



# Christian Brothers' Grammar School Omagh

## Anti Bullying Policy

**Author** Senior Leadership Team

**Frequency of**

**Review** Every 3 years

**Approved by Board**

**of Governors** June 2022

**Review Due** 2025

### 1. Introduction

At the Christian Brothers' Grammar School, Omagh we believe all forms of bullying behaviour are unacceptable. We are committed to fostering a safe and supportive environment for pupils in which pupils can thrive and learn without fear of being bullied.

As an Edmund Rice Trust School, the Christian Brothers' Grammar School is fully committed to:

- promoting the full personal and social development of each pupil in a caring Christian community of learning and teaching;
- to creating a caring school community where children and young people can live free and safe from bullying;
- a preventative, responsive and restorative anti-bullying ethos across the whole school;

We believe that every child and young person should be celebrated in their diversity.

We value the views and contributions of young people and will actively seek these views and take them into account in the development of our Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures.

We understand that everyone in our school community has a role to play in taking a stand against bullying and creating a safe and welcoming environment for all.

### 2. Aims of Anti-Bullying Policy

To develop a secure environment in which all members of the school community respect and support each other.

To ensure that students, staff and parents share a common definition of what constitutes bullying behaviour.

To develop an ethos which makes it clear to everyone that bullying behaviour is unacceptable in any form.

To develop a preventative and proactive approach to dealing with bullying.

To create an atmosphere where students feel that they will be listened to if they do report bullying.

To ensure that swift action will be taken to address bullying behaviour that will be sensitive to the needs of all parties involved.

To raise awareness and understanding of bullying through the curriculum

### **3. Context**

The general principles which underpin our Anti-Bullying Policy are guided by the following legislative acts, international protocols and guidance from the Department of Education:

- The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 which:
  - Provides a legal definition of bullying;
  - Places a duty on the Board of Governors to put in place measures to prevent bullying behaviour, in consultation with parents and pupils;
  - Requires schools to record all incidents of bullying behaviour and alleged bullying incidents;
  - Sets out the circumstances under which this policy should be applied;
  - Requires that the policy is reviewed updated at least every four years.
- The Education and Libraries Order (Northern Ireland) 2003 which:
  - Requires the Board of Governors to 'safeguard and promote the welfare of registered pupils'
- The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010
- Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 which:
  - Provides the legislative framework for Northern Ireland's child protection system;
  - Sets out the duties and powers public authorities have to support children and to intervene if they have concerns about a child's welfare;
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools: A Guide for Schools (DE, 2017)
- Pastoral Care in Schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour (DE 2001)
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which sets out every child's right to:
  - Be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, maltreatment or exploitation;
  - Be protected from discrimination;
  - Express their views in a supported and accessible way on issues that affect them, and to have their opinions taken seriously;
  - Education.

### **4. What is Bullying?**

Bullying is a complex issue and takes many forms. In some cases, it can be overt and easily identified. In other cases, it can be subtle, insidious, or hidden. It encompasses a range of harmful behaviours, both physical and psychological.

The *Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016* defines bullying as following:

- 1. (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.**

This school defines bullying as follows;

***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.***

**OR**

***“Bullying can be defined as deliberate psychological or physical hurt caused to an individual by the behaviour of another that is unprovoked and repeated over a period of time.”***

Isolated or “one-off” incidents will not normally be treated as bullying incidents and will be dealt with, as appropriate, through the school’s Positive Behaviour Policy. There may be, however, some occasions when a “one off” incident will be considered as bullying. When assessing a “one-off” incident, to decide on whether to classify it as bullying, the school shall consider the following criteria:

- The severity and significance of the incident.
- Evidence of pre-meditation.
- Any evidence of an imbalance of power.
- Previous relationships or incidents between those involved.

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

## **5. Forms of Bullying**

The following unacceptable behaviours, when repeated, targeted and intentionally hurtful, may be considered a bullying behaviour. This is not an exhaustive list.

