



*Lisnagarvey High School*

# **LISNAGARVEY HIGH SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Bullying does not just affect bullies and victims. Other children who see it happening and so witness the distress of the victim will suffer mental anguish. Bullying will alter the atmosphere of a class and moreover pupils who are not aggressive by nature may be drawn into the taunting and tormenting of victims by group pressure.

The staff of Lisnagarvey High School strive to eradicate bullying in school through the series of anti-bullying initiatives. We want to give the message that in our school bullying will **NOT** be tolerated. We want to give the message to pupils who feel threatened that they may report their fears in the knowledge that the bully will be firmly dealt with.

As advocated by DENI Circular 1997/4, schools should act and be seen to act promptly and firmly to combat bullying. This is consistent with our school's basic responsibility to keep our pupils safe from harm and to provide a secure learning environment. Bullying, however, thrives in an atmosphere of uncertainty, secrecy and fear, and by its very nature undermines and detracts from the quality of education offered in school. Thus, it is an issue which must be firmly faced and addressed by the Principal and staff on a day to day basis. A whole-school response aimed at implementing effective anti-bullying procedures is essential.

There can be a variety of reasons why some pupils bully - they might be unhappy with their own lives and because they are angry or jealous, or are perhaps themselves being bullied, then they try to compensate by taunting someone else. The person they choose to bully will invariably be an easy target, someone they can pick on without there being any danger to themselves. The bullying will be done when there is no teacher or other reliable and supportive person present, because an important part of the life of the bully is to appear 'big'.

The actions of a bully are such as to create an atmosphere in which the victim feels a constant sense of foreboding at the thought of being subjected to taunts or threatened with violent behaviour.

Tatum (1990) states that "It is the basic entitlement of all children and young people in the UK that they receive their education free from humiliation, oppression and abuse. Education is compulsory in our society, and therefore it is the responsibility of all adults to ensure that it takes place in an atmosphere which is caring and protective".

## **DEFINITION OF BULLYING**

There is no legal definition of bullying, however according to **GOV.UK**, it's usually defined as behaviour that is repeated, intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally and is often aimed at certain groups, for example because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation. It takes many forms and can include physical assault, teasing, making threats, name calling and cyber bullying - bullying via mobile phone or online (for example email, social networks and instant messenger).

According to a **Department of Education** consultation in 2016 bullying was defined as "The repeated and intentional use of physical, verbal, electronic, written or psychological acts," or a combination of these, "by one or more pupils against another pupil or group of pupils with the intention of causing hurt, harm, fear, distress or adversely affecting the rights or needs of that pupil or group".

**The Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF)** defines bullying as the repeated use of power by one or more persons intentionally to hurt, harm or adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others.

## **PREJUDICE BASED BULLYING**

Bullying, no matter how it happens or why it happens, is always wrong. To better understand the behaviour and our response, it can be helpful to think about different themes of bullying. Some forms of prejudice-based bullying include:

**Racist Bullying** - When a child or young person experiences bullying based on the colour of their skin, their ethnic, or perceived ethnic, origin, cultural or religious background.

**Sectarian Bullying** - When a child or young person experiences bullying based on their real, or perceived, religious or cultural background within the context of the society in Northern Ireland.

**Disablist Bullying** - When a child or young person experiences bullying based on a perceived, or actual, disability or special need.

**Homophobic Bullying** - When a child or young person experiences bullying because they are lesbian, gay or bisexual, or because others think they are.

**Transphobic Bullying** - When a child or young person experiences bullying because of their real, or perceived, gender identity.

**LAC Bullying** - When a child or young person experiences bullying because they are looked after by someone other than their parents (Looked After Child) - NIABF.

## **CYBER-BULLYING**

Cyber Bullying is bullying behaviour that is displayed through mobile/smart phones or the internet. This could include:

- Hurtful, embarrassing or threatening material posted online (e.g. on social networking websites).
- Nasty messages sent as texts, emails or other websites or apps that are threatening or cause discomfort.
- Being excluded from an online game.
- Fake profiles on a social network to make fun of others.
- Picture/video clips via mobile phone cameras - images sent to others to make the victim feel threatened or embarrassed.
- Mobile phone calls - silent calls or abusive messages; or stealing the victim's phone and using it to harass others to make them believe the victim is responsible.
- E-mails - threatening or bullying e-mails, often sent using a pseudonym or someone else's name.
- Chat-room bullying - menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in a web-based chat-room e.g. MSN.
- Instant messaging - unpleasant messages sent while children conduct real-time conversations online, e.g. Snapchat.
- Bullying via websites - use of defamatory blogs (web logs), personal websites and online personal polling sites. This includes websites such as MySpace and Facebook.

- Webcams - goading/provoking, encouraging others to be involved in inappropriate behaviour.

Some Cyber Bullying activities could be criminal offences under a range of different laws including: Protection from Harassment Act 1997, Malicious Communications Act 1998 and the Public Order Act 1986. The age of criminal responsibility in the UK starts at 10.

### **What Should You Do to Deal with Cyber Bullying?**

Many children get caught up in cyber-bullying simply by not thinking of the consequences of their actions. Parents should understand and monitor the ways in which their child is using the internet and/or their mobile phones and should discuss appropriate and inappropriate use of such technology.

If you're reporting cyber bullying, keep a record of the date and time of the calls, emails or texts - don't delete any messages you receive.

### **LISNAGARVEY HIGH SCHOOL ANTI CYBER-BULLYING CODE**

1. Respect others - what may seem like a joke to some can be hurtful to others. Forwarding unpleasant messages or pictures assists the bully in his/her campaign and, therefore, is inappropriate.
2. Think before messages are sent - what is sent can be made public very quickly and can stay online forever.
3. Secrecy - passwords should be changed regularly and should be chosen so that they are hard to guess. Mobile numbers and personal website addresses should only be given to trusted friends.
4. Social networking site profiles should always be set to 'private'.
5. Replying to a bully's messages - don't reply to offensive messages as the bully will be hoping for a reaction.
6. Save the evidence - keep records of offending messages, pictures or online conversations.
7. Block the bully - most responsible websites enable this to happen.

### **AIMS**

The aims of Lisnagarvey High School's Anti-Bullying Policy are:

- To engender readiness to act on behalf of those who cannot effectively act on their own.
- To develop tolerance of views, values, opinions and attitudes of others.
- To empower pupils to take responsibility for their own lives.
- To develop decision-making skills in pupils so that they may behave responsibly in any situation.
- To promote a healthy self-image and self-confidence in all pupils so that they will feel empowered to speak out against any perceived misdemeanours.
- To create an ethos within which pupils can feel secure and can develop a sense of belonging, an ethos which can be considered inclusive.
- To develop in pupils a knowledge and understanding of themselves intellectually, personally and socially.

## OBJECTIVES

### Staff Focus

- To help pupils achieve and maintain healthy relationships in school through the work carried out in LLW, Personal Development classes and Contact Period(s).
- To promote good discipline and acceptable patterns of behaviour based on a proper respect for authority through consistent recognition and usage of school rules.
- To assist pupils in reaching an agreement on a definition of bullying.
- To inform pupils that bullying will not be accepted in Lisnagarvey High School.
- To inform pupils that help is available for victims and bullies and that no-one needs to suffer the indignity of bullying.
- To encourage coping strategies which will empower pupils to be more assertive and more self-confident in response to bullying-type behaviours.

### Pupil Focus

- To facilitate the teaching staff in their handling of bullying issues. Parameters will be set down so that decisions are neither arbitrary nor open to personal interpretation.
- To give staff clear specific guidelines as to their statutory and legal responsibilities in this area.
- To draw up an effective policy for dealing with incidents at whole school level, involving pupils, staff, parents and governors.
- To determine the extent and nature of bullying in Lisnagarvey high School through completion and evaluation of questionnaires (when appropriate).

## RESPONSE TO BULLYING

Help, support and counselling will be given as appropriate to both victim and bully. The response will be immediate and in general, the following seven steps will be taken;

- The victim will report the bullying incident to the appropriate teacher (e.g. Class Tutor, Year Head etc.) and will write a full report of the incident.
- The bully will write a full report of the incident.
- The appropriate teacher (e.g. Class Tutor, Year Head etc.) will then interview the pupils concerned, having read the written reports. The teacher will make notes and try to resolve the matter. **All bullying incidents must be reported to the Form Tutor, Head of Year, Head of School and Head of Pastoral Care via SIMs.**
- The Head of Pastoral Care (Mrs L. Knipe) will keep a record of any bullying incidents (Bullying Folder) and will become involved (if bullying cannot be resolved at a Class Tutor or a Year Head level).
- Parents may be informed.
- Sanction/reparation will be implemented as soon as possible so that the message clearly goes out that no act of bullying will be condoned.
- Continued support will be offered to both the victim and the bully if they feel they need it.

## **RECORDING PROCEDURES**

There is a set procedure for recording all incidents of bullying. It is very important to keep an accurate record which includes events, dates and action taken, especially if recorded as closely as possible to events having taken place. This also provides a safeguard for pupils and staff - if someone queries events at a later stage, the record is there.

**If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident should be logged thoroughly and systematically on SIMS by the member of staff who has been approached.**

**Parent/carers will be informed at the discretion of the Class Tutor/Head of Year/Head of School.**

When a pupil reports an incident to a teacher, that teacher informed will ask the victim and the alleged bully/bullies to complete a statement. A copy of these statements is then passed onto Mrs L. Knipe (Head of Pastoral Care) who will keep a copy in the '**Bullying Folder**'.

The Head of Pastoral Care will closely monitor any bullying accounts on SIMs and when it becomes obvious that a pattern of bullying is being established rather than just one isolated incident, parents of the bully/bullies will be asked to make an appointment with the Head of Year, Head of School, Head of Pastoral Care, Vice Principal and/or Principal to discuss the matter further and establish a way forward.

Access to these reports in the Bullying Folder are limited, due to the sensitive nature of these cases - victims sometimes disclose very personal information and they need to know that this information will not be made available to everyone. The issue of trust and confidentiality is a very important aspect in the problem of bullying; therefore, staff members with access are the Heads of Year, Junior and Senior School, Head of Pastoral Care, Vice Principal and the Principal.

## **REPORTING A CYBER-BULLYING INCIDENT**

- Tell a responsible adult.
- Inform your school (Class Tutor or Year Head) - if the incident involves a pupil at school, who in turn will inform parents.
- Contact your mobile phone operator e.g. O2 or Vodafone, a social network provider e.g. Facebook or an Instant Messenger provider e.g. MSN Messenger. Most responsible service providers have a 'report abuse' facility or a nuisance call bureau.
- If cyber-bullying is serious or if a potential criminal offence has been committed, consider contacting the Police; they will follow it up and take it seriously.

## **BULLYING OUTSIDE SCHOOL**

Head teachers have the legal power to make sure pupils behave outside of school premises (state schools only).

This includes bullying that happens anywhere off the school premises, for example on public transport or in a town centre.

School staff can also choose to report bullying to the police or local council.

## **DEALING WITH THE VICTIM**

The victim is perceived to be different. He/she may be sensitive, emotional, passive, a loner. Victims can often be physically weak, of low energy, have poor co-ordination and be poor communicators. The victim

can experience a loss of identity - his/her name can be changed to a nasty nickname. Members of staff should be aware that external problems can influence pupil behaviour and should be sensitive to this, taking account of this when problems arise.

Such knowledge may be accrued by building relationships and establishing a rapport with pupils, particularly at Class Tutor/pupil level. Information gained by Class Tutors may then be disseminated to other members of staff on a 'need to know' basis - in particular, the Year Heads and Head of Pastoral Care should be informed when such circumstances pertain.

It is the responsibility of all members of staff, whatever their status, to ensure the smooth running and effective operation of the school. The Anti-Bullying Policy requires, indeed demands, the co-operation and participation of all staff and must be implemented consistently.

When talking to the victim, there are four stages to be worked through:

1. **Denial** - the pupil must be encouraged to accept the fact that bullying is happening to him/her, that it is pointless to deny and continue in fear. To start with the teacher must make the conversation general and talk about people in the third person.
2. **Partial Disclosure** - the pupil will give hints about what is going on, but since he/she may feel that it must be their own fault, they will not talk openly. It is up to the teacher to give assurance that something can and will be done and to ensure that the pupil is gaining confidence in the teacher's handling of the situation.
3. **Disclosure** - this comes along with acceptance. It is important that the teacher shows belief in the pupil and makes it clear that he/she has understood.
4. **Problem Solving** - the teacher needs to help the pupil to formulate his/her own views, and to plan a response. The pupil also needs confirmation that teacher support will continue. Each meeting should end optimistically and with praise.

## SUGGESTED STRATEGIES

- Reassure the victim that the matter has been taken seriously and will be dealt with. Check to see if supervision can be improved.
- Meet with the victim as soon as possible. Ask for a written statement of what has happened.
- Meet with the individual witnesses to try to get a clearer picture.
- Help the victim to plan self-protective strategies and a response if the incident should recur. The pupils should be encouraged to stay with a group of friends/people as there is safety in numbers. The pupil should also be encouraged to ignore the bullying and confidently walk away; but report it immediately to a teacher. Other strategies that could be used are the use of humour to deflate the situation or to simply talk to someone they trust (Appendix 2 - Pupil Guidance on Bullying).
- Befriend the victim. Ask an older child to befriend or shadow.

## **DEALING WITH THE BULLY**

Meet with the bully as soon as possible and ask for a written report of what happened (what/where/when).

- Stress that it is the behaviour and not the pupil that is unacceptable.
- Suggest acceptable forms of behaviour and highlight any good form that the pupil has already demonstrated.
- Responsibility for harm/damage/hurt must be accepted by the bully and recompense made.
- Make use of the curriculum to highlight acceptable behaviour. Pastoral Care classes, (e.g. anti-Bullying Week, Personal Development, LLW, Contact Periods etc.) emphasise the desirability of positive attitudes and values.
- Explore the possibility of bullying being a compensatory activity for the bully having no friends, no academic achievements, and no sporting activities.
- Offer a situation where the bully and the victim can get to know each other in a safe environment - perhaps in the counselling suite with the school counsellor. Ensure that adults and older pupils are modelling appropriate behaviour throughout the day, so that pupils can see that frustration, conflict and stress are handled in an appropriate manner.
- Contact parents.
- Agree action to be taken: let the bully know that the behaviour will be closely monitored.
- Set a review date: arrange to see the bully in the short term as he/she may need support towards positive behaviour.

## **RAISING AWARENESS**

Signs and symptoms of bullying behaviour - although there is no fool-proof way of knowing that a child is being bullied, there are nonetheless signs which can be taken as clear indicators. A pupil who is being bullied may display some of the following signs and symptoms.

- A pattern of physical illness, e.g. stomach aches, headaches etc.
- Anxiety about travelling to and from school, wanting to be taken to and collected from school, avoiding regular travelling times.
- Changes in temperament and/or behaviour.
- Signs of anxiety or distress - difficulty in sleeping, not eating, crying, bed-wetting, nightmares, stammering, becoming introverted or unsociable.
- Possessions and/or clothing damaged or missing.
- Increased demands and/or stealing money.
- Unexplained bruising or cuts.

- Deterioration in educational performance or loss of enthusiasm and interest in school.
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her.

## **PREVENTATIVE MEASURES**

Studies have shown that schools which emphasise the prevention of bullying have less of it. Lisnagarvey High School has a clear policy on the promotion of good citizenship, where it is made clear that bullying is a form of anti-social behaviour; it is wrong and will not be tolerated.

The main thrust is through the Pastoral Care Programme for all pupils. The effects of bullying can include illness, dropping out and even suicidal thoughts, so it is vital to equip our pupils with the personal qualities and skills that can make bullying an irrelevance.

Possible preventative measures could include the following;

- Make the consequences of bullying clear to all pupils and to their parents/guardians.
- Make pupils aware that immediate action will be taken and seen to be taken.
- Encourage pupils to write about, or illustrate, their experiences in school.
- Keep clear records.
- Ensure that all pupils know that the school does not tolerate bullying and that all pupils know how to speak out. They should also be told that they can inform their Class Tutor, Year Head, Head of School and Head of Pastoral Care at any time.
- Ensure that all new pupils understand the Anti-Bullying Policy within school and the clear message it conveys.
- Continuous publicising of the policy to both pupils and staff.
- Ensure that the ways of preventing bullying are outlined in the school's written policy on discipline, and that they are also included in the school prospectus.
- Keep parents informed - inform them that the school acts to prevent bullying as a whole; and does not just deal with isolated incidents as they occur.
- Make provision to follow up the detection and reporting of incidents, so that the victims of bullying can be supported, and the bullies deterred.
- Inform pupils that they need not feel that they have nowhere to turn; the Head of Pastoral Care, Class Tutors, Year Heads, Heads of Junior and Senior School and the School Counsellor are available to talk to any pupil.

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## **SANCTIONS**

Bullying has many guises and many degrees of severity. The sanction employed should be appropriate to the bullying offence. The following is a list of school sanctions. When considering sanctions, it is important to have a fairly long and varied list; on the grounds that it is not sensible to reach the ultimate sanction

too soon. Whatever the sanction, it is less likely to be effective if overused. Similarly, staff should be discouraged from by-passing earlier sanctions so that the next step is always available for use and the school does not find itself forced to take extreme measures through the lack of alternatives. Furthermore, it is essential that all teachers should avoid threats or statements that leave them, or more senior staff, with no room for manoeuvre.

The following list of sanctions starts with the less serious and ends with the more serious, but there is no attempt to put them in precise order:

- Immediate checking of misbehaviour, including verbal and non-verbal individual and public indications of disapproval.
- Detentions of varying lengths. Parents must be notified 24 hours in advance.
- Loss of privileges, such as membership of clubs, the right to go on visits and excursions, memberships of school teams etc.
- Restitution, repair of wilful damage and/or payment for it.
- Parental consultation should come at an early stage. This has the advantages of being a sanction, clarifying the problems behind the misbehaviour, providing joint/consistent action between the school and home and preventing the pupil from 'playing off' one party against the other.
- Placing on report, either for poor attendance or misbehaviour. This may be on a weekly or daily basis requiring a comment from all staff teaching the pupil, the Year Head and parent.
- Withdrawal from a subject, or from all lessons, for a period of time.
- Exclusion, suspension or in severe cases, expulsion from school.

## **PASTORAL PROGRAMME**

Each year group is assigned a Year Head and the role of this member of staff is to undertake a range of tasks relating to that year group. It is envisaged that the Year Head would liaise closely with the Head of Pastoral Care when incidents occur and that they would also thereafter review pupils on a regular basis.

Counselling is offered throughout the school via outside agency 'Familyworks' one morning each week. Pupils are encouraged to speak to the school counsellor by referral through the Head of Pastoral Care. Pupils are encouraged to discuss sensitive issues about any fears and worries they may have.

## **PARENTS**

Parents must be made aware that they should report their concerns about bullying to the school. They should be able to do this with confidence that issues will be fully investigated and, if substantiated, taken seriously and acted upon.

Parents should be encouraged to take an active part in their children's education and enquire how the school day has gone, who they spent time with and how break and lunch were spent.

## **EVALUATION**

The evaluation of an anti-bullying policy is very important. It is not enough to hope that the Anti-Bullying Policy is working. It must be clearly monitored. This can be done by:

- Surveys - staff and pupils
- Continuing review of the Anti-Bullying Policy (annually)
- Staff Consultations
- Review of 'Bullying Folder' and 'Bullying Record Book'

## **WHERE TO GET HELP & ADVICE**

There are various organisations that provide support and advice if you're worried about bullying:

- Anti-Bullying Alliance
- Bullying UK
- Childline
- The Diana Award
- Internet Matters
- Kidscape
- The UK Safer Internet Centre
- UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS)

## **CONCLUSION**

If there is a whole school response to bullying and if the Anti-Bullying Policy is adhered to, if all members of the teaching and ancillary staff are aware of the strategies contained within it and conform to these, it is likely that the threat and fear will be removed from our school and its environs.