

Kilkeel High School

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

RATIONALE

Kilkeel High School believes that its students and staffs have the right to learn and work in a secure and caring environment without the fear of being bullied. They also have a responsibility to contribute, in whatever way they can, to the protection and maintenance of such an environment. Bullying is entirely contrary to the values and principles we work and live by.

Kilkeel High School is completely opposed to all forms of bullying.

MISSION STATEMENT

We will endeavour to:

- Ensure that the school is an orderly and disciplined community in which consideration for others, courtesy and good manners are encouraged and a positive attitude towards discipline, conduct and authority sustained.
- Provide a supportive learning environment which cultivates self-esteem and enables students of all abilities to develop confidence, act with initiative and adopt positive attitudes towards themselves and others.
- Develop effective two-way channels of communication and an active partnership between home, school and community.

PRINCIPLES

It is the aim of Kilkeel High School that all our students will:

- Enjoy good relationships with peers and staffs, caring for each other and valuing the diversity that exists among us.
- Show courtesy and good manners, respecting themselves and others within the school, the local community and the global environment.
- Be self-disciplined and capable of making informed decisions, independently and collaboratively.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying is an act of aggression, causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to someone. It can take a number of forms; physical, verbal, making gestures, extortion and exclusion. It is an abuse of power. It can be planned and organised, or it may be unintentional. It may be perpetrated by individuals or by groups.

FORMS OF BULLYING

- Physical violence, which may include; hitting, pushing or spitting at another person.
- Interfering with another person's property, by stealing, hiding or damaging it.
- Using offensive names when addressing another person.
- Teasing or spreading rumours about another person or his/her family.
- Belittling another person's abilities and achievements.
- Writing offensive notes or graffiti about another person.
- Excluding another person from a group activity.
- Ridiculing another person's appearance, way of speaking or personal mannerisms.
- Misusing technology including e-mail, phone calls, social networking sites, instant messaging and text/photo messaging etc. to hurt or humiliate another person.

It is not possible to list all forms of bullying in this policy, but every incident will be considered on an individual basis, taking into account intent and the context in which it occurred.

LINKS WITH OTHER SCHOOL POLICIES

This Anti-Bullying Policy forms part of the school's overall **Pastoral Care Policy**.

It links with the **Child Protection Policy** in which the school outlines the steps it will take to protect children from harm and develop their personal safety strategies.

It links with the **Discipline Policy** in which the school outlines types of behaviour which are considered appropriate and inappropriate, together with the sanction which will be used as part of the disciplinary process.

It links with the **Acceptable use of the Internet Policy**, in which the school outlines appropriate use of electronic forms of communication.

PARTICIPATION & CONSULTATION PROCESS

- Awareness raising programmes (Curriculum & Parent Information Evenings)
- Survey/questionnaires distributed to students, parents and whole school staffs.
- Obtaining the views of elected student representatives e.g. class forum, school's council or prefects.
- Monitoring, evaluation and review.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS, PARENTS AND STAFFS

The Responsibilities of Staffs

Our staff will:

- Foster in our students self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others
- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our students.
- Discuss bullying with all classes, so that every student learns about the damage it causes to both the child who is bullied and to the bully and the importance of telling a teacher about bullying when it happens.
- 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 to support and protect them.
- Report suspected cases of bullying to the relevant Form Tutor, Year Head, Key Stage Coordinator, Vice Principal or Principal.
- Follow up any complaint by a parent about bullying, and make every attempt to report back on the action which has been taken.
- Deal with observed instances of bullying promptly and effectively, in accordance with agreed procedures.

The Responsibilities of Students

We expect our students to:

- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity.
- Intervene to protect the student who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so.
- Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances.

Anyone who becomes the target of bullies should:

- Not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out, to put an end to his/her own suffering and that of other potential targets.

The Responsibilities of Parents

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 to their Class Teacher, Form Tutor, Year Head, Key Stage Coordinator, Vice Principal or Principal.
- Explaining the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other students.

- Advising their children not to retaliate violently to any forms of bullying.
- Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken;
- Informing the school of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved;
- Co-operating with the school, if their children are accused of bullying, to try to ascertain the truth.
- Pointing out the implications of bullying, both for the children who are bullied and for the bullies themselves.

The Responsibilities of All

Everyone should:

- Work together to reduce, combat and move towards eradicating bullying.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES.

The school aims to provide a safe and caring community, through an ethos which promotes consideration for others, courtesy and good manners. All students benefit from a comprehensive and accessible support structure through a dedicated team including Form Tutor, Year Head, Key Stage Coordinators, Vice Principal and Principal. The Form Tutor plays a key role, building positive and trusting relationships.

The school also has an ongoing range of preventative measures that are used to combat bullying, including:

- Anti-Bullying week
- Dealing with the issue in assemblies
- Personal Development Programme
- Education Welfare Officer
- School Counsellor provided by Contact Youth (External Agency)
- Support of external agencies such as "Class Acts" and the PSNI
- Displays
- In service training for staff

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH INCIDENTS OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

We support the victims in the following ways, by:

- offering them an opportunity to talk about the experience with the appropriate teacher.
- informing the victims' parents/guardians, if necessary.
- offering continuing support if necessary.

We also discipline, yet try to help the bullies in the following ways, by:

- talking about what happened, to discover why they became involved.
- informing the bullies' parents/guardians.
- continuing to work with the bullies in order to get rid of prejudiced attitudes as far as possible.
- applying the relevant sanctions.
- details of incidents are recorded and placed in the students' files.
- action which may be taken
 - Contacting parents/carers of all students concerned in the bullying incident.
 - Investigation.
 - Feedback to those concerned.
 - Sanctions.
 - Contacting relevant professionals e.g. EWO, Behaviour Management Team, School Counsellor, Pupil Personal Services' Development Team.

DISCIPLINARY STEPS

1. Students found to be bullying will be warned officially to stop offending.
2. Parents/guardians of students found to be bullying will be informed.
3. Where the incidence of bullying is serious, or the student continues to offend, he/she will be dealt with by senior staff and will face appropriate consequences.
4. If a student, found to be bullying, continues to offend, he/she will face suspension.
5. If he /she will not end such behaviour, he/she will be recommended for permanent exclusion. (Based on the School's and SELB policies).

CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF

The need for staff training in Kilkeel High School is met through attendance at external courses or through the organisation of suitable school-based professional development. Staff will be provided with up to date information on anti-bullying issues and the requirements and recommendations of relevant DE circulars.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Policy will be reviewed annually by the Behaviour Development Team taking into account feedback from staff, parents and students.