### **Physical:**

This will include, but is not limited to:

- hitting,
- kicking,
- shoving,
- causing damage to possessions, taking, or hiding belongings including money.

### **Verbal or Written:**

This will include, but is not limited to:

- name calling,
- teasing,
- threatening,

- insulting,
- writing unkind notes,
- saying mean or hurtful things to, or about others,
- telling lies or spreading false rumours about others or trying to make other pupils dislike another pupil/s.

### **Emotional**

This will include, but is not limited to:

- being unfriendly, excluding or tormenting another pupil;
- spreading rumours about another pupil or his family ;
- belittling or humiliating another pupil, mocking their appearance, personal idiosyncrasies, abilities or achievements.

### **Cyber**

Cyber bullying refers to the use of electronic communication as a method of bullying behaviour. It is an intentional act carried out by an individual or group against a target using, for example, electronic forms of contact and social media platforms. It includes, but is not limited to, the use of mobile telephones, internet resources, social media platforms to:

- Post/share offensive, embarrassing or humiliating photographs of another pupil or pupils;
- Call another pupil or pupils mean or hurtful names
- Post mean and hurtful things to, or about, others
- Make fun of another pupil or pupils
- Tell lies or spread false rumours about others
- Try to make other pupils dislike another pupil or pupils
- Tease or insult another pupil

### **Sexual / Homophobic**

This is any bullying behaviour, whether physical or non-physical, that targets a person's sexuality or gender.

### **Racist**

This is bullying directed at individuals of a certain race, culture or group who are singled out because of:

- the colour of their skin,
- the way they talk,
- their ethnic grouping or
- by their religious or cultural practices.

### **Omission (Exclusion)**

- This includes, but is not limited to, where a pupil is intentionally left out and where there is wilful failure to include a pupil in a group of friends, activities, games, group work in class.

## **6. Preventative Measures**

This school is fully committed to taking positive measures to create a climate that is opposed to the concept and practice of bullying, adopting a range of proactive strategies to promote an anti-bullying ethos in an attempt to reduce the number of bullying incidents that occur. These include:

### ***In School***

- Participation in the NIABF's annual Anti-Bullying Week activities;
- Use of focused assemblies to raise awareness and promote understanding of key issues related to bullying;
- Prominent publication of posters on year group noticeboards and around the school, promoting anti-bullying messages;
- Addressing bullying issues through the school's preventative curriculum;
- Close monitoring of the school yards, assembly hall, canteen and corridors in the morning, at breaktime and lunchtime;
- Provision of extra-curricular activity at lunch time to occupy pupils in a constructive manner;
- The use of the school council to discuss, develop and promote anti-bullying messages;

### ***To and From School***

In addition to the measures detailed above, the following measures are implemented to prevent bullying behaviour on the way to and from school.

- Pupils are regularly reminded in form classes and year group assemblies about the importance of their ambassadorial role for the school within the community and the school expectations of their behaviour when they are in school uniform;
- The school liaises closely with Translink staff when investigating any allegations of misbehaviour on the bus;
- Senior Prefects who travel on school buses are encouraged to monitor and report instances of misbehaviour which they witness;
- A senior member of staff is present when pupils are boarding the buses which leave from the school gates.

### ***On an Educational Visit***

- The visit should be planned in accordance with the guidance set out in the school's Educational Visits Policy
- The lead organiser should carry out a rigorous Risk Assessment
- An appropriate number of supervising staff should accompany pupils on the visit
- Supervising staff should be actively vigilant during the course of the visit and alert to any possible bullying behaviour
- The importance of acceptable behaviour on an educational visit should be stressed on the consent letters signed by parents/carers prior to participation

## **7. Reporting a Bullying Concern**

### **Pupils**

All pupils are encouraged to report any concerns that they have about bullying behaviour or a potential bullying situation.

If a pupil has a concern about a bullying behaviour they are experiencing OR bullying behaviour being experienced by another pupil, they should report it to a member of staff who they trust.

This may be:

- their Form Teacher who they see every morning in the Registration Class;
- their Head of Year;
- their Head of School;
- the Vice Principal;

- any subject teacher;
- a classroom assistant;

### **Parents/Carers**

Parents are encouraged to report bullying concerns at the earliest opportunity. They can do this by telephoning the school reception and asking to speak to the appropriate Head of Year or Head of School. If the Head of Year or Head of School is not available to take their call, a message should be left and their call will be returned at the earliest opportunity.

Where a parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken to investigate the allegation or to prevent further incidents, the concern should be reported to the Vice Principal with responsibility for Pastoral Care.

Where a parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken by the Vice Principal to investigate the allegation or to prevent further incidents, the concern should be reported to the Principal.

Where the parent/carer remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the school's Complaints Procedure should be followed. A copy of the Complaints Procedure can be found on the school's website.

## **8. Responding to a Bullying Concern**

While it is our aim to eliminate bullying, we realise that incidents will occur. All allegations of bullying will be taken seriously and investigated as speedily and thoroughly as possible.

- If a member of staff becomes aware of or suspects potential bullying he/she will record the details as a matter of urgency and pass them immediately to the Head of Year or Head of School for the child who has been or is possibly being targeted by the bullying behaviour.
- The Head of School will coordinate the response to the incident, either investigating the incident themselves or, depending on the severity of the incident or the availability of staff, referring it to the relevant Head of Year or Form Teacher for investigation.
- The purpose of the investigation will be:
  - to try, as far as is possible in the circumstances, to elicit all the facts;
  - to decide whether the behaviour constitutes bullying behaviour as defined by this policy – this may include checking whether there have been any previous incidents involving the pupil who is displaying bullying behaviour;
  - to establish the nature, severity and extent of the bullying behaviour – this will involve taking account of the frequency and duration of the bullying behaviour as well as the perceptions and feeling of the pupil(s) who has been targeted by the bullying behaviour;
  - to identify any themes or motivating factors
- If the pupil(s) displaying the bullying behaviour is/are from another year group, a report will be passed to the Head of School who will coordinate the response in line with the guidance above.

Once a bullying concern has been investigated and it has been established that bullying has occurred, it is essential that an appropriate intervention is put in place to address the behaviour.

It is important that every bullying incident is individually assessed and an intervention chosen which best meets the individual needs of the pupils involved.

A range of strategies should be considered for bringing closure to a bullying incident, resolving conflict between the parties and restoring the well-being of those involved. Where appropriate, school staff may implement sanctions for those pupils displaying bullying behaviour.

In choosing an appropriate intervention the Head of School, Head of Year or Form Teacher should consider the guidance set out in this section of the school policy and may consult with the Vice Principal with responsibility for Wellbeing.

The effectiveness of the interventions chosen must be monitored and reviewed.

### **Level 1 – Low Level Bullying Behaviour**

Bullying behaviour may be classified as Level 1 if:

- It is perceived to be a first time occurrence;
- It is deemed to be of a minor nature – this will be determined by:
  - consideration of the **nature** of the behaviour that has taken place
  - the **frequency** and **duration** of the bullying behaviour;
  - the **perceptions** and **feelings** of the child being bullied. The seriousness of bullying can only be measured by the degree of distress suffered by the target of the bullying behaviour. **“It can be defined as bullying only by measuring the effects the acts have on the vulnerable child.” (V Besag “Bullies and Victims in Schools” OUP 1989)**

### **Level 1 – Interventions**

Interventions at this level may be carried out by the Head of Year or the Form Teacher. The following interventions will be considered;

- One to one interviews with the pupil who has been exhibiting bullying behaviour which help the pupil to recognise and reflect on their unacceptable behaviour;
- Where deemed appropriate, the pupil who has exhibited the bullying behaviour should be encouraged and supported to make reparation to the pupil who has been bullied. With the consent of the pupil who has been bullied this could include a formal apology and an undertaking as to future behaviour supervised by the form teacher or Head of Year.
- The Form Teacher or Head of Year will work with the pupil who has been bullied to reassure him, deal with hurt feelings, develop self-esteem and coping strategies.
- Careful monitoring of the situation after it has been dealt with;
- Consideration should be given to involving the pupil’s parent(s).

### **Level 2 – Intermediate Level Bullying Behaviour**

Bullying behaviour may be classified as Level 2 if:

- the pupil displaying the bullying behaviour has previously exhibited similar behaviour and, in spite of level 1 interventions, is proving resistant to changing their behaviour;
- the bullying behaviour is considered to be more serious or is having a more severe impact on the pupil who is the target of the bullying behaviour.

### **Level 2 – Interventions**

Interventions at Level 2 will be led by the Head of School and may involve a continuation or extension of the strategies used above as well as:

- Regular meetings with the pupil who has been exhibiting bullying behaviour;

- Parents/Carers should be informed of the issues and invited to attend a meeting with the Head of School to discuss and agree their role in providing support to the pupil exhibiting bullying behaviour;

### **Level 3 – Complex Bullying Behaviour**

Bullying behaviour will be classified as Level 3 if:

- the pupil displaying the bullying behaviour presents with additional needs and risk factors;
- the bullying behaviour is proving more complex and more resistant to change.

### **Level 3 – Intervention Strategies**

Interventions at this level will be coordinated by the Vice Principal with responsibility for pupil wellbeing. Depending on the needs of the pupil, the following interventions will be considered:

- Social and emotional mentoring provided by an identified member of staff;
- Placement at Stage 2 on the school's Special Educational Needs Register under the category of "Emotional and Behavioural";
- The creation of an agreed **Individual Behaviour Plan** incorporating targets with incentives and consequences;
- The active involvement of the parent(s), working in partnership with school and/or external agencies to effect change;
- The involvement of external agencies such as;
  - The Independent Counselling Services for Schools;
  - SEBD Team

### **Level 4 – High Risk Bullying Behaviour**

Bullying behaviour will be classified as Level 4 if:

- The behaviour is considered severe and involves a significant threat to the safety and welfare of any or all of the pupils involved. Such severe bullying concerns may be new or may have proved resistant to earlier school interventions and have now been assessed as high risk.
- The pupil exhibiting bullying behaviour is presenting with significant concerns such as mental health, criminal or child protection concerns.

### **Level 4 – Interventions**

Interventions at this level will be coordinated by the Vice Principal with responsibility for pupil wellbeing. The following interventions will be considered:

- Referral to relevant agencies such as Gateway Team, PSNI or Health and Social Care Trust;
- Suspension;
- Expulsion;
- Continuation of the Level 3 Intervention strategies in addition to the above.

## **9. Recording of Bullying Incidents**

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 makes it a legal requirement for schools to maintain a record of all instances of bullying and alleged bullying behaviour.

In line with Department of Education guidance, this school will use the SIMS Behaviour Module to record instances of bullying behaviour or alleged bullying behaviour. A Bullying Concern Assessment Form will be generated through the SIMS Behaviour Module when a bullying allegation is made and updated over the course of the investigation and the management of the situation. On completion, the BCAAF will be saved into the *Linked Documents* folder on SIMS of the pupil who was the alleged target of the bullying behaviour. A copy will also be stored in a



folder in the Wellbeing Section Access to this folder will be restricted to members of SLT and Heads of Year.

All records will be maintained in line with relevant data protection legislation and guidance and will be disposed of in line with the school's Retention and Disposal of Documents Policy

**10. Links to other Policies**

- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- E-Safety Policy and Acceptable Use of ICT Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Retention and Disposal of Documents Policy