



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Bullying may be defined as 'deliberately hurtful behaviour usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, but the three main types are physical, verbal and emotional.'¹ The use of mobile phones, email and web-based chatrooms has led to the rise of cyber-bullying, which may be defined as the 'sending or posting of harmful or cruel text or images using the internet or other digital communication devices'.²

The Aim of Friends' School is 'excellence within a caring, supportive environment'. All pupils have a right to be educated in an atmosphere in which they feel valued, secure and supported by each member of the community. The values of Friends' School emphasise respect for each individual and encourage tolerance and openness. By its nature, bullying is contrary to these values and is unacceptable.

The ethos of Friends' School is important in helping to address the issue of bullying and in minimising its incidence. However, bullying must also be addressed in more specific ways. Preventing and countering bullying require an awareness of bullying type behaviour and a collective vigilance on the part of all members of the school community.

The Anti-Bullying Policy aims to:

- (1) help in the understanding of what constitutes bullying-type behaviour;
 - (2) indicate approaches to preventing bullying and to responding to bullying-type behaviour.
- (1) Bullying can take different forms. The following are examples of different types of bullying behaviour:
- (a) physical aggression, for example, through hitting, kicking, pushing or tripping;
 - (b) interference with another's property, causing deliberate damage to that property, or theft;
 - (c) verbal, for example, through racist, homophobic or sectarian remarks, threats, name calling or demeaning comments;
 - (d) emotional hurt, for example, through isolating or excluding an individual from the activities and social acceptance of his peer group or through passing notes or spreading rumours;
 - (e) intimidation and harassment, for example, through pressure from members of a group against an individual so that he/she feels uneasy or frightened;
 - (f) cyber-bullying, for example, through mobile phone calls, text messages, sending picture/video clips via mobile phone cameras, emails, chatrooms, instant messaging and websites.

¹ This definition of bullying is set down in the Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures (April 2005)

² As defined by Childnet International

2. Each member of the school community has a role to play in helping to prevent bullying and in creating an atmosphere in which it is not allowed to develop. In Friends' School, action will be taken to seek to prevent bullying in the following ways:
- (a) By promoting and maintaining an ethos which encourages consideration and respect for others and which is firmly based on the values of Friends' School;
 - (b) By educating pupils about the boundaries of appropriate behaviour towards others and addressing bullying and related issues through Collect, Assemblies and the Personal Development programme;
 - (c) By ensuring effective supervision of locations within School where bullying is likely to occur and highlighting to pupils, with the support of parents, the importance of appropriate behaviour when travelling to and from school;
 - (d) By ensuring that pupils and parents are aware of school policy on the use of mobile phones within School and on the use of the internet within School (through the Mobile Phone Policy and the Acceptable use of the Internet Policy);
 - (e) By utilising Prefects and senior pupils as Mentors;
 - (f) By liaising with other agencies as appropriate, eg NSPPC, social services, Translink and PSNI;
 - (g) By encouraging a strong sense of belonging to School through participation in extra curricular activities;
 - (h) By having clear procedures for responding to bullying, which are kept under regular review.

3. Procedures for dealing with Bullying

Bullying is unacceptable and a culture of openness is the best way to counter such behaviour. It is the responsibility of each member of the community - pupils, staff and parents - to report instances of bullying or suspicions of bullying, in the understanding that all such reports will be listened to and taken seriously.

In each instance, the priority should be that the bullied pupil feels supported and that the individuals responsible for bullying are made aware that their behaviour is unacceptable and the bullying stops.

It is accepted that the precise action taken will vary from incident to incident. However, the broad guidelines below apply:

- (a) Instances of bullying or suspicion of bullying should be reported by pupils, parents or other members of staff to the Year Teacher in the first instance. However, it is recognised that on occasion, the report may be made to a Head of School, Vice Principal or Principal. A record of any report will be taken and, in all instances, passed on to the Vice Principal (Pastoral) who will keep an overview;
- (b) The Year Teacher will investigate, in liaison with the Head of School and the Vice Principal;
- (c) Pupils directly involved will be asked to give a written account of the incident;
- (d) Parents of all pupils involved will be contacted promptly;
- (e) If necessary, referrals to outside agencies will be made in accordance with procedures;
- (f) The pupil bullied will be given practical advice and support;

- (g) An appropriate response will be made, and recorded, with regard to the individual responsible (see 4. below);
- (h) The situation will be monitored and reviewed after one month by the Head of Year to ensure the welfare of all pupils involved.

4. Responses to Bullying

A range of responses may be used in dealing with instances of bullying. The response(s) to be used will depend upon the severity and persistence of the bullying. It is intended that the person responsible will learn from what has happened and change his or her behaviour. Education and awareness raising are effective ways of challenging bullying and encouraging individual pupils to take responsibility for their own actions. This may include the pupil's involvement in a programme of mentoring, counselling, community service, or referral to an outside agency. Class activities and Assemblies may also be used more generally for this purpose.

In addition, sanctions, in line with the Behaviour Policy, to be considered are:

- (a) Verbal reprimand from Year Teacher/Head of School /VP/Principal;
- (b) Verbal or written apology;
- (c) After School detention;
- (d) Saturday detention;
- (e) Exclusion from class;
- (f) Suspension;
- (g) Expulsion.

The Anti-Bullying policy is kept under review.

A summary of the Anti-Bullying policy is published in the prospectus.

The Anti-Bullying policy has been drawn up in consultation with pupils, through the School Council, Year Teachers and with members of the Board of Governors.

SIGNS and SYMPTOMS

The following signs **MAY** suggest that a pupil has been bullied and that the situation warrants investigation:

- ❖ Unwillingness to attend School/truancy
- ❖ Anxiety about travelling to and from School/avoiding regular travelling times
- ❖ Underachievement
- ❖ Loss of concentration/enthusiasm/interest in School/changed behaviour
- ❖ Repeated non specific reasons for Surgery visits - headache/stomach ache
- ❖ Unexplained changes in mood especially before returning to School after holidays/weekends
- ❖ Physical signs of anxiety - stammering/nightmares/sleep difficulty/loss of appetite/nausea/withdrawal
- ❖ Physical bruising/torn clothes
- ❖ Loss of self esteem/confidence/mood swings
- ❖ Books torn or destroyed/missing possessions
- ❖ Reluctance to say what is wrong

PUPILS

Friends' School encourages **PUPILS** to show respect and tolerance in their relationships with all members of the School community.

School encourages pupils to:

- ❖ Say **NO** to **BULLYING**
- ❖ Know and understand what bullying means and the consequences of bullying type behaviour
- ❖ Be active not passive - speak out/tell about/report incidents of bullying
- ❖ Listen to, support and help bullied pupils
- ❖ Develop a range of assertiveness strategies to use in the event of a bullying situation.
- ❖ Take personal responsibility
- ❖ Take collective responsibility
- ❖ Develop loyalty to School and pupils within it

Support Services

Pupils and parents can contact the following organisations for information and support:

- **Anti-Bullying Campaign**
Helpline: 020 7378 1446 (9.30 am - 5.30 pm)
This organisation produces leaflets and information for parents.

- **Childline**
Freepost 1111
LONDON
N1 0BR
Freephone: 0800 1111
www.childline.org.uk
A 24-hour helpline for children and young people who wish to discuss their problems. They also welcome calls from young people who are engaged in bullying type behaviour.

- **Kidscape,**
152 Buckingham Palace Road
LONDON
SW1 9TR
Helpline for Parents: 0171 730 3300 (10.00 am - 4.00 pm Monday - Friday)
www.kidscape.org.uk
They provide free leaflets and booklets for parents, children and teenagers about bullying.

- **The Family Coaching Consultancy**
This organisation offers support through individual counselling and group programmes including 'Raising Self Esteem' and 'Beat the Bully'.
Telephone: 028 92 639450
e-mail: info@familycoaching.co.uk
www.familycoaching.co.uk

- **National Child Protection Helpline,**
Freephone: 0800 800 500
A 24-hour helpline for anyone concerned about a child at risk of abuse (including bullying).
Children may also use this helpline.

- **National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)**
Helpline: 0808 800 5000
www.nspcc.org.uk

- **Parents' Advice Centre,**
Franklin House
12 Brunswick Street
BELFAST
BT2 7GE
Telephone: 028 90 238800 (a 24 hour helpline)
This is a service for parents and young people in Northern Ireland. It offers listening support, in addition to guidance and counselling relating to any family problem.

- **British Association of Counselling,**
1 Regent Place,
RUGBY
Warwickshire
CV21 2PJ
Telephone: 01788 578328
Members of BAC have experience of a wide range of counselling. Write enclosing a SAE for a list of counsellors in your area