Friends' School Lisburn

Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Introduction

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.

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 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.

2. Context

The Friends' School Anti-Bullying Policy has been developed within the legislative and policy/guidance framework which includes:

The Legislative Context
- The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016
- The Education and Libraries Order (NI) 2003 (A17-19)
- The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (NI) 2010
- The Children (NI) Order 1995
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Health and Safety at Work Order (NI) 1978

The Policy and Guidance Context
- The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 Statutory Guidance for Schools and Boards of Governors (DE, 2019)
- Pastoral Care in Schools – 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 (Department 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)

The key points to note are:

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

a) Provides a legal definition of bullying;
b) Places a duty on the Board of Governors to put in place measures to prevent bullying behaviour, in consultation with pupils and parents;
c) Requires schools to record all incidents of bullying behaviour and alleged bullying incidents;
d) Sets out under which circumstances this policy should be applied, namely:

i) In school, during the school day
ii) While travelling to and from school
iii) When under control of school staff, but away from school (eg. school trip)
iv) When receiving education organised by school but happening elsewhere (eg. in another school in the ALC)

e) Requires that the policy be reviewed at least every four years.

- The Education and Libraries Order (NI) 2003, requires the Board of Governors to:

'Safeguard and promote the welfare of registered pupils' (A.17)

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) sets out every child's right to:

a) Be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, maltreatment or exploitation (A.19);
b) Be protected from discrimination (A.2);
c) Express their views, in a supported and accessible way, on issues that affect them, and to have their opinions taken seriously (A.12);
d) Education (A.28).

3. Ethos and Principles

At Friends' School we are committed to a society where children and young people can live free and safe from bullying. We believe in a society where bullying is unacceptable and where every child and young person is safe and feels safe from bullying. We further believe that every child and young person should be celebrated in their diversity. We are committed to a preventative, responsive and restorative anti-bullying ethos across the whole school. We value the views and contributions of children and young people, will actively seek these views, and will respect and take them into account. We also 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.

4. Consultation and Participation

This policy has been developed in consultation with registered pupils, parents/carers and staff, in compliance with the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016. This has included:

- Class-based activities in LLW lessons and Extended Collects
- Online surveys distributed to all pupils, parents and staff
- Feedback from the School Council

5. Definition of Bullying

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 provides schools with the following legal definition:

> **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.**

At Friends' School, we therefore believe that bullying is behaviour that is usually repeated, and which is carried out intentionally to cause hurt, harm, or to adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others. However, there are

instances of one-off incidents that the school will consider as 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:

- The severity and significance of the incident
- Evidence of pre-meditation
- Impact of the incident on individuals (physical/emotional)
- Impact of the incidents on wider school community
- Previous relationships between those involved
- Any previous incidents involving the individuals

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

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 pupil mean and hurtful names
- Telling lies or spreading rumours about others
- Try to make other pupils dislike another pupil/s
- Physical acts (hitting, kicking, pushing and shoving)
- Material harm, such as taking/stealing money or possessions or causing damage to possessions
- Omission (Exclusion)
- 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 (eg. photographs or videos) online to embarrass someone

This list is not exhaustive and behaviours which fit with the definition may be considered bullying behaