "encourage good behaviour and respect for others" and in particular, prevent bullying among pupils.

The legislation also requires the Board of Governors and Principal to consult with pupils, parents and staff regarding positive behaviour and bullying prevention measures which must be in place. This is especially necessary if the policy is being reviewed or there are significant changes made.

We have met this requirement in the following ways:

1. Awareness raising programmes through the Curriculum, Pastoral Lessons and Assemblies.
2. Involvement in Anti-Bullying Week
3. Obtaining the views of elected pupil representatives (School Council)
4. Questionnaires distributed via 'Google Docs' to a selection of parents, pupils and whole school staff
5. Parents' awareness raising programmes eg. Leaflets, posters.

Aims

1. To identify various elements of bullying.
2. To promote means of preventing bullying.



3. To establish procedures for staff in dealing with cases of alleged or suspected bullying.
4. To offer guidance and clarify procedures for parents.
5. To offer guidance to pupils.

Elements of Bullying

As the willful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone, bullying can take many forms:

1. Physical e.g. pushing, hitting, kicking, spitting, theft, damage to belongings.
2. Verbal, for example, threats, name-calling, teasing, taunting, spreading rumours, passing malicious notes.
3. Indirect, for example, excluding someone from the social group, tormenting, hiding other pupils' belongings, being unfriendly, making threatening gestures, staring.
4. Cyber bullying which may include misusing mobile phones/ computer and internet programmes to humiliate, threaten and isolate another as well as bullying through Social Network Sites, messaging and chat rooms.
5. Pupils may be targeted on the basis of race, religion, culture, gender, homophobic bullying including perceived sexual orientation or identity.

Often there is no theme evident in bullying behaviour but we believe that all bullying behaviour is wrong.

- The person displaying bullying behaviour takes pleasure in the targeted pupils' pain, fear and humiliation.
- Bullying often manifests itself in the repeated use of power over others.
- Bullying can be carried out by an individual or a group. Bullies sometimes try to involve others in their activities and onlookers can unwittingly become part of the bullying.
- Early signs of distress in pupils, for example, deterioration of work, spurious illness, isolation, erratic attendance or the desire to remain with adults may be symptoms of bullying.

Prevention of Bullying

- High standards of teaching and learning, an effective pastoral system and good relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils help to create an ethos in which good behaviour is promoted and maintained.
- The issue of bullying is addressed in Assemblies, Pastoral Lessons and Registration time. Coping strategies are developed in Personal Development lessons and in other parts of the curriculum, for example, English.



- Visiting speakers and drama groups are invited from time to time to explore the problem of bullying.
- Anti-bullying training is a regular part of the Staff Professional Development programme.
- Effective supervision of the school buildings and grounds before school, at break and at lunchtime is essential to prevent opportunities for bullying. This means that all staff must be alert all times, including between classes, to the possibility of bullying occurring.
- In promoting a climate of care in the school, pupils are encouraged regularly to discuss with a member of staff or a school counsellor any concerns about themselves or another pupil.

Procedures for staff in cases of suspected or alleged bullying:

- Where there is an allegation or suspicion of bullying, the incident will be thoroughly and sensitively investigated.
- Teachers who are dealing with bullying will follow school policy. (See Guidelines for Staff)
- Sanctions against the bully will be in accordance with the school's Discipline Policy.
- All cases of bullying must be reported to the Year Head and serious cases must be referred to the Head of Pastoral Care and / or Vice Principal.
- Very serious or persistent cases of bullying will be referred to the Education Authority who will work alongside school in an advisory capacity. If appropriate, the Educational Welfare Officer may be involved and where necessary, Child Protection Procedures will be instigated.

Guidance and procedures for parents:

- Parents who suspect that their child is being bullied should contact the school immediately. The initial contact may be to the Year Head, Head of Pastoral Care, Vice Principal or to the Principal.
- Parents who report an incident of bullying will be informed of the outcome of the investigations and the steps to be taken.
- A leaflet on Bullying containing advice for parents and for pupils will be issued to all parents. Copies are available from the school office on request.

Guidance for pupils:

- Pupils are encouraged not to neglect their own welfare as well as caring for others.
- Pupils who are being bullied or who know that someone else is being bullied should report the matter to a teacher at the first opportunity.



- A leaflet on Bullying containing advice for pupils will be issued to all pupils in Year 8. A copy of the leaflet will be displayed in all Form rooms and Form Teachers will remind pupils of the advice at regular intervals.
- The websites listed in Appendix A contain practical advice for pupils, teachers and parents on tackling cyber-bullying.

Guidance for parents

In Ballycastle High School bullying will not be tolerated. We aim to prevent bullying in school and recognise that in this, as in all other areas of school life, we will be much more successful if we have the support of you, the parents. We would like to suggest that you can help your child by:

- watching for signs of distress. These may include deterioration of work, unwillingness to go to school, spurious illness, erratic attendance, isolation or the desire to remain with adults.
- taking an active interest in your child's school life e.g. by taking time to discuss the school day, the journey to and from school and your child's friendships.
- encouraging your child not to retaliate if there is bullying but rather to talk to a teacher - the Form Teacher or any teacher to whom he/she can relate easily.
- contacting the school immediately if you suspect that bullying is taking place. Your initial contact may be to the Year Head, Head of Pastoral Care, Vice Principal or the Principal.
- offering continuing support to your son/daughter if he/she has been the victim of bullying.
- working with your son/daughter at home if he/she has been guilty of bullying. It is important that the young person understands why bullying is wrong and the detrimental effect it can have.

Parents who report an incident of bullying will be informed as soon as possible and not later than one week of the outcome of the investigations and the steps to be taken.

The websites listed in Appendix A of the Anti-Bullying Policy contain practical advice for parents on tackling cyber-bullying.

Useful contact numbers

- Ballycastle High School (028) 2076 2254

(The Vice-Principal is Mrs. C. Stewart and the Head of Pastoral Care is Miss J. Elliott)

- Childline 0800 1111
- NSPCC 0800 800500



Advice for pupils:

Bullying may take many forms. It can be:

- physical e.g. pushing, hitting, kicking, spitting, theft, damage to belongings;
- verbal e.g. threats, name-calling, teasing, taunting, spreading rumours, passing malicious notes,
- indirect e.g. excluding someone from a social group, tormenting, hiding other pupils'
- belongings, being unfriendly, making threatening gestures, staring.
- bullying and harassment (cyber bullying) can occur through mobile phones as well as on line

We will not tolerate bullying in Ballycastle High School but if it occurs we want to give you the following advice:

- If you are being bullied it's not your fault. The bully needs to change, not you.
- If you are being bullied or someone you know is being bullied talk to someone you can trust, tell your parents or talk to a teacher. This may be your Form Teacher or if you prefer, another teacher you find it easy to talk to. You may also speak to a school counsellor or the school nurse. Tell what actually happened - always be truthful and do not exaggerate.
- If you think it would help, bring a friend with you when you come to talk to a teacher - or ask a friend to speak to a teacher on your behalf.
- Don't be afraid that you will make matters worse by speaking to a teacher. Your teacher will try to deal with the problem discreetly and sensitively and help to stop the bullying.
- If you find it helpful write down what the bully has said or done to you - be careful to write down only what actually happened.
- If you are being bullied do not retaliate e.g. by hitting the bully, calling him/her names or spreading rumours about him/her. You could then be accused of bullying.
- When the incident has been dealt with you must tell the teacher immediately if the bullying ever starts again.
- If you feel the incident has not been dealt with satisfactorily tell another teacher e.g. your Year Head, Head of Pastoral Care (Miss J. Elliott) or the Vice Principal (Mrs. C. Stewart)
- If you are still unsure about talking to an adult in person you can telephone
 - Childline 0800 1111
 - NSPCC 0800 800500

Calls to these numbers are free of charge and do not show up on your phone-bill.



The websites listed on Appendix A of the school's Anti-bullying Policy contain useful advice on cyber-bullying.

REMEMBER!

Bullying is not acceptable in Ballycastle High School. By talking to a teacher you can help to stop it. You can help yourself and help your school.

APPENDIX A

Links to practical advice:

Many sites include practical advice for pupils, teachers and parents on tackling cyberbullying:

- The Anti-bullying Network – provides information for teachers and other professionals who work with young people (www.antibullying.net)
- Kidscape- advice for young people on how to respond to cyberbullying (www.kidscape.org.uk)
- NSPCC – lots of advice here about keeping children safe online. (www.nspcc.org.uk)
- Childnet International - plenty of advice and teachers' resources. Look for the 'Prank or Pain' link through their 'Know it All' project link. (www.childnet.org)
- Internet Watch Foundation - support website with information on filtering, protection, and an area to report illegal content. (www.iwf.org.uk)
- Kidsmart - part of the Childnet stable of websites, dealing with Internet safety programmes for schools, young people and parents. (www.kidsmart.org.uk)
- Cyberbully - contains links to useful online documents such as a guide to cyber-bullying and an educator's guide. (www.stopbullying.gov.uk/cyberbullying)
- Phone network service providers can assist through the phone numbers below:
 - Orange - 07973 100 150, or 150 from an Orange phone
 - Vodafone - 08700 700 11, or 191 from a Vodafone phone
 - O2 - 08705 678 678, or 4445 from an O2 phone
 - Virgin Mobile - 0845 6000 070, or 789 from a Virgin Mobile phone
 - 3 Network - 08707 330 333, or 333 from your 3 Network phone
 - T-Mobile - 0845 412 5000

For bullying phone calls through a landline, the numbers of the providers below may be useful:

- British Telecom Nuisance Call Advisor - freephone 0800 661 441
- View British Telecom's (BT) pdf leaflet for more information