# DOWN HIGH SCHOOL

# ANTI-BULLYING POLICY



## "NOTHING ACHIEVED WITHOUT EFFORT"

## Introduction

At Down High School, we are committed to promoting wellbeing by providing a safe, caring and supportive environment for every member of our school community. We believe that through our core value of **RESPECT,** bullying behaviour can be prevented, challenged, reported and stopped. Our core value of **RESPECT** means:

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| *Responsibility* | *We value doing the right thing* |
| *Effort* | *We value trying our best* |
| *Success* | *We value high achievement* |
| *Perseverance* | *We value rising to a challenge* |
| *Equality* | *We value our diversity* |
| *Community* | *We value our positive relationships* |
| *Trust* | *We value each other* |

## Anti-Bullying Ethos

- We believe that all forms of bullying behaviour are unacceptable and that all pupils have the right to live and learn in a safe and supportive environment, free from bullying.
- We have an ethos and culture of inclusion in our school for all pupils, irrespective of race, religion/belief, political views, gender, gender identity and sexual orientation.
- We are committed to a preventative, responsive and restorative anti-bullying ethos across the whole school.

- We value and will actively seek the views of our pupils. We will respect these views and take them into account.
- We understand that everyone in the Down High School community has a role to play in taking a stand against bullying behaviour and in creating a safe and welcoming environment for all.

## Context

This policy has been developed within the following relevant legislative and policy framework. This includes:

**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 Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016**

**Key points to note are that the Act:**

✓ 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;
- ✓ Requires that the policy be updated at least every four years.

Sets out the circumstances under which this policy should be applied, namely:

- ✓ In school, during the school day;
- ✓ While travelling to and from school;
- ✓ When under supervision 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 Area Learning Community [ALC]).

The school also reserves the right to take steps to prevent bullying behaviour through the use of electronic communication amongst pupils at any time during the term, where that behaviour is likely to have a detrimental effect on a pupil's education at school.

**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).

## Consultation and Participation

This policy has been developed in consultation with all members of the school community, including pupils and their parents, in compliance with the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016. Consultation has taken place in the following ways:

- Consultative Anti-Bullying workshops with School Council Representatives;
- Pastoral Team training and consultation;
- Staff training and consultation;
- Engagement with parents.

## What is 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 (see below for definitions).

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), "act" includes omission. (When someone has been deliberately left out or excluded, with the aim of causing harm.)

**\*Physical and Emotional Harm - Definitions**

- 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.

## Therefore, in summary, according to the Down High School Anti-Bullying Policy;

Bullying is behaviour, usually repeated, by one or more persons intentionally to cause hurt, harm or adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others.

## One-off Incidents

While bullying is usually repeated behaviour, there are situations when one-off incidents, in line with the legislation, will be considered as bullying. To make a decision on whether to classify a one-off incident as bullying, the school will 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 incident on the 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 Positive Behaviour Policy.

## What is Bullying Behaviour?

The following unacceptable behaviours, when repeated, targeted and intentionally hurtful, may be considered 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 spreading false rumours about others
- ➢ Trying to make other pupils dislike another pupil/s

**Physical acts**

- ➢ Hitting
- ➢ Spitting
- ➢ Kicking
- ➢ Pushing
- ➢ Causing material harm, such as taking/stealing money or possessions or causing damage to possessions
- ➢ Threats of violence

**Omission (Exclusion)**

- ➢ Leaving someone out of a game or activity
- ➢ 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
- ➢ Sharing images (e.g. photographs or videos) online to embarrass someone
- ➢ Using online tools to create fake photographs, videos or memes
- ➢ Creating fake profiles or websites to impersonate, humiliate or expose someone
- ➢ Online threats of violence

➢ Online exclusion (for example: preventing a pupil from joining a class online group chat)

**Please note this list is not exhaustive and other behaviours which fit with the definition may be considered bullying behaviour.**

## What motivates Bullying Behaviour?

There are many motivations behind bullying. These include, but are not limited to:

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| ➢ Age | ➢ Religion |
| ➢ Appearance | ➢ Disability / SEN |
| ➢ Breakdown in peer relationships | ➢ Ability |
| ➢ Community background | ➢ Looked After Child status |
| ➢ Political affiliation | ➢ Young Carer status |
| ➢ Gender | ➢ Pregnancy |
| ➢ Gender identity | ➢ Marital status |
| ➢ Sexual orientation | ➢ Race |

Bullying is an emotive issue, therefore it is essential to ensure that we use supportive, understanding language when discussing these matters. For that reason, we will not refer to a child as 'a bully', but as 'a child displaying bullying behaviours'. Nor will we refer to a child as 'a victim', but as 'a child experiencing bullying behaviours'. We encourage all members of the school community to use this language when discussing alleged bullying incidents.

## Preventing Bullying

Anyone can be bullied; however, pupils can be better equipped to deal with potential problems if they develop a strong sense of self-confidence and a range of positive and supportive relationships. The prevention of bullying is embedded in both the ethos and curriculum of the school, helping to create a safe learning environment. Down High seeks, through its curriculum and wide range of extra-curricular activities, to provide pupils with

opportunities to engage in activities where self-esteem and personal growth are actively promoted. A strong anti-bullying ethos is promoted in a number of ways, including:

- Promotion of our core value of RESPECT;
- Promotion of positive pupil-teacher relationships;
- Raising awareness and understanding of the importance of positive behaviour, as set out in the Positive Behaviour Policy;
- Promotion of anti-bullying messages through the curriculum;
- Raising pupil awareness and understanding of types of bullying through Personal Development (PD) as part of Learning for Life and Work (LLW) (e.g. sectarian, racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, disablist, etc.);
- Involvement in meaningful and supportive shared education projects, encouraging pupils to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity;
- Promotion of positive emotional health and wellbeing;
- Promotion of a help-seeking culture;
- Participation in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities;
- Use of the Anti-Bullying notice board to raise awareness of the types of bullying behaviour and the impact bullying behaviour can have on young people;
- Use of external agencies to raise awareness of the impact bullying behaviour can have on young people and to support pupil resilience;
- Engagement in key national and regional campaigns, e.g. Safer Internet Day;
- Peer leadership through the School Council to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messages within the school;
- Focused assemblies to raise awareness and promote understanding of key issues related to bullying;
- Provision and promotion of an extensive range of extra-curricular activities, aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks.

**Preventing bullying behaviour on the way to and from school**

The school also promotes and develops an anti-bullying culture on the journey to and from school. This includes:

- Promotion of our core value of RESPECT and the development of a culture where pupils take pride in their school. This includes regular reminders of the positive behaviour expectations of pupils whilst travelling to and from school;
- Visit from Translink "Safety Bus" in Year 8 to promote positive behaviour on public transport;

- Promotion of "Up-standers", empowering pupils to challenge inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour of their peers during the journey to and from school;
- Regular engagement with transport providers (e.g. Translink, EA Transport, etc.) to ensure effective communication and the early identification of any concerns;
- Use of senior staff to support the transition from school day to journey home.

**Online bullying**

Online bullying can be overt or covert bullying behaviours using digital technologies, including hardware such as computers and smartphones, and software such as social media, instant messaging, texts, websites and other online platforms. Online bullying can happen at any time. It can be in public or in private and sometimes only known to the target and the person displaying bullying behaviours. The school reserves the right to take steps to prevent bullying behaviour through the use of electronic communication amongst pupils at any time during the term, where that behaviour is likely to have a detrimental effect on a pupil's education at school.

The school raises awareness of the nature and impact of online bullying in a number of ways and supports pupils to make use of the internet safely, responsibly and respectfully. This includes:

- Addressing key themes of online behaviour and risk through ICT and 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 to support the promotion of key online safety messages;
- Participation in annual Safer Internet Day and promotion of online safety messages throughout the year;
- Development and implementation of robust and appropriate policies in related areas (e.g. Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy and Mobile Phone Policy).

## Responsibility

The whole school community is responsible for creating a safe and supportive learning environment and pupils, parents and staff 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;
- Be an "up-stander" and 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 or via the "Pastoral Alert" on the school website;
- 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 – inside and outside school;
- Resolve difficulties in restorative ways to prevent recurring bullying behaviour and meet the needs of all parties.

## Reporting a Bullying Concern

ANY pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing this behaviour. Our preventative programme encourages pupils to seek help if they have a concern about bullying that they experience or is experienced by another pupil or group of pupils.

### Pupils Reporting a Concern

Pupils can report a bullying concern by:

- Talking to any member of staff they trust;
- Writing a note to a member of staff (e.g. in a homework diary);
- Sending an email to a member of staff;
- Using the **Pastoral Alert** on the school website (Pastoral Section).

### Parents/Carers Reporting a Concern

Parents and carers should raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour with the school at the earliest opportunity. Parents and carers should encourage their children to react appropriately to bullying behaviour and to not do anything to retaliate or to 'hit back'.

The process of reporting bullying concerns is as follows:

- In the first instance, all bullying concerns should be reported to the relevant Year Head or Head of Pastoral Section (Junior School- Mrs Emerson, Middle School-Mr Knox, Senior School-Mrs Hamilton);
- 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 Section or Vice-Principal, as applicable;
- Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken by the Head of Section/Vice-Principal to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to the Principal.

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. (See Complaints Policy on the school website for full details)

Any member of the school community can report a bullying concern to school by contacting the main office (028 44612103) and asking to speak to a member of the pastoral staff, by emailing the school their concern (office@downhigh.downpatrick.ni.sch.uk) or by using the **Pastoral Alert** on the school website.

All reports of bullying concerns received from pupils, parents or members of the public will be responded to in line with this policy and 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.

## Responding to a Bullying Concern

The processes outlined below provide a framework for how Down High School will respond to any bullying concerns identified.

The member of pastoral staff responding to the concern will:

- Clarify facts and perceptions;
- Check records (SIMS/behaviour management module);
- Assess the incident against the criteria for bullying behaviour;
- Identify any themes or motivating factors;
- Identify the type of bullying behaviour being displayed;
- Identify the intervention level in line with guidance provided by NIABF http://www.endbullying.org.uk/effective-responses-to-bullying-behaviour/;

- Select and implement appropriate interventions for all pupils involved, including appropriate interventions, consequences and sanctions not listed in the NIABF Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource;
- Track, monitor and record effectiveness of interventions;
- Review outcome of interventions;
- Select and implement further interventions as necessary.

Our main focus is on a restorative approach to bullying behaviour. When responding to a bullying concern, the school will implement interventions aimed at responding to the behaviour, resolving the concern and restoring the wellbeing of those involved.  When necessary, the school may implement sanctions for those displaying bullying behaviour.

## Recording

As outlined in the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016, a record of all incidents of bullying and alleged bullying behaviour will be maintained. This will include:

- 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 Module, which is part of the C2k system in schools. 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 anti-bullying policy and practice within the school.

### Monitoring and Review of Policy

To appropriately monitor the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy, the Board of Governors will:
- Maintain a standing item on the agenda of each meeting of the Board where incidents of bullying behaviour will be given and recorded in minutes;
- 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.

This Anti-Bullying Policy shall be reviewed as required, in consultation with pupils and their parents/carers, every four years.

## Links to Other Policies

In the development and implementation of this Anti-Bullying Policy, the Board of Governors has taken into consideration a number of related policies, including:

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


## Advice and Support

The following organisations offer support, advice, and information:

http://www.bullying.co.uk/

http://www.familylives.org.uk/

https://www.kidscape.org.uk/

https://www.childline.org.uk/

http://www.parentingni.org/

https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/contacts-az/northern-ireland-anti-bullying-forum