



## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

The Friends' School Anti-Bullying policy is set within the proposed legal framework set down by the Department of Education in its consultation document: 'Addressing Bullying in Schools'.

The policy is set down in consultation with pupils, parents and members of staff, carried out through the School Council, the PTA, pastoral team meetings and more general surveys.

The Aim of Friends' School is 'excellence within a caring, supportive community'. 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 in an atmosphere of inclusivity. By its nature, bullying is contrary to these values and is unacceptable.

It is recognised also that there is 'a legal duty on the Board of Governors to safeguard and promote the welfare of registered pupils when they are on school premises or in the lawful control or charge of a member of staff'.<sup>1</sup>

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. We wish to recognise and understand the impact of bullying behaviour on both the victim and the perpetrator. 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 Aims of the Friends' School Anti-Bullying policy are as follows:

1. To clarify what constitutes bullying
2. To set down approaches to prevent bullying occurring
3. To set down the response to complaints of bullying behaviour, including the sanctions that may apply to pupils engaging in bullying behaviour
4. To set down how support may be given to any pupil experiencing bullying
5. To establish procedures for recording instances of bullying behaviour and reporting them as required.<sup>2</sup>

### **1. The Friends' School Anti-Bullying policy uses the definition of bullying proposed by the Department of Education for adoption in all schools.**

*Bullying is the repeated and intentional use of physical, verbal, electronic, written or psychological acts or omissions, or any combination thereof, by one or more pupils against another pupil or group of pupils with the intention of causing hurt, harm, fear, distress or adversely affecting the rights or needs of that pupil or group of pupils*

It is recognised that bullying is a very complex problem, with bullying behaviour changing over time and manifesting itself in different forms. However, it is noted that a feature of bullying is that the behaviour is repeated – isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour cannot

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<sup>1</sup> Addressing Bullying in Schools Consultation Document para 17

<sup>2</sup> Addressing Bullying in Schools Consultation Document para 8

be described as bullying. A primary motivation for bullying behaviour can often be prejudice or discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived difference. Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 sets out the commonly recognised forms which this can take (See Annex 1).

The list of the different forms of bullying set out below is not exhaustive and is kept under review:

- physical aggression, for example, through hitting, kicking, pushing or tripping;
- interference with another's property, causing deliberate damage to that property, or theft;
- verbal, for example, through disablist, racist, homophobic or sectarian remarks, threats, name calling or demeaning comments;
- emotional hurt, for example, through isolating or excluding an individual from the activities and social acceptance of his/her peer group
- intimidation and harassment, for example, through pressure from members of a group against an individual so that he/she feels uneasy or frightened;
- writing offensive notes, graffiti, messages or texts (see cyber bullying)
- cyber-bullying, for example, through mobile phone calls, text messages, sending picture/video clips via mobile phone cameras, emails, chatrooms, instant messaging (IM), websites and on-line polling sites.

It is noted that the scope of the proposed legislation to address bullying, including cyber-bullying, includes all pupils in their conduct towards and interaction with other pupils:

- on school premises
- whilst travelling to and from schools
- whilst under the care, control or lawful authority of a member of school staff; and/or
- whilst using school equipment<sup>3</sup>

## **2. Action to prevent Bullying Behaviour**

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. (See Annex 2)

In Friends' School, action will be taken to seek to prevent bullying in the following ways:

- By promoting and maintaining an ethos which encourages consideration and respect for others and which is firmly based on the values of Friends' School;
- By educating pupils about the boundaries of appropriate behaviour towards others and addressing bullying and related issues through Collect, Assemblies, Personal Development programmes and other parts of the curriculum.
- By listening to the views of the pupils through forums such as the School Council and adopting suggestions that they have for dealing with bullying behaviour.
- 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;
- By ensuring that non-teaching staff are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them;
- 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 School's e-Safety policy and AUP)
- By utilising Prefects and senior pupils as Mentors and emphasising the role all pupils have in caring for others, highlighting that reporting bullying is not telling tales, but is responsible behaviour;
- Through staff training and ongoing professional development to highlight awareness of anti-bullying strategies;
- By liaising with other agencies as appropriate, eg the Northern Ireland Anti Bullying Forum, NSPPC, social services, Translink and PSNI;

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<sup>3</sup> Addressing Bullying in Schools Consultation Document paras77-80

- Through marking events such as the NIABF Anti-Bullying week in School;
- By encouraging a strong sense of belonging to School through participation in extra-curricular activities;
- By having clear procedures for responding to bullying, which are kept under regular review.

### **3. The response to Bullying Behaviour**

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, taken seriously and dealt with as promptly as possible.

Instances of bullying should be reported 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, or indeed another member of staff.

It is accepted that the precise action taken will vary from incident to incident and that it is not always easy to find clarity when there are conflicting allegations. However, the broad guidelines below apply:

- i. The Year Teacher will investigate, in liaison with the Head of School and the Vice Principal;
- ii. Pupils directly involved will be interviewed by the Year Teacher and may also be asked to give a written account of the incident;
- iii. Parents of all pupils involved will be contacted promptly to inform them of the matter and to explain the actions being taken;
- iv. Once the facts of the situation are established, an appropriate response will be made with regard to the individual(s) responsible for the bullying behaviour.

The response(s) to be used will depend upon the severity and persistence of the bullying. Any sanctions applied are a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the School.

It is intended that the person responsible will learn from what has happened and change his or her behaviour. Steps will be taken to restore the relationship where practicable.

