Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock

Anti-Bullying Policy

Policy Details

Legal Status	Adopted	Version Date	Last Review	Next Review	Responsible
Statutory	1st December 2021	September 2021	August 2020	September 2025	Ms McCarthy

Related Documents and Location
1. Positive Behaviour Policy
2. Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy
3. Pastoral Care Policy
4. Special Educational Needs Policy
5. Health and Safety Policy
6. Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy
7. Safety and Digital Technology Policy
8. Educational Visits Policy
9. Code of Conduct for All Staff and Volunteers
10. School Improvement Plan

All policies are available on the College Website and Private Folders.

Contents

1. **Introduction**

   Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock recognises the right of every individual to be educated and to educate in a safe and caring environment. We seek to uphold that right and to provide an environment based on tolerance and mutual respect for all.

   Bullying is a complex, multi-faceted problem which can be found, in varying degrees, in almost every school. It can have a negative impact upon the physical and mental health of both the child experiencing bullying behaviour and the person displaying bullying behaviour. Any form of bullying, including cyberbullying, is contrary to the College's Mission Statement and Aims, and will not be tolerated in the College.

2. **Context**

   This policy has been developed in line with current key legislation and guidance applicable to schools in Northern Ireland as listed in Appendix 1. The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, alongside guidance provided by DE and the Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF), have the aim of ensuring that *'policies designed to prevent bullying of a registered pupil at the school are pursued at the school'* and *'to determine the measures to be taken at the school with a view to preventing bullying involving registered pupils at the school'.*

   This policy reflects the College's commitment to the prevention of bullying involving a registered student of the school and to supporting both those students experiencing bullying behaviour and those who display bullying behaviour towards another student/other students.

3. **Ethos and Principles**

3.1   Our **Mission Statement** states that the College *"cares for young people in a way that encourages them to develop to their full potential within a supportive Christian community. We seek to prepare our students to play an active and responsible role in society, and to use their talents for the service of others."*

3.2   **The Aims of the College are to:**

   - develop the 'whole person' as a follower of Christ;
   - promote the philosophy and values of Catholic Education;
   - develop positive attitudes in an atmosphere of co-operation, justice and mutual respect;
   - prepare young people to be confident and creative contributors to society;
   - enable students to realise their full academic potential and to develop all their gifts and talents;
   - prepare students for adulthood by enabling them to acquire the relevant knowledge and skills;
   - engage positively with the local and wider community.

   As a Catholic College, we recognise that when one child displays bullying behaviour towards another, he/she denies dignity to another human being. Catholic social teaching guides the College to ensure that the dignity of each student is respected and that responses to bullying behaviour promote compassion, responsibility and forgiveness for all concerned.

3.3   **The Aims of this Anti-Bullying Policy are to:**

- provide a safe and caring environment for all students;

- raise awareness and promote understanding of what constitutes bullying behaviour;

- ensure students and parents know how to raise a concern about bullying;

- encourage students and parents to report bullying to a member of staff;

- ensure an appropriate and consistent response to all reported instances of bullying;

- provide support for students who are experiencing bullying behaviours;

- support those students who display bullying behaviour to adopt positive attitudes and behaviour.

3.4   **The Scope of this Policy** includes the prevention of bullying involving a registered student:

- on the premises of the College during the school day;

- while travelling to or from the College during the school term;

- while the student is in the lawful control or charge of a member of staff of the College;

- while the student is receiving educational provision arranged on behalf of the College and provided elsewhere than on the premises of the College;

- while using personal electronic devices in any of the above settings;

- while using College digital technology for electronic communication.

Bullying and cyberbullying incidents which occur outside school hours are primarily the responsibility of parents. Parents are encouraged to report serious incidents of cyberbullying outside of school to the PSNI. The College, however, reserves the right to deal with issues of cyberbullying which take place outside the College and have a detrimental effect on the student's education. It will be at the discretion of the College to determine if any such issue falls within the remit of this policy.

4.   **Consultation and Participation**

This policy is written in consultation with students, parents and staff of the College, in compliance with The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016. Consultation involved the following:

4.1   **Students**

- Discussions with the Student Council
- Student Council review of the draft policy before ratification by the Board of Governors

4.2   **Parents**

- Consultation via email/College website
- Discussions with the PTA
- Parent review of the draft policy before ratification by the Board of Governors

4.3   **School Community**

- Consultation with staff via email
- Staff review of the draft policy before ratification by the Board of Governors

5.   **What is Bullying?**

5.1   **Definition**

The Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF) defines bullying as:

'behaviour, that is usually repeated, by one or more persons intentionally to hurt, harm or adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others.'

This definition statement is based on the definition of bullying as laid out in The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 which states that,

(1) *"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 is behaviour that is usually repeated, which is carried out intentionally to cause hurt, harm or to adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others.

5.2   **One-Off Incident**

In exceptional circumstances, a one-off incident may be considered as bullying if, in the view of the College, it is aggravated by the level of harm caused and/or the intention of the perpetrator. In any such case, the College will decide if the behaviour meets the threshold to be defined as bullying.

When assessing a one-off incident, to make a decision on whether to classify it as bullying, the College shall consider the following criteria:

- severity and significance of the incident
- evidence of pre-meditation
- impact of the incident on individuals (physical/emotional)
- impact of the incidents on the wider school community
- previous relationships between those involved
- any previous incidents involving the individuals

While 'an imbalance of power' has not been included in the 2016 definition, it can be a determining factor in some cases. The College will, therefore, consider its role in determining if bullying has occurred.

5.3   **Positive Behaviour Policy**

Any incidents which are not considered bullying behaviour will be addressed under the College's Positive Behaviour Policy.

5.4   Unacceptable Behaviour

Bullying is a form of unacceptable behaviour, but not all unacceptable behaviour can be considered bullying. The following unacceptable behaviours, when repeated, targeted and intentionally hurtful, may be considered a bullying behaviour:

Verbal or Written Acts

- saying mean and hurtful things to, or about, others
- making fun of others
- calling another student mean and hurtful names
- telling lies or spreading false rumours about others
- trying to make other students dislike another student
- making racist, sectarian, homophobic or transphobic comments

Physical Acts

- hitting
- kicking
- pushing
- shoving
- material harm, such as taking/stealing money or possessions or causing damage to possessions

Omission (Exclusion)

- Leaving someone out of a game
- Refusing to include someone in group work

Electronic Acts

- Using online platforms or other electronic communication to carry out many of the written acts noted above
- Impersonating someone online to cause hurt
- Sharing images (e.g. photographs or videos) online to embarrass someone

The above is not exhaustive and other behaviours which fit with the definition may be considered bullying behaviour.

5.5   Motivations behind Bullying

The various motivations behind bullying, including those named in the Act, include, but are not limited to:

Ability	Disability/SEN	Pregnancy
Age	Gender identity	Race
Appearance	Looked after Child status	Religion
Breakdown in peer relationships	Marital status	Sexual orientation
Community background	Political affiliation	Young Carer status

5.6   Language to Be Used

Bullying is a sensitive, emotive issue and the College will use supportive, understanding language when discussing these matters. All members of the College community are encouraged to avoid using labelling terms such as 'victim' and 'bully', in preference of terms which focus on the behaviour, for example:

- A child displaying bullying behaviours

- A child experiencing bullying behaviours

5.7   Definition of Harm

In determining harm, DE guidance defines -

- <u>Emotional or psychological harm</u> as intentionally causing distress or anxiety by scaring, humiliating or affecting adversely a pupil's self-esteem.

- <u>Physical harm</u> as intentionally hurting a pupil by causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts.

6.   <u>Preventative Measures</u>

Under the legislation, the focus for all anti-bullying work should be on prevention. This section sets out the measures to be taken by the school to prevent bullying behaviour (online and person to person), as defined in Section 5, thus promoting a strong anti-bullying ethos within the College and the wider school community.

6.1   Preventative Measures in School

- Raising awareness and understanding of the positive behaviour expectations, as set out in the Positive Behaviour Policy.

- Promotion of anti-bullying messages through the curriculum.

- Addressing issues, such as the various forms of bullying, through PD/LLW/EFL.

- The Mentor Programme, including peer-led lessons with Anti-Bullying Mentors and Digital Mentors.

- Actively promoting positive emotional health and well-being.

- Focused assemblies and Focus of the Week to raise awareness and promote understanding of key issues related to bullying.

- Development of the Student Council to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messaging within the College.

- Development of effective strategies for the management of unstructured times (e.g. break/lunch). Any behaviour which gives cause for concern is reported to the Head of Year.

- Participation in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities.

- Engagement in key national and regional campaigns.

- Involvement in shared education projects, supporting students to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity.

- Provision and promotion of extra-curricular activities, aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks.

6.2   Preventative Measures on the Way to and from School

- Development of a culture where students take pride in the College and are viewed as ambassadors within the community.

- Regular reminders of the positive behaviour expectations of students whilst travelling to and from the College.

- Measures to empower students to challenge inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour of their peers during the journey to and from school.

- Appointment of Prefects, Senior Prefects and Mentors to maintain a well-ordered environment on school buses.

- Appropriate deployment of staff to support the transition from school day to journey home.
- Engagement with transport providers to ensure effective communication and the early identification of any concerns.

6.3 **Preventative Measures for Use of Electronic Communication** at any time during term, where that behaviour is likely to have a detrimental effect on the student's education at school.

- Supporting students to make use of the Internet in a safe, responsible and respectful way.
- Addressing key themes of online behaviour and risk through PD/LLW, including understanding how to respond to harm and the consequences of inappropriate use.
- Engagement with key statutory and voluntary sector agencies (e.g. C2k, PSNI, PHA, SBNI) to support the promotion of key messages.
- Participation in Safer Internet Day.
- Development and implementation of robust and appropriate policies in related areas.

7. **Responsibility**

7.1 **College Community**

All members of our College community have responsibility for creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all members of our school. Students, parents and staff of the school are expected to respect the rights of others to be safe and everyone has the responsibility to work together to:

- foster positive self-esteem;
- behave towards others in a mutually respectful way;
- model high standards of personal pro-social behaviour;
- be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying behaviour;
- inform the College of any concerns relating to bullying behaviour;
- refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying behaviour, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity;
- refrain from retaliating to any form of bullying behaviour;
- intervene to support any person who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so;
- report any concerns or instances of bullying behaviour witnessed or suspected, to a member of staff;
- emphasise the importance of seeking help from a trusted adult about bullying behaviour when it happens or is observed;
- explain the implications of allowing the bullying behaviour to continue unchecked, for themselves and/or others;
- listen sensitively to anyone who has been bullied, take what is said seriously, and provide reassurance that appropriate action will be taken;
- know how to seek support – internal and external;
- resolve difficulties in restorative ways to prevent recurring bullying behaviour and meet the needs of all parties.

7.2 Board of Governors

The Board of Governors of the College has a responsibility to *'take an active interest in all aspects of their school's activities that promote pupil welfare.'* (ESAGS: The Governor's Role, P107)

The Board of Governors has a duty to secure measures to prevent bullying in the College and to keep a record of all incidents of bullying or alleged bullying of a registered student of the College.

7.3 Staff

All staff, teaching and support staff, have a responsibility to create and maintain a safe and caring environment within the College. Staff must foster an ethos of mutual respect and positive self-esteem for our students. They must report any alleged bullying incident in the appropriate manner and refer the matter to the relevant Head of Year.

7.4 Students

Students have a responsibility to respect the rights of every other individual in the College. Students must treat all others with respect and must not engage in bullying behaviour. Equally, they are encouraged not to be a bystander to bullying behaviour. They should report bullying behaviour of which they are aware to a member of staff and encourage others to get help from a trusted adult when it happens or is observed.

