

Belfast High School

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Anti-Bullying Policy

Statement of Intent

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils and staff so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a **telling** school. This means that **anyone** who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

Objectives of this Policy

- All Governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All governors and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a school we take bullying seriously. Pupils, staff and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- **Bullying will not be tolerated.**

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Sectarian sectarian taunts, graffiti
- Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber All areas of internet, such as email & internet chat room misuse. Mobile threats by text messaging & calls. Misuse of associated technology i.e. camera & video facilities

Why is it Important to respond to bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

Schools have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying which occur within the school.

Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go on the school / public bus
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (money / lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous & jumpy when a cyber message is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Procedures

1. Report bullying incidents to staff
2. All incidents reported will be recorded by staff
3. In serious cases parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem

4. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted
5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
6. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.

The School's view is that parents should be monitoring their child's use of the internet outside school. However, if the School becomes aware of serious abuse of a pupil or a member of staff on the internet, the School may contact parents and take disciplinary action, even if the offence occurred outside school. The PSNI may be involved if the internet abuse is a civil matter and the victim decides to press charges.

Outcomes

- 1) The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences may take place.
- 2) In serious cases, suspension or even expulsion will be considered.
- 3) If possible, the pupils will be reconciled.
- 4) After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

Prevention

We will use various methods for helping children to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- writing a set of school rules
- signing a behaviour contract
- writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying
- reading stories about bullying or having them read to a class or assembly
- having discussions about bullying and why it matters

HELP ORGANISATIONS:

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)	020 7354 8321
Children's Legal Centre	0845 345 4345
KIDSCAPE Parents Helpline (Mon-Fri, 10-4)	0845 1 205 204
Parentline Plus	0808 800 2222
Youth Access	020 8772 9900
Bullying Online	www.bullying.co.uk

Visit the Kidscape website www.kidscape.org.uk for further support, links and advice.

For a copy of Kidscape's free booklets "*Stop Bullying*", "*Preventing Bullying*" and "*You Can Beat Bullying*", send a large (A4) self-addressed envelope (marked "Bully Pack") with 6 first class stamps to – Kidscape, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London, SW1W 0DH.