In addition, sanctions, in line with the Behaviour Policy, will be applied, as appropriate to the severity and persistence of the bullying.

- Verbal reprimand from Year Teacher/Head of School /VP/Principal
- Verbal or written apology
- After School detention
- Saturday detention
- Exclusion from class
- Suspension
- Expulsion.

The situation will be kept under review by the Head of Year to ensure the welfare of all pupils involved.

### **4. Support for pupils affected by bullying**

It is recognised that the person who has been bullied may be badly affected emotionally. Therefore the pupil who has been bullied will be given practical help, advice and support to restore his/her self-esteem and confidence, to build resilience and to feel secure in the school community. This may be in the form of support from the Year Teacher, a Mentor, a School Counsellor or, indeed, an outside Agency.

Education and awareness raising are effective ways of challenging bullying and encouraging individual pupils to take responsibility for their own actions. This may include involving the pupil responsible for bullying in mentoring, counselling, community service or referral to an outside agency. Information about sources of support is given in Annex 3.

## **5. Procedures for monitoring and recording incidents of Bullying in School**

All instances of bullying are recorded by the appropriate Year Teacher and passed on to the Vice Principal (Pastoral) who has responsibility for monitoring levels of bullying behaviour. This monitoring process will link in with the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying policy.

The mechanisms for recording bullying are kept under review and will be modified in line with proposals for best practice set out in the 2015 Consultation document: Addressing Bullying in Schools.<sup>4</sup>

## **6. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying policy**

The Anti-Bullying policy will be reviewed annually in light of information gathered from the records kept in School of bullying incidents and through examination of the strategies in place in School both to prevent bullying occurring and to intervene in instances of bullying behaviour.

A summary of the Anti-Bullying policy is published in the prospectus and on the school website. It is cross referenced with other relevant school policies.

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<sup>4</sup> Addressing Bullying in Schools Consultation Document para 54

## **ANNEX 1**

### **Section 75 Categories**

1. Religion
2. Political Opinion
3. Racial Group
4. Marital Status
5. Sexual Orientation
6. Gender
7. Disability
8. Person With or without Dependents
9. Age

## **Annex 2: Responsibilities of those in our community**

At Friends', we seek to encourage a culture of clear communication between school and regard tackling bullying as a shared responsibility.

### **Pupils**

School encourages pupils to:

- Speak out and say **NO** to **BULLYING**. **No one should suffer in silence**
- 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
- Know that all members of staff will take reports of bullying behaviour seriously.

### **Staff**

Members of staff will:

- Foster in pupils a sense of the worth of each individual and thereby respect for others and respect for self
- Demonstrate by example the high standards of behaviour expected of our pupils
- Encourage pupils to recognise the importance of reporting bullying to a member of staff when it occurs
- Emphasise to pupils how seriously bullying is taken and the steps taken to respond to bullying type behaviour
- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying
- Take any reports of bullying seriously and deal with them promptly and effectively, in accordance with the procedures set down in the Friends' School Anti-Bullying policy

### **Parents**

We ask our parents to support their children and the school by:

- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children, which might be signs or symptoms of bullying.
- Advising their children to report any instances of bullying behaviour to an appropriate person in school.
- Advising their children not to retaliate violently to any form of bullying
- Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children, reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken
- Informing the school of any instances of bullying even if their child is not involved
- Co-operating with the school if their child is accused of bullying, by trying to ascertain the truth and pointing out the implications of bullying for the pupil who is bullied and the perpetrator
- Monitoring their child's use of the internet, mobile phones or any other device used for emailing or messaging.

### **Annex 3**

#### **Support Services**

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

- **N Ireland Anti- bullying forum** (<http://www.niabf.org.uk>) **giving access to information for pupils, parents and teachers regarding the causes, symptoms and how to stop bullying.**  
c/o NCBNI  
The NICVA Building  
63 Duncairn Gardens  
Belfast  
BT152GB.  
Tel: 02890875006
- **Childline**  
NSPCC  
Weston House  
42 Curtain Road  
LONDON  
EC2A3NH.  
Freephone: 0800 1111  
[www.childline.org.uk](http://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,**  
2 Grosvenor Gardens  
LONDON  
SW1 W0DH  
Tel: 02077303300  
[www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)  
They provide free leaflets and booklets for parents, children and teenagers about bullying.
- **Familyworks/Schools' Counselling**  
3 Glenford Way  
Newtownards  
County Down  
BT234BX.  
Tel: 02891821721.
- **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](http://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.
- **Contact NI**  
Lifeline  
08088088000  
[www.contact.org](http://www.contact.org)  
This organisation offers a counselling service to young people and a telephone counselling service.

### **Cyber bullying**

**Thinkuknow** ([www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)) provides practical information and advice about many aspects of the internet

**Chat Danger** ([www.chatdanger.com/](http://www.chatdanger.com/)) is a website about the potential dangers of interactive online services like chat, instant messaging, email and mobiles.

**Kidsmart**([www.kidsmart.org.uk/](http://www.kidsmart.org.uk/)) is a website, dealing with Internet safety programmes for schools, young people and parents.

The **Centre for Exploitation and Online Protection** ([www.ceop.gov.uk/](http://www.ceop.gov.uk/)) also provides a facility for reporting abuse on the Internet. If online content is potentially illegal, then it should be reported to the Internet Watch Foundation ([www.iwf.org.uk/](http://www.iwf.org.uk/))

The **urzone website**, ([www.urzone.com/](http://www.urzone.com/))is sponsored by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and provides advice and help on a range of issues affecting young people