

Larne High School



Anti-Bullying Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The school requires an Anti- Bullying Policy to meet its statutory duties under the *Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003*

1.2 Mission Statement

'Larne High School provides a secure, happy learning environment where everyone is valued, respected and committed to working together to achieve success in preparation for a changing world.'

Our Mission Statement makes clear that bullying is entirely contrary to the values and principles we in this school work and live by. All members of the school community have a right to work in a secure and caring environment. They also have a responsibility to contribute, in whatever way they can, to the protection and maintenance of such an environment.

1.3 Principles underpinning the Policy

- Pupils have a right to learn free from intimidation and fear.
- The needs of the child who has been bullied are paramount.
- Schools will not tolerate bullying behaviour.
- Bullied pupils will be listened to.
- Reported incidents will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated.

1.4 Links with other School Safeguarding Policies

The policy is linked to the school's Pastoral Care, Child Protection, Sustaining Positive Behaviour and Internet policies and the Pupil Code of Conduct.

The Anti-Bullying Policy seeks to create a safe and caring environment in which effective teaching and learning can take place and all pupils are given the opportunity to develop to their full potential.

2. THE AIMS OF THE POLICY AND DEFINITION OF BULLYING

2.1 Larne High School is a closely knit community in which everyone is entitled to equal rights, opportunity, respect and worth. The aim of our anti-bullying policy is to clarify for students, staff and parents that bullying is totally unacceptable. In Larne High School, we wish to encourage an environment where independence is celebrated and individuals can flourish without fear. We believe that every student has the right to be safe and happy in school and to be protected from bullying. In order to fulfil these objectives, this school adopts a strong and active anti-bullying stance.

In practice, this means that we aim:

- to ensure that there is a shared understanding of what constitutes bullying behaviour;
- to stop bullying taking place;
- to ensure that pupils, staff and parents are aware of the school's policy towards bullying behaviour;
- to create an environment where pupils feel safe to report incidents of bullying;
- to ensure a suitable and consistent response to all reported incidents of bullying.

UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

There are different forms of unacceptable anti-social behaviours which from time to time occur in all schools; the four main types include:

Physical: hitting, kicking, throwing things or using implements to cause deliberate injury to another pupil, spitting, deliberately damaging, destroying, taking or hiding another pupil's belongings (including money).

Verbal: threats, name calling (including sectarian, homophobic or racist name-calling), teasing, insulting, taunting or disparaging a pupil.

Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, spreading rumours, giving looks, sending unpleasant notes.

Cyber: making nasty or threatening phone calls, or sending nasty or threatening text messages or emails. Posting humiliating, abusive or threatening comments, images, or videos on, for example, chat rooms, instant messenger or social networking sites.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

3. "Bullying is 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." (Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum)

Bullying is a form of unacceptable behaviour, but not all unacceptable behaviour can be considered bullying. Bullying behaviour usually has 4 key elements:

1. It is repeated behaviour that happens over a period of time
2. It involves an imbalance of power
3. It is intentionally hurtful behavior
4. It is targeted - one specific pupil/group of pupils

If unchecked, bullying can be profoundly damaging to the victim in both the short and longer term, emotionally or physically or both, and can seriously disrupt or impair the capacity to learn or develop.

People react differently to bullying and it may not always be possible to tell if someone is hurt or upset

4. PROCEDURES

3.1 In Larne High School, we aim to create an atmosphere where students who are being bullied, or others who know about it, feel that they will be listened to and that action taken will be swift and firm but sensitive to their concerns. It is therefore essential that the school is made aware of any bullying incidents as soon as they arise.

3.2 Bullying is considered to be, and is treated as, a serious offence. The person engaging in bullying behaviour must be made aware that this behaviour is unacceptable and has caused distress. The person subjected to the bullying behaviour must realise that revenge is inappropriate. Every effort will be made to resolve the problem by arranging pastoral support for both parties (if they so wish), and if appropriate, sanctions will be applied. In serious cases, counselling will be offered to both parties.

3.3 Parents of all those involved will normally be informed, as soon as possible, of what has happened and the manner in which the matter has been handled.

3.4 If the bullying behaviour continues then further sanctions will follow. These sanctions will be decided by the Principal in consultation with the Vice Principals and the Year Head(s), taking into account the nature of the incident. Those who persist in bullying behaviour after having been warned to stop will be dealt with particularly sternly and sanctioned severely. It is important however that counselling is facilitated for both parties even when sanctions have been applied.

3.5 The School may request the involvement of outside agencies.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Board of Governors

The Board of Governors is responsible for the formulation, implementation, operation and review of the Anti-Bullying Policy and associated procedures.

The Designated Governor (currently Ms L Mawhinney) will take the lead responsibility for the Anti-Bullying policy and procedures.

The Board of Governors delegates the responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the policy to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and staff of the school.

4.2 Staff

If a member of staff thinks that bullying is happening, they should talk to the pupil or pupils concerned and enquire what has been happening. They might ask the pupil(s) to write down the details and make a record that can then be passed on to the appropriate Form Teacher. It is the School's view that the most effective way of dealing with bullying is through the persistent and determined action of all members of staff. Staff need to be particularly vigilant at break and lunch times, around the circulation spaces between lessons and in the areas of the playground and the cloakrooms. These are times and places where pupils are more vulnerable and bullying is not easily detected. Staff should also be aware of inappropriate language or actions by pupils both inside and outside the classroom and try to prevent such behaviour.

Through the taught curriculum and their pastoral role, staff will emphasise the need for the development of positive, mutually supportive relationships and will educate pupils on acceptable and unacceptable attitudes and behaviours.

Our staff will seek to:

- foster in our pupils self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others;
- demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils;
- discuss bullying with all classes, so that every pupil learns about the damage it causes to both the child and 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 to the appropriate member of staff, e.g. the Year Head;
- follow up any complaint by a parent about bullying, and report back promptly and fully on the action that has been taken;
- deal with observed instances of bullying promptly and effectively, in accordance with agreed procedure.

4.4 Pupils

If you are being bullied or you know that someone else is, please inform a teacher immediately so that it can be dealt with. Not telling means that the bullying behaviour may continue. Everyone has a responsibility to make sure that bullying is not tolerated in Larne High School.

We expect our pupils to:

- refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity;
- intervene to protect the pupil 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 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 their own suffering and that of other potential targets.

4.5 Parents/Carers

If you think that your child may be being bullied or he/she tells you that they are, please inform the appropriate Class Tutor immediately. Reassure your child that it will be dealt with sensitively but firmly. Where it is discovered that your child is being bullied or is directly involved in bullying, you will be contacted so the school can discuss with you how the situation can be improved and any necessary action taken.

We ask our parents/carers 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 form teacher, year head or indeed any member of staff and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other pupils;
- advising their children not to retaliate violently to any form of bullying;
- being sympathetic and supportive towards their children and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken;
- keeping a written record of any reported instances of bullying;
- informing the school of any suspected bullying, even if their own children are not involved;
- co-operating with the school if their children are accused of bullying, try to ascertain the truth and point out the implications of bullying, both for the children who are being bullied and the bullies themselves.

6. APPLICATION

The School will support this anti-bullying policy by:

5.1 Using teaching methods which encourage co-operative work and a variety of groupings so that pupils extend their relationships beyond a small group of friends.

5.2 Dealing with the topic of bullying, in a way which explores why it happens and gives alternative ways of behaving and dealing with difficulties. This topic will be covered in assemblies, as part of the Learning for Life and Work Programme and during Anti-Bullying Week (usually November).

7. REVIEW & EVALUATION

6.1 This Policy will be reviewed and evaluated annually by the Safeguarding Team in consultation with the school Pastoral team and pupils.