7.5 Parents

Parents have the right to expect that the College is a safe and caring environment for their children. They have a responsibility to ensure that their children respect all others in the College and that they act as a model of good behaviour. Parents should monitor their child's use of the Internet and mobile devices. In particular, they should ensure that their child complies with the Age Restrictions on Social Media Services (Appendix 2). Parents should report any alleged bullying of which they are aware to the class Tutor.

7.6 College Prefects, Senior Prefects, Mentors and Anti-Bullying Mentors

Prefects, Senior Prefects and Year 13 Mentors, in particular, Anti-Bullying Mentors, have a responsibility to report to a class Tutor, Head of Year, Head of School or Vice Principal (Pastoral Care) any alleged bullying which they witness or of which they are aware. Prefects, Senior Prefects and Mentors are expected to be particularly vigilant and maintain a well-ordered environment on school buses to and from the College since this is an area where bullying behaviour may occur.

8. <u>Reporting a Bullying Concern</u>

8.1 Students Reporting a Concern

Students of the College are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour as soon as possible. The names of those experiencing or displaying bullying behaviours are very helpful. The College encourages students to talk to a trusted member of staff, a Senior Prefect, an Anti-Bullying Mentor or a member of the College's Head Team. Students are encouraged to report concerns involving another student – they should not assume that the student experiencing bullying behaviour will report bullying behaviour themselves. Students reporting a concern may do so face to face, via email or written note.

8.2 Parents Reporting a Concern

Parents of the College are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour as soon as possible. The names of those experiencing or displaying bullying behaviours are very helpful. Parents are asked to remind their child to react appropriately to bullying behaviour by not retaliating or taking matters into his/her own hands. The best response is to refer the incidents to the College using the steps below.

1. In the first instance, parents are encouraged to speak directly with their son/daughter's Tutor.

2. Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to the Head of Year or Head of School.

3. Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken by the Head of Year or Head of School to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to the Vice Principal (Pastoral Care).

4. Where the parent remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the College's Complaints Procedure (www.knock.co.uk) should be followed. See Step 3 – Formal Stage: Writing to the Principal.

All reports of bullying concerns will be responded to by the College, in line with this policy, regardless of who makes the concern. The person reporting the concern will be given feedback on the concern reported. However, it must be noted that no information about action taken in relation to a student can be disclosed to anyone other than the student and his/her parent(s).

9.   Responding to a Bullying Concern

The processes outlined below provide a framework for how the College will respond to any concerns/allegations of bullying behaviour.

9.1   Stage 1: The member of staff will:

- Listen carefully to all involved;

- Clarify facts and perceptions;

- Carefully record the details, including the motivating factors;

- Assure the student/parent that the matter will be dealt with as quickly as possible;

- Inform the Head of Year who will assess the incident against the criteria for bullying behaviour as defined by The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016.

- The Head of Year will liaise with other relevant members of staff, including the Head of School, and determine if it is necessary to complete Part 1 of the Bullying Concern Assessment Form (BCAF).

- If a determination is made that the incident does not constitute bullying behaviour, it will, if appropriate, be dealt with under the Positive Behaviour Policy or through other appropriate Pastoral Care measures.

9.2   Stage 2 - If a determination is made that the incident does constitute bullying behaviour, the Head of Year should:

- Complete the Bullying Concern Assessment Form (BCAF);

- Clarify facts and perceptions;

- Check records (SIMS/BMM);

- Question any witnesses/bystanders;

- Identify any themes or motivating factors;

- Determine the type of bullying behaviour being displayed;

- Identify the intervention level (Appendix 3);

- Decide on the appropriate interventions for all students involved, including interventions, consequences and sanctions.

- Inform parents, if it is appropriate to do so, taking into account the seriousness of the incident(s);

- Keep a written record of all interviews and details;

- Track, monitor and record effectiveness of the interventions;

- Review outcome of interventions;

- Select and implement further interventions as necessary.

9.3   Interventions

When responding to a bullying concern, school staff shall implement interventions aimed at responding to the behaviour, resolving the concern and restoring the well-being of those involved. The College will draw from evidence-based interventions recommended in the Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour (NIABF) and select the most appropriate intervention in each case.

