



Parkhall Integrated College

Anti-Bullying Policy

Agreed by Board of Governors: November 2021

To be reviewed November 2024

Rationale

Parkhall Integrated College's mission statement is "to provide a caring learning environment where each person feels valued and respected". The pastoral and discipline structures of the college seek to serve these ends. It is an integral part of such an ethos that bullying will not be countenanced. The college, pupils staff and parents will work to eliminate bullying by an effective combination of support and sanction; by Prevention strategies (proactive) and Intervention strategies (reactive) drawn from the pastoral and positive behaviour structures. This policy takes cognizance of the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016.

Purposes

The school will be better able to address the issue of bullying if:

- there is a clear definition and awareness of what constitutes bullying and that it is unacceptable.
- there is a policy aimed at preventing or dealing with the same to which staff, pupils and parents are committed.
- there is a consistent application of the policy in school, through the existing structures and programmes for pastoral care, personal and social education and positive behaviour.
- all involved, recognise it is everyone's concern, not somebody else's business.

Definitions

Definition of "bullying" in Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016.

(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.

(2) For the purposes of subsection (1), "act" includes omission.

"Bullying" relates to the repeated intimidation of another person through verbal, written, cyber, emotional or physical attack or by deliberately omitting the person by an individual or group, which causes the person harm. It is a wilful, conscious desire which is recurrent/persistent to hurt another individual(s) or place them under stress.

Characteristics vary:

- it may be short-term or prolonged
- it may be a 'one off 'incident' concerning the person subjected to bullying but more often is repetitive and intentional.
- it may be physical, verbal or psychological
- gesturing, extortion or exclusion may also occur
- generally, a power imbalance between pupils is evident
- it may be subtle or overt intimidation

Parkhall Integrated College will work to prevent bullying to its pupils

- on the premises of the school during the school day;
- while travelling to or from the school during the school term;
- while the pupil is in the lawful control or charge of a member of the staff of the school; or
- while the pupil is receiving educational provision arranged on behalf of the school and provided elsewhere than on the premises of the school;

Potential signs and symptoms of those at risk from bullying are included in Appendix 3.

Guidelines

All instances of bullying **must** be recorded. Year Heads should keep copies of the information about bullying incidents in the folder for each pupil involved and separately in a folder "Records of bullying incidents". Each term the number and nature of bullying incidents should be sent to the relevant Head of School. An annual report of bullying incidents will be given to the Board of Governors.

As we move towards full usage of SIMS, teachers and Year Heads should start to record information regarding bullying in this system. The behaviour module allows the recording of incidents involving the following terms: Witness, Target, Aggressor, Participant and Bystander. This allows the recording of all incidents and all pupils involved so that a full picture can be gathered, allowing better determination of bullying type incidents.

Prevention Strategies (proactive)Staff Awareness

- all staff are aware of what constitutes bullying and that it is unacceptable
- urge observation in classrooms and in general throughout the school premises
- respond to bullying behaviour promptly and effectively
- foster in our pupils, self-esteem and a sense of their rights and responsibilities to others
- record all reported incidents of bullying on SIMS recording all parties involved.
- keep records of incidents observed and informing colleagues through the pastoral and discipline structures
- having a whole school awareness of danger areas and times
- recognise values we may display through the hidden curriculum and potential of subject content to promote positive behaviour or discourage aggression
- know the potential signs and symptoms of those at risk from bullying. (see appendix 3)

Pupils' Awareness

- pupils are expected to behave in a caring and respectful manner to each other and all members of the school community;
- pupils should be encouraged to inform a member of staff if they feel bullied or threatened;
- pupils should refrain from any form of bullying behaviour, rather they should support anyone who is subjected to bullying behaviour;
- anti-bullying advice is included in the student planner for all pupils;
- the issue of bullying is addressed through assemblies at regular intervals throughout the school year including Induction and Anti-Bullying week;
- all year 8 pupils are engaged in the "Standup, Speak out" anti-bullying training on an annual basis;
- the issue of bullying is addressed through classroom activities and lesson content;
- it is addressed further through Personal Development and positive behaviour is encouraged;
- year 10 mentors are trained to provide support for year 8 pupils as they begin their school careers.

Parental Awareness

Parents are requested to support their children and the school by:

- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children, which may be evidence of bullying;
- Reporting to the school immediately any concerns around potential bullying;
- Being supportive towards their children in reassuring them that it will be dealt with effectively;
- Discouraging any form of revenge by the person subjected to bullying;
- Co-operating fully with the school in resolving any difficulties that meets the needs of all children;
- Further information for parents is included in Appendix 2.

Pastoral Care

- Year Heads should be approachable and encourage pupils to share their concerns
- Pupils should be encouraged to make use of this avenue to redress problems: to know staff care and will act appropriately
- Year Heads may address the issue through Year Assemblies, Class or Group Talks or individual counselling as appropriate
- Senior staff, parents and relevant outside agencies may be involved and records kept.

Intervention Strategies (reactive)

All staff should:

- be aware of potential bullying in classroom or whole school context
- take incidents seriously and act promptly
- react calmly so as not to allow a situation to escalate
- express support for the person subjected to the bullying behaviour
- express disapproval towards the person engaged in bullying behaviour and if possible try to find a reason for their actions and try to persuade them to change their behaviour.
- keep a detailed record of the incident witnessed by them or reported to them
- complete this account and forward to appropriate staff, ie. relevant Year Head(s), Mr Harbinson (Pastoral SMT, Junior School) and Mrs Davidson Brown (Pastoral SMT, Senior School)
- make use of School Referral System: In cases where there is more than a single year group involved Mr Harbinson (Pastoral SMT, Junior School) and Mrs Davidson Brown (Pastoral SMT, Senior School) should co-ordinate the relevant procedures.
- relevant Year Head(s) should ensure that any incident is dealt with appropriately involving parents which may include the following sanctions: official warning to cease offending, detention at break time, lunch time or after school, exclusion from certain areas of the school premises, fixed term suspension or risk of expulsion.
- Mr Harbinson (Pastoral SMT Junior School) or Mrs Davidson Brown (Pastoral SMT Senior School) who should initiate further support, mediation or counselling as appropriate for both the person engaged in the bullying behaviour and the person subjected to the bullying behaviour.

Guidelines for listening to those engaged in bullying behaviour, those subjected to bullying behaviour and those who witness bullying behaviours:

- hear all sides to the issue and endeavour to be non-emotive
- have pupils record stories in writing where necessary/appropriate or record their version of events for them
- support/advise the person subjected to the bullying behaviour/give withdrawal or composure time
- express disapproval of actions of the person engaged in the bullying behaviour/isolate from pupil body

Suggested Levels of Response

Our response moves through existing structures and personnel while employing a combination of sanction and support. The needs, interests and rights of the person subjected to the bullying behaviour should also be addressed and their parents informed/appraised of the issue as appropriate.

- act within the context of the definition of bullying
- individual circumstances need to be addressed regarding each specific incident
- pupils should be aware of our intent e.g. through Personal Development and Year Assemblies.
- sanctions ought to be applied according to the scale of the bullying and not the type i.e. all forms of bullying should be addressed seriously, with our response measured against the scale of the incident.
- the object in all reported cases of bullying is to ensure the future safety of the person subjected to the bullying behaviour and the non- reoccurrence of the behaviour of the person engaged in the bullying behaviour.

A Summary of Progression for Levels of Response**Level One**

- Use school referral system
- Issue a stern verbal warning/counsel against repeat
- Parents of all parties informed by relevant class teacher/Year Head
- In some instances, it may be appropriate to implement a conflict resolution meeting between both parties. This is determined by the pastoral staff involved.

Level Two

In addition to Level 1 responses:

- School sanctions system invoked
- Remove the person engaging in bullying behaviour from peer contact at specified times if appropriate.
- Parents of those engaged in bullying behaviour may be called to interview.

Level Three

In addition to Level 1 and 2 responses:

- Extended detention.
- Suspension
- Outside agencies involved as appropriate

Level Four

In addition to Levels 1, 2 and 3 responses:

- Pre Exclusion meeting with Board of Governors.
- Meeting with Principal, the Education Authority and Board of Governors.
- Exclusion

These policy Guidelines are translated into action through other policies and procedures, for example:

Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016.

Pastoral care in Schools; promoting Positive Behaviour

Child Protection Policy

Pastoral Care Policy

Positive Behaviour Policy

Counselling Policy

Special Educational Needs Policy

Attendance Policy

Relationships and Sexuality Policy

Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy

Chair of Board of Governors :-

M. Alexander

Date 22/11/2021

Appendix 1

A Statement of Rights for the Whole School Community

Everyone who works in or visits our school community is entitled to respect and equal treatment.

- Regardless of their gender
- Regardless of their colour, race or nationality
- Regardless of their language
- Regardless of their religion
- Regardless of their needs, ability or disability
- Regardless of their social class or status
- Regardless of their political or other opinion
- Regardless of where they were born
- Regardless of where they live
- Regardless of how they speak
- Regardless of how they look

(Note: This is not an exhaustive list; it merely offers some suggestions).

Appendix 2

Bullying: Information for Parents

No school is immune from bullying and no school should be complacent. If bullying occurs at Parkhall Integrated College it is vitally important that all of us should know what action to take.

- * Staff at Parkhall Integrated College recognise bullying behaviour as all forms of physical and psychological abuse systematically directed at victims who find this hurtful. We take responsibility for helping all pupils understand what bullying is and the harm it can do. We believe that adults can set an example in their own behaviour.
- * We hope that the ethos of the school will help to instil mutual respect and good behaviour, but we recognise that in our preventive approach to bullying we should provide pupils with the opportunity to discuss the topic regularly.
- * We will also ensure that every pupil knows where, when and to whom they can talk about any bullying incidents. This may be staff at school or parents at home. Pupils must feel confident that talking to adults is the proper course of action if they witness or experience bullying.
- * Incidents of bullying should immediately be reported. Senior staff may then be called in to help. Although the nature of the response will depend upon the circumstances, we have a standard procedure to follow which does not necessarily involve punishment in the first instance. Staff are experienced and use tact and discretion in their follow-up.
- * The whole school community (parents, staff and ancillary staff) has a role to play in combating bullying. All pupils should be aware that there is no such thing as an innocent bystander and the school neither condones nor ignores bullying, whilst all adults should be familiar with this policy to avoid inappropriate action being taken. We should all be committed to ensuring that every pupil receives his or her education in a safe environment free from humiliation, oppression or harassment.

Appendix 3

Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

Indications of those at risk from bullying may include:

- Lack of friends
- Isolation
- Poor communication and/or poor co-ordination
- Unusual physical characteristics
- Volatile, sulky or tearful behaviour
- Inexplicable behaviour
- Chooses to stay with adults
- Illness and absenteeism
- Lateness
- Accents or racial differences

The signs that may signify that a student is being bullied include:

- Being frightened of walking to and from school
- Being unwilling to come to school
- Beginning to do poorly in school work
- Displaying personality changes
- Complaining of feeling unwell (frequently)
- Having unexplained bruises and injuries
- Having possessions destroyed or go missing
- Showing reluctance to go into the playground
- Refusing to say what is wrong, or giving improbable excuses to explain any of these above.
- Isolated and ostracized

These signs and symptoms are for the whole school community of school staff, parents and students to act upon. All should be encouraged to respond and report where they have any misgivings about what they see.