



Ashfield Boys' High School  
Anti-Bullying Policy

## Statement of Intent

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a *TELLING* school. This means that *anyone* who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

## Objectives of this Policy

- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All governors and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a school we take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

## Defining Bullying

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 provides schools with a legal definition which states:

(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.

Therefore, in summary, according to the Ashfield Boys’ High School Anti-Bullying Policy;

***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.***

While bullying is usually repeated behaviour, there are instances of one-off incidents that, in line with the legislation, Ashfield Boys’ High School will consider as bullying.

When assessing a one-off incident, to make a decision on whether to classify it as bullying, Ashfield Boys' High School shall consider the following criteria:

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

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

## **Forms of Bullying**

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. Sharing of inappropriate images may be dealt with in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

This list is not exhaustive and that other behaviours which fit with the definition may be considered bullying behaviour.

## **Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?**

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a target of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who display bullying behaviours need to learn different ways of behaving.

As a school we have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to instances of bullying.

## **Signs and Symptoms**

A child may indicate by 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
- doesn't want to go on the school / public bus
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the person displaying bullying behaviour)
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (money / lunch has been stolen)

- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous & jumpy when a cyber message is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

### **Staff Responsibilities in preventing and dealing with bullying type behaviour**

Our staff will:

- Foster in our pupil's self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others
- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils
- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying
- Listen to children who have been bullied, take what they say seriously and act promptly by reporting any concerns to the boy's HOY who will investigate as per protocol.

### **Pupil Responsibilities in preventing and dealing with bullying type behaviour**

We expect our pupils to:

- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying behaviour, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity
- Intervene to protect the pupil who is the target of bullying behaviour, unless it is unsafe to do so
- Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying behaviour, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances
- Anyone who becomes the target of bullying behaviour should not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak to staff and be confident that it will be dealt with promptly, putting an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets.

### **Parent Responsibilities in preventing and dealing with bullying type behaviour**

We ask our parents to support their children and the school by:

- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children, which might be evidence of bullying.
- Advising their children to report any bullying behaviour to their Head of Year and explain the implications of allowing the bullying behaviour to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other pupils

- Advising their children not to retaliate violently to any form of bullying behaviour
- Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken
- Keeping a written record of any reported instances of bullying behaviour
- Informing the school of any suspected bullying behaviour, even if their children are not involved
- Co-operating with the school, if their children are accused of bullying type behaviour, try to ascertain the truth, and point out the implications of bullying behaviour, both for the children who are the targets of bullying behaviour and for the pupils displaying bullying behaviour.

## **Protocol for dealing with bullying related incidents/ concerns**

Once an alleged bullying incident has occurred:

1. Report initial concerns to appropriate HOY.
2. HOY to gather and clarify the facts before checking that the behaviour constitutes bullying as defined in this policy and check records for any previous incidents.
3. HOY to complete the **Bullying Concern Assessment Form** (available on Fronter Pastoral Care section) and discuss with the Vice Principal.
4. HOY/ Vice Principal should agree on the level of severity taking account of the criteria in the Bullying Concern Assessment Form.
5. On the basis of this initial assessment an appropriate intervention(s) from the Intervention Levels (see p16-19 of Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum produced resource Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour) will be chosen by the HOY and Vice Principal. This is to be recorded in the Bullying Concern Assessment Form. Consequences identified in the school's Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy may also be deemed appropriate in dealing with these incidents.
6. The HOY and Vice Principal will identify the appropriate intervention for the pupil who has been the target of the bullying behaviour and record in the Bullying Concern Assessment Form.
7. The detail of the incident, interventions for the target of the bullying behaviour and interventions for pupil displaying bullying behaviour will be communicated to the parents of the targeted pupil by the HOY.
8. The detail of the incident and interventions will be communicated to the parents of the pupil displaying bullying behaviour.
9. HOY to monitor and evaluate the on-going effectiveness of the chosen intervention/strategy and record in Bullying Concern Assessment Form.
10. The completed Bullying Concern Assessment Form is to be recorded electronically as a 'Linked Document' on the relevant SIMS pupil profiles.

## **Prevention**

Bullying, its effects and consequences are dealt with through the delivery of LLW and RE through the Barnardos All Stars programme.

The school's messages regarding bullying are reinforced through our Anti-Bullying Charter, in assemblies and National Anti-Bullying Week.

### **On-going effective management of bullying incidents**

A report on bullying incidents within the school will be included every term in the Pastoral Care update to the CLT and annually to the BOG. These reports should inform and guide the on-going review and development of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy, procedures and practice.