Where appropriate, school staff may implement sanctions, as outlined in the Positive Behaviour Policy, for those displaying bullying behaviour. It must be noted that no information about action taken in relation to a student can be disclosed to anyone other than the student and his/her parent(s).

10.   Recording

In accordance with The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, the College will maintain a record of all incidents of bullying and alleged bullying behaviour.

Using the Bullying Concern Assessment Form (BCAF), the College will centrally record all relevant information related to reports of bullying concerns, including:

- how the bullying behaviour was displayed (the method);

- the motivation for the behaviour;

- how each incident was addressed by the school;

- the outcome of the interventions employed.

These records will be kept on the online SIMS Behaviour Management Module, which is part of the C2k system in schools. Access to completed BCAFs will be restricted and only provided to those members of staff with a legitimate need to view them.

All records will be maintained in line with relevant data protection legislation and guidance and will be disposed of in line with the College's Retention and Disposal of Documents Policy. Collated information regarding incidents of bullying and alleged bullying behaviour will be used to inform the future development of anti-bullying policy and practice within the College.

11.   Professional Development of Staff

The College is committed to providing appropriate training opportunities for staff as part of its ongoing CPD programme. Training to support staff and Governors in responding to allegations of bullying will be provided as deemed necessary by the Principal of the College. This training will be use to inform future policy and procedural changes. Records of all CPD training will be kept and updated regularly.

12. Monitoring and Review of Policy

To appropriately monitor the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy, the Board of Governors shall:

- maintain a standing item on the agenda of each meeting of the Board where a report on recorded incidents of bullying will be noted;
- identify trends and priorities for action;
- assess the effectiveness of strategies aimed at preventing bullying behaviour;
- assess the effectiveness of strategies aimed at responding to bullying behaviour.

This Anti-Bullying Policy shall be reviewed as required, in consultation with students, staff and parents, on or before September 2025.

13. Links to Other Policies

In the development and implementation of this Anti-Bullying Policy, the Board of Governors has been mindful of related policies, including:

- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy
- Safety and Digital Technology Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Code of Conduct for All Staff and Volunteers

14. How to Raise a Concern or Make a Complaint about the Administration of this Policy

If you have a concern or complaint about the administration of this policy, please contact Ms McCarthy, Vice Principal, in the first instance. If necessary, you may then access and follow the College's Complaints Procedure which is available on the College website at www.knock.co.uk. Should you remain dissatisfied with the College's response after completing the internal complaints procedure, you can bring your complaint to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman within six months. Contact details for the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman are provided on Page 11 of the Complaints Procedure.

Signed: *Mr Leo O'Reilly*   Date: *1st December 2021*
            (Chairperson of Board of Governors)

Signed: *Miss Deborah McLaughlin*   Date: *1st December 2021*
            (Principal)

Guidance and Related Documents

The Legislative Context:

- The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

- The Education and Libraries Order (Northern Ireland) 2003 (A17-19)

- The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010

- The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995

- The Human Rights Act 1998

- The Health and Safety at Work Order (Northern Ireland) 1978

The Policy and Guidance Context:

- The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 Statutory Guidance for Schools and Boards of Governors (DE, 2019)

- EA Guidance 2018/19: Supporting the Successful Implementation of The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

- Pastoral Care in School: Promoting Positive Behaviour (DE, 2001)

- Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: A Guide for Schools (DE, 2017)

- Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (Dept. of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, 2016)

- Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland Policies and Procedures (SBNI, 2017)

- NIABF: Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour (2013)

- DE Circular 2016/20 (01/12/16) - Online Safety

- C2K: Using SIMS Behaviour Management to Record a Bullying Concern - Guidance for Schools (2019)

The International Context:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

Age Restrictions on Social Media Services

Social Media Service	Minimum Age
Facebook	13 years
Instagram	13 years
Snapchat	13 years
Twitter	13 years
TikTok	13 years
WhatsApp	16 years

NIABF - Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour