ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

1. AIMS, ETHOS AND STATEMENT

Banbridge Academy is a co-educational and non-denominational grammar school which seeks to provide a regulated and happy environment with a pleasant atmosphere in which its pupils and staff can strive to achieve their full academic, personal and professional potential. The school seeks to provide a wide, stimulating and enjoyable educational experience rooted in values of honesty, openness, integrity, tolerance and respect for each individual as a person. **Our central aim is for everyone to be happy at school, known personally and cared for individually.**

In Banbridge Academy we seek to provide for our pupils a safe and caring environment where bullying will not be tolerated. We repudiate bullying behaviour of any kind, to any member of the school community, by any member of the school community. We believe that all pupils have the right to learn in a safe and supported environment.

Aims of the Policy
1. To identify various elements of bullying.
2. To promote means of preventing bullying.
3. To establish procedures for staff in dealing with cases of alleged or suspected bullying.
4. To offer guidance and clarify procedures for parents.
5. To offer guidance to pupils.

2. CONTEXT
This policy is informed and guided by current legislation and DE Guidance listed below:

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)
- 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)

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

In the current context the statutory duties placed on the Board of Governors are to secure measures to prevent bullying and to keep a record of incidents of bullying or alleged bullying involving a pupil at the school.

3. CONSULTATION AND PARTICIPATION

On-going self-evaluation is a key aspect of life at Banbridge Academy. The legislation requires the Board of Governors and Principal to consult with pupils, parents/carers and the school community when developing and reviewing the Anti-Bullying Policy.

We have met this requirement in the following ways:
- Every three years a comprehensive survey of pupils, staff and parents is completed as part of the School Development Planning process.
- In addition, a range of other consultation methods are regularly employed, including discussions with staff, School Council, Senior Prefects, focus groups from different year groups, Anti-Bullying Ambassadors and Banbridge Academy Association. Results of all these discussions and surveys feed in to the School Development Plan and Policy review schedule.
- A representative group of staff was directly involved in developing the Anti-Bullying Policy. All staff had an opportunity to comment on the draft policy.
- Parents were given the opportunity to comment on the draft policy through an online survey and letter.
- Awareness raising programmes through the Curriculum, Form Time, Assemblies.
- Involvement in NIABF Anti-Bullying week.

4. WHAT IS BULLYING?

The legal definition of Bullying (Addressing Bullying in Schools (NI) 2016) is
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.

> ***Bullying is therefore 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.***

What form does bullying take?
Bullying can take many forms:
1. Physical, for example, pushing, hitting, kicking, spitting, theft, damage to belongings, physical intimidation, any other physical contact which may include the use of weapons.
2. Verbal, for example, repeated insults, name-calling, teasing, taunting, spreading rumours, passing malicious notes.
3. Indirect, for example, excluding someone from the social group/isolation, tormenting, hiding other pupils' belongings, making threatening gestures.
4. Electronic acts, for example 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. When bullying behaviour occurs through the medium of electronic communication 'repetition' can take place through the repeated viewing and sharing of a post even if there is only one post.

This list is not exhaustive and other types/methods may also fall into the category of bullying.

Terminology

The welfare of all pupils is paramount and pupils' needs, whether the pupil displaying bullying behaviour or targeted pupil, should be separated from their behaviour. In Banbridge Academy we do not want to label pupils unfairly, therefore we will use the term 'pupil experiencing bullying behaviour' or 'target of bullying' instead of 'victim'. Instead of 'bully' we will use the term 'pupil who is displaying bullying behaviour'. We encourage all members of the school community to use this language when discussing bullying incidents.

When does socially unacceptable behaviour become bullying behaviour?

All socially unacceptable behaviours which occur within school will be dealt with in line with the school's Positive Behaviour Policy. Socially unacceptable behaviours become bullying behaviours when the information gathered clearly demonstrates that the unacceptable behaviour does meet the criteria below i.e. on the basis of evidence gathered the behaviour is/was:

- Intentional;
- Targeted at a specific pupil or group of pupils;
- Repeated; and
- Causing physical or emotional harm

In determining 'harm' we define:

- **Emotional or psychological harm** as intentionally causing distress or anxiety by scaring, humiliating or affecting adversely a pupil's self-esteem; and
- **Physical harm** as intentionally hurting a pupil by causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts.

Intention will be determined by the repeated nature of the offence.

Repetition is when the bullying behaviour occurs to the same targeted person on more than one occasion over a period of time.

When does a one-off incident become bullying?

When assessing a one-off incident, to make a decision on whether to classify it as bullying, the school 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 incident on wider school community;
- previous relationship(s) between those involved; and
- any previous incident(s) involving the individuals.

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

Motivation behind bullying behaviour

Various motivations can lie behind bullying behaviour, including age, appearance, breakdown in peer relationships, community background, political affiliation, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital status, race, religion, disability/SEN, ability, Looked After Child status, Young Carer status etc. Often there is no theme evident in bullying behaviour but we believe that all bullying behaviour is wrong.

5. PREVENTION OF BULLYING

There are a number of key actions listed below which take place in school and have the aim of preventing bullying and creating a safe learning environment. Examples of these include:

- High standards of teaching and learning, an effective pastoral system and good relationships between pupils, and between staff and pupils, help to create a strong ethos in which good behaviour is promoted and maintained.
- 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 eg. inclusion of age-appropriate material specific to individual subject areas related to bullying, positive behaviour and inclusion.
- Promoting a climate of care in the school, pupils are encouraged regularly to discuss with a member of staff or a school counsellor any concerns about themselves or another pupil.
- Addressing issues, through LLW/PD, such as the various forms of bullying, including how and why it can happen.
- Through the preventative curriculum actively promote positive emotional health and well-being.
- Visiting speakers and drama groups are invited from time to time to explore the problem of bullying.
- Participation in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities.
- Development of peer-led systems (eg. School Council) to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messaging within the school.
- Development of effective strategies for management of unstructured times, eg. training for supervisors.
- Focused assemblies to raise awareness and promote understanding of key issues related to bullying.
- Provision and promotion of extra- and co-curricular activities, aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks.
- Year 14 Form Prefects, acting as peer mentors, are attached to each Year 8 Form Class.

As bullying can also take place on the way to and from school we endeavour to:

- Develop a culture where pupils take pride in their school and are viewed as ambassadors for their school within the community. This includes regular reminders of the positive behaviour expectations of pupils whilst travelling to and from school.
- Take measures to empower pupils to challenge inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour of their peers during the journey to and from school e.g. Guidance for Prefects.
- Have regular engagement with transport providers (eg. Translink, EA Transport, etc.) to ensure effective communication and the early identification of any concerns.
- Ensure there is appropriate deployment of staff to support the transition from school day to journey home eg. staff bus duty

Bullying can occur through the use of electronic communication at any time during term time and have a detrimental effect on the pupil's education in school. Banbridge Academy raises awareness of the nature and impact of online bullying and supports our pupils to make use of the internet in a safe and respectful way through:

- Addressing key themes of online behaviour and risk through Assemblies and LLW/PD classes, including understanding how to respond to harm and the consequences of inappropriate use.
- Participation in Anti-Bullying week activities.

- Engagement with key statutory and voluntary agencies (e.g. C2k, PSNI, Futureproof).
- Development and implementation of robust and appropriate policies in related areas e.g. Online Safety Policy.

What if bullying occurs outside school hours?
If bullying occurs outside school during term-time e.g. on the way to and from school and/or electronically, and it is likely to have a detrimental effect on the pupil's education in school, Banbridge Academy reserves the right to deal with it in line with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

6. RESPONSIBILTY

Every member of the school community is expected to work together to:
- foster positive self-esteem, respect the right of others to be safe;
- behave towards each other in a mutually respectful way;
- be alert to signs of distress and other possible indicators of bullying behaviour;
- inform the school of any concerns related to bullying behaviours;
- model high standards of personal pro-social 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; and
- resolve difficulties in restorative ways to prevent recurring bullying behaviour and meet the needs of all parties.

7. REPORTING A BULLYING CONCERN

All pupils are encouraged to get help if they have a concern about bullying that they experience or is experienced by another.

A range of mechanisms are in place for the reporting of bullying. These include:
- Speaking to a member of staff;
- Speaking to a member of the Anti-Bullying Ambassadors team;
- Raising concern via the alert button on the "My School' webpage; and
- Placing a note in the concerns/Anti-Bullying Ambassadors box at the Office hatch.

ANY pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing this behaviour.

Guidance for parents/carers reporting a concern (see Appendix A)

Parents/carers who suspect that their child is being bullied should contact the school at the earliest opportunity.
- The initial contact should be to the Form Teacher.
- Where the parent/carer 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 Year Head.
- Where the parent/carer 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 Vice Principal (Pastoral).
- Where the parent/carer 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 Headmaster.

Where a parent/carer remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been responded to appropriately, then the school's complaints procedure should be followed.

- All reports of bullying concerns received from pupils and/or parents/carers will be responded to in line with this policy. Feedback will be made to the person who made the report. However, it must be noted that no information about action taken in relation to a pupil can be disclosed to anyone other than the pupil and his/her parents/carers.
- A leaflet on Bullying containing advice for parents and for pupils is placed on the website. Copies are available from the office on request.
- The Anti-Bullying policy will also be placed on the school website.
- Copies of the Anti-Bullying policy are available from the school office.

Guidance for pupils
- Pupils are encouraged not to neglect their own welfare as well as caring for others.
- Pupils who are being bullied or who know that someone else is being bullied should report the matter to a teacher at the first opportunity.
- A leaflet on Bullying containing advice for pupils will be issued to all pupils in Year 8. A copy of the leaflet will be displayed in all Form rooms and Form Teachers will remind pupils of the advice at regular intervals.
- The websites listed in Appendix A contain practical advice for pupils, teachers and parents on tackling cyber-bullying.

8. RESPONDING TO A BULLYING CONCERN

The processes below provide a framework for how Banbridge Academy will respond to any bullying concern identified.

Using the Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF) 'Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour' resource, the member of staff responsible shall:
- Clarify facts and perceptions;
- Check pupil records;
- Assess the incident against the criteria for bullying behaviour;
- Identify any themes or motivating factors;
- Identify the type of bullying behaviour being displayed;
- Identify intervention level;
- Select and implement appropriate interventions for all pupils involved, including appropriate interventions, consequences and sanctions not listed in the Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource (e.g. Positive Behaviour Policy);

- Track, monitor and record effectiveness of interventions;
- Review outcomes of interventions; and
- Select and implement further interventions as necessary.

Where appropriate, school staff may also implement sanctions for those displaying bullying behaviour.

NIABF advocates a restorative approach to responding to bullying behaviour. Interventions suggested in the 'Effective Approaches to Bullying Behaviour' resource focus on responding to the behaviour, resolving the concern and restoring the well-being of those involved.

Within this framework there are 4 levels of intervention.
1. Level 1 (Low Level Bullying Behaviour)- interventions are to help individuals to recognise/reflect on their unacceptable behaviour and to 'get them back on track', while listening to and supporting/strengthening the pupil(s) experiencing bullying.
2. Level 2 (Intermediate level Bullying Behaviour)- these interventions continue with the above but there is a shift from individual support to group interventions.
3. Level 3 (Complex Bullying Behaviour)- interventions will often involve senior staff, Learning Support Coordinator in collaboration with pupil(s), parents and others to determine the way forward in affecting change.
4. Level 4 (High Risk Bullying Behaviour)- At this level the school's safeguarding procedures will need to be invoked and external support sought.

When bullying concerns are identified we will work in a restorative and solution-focused way to achieve the necessary change.
- Pupils who are targeted will be listened to, supported and strengthened.
- Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour will be listened to and supported to accept responsibility and change their behaviour.

Staff are expected to respond to bullying behaviour promptly and efficiently, in an assertive and confident manner, with an expectation of change being achieved through implementing the procedures as set out in the Positive Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies.

9. RECORD KEEPING

Banbridge Academy will keep a central record of all bullying or alleged bullying incidents that occur while:
a) On the premises of the school during the school day;
b) Travelling to or from the school during the school term e.g. walking or on a bus;
c) The pupil is in the lawful control or charge of a member of staff e.g. on a school trip or playing for a school team; and
d) The pupil is receiving educational provision arranged on behalf of the school and provided elsewhere other than on the premises of the school.

A Bullying Concern Assessment Form will be used to record details such as:
- How the bullying behaviour was displayed (the method);
- The motivation for the behaviour;
- How each incident was addressed by the school; and
- The outcomes of the interventions employed.

All records will be maintained in line with the relevant data protection legislation and guidance and will be disposed of in line with the school's Retention and Disposal Schedule. 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 school. The Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher will review bullying data and provide feedback to the Safeguarding Team and Board of Governors as required.

10. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF

- Banbridge Academy is committed to ensuring that staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school's ongoing CPD/PRSD provision
- The impact of the training may result in policy/procedural updates.
- Records are kept of training provided.

11. MONITORING AND POLICY REVIEW

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; and
- Assess the effectiveness of strategies aimed at responding to bullying behaviour.

The Anti-Bullying policy will be reviewed at intervals of no more than four years. From time to time amendments will be made:
- as a result of surveys;
- when changes to legislation occur;
- in response to issues arising from a current situation; and
- when data generated to identify existing behavioural patterns and trends indicate that changes are required.

12. RELATED SCHOOL POLICIES

The Anti-Bullying Policy forms part of the suite of safeguarding and pastoral policies which work together to promote the welfare and well-being of pupils. As such the policy must comply with current safeguarding requirements as set out in the current ETI Safeguarding Pro forma.

This policy is set within the broader school context of Pastoral Care and as such should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:
- Pastoral Care Policy;
- Positive Behaviour Policy;
- Safeguarding Policy;
- Special Educational Needs Policy;
- Health and Safety Policy;
- Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy;
- Online Safety Policy;
- Educational Visits Policy; and
- Staff Code of Conduct

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BULLYING

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

> *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.*

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- Intentional;
- Targeted at a specific pupil or group of pupils;
- Repeated; and
- Causing physical or emotional harm

In Banbridge Academy bullying will not be tolerated. We aim to prevent bullying in school and recognise that in this, as in all other areas of school life, we will be much more successful if we have the support and co-operation of you, the parents. We suggest that you can help your child by:

- **watching** for signs of distress. These may include deterioration of work, unwillingness to go to school, spurious illness, erratic attendance, isolation or the desire to remain with adults;

- **taking an active interest** in your child's school life e.g. by taking time to discuss the school day, the journey to and from school and your child's friendships;

- **encouraging** your child not to retaliate if there is bullying but rather to talk to a teacher - the Form Teacher or any teacher to whom he/she can relate easily;

- **contacting the school** immediately if you suspect that bullying is taking place. Your initial contact should be to the Form Teacher;

- **offering continuing support** to your son/daughter if he/she has been the target of bullying. Encourage your child to react appropriately to bullying and not to do anything to retaliate or 'hit back'; and

- **working with your son/daughter** at home if he/she has been guilty of bullying. It is important that the young person understands why bullying is wrong and the detrimental effect it can have.

All reports of bullying concerns received from pupils and/or parents/carers will be responded to in line with this policy. Feedback will be made to the person who made the report. However, it must be noted that no information about action taken in relation to a pupil can be disclosed to anyone other than the pupil and his/her parents/carers.

If bullying occurs outside school during term-time e.g. on the way to and from school and/or electronically, and it is likely to have a detrimental effect on the pupil's education in school, Banbridge Academy reserves the right to deal with it in line with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

Useful contact numbers

Banbridge Academy   (028) 4062 3220 (The Vice-Principal (Pastoral) is Mrs H Evans)

Childline   0800 1111

NSPCC   0800 800500

Many websites include practical advice for pupils, teachers and parents on tackling bullying:

Northern Ireland's Anti-Bullying Forum- provides advice for everyone on bullying issues.

Kidscape: advice for parents and young people on how to respond to cyberbullying.

Childnet: Advice and guidance for parents and young people about online safety.

Thinkuknow- CEOP's excellent website focusing on internet safety for young people.

Internet Watch Foundation - support website with information on filtering, protection, and an area to report illegal content.

Sorted - Part of the Childnet stable of websites providing information on computer security issues.

UK Safer Internet Centre: provides online safety tips, advice and resources to help children and young people stay safe online.

NI Government website - provides advice for parents on cyberbullying.

Bullying which happens online or through an app can be reported directly to the provider.

Examples include

Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook…

Phone network service providers can assist through the phone numbers below:

EE- 150 from an EE phone;

Vodafone -03333 040 191, or 191 from a Vodafone phone;

O2 – 0844 809 0222;

Virgin Mobile - 0345 6000 789, or 789 from a Virgin Mobile phone; and

3 Network – 0333 338 1001, or 333 from your 3 Network phone.

BULLYING

ADVICE FOR PUPILS

> ***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.***

Bullying can take many forms:
1. Physical, for example, pushing, hitting, kicking, spitting, theft, damage to belongings, physical intimidation, any other physical contact which may include the use of weapons.
2. Verbal, for example, repeated insults, name-calling, teasing, taunting, spreading rumours, passing malicious notes.
3. Indirect, for example, excluding someone from the social group/isolation, tormenting, hiding other pupils' belongings, making threatening gestures.
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This list is not exhaustive and other types/methods may also fall into the category of bullying.

We will not tolerate bullying in Banbridge Academy but if it occurs the following advice is offered:

- If you are being bullied, it's not your fault. The person displaying bullying behaviour needs to change, not you.

- If you are being bullied or someone you know is being bullied talk to someone you can trust, tell your parents or talk to a teacher. This may be your Form Teacher or if you prefer, another teacher you find it easy to talk to. You may also speak to a school counsellor or the School Nurse. Tell what actually happened - always be truthful and do not exaggerate.

- If you think it would help, bring a friend with you when you come to talk to a teacher - or ask a friend to speak to a teacher on your behalf.

- Don't be afraid that you will make matters worse by speaking to a teacher. Your teacher will try to deal with the problem discreetly and sensitively and help to stop the bullying.

- If you find it helpful write down what the person displaying bullying behaviour has said or done to you - be careful to write down only what <u>actually</u> happened.

- If you are being bullied do not retaliate e.g. by hitting the person displaying bullying behaviour, calling him/her names or spreading rumours about him/her. <u>You</u> could then be accused of bullying.

- When the incident has been dealt with you must tell the teacher immediately if the bullying ever starts again.

- If you feel the incident has not been dealt with satisfactorily tell another teacher e.g. your Year Head or the Vice Principal, Mrs Evans.

- If you are still unsure about talking to an adult in person you can telephone
  Childline   0800 1111 or communicate via the Childline website
  NSPCC   0800 800 5000
Calls to these numbers are free of charge and do not show up on your phone-bill.

REMEMBER!

Bullying is not acceptable in Banbridge Academy.
By talking to a teacher you can help to stop it. You can help yourself and help your school.

Many sites include practical advice for pupils, teachers and parents on tackling bullying:

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Childnet: Advice and guidance for parents and young people about online safety.

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