

POLICY STATEMENT

ANTI BULLYING POLICY for BANBRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

AIM

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 and Safeguarding Procedures.

IMPLEMENTATION

1. Bullying can be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for the victim to defend him or herself. It can take a number of forms, for example:
 - * Physical (hitting, kicking, spitting, theft, hiding or damage to belongings).
 - * Verbal (belittling, ridiculing appearance/mannerism/speech, threats or offensive name-calling).
 - * Indirect (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 be perpetrated by individuals or groups of individuals. It is recognised that some forms of bullying are crimes.

2. If unchecked and unchallenged, bullying can profoundly damage the victim, in both the short and long term as well as 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.
3. 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.
4. All reported incidents of bullying will be carefully investigated and if substantiated will be acted upon. During this process, steps will be taken to consult, protect and support the victim.
5. All necessary steps will be taken to identify those responsible for the bullying. When this has been established the school will invoke its discipline procedures appropriately, to sanction the perpetrator and attempt to change their behaviour.

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

6. The needs of the victim are paramount. The parent/guardian of the victim will be kept fully informed of the way in which the issue is being dealt with. The victim will be offered support within the pastoral structure of the school, and external support if requested or deemed appropriate.

7. To ensure the implementation of this policy our staff will:
- * Foster self-esteem, self and mutual respect.
 - * Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect from our pupils.
 - * Discuss bullying as part of the pastoral programme.
 - * 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.
 - * Listen to victims of bullying and treat seriously what they say. Record details in writing following the schools normal referral procedures.
 - * Report suspected cases of bullying to the appropriate Year Head and designated teacher for child protection.
 - * Follow up any parental concern and feedback promptly detailing any action taken.
8. Our pupils are expected to:
- * Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying.
 - * Inform staff immediately of any bullying they have witnessed or suspect.
 - * Have the courage to speak out in order to put to an end their own suffering at the hands of a bully.
9. We 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 a victim of 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 bullying, helping to ascertain the truth and point out the implications for both their child and the victim.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed against on-going information and advise on protocols received from the Southern Education and Library Board, Childline and support agencies. 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 (eg anti-bullying week, school assemblies, through citizenship and personal development classes).

Reviewed 2011.

Approved by BOG: June 2011