BANBRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

REVISED DRAFT ANTI BULLYING POLICY

CONTEXT

Our purpose is to provide a safe and secure learning environment for all our pupils in Banbridge High School; an environment which is conducive to effective learning and teaching, free from intimidation and the threat of psychological and physical abuse. The school’s anti-bullying policy is an integral part of our Pastoral Care Policy, Safeguarding Procedures and Positive Behaviour Policy. The Policy is also informed and guided by current legislation, Health and Safety at Work (NI Order), 1978; The Children (Northern Ireland) Order, 1995; The Human Rights Act, 1998; The Education (Northern Ireland) Order, 1998; Welfare and Protection of Pupils Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order, 2003; The Education (2006 Order) Order (Northern Ireland), 2007; The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010; Addressing Bullying in Schools Action (Northern Ireland), 2016 and Department of Education Guidance, Pastoral Care in Schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour, 2001; Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: A Guide for Schools, 2017; Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 Statutory Guidance for Schools and Board of Governors, 2019, and will be regularly reviewed in line with changes to legislation and guidance.

This policy applies to pupils attending the school and who are under the lawful charge of a member of staff of the school.

OBJECTIVES

The role of this policy is to ensure that all have an understanding of the need to have a school environment which allow all to reach their fullest potential, without having their progress prevented or disrupted. Its function is to ensure that the positive well-being of all is promoted. It will be the responsibility of the school through the Board of Governors to ensure that all pupils have a fair and equitable educational experiences that are not affected by the bullying activities of others.

It is also the purpose of the policy to highlight ways in which the school seeks to build the capacity of each pupil to be informed of preventative measures which they can deploy to help deal with bullying situations. These include a range of school based activities which provide key strategies and approaches that can be used in school and outside of school which allow pupils to deal with the issue of bullying in an appropriate manner.

DEFINITION

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI), 2016 defines Bullying as the repeated use of, but not limited to, any verbal, written or electronic communication or 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 and/or emotional harm to that pupil or group of pupils. The Act also includes omission.

Under this definition, the school may not consider a one off incident as bullying behaviour unless there is significant evidence of pre-mediation causing significant emotional and/or physical harm. The criteria which we will judge an incident against may include: the severity and significance of the incident; evidence of pre-mediation; impact of the incident on individuals (physical/emotional); impact of the incidents on the wider community; previous relationships between those involved; any previous incidents involving the individuals.

Bullying can be deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for the pupil experiencing bullying behaviour is unable defend themselves. It can take a number of forms, for example (this is not an exhaustive list):
* Physical (eg hitting, kicking, spitting, theft, hiding or damage to belongings).
* Verbal (eg belittling, ridiculing appearance/mannerism/speech, threats or offensive name-calling).
* Indirect (eg spreading rumours, writing offensive graffiti, excluding someone from social groups, abusive text messages and e-format bullying).

It can be planned and organised, or it may be unintentional; it can happen over a period of time or may happen only once but have a profound effect. It can be perpetrated by individuals or groups of individuals. It is also recognised that some forms of bullying may be crimes.

If unchecked and unchallenged, bullying can profoundly damage the person experiencing the bullying, in both the short and long term, emotionally and physically and seriously disrupt or impede the capacity to learn and develop. It is the responsibility of all staff to act on allegations of bullying by following the procedures outlined in this policy.

**PREVENTATIVE APPROACHES**

The school seeks, through its preventative curriculum, to develop the young person’s ability to be able to detect and manage bullying activity directed towards them or others inside school or on their way to and from school. The listed activities are designed to empower the young person to behave in a way which keeps them safe and respects the rights of others and assists the school in identifying issues of bullying and where additional support and help may be required:

- Annual Anti-Bullying Week activities
- Anti-Bullying Ambassadors
- School Assemblies
- School Council Meetings
- PSHE and Citizenship programmes in Years 8-10
- LLW programmes in Years 11-14 (Covering the following topics: Stress and Anxiety; Developing Self Esteem; Building Resilience; Promoting Positive Mental Health)
- Specific Year programmes through Form Class programmes (Covering the following topics: emotions and feelings; Body Reaction to Conflict; Resolving Conflict; Good and Bad Friendships; Being Positive; Looking after our Mental Health; Rights and Responsibilities).
- Prefect mentoring in Years 8 and 9.
- Resilience and capacity building programmes developed through whole school engagement such as whole school Rewards System, extra-curricular activities and additional enrichment programmes such as those delivered through Shared Education.
- Monitoring through SMT and Pastoral Meetings and Pastoral Year meetings.
- Monitoring of incidents of bullying through Sims Behaviour module and Bullying Concern Assessment Form.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

The school ethos seeks to ensure that the rights of all are respected and the responsibilities of all highlighted. In relation to this Policy it is the responsibility of all within the school to behave in a manner which respects everyone and to report any incidents in which these rights are not being respected. Likewise, pupils are encouraged to have the responsibility to behave in a caring manner towards other members of the school community, in an atmosphere where bullying is not tolerated and where incidents of bullying are reported to staff.

The School through its range of pastoral, PSHE, LLW programmes will seek at various opportunities will seek to alert pupils to the unacceptable act of bullying, and ensure that they are well informed of what to do if they feel they are experiencing bullying or witness it taking place. This awareness
raising will be instilled also through various socialising programmes which are offered by a range of outside agencies who conduct programmes within the school and throughout the school year.

The school will ensure that:

(i) In reported incidents of bullying the facts will be gathered and if the evidence supports that bullying has occurred the process of addressing the matter can be progressed. During this process, the pupil experiencing bullying will be protected and supported by the pastoral structures of the school.

(ii) If substantiated steps will be taken to identify those responsible for the bullying. When this has been established and proven the school will invoke its discipline procedures appropriately, to address the pupil(s) displaying bullying behaviour in an effort to change their behaviour(s). The parent/guardian of the pupil(s) displaying bullying behaviour will be made aware of any allegations, the progress of investigation and the outcomes of such investigations.

(iii) Depending on the nature of the bullying and especially where the bullying behaviour is persistent and defies school’s attempts to successfully address it, then child protection procedures may be instigated. The pupil(s) displaying bullying behaviour will be offered support to help modify their behaviour within the pastoral system of the school or the input of other appropriate external agencies.

(iv) Support for the pupil(s) experiencing the bullying behaviour will be through the existing pastoral supports of the school. The parent/guardian of the pupil(s) experiencing the bullying behaviour will be kept fully informed of the way in which the issue is being dealt with.

(v) Incidents of alleged bullying will be recorded electronically using the Bullying Concern Assessment Form (BCAF) and the associated and appropriate parts of this electronic record.

(vi) The details of each bullying case will be monitored by the appropriate pastoral team of the school, to ensure that the steps being taken to deal with the matters and issues arising are having the positive and remedial effect as required.

To ensure the implementation of this policy our staff will:

* Foster and cultivate self-esteem, self and mutual respect within the school community.
* Demonstrate and model the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect from our pupils.
* Discuss bullying in its various forms as part of the pastoral, PSHE and LLW programmes.
* Provide pupils with the opportunity to learn and practise the skills and knowledge needed to empower them to better protect themselves and others from bullying.
* Be alert to the signs of distress and other possible indicators of bullying in students and to act on these indicators in an explorative and investigative way.
* Listen to those experiencing bullying and treat seriously what they say. Record details in writing following the school’s normal referral procedures.
* Report suspected cases of bullying to the appropriate Year Head and when appropriate designated teacher for child protection.
* Follow up any parental concern and feedback promptly detailing any action taken as well as monitoring and updating records.

The school also expects its pupils to:

* Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying activity towards others.
* Inform staff immediately of any bullying they have experienced, witnessed or suspect.
* To listen carefully and follow through on advice and support that is offered in school to develop strategies and approaches on managing bullying situations.

We would ask our parents to support us by:

* Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children which may be indicators of bullying.
* Encourage their children to follow school procedures for reporting incidents of bullying.
* Inform the school if they suspect their child is experiencing bullying.
* Being sympathetic and understanding towards their children and assuring them that appropriate action will be taken.
* Co-operating with the school, if their child is accused of displaying bullying behaviour in helping to ascertain the truth and point out the implications for both their child and the person experiencing bullying behaviour.

CONSULTATION AND TRAINING

The school will ensure that this policy is reviewed not less than every four year, in line with guidance, or is reviewed following new guidance, revised procedures or changes in legislation. At points of review all will be consulted through on-line surveys regarding the contents of the policy, and in line with the school’s development plan cycle, student, staff, parents and Governors will be asked to refresh their views on the school’s policies and procedures regarding anti-bullying at the beginning of each new school development plan cycle (every three years).

Staff receive refresh child protection and safeguarding training at the beginning of each school year, of which anti-bullying forms part of this refresh. Staff will receive additional training and support as it is appropriate and available, and additional support through relevant external agencies who may support the school as a whole, or support individual pupils experiencing bullying or individual pupils displaying bullying behaviour.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The school seeks to develop and sustain a school environment which encourages pupils’ to raise issues around anti-bullying as well as operate clear steps to implementation. There are opportunities during the school year where specific attention is paid to the area of anti-bullying such as Anti-Bullying Week. The pastoral system of the school will record incidents of bullying, so that trends or patterns within sub-groups of the school can be identified and so inform the further development of targeted or specific work (eg a particular group within the school, or specific medium for bullying such as social media). Where there is opportunity additional training and support will made available to address both additional anti-bullying approaches and more specific anti-bullying challenges.

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Appendices:

1. **Related School Policies**

   Positive Behaviour Policy  
   Attendance Policy  
   Pastoral Care Policy  
   Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy  
   Special Educational Needs Policy  
   Staff Code of Conduct  
   Relationships and Sexuality Policy  
   Acceptable Use of the Internet, Digital Technologies and E-Safety Policy

2. **List of external agencies used by the school to support its anti-bullying policy**

   School Counsellors  
   Action Mental Health (Years 8, 11, 13 and 14)  
   PSNI-The appropriate use of social media  
   BEAM-Healthy relationships and self esteem  
   Love for Life-Promoting Healthy Relationships  
   Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum  
   SMASHED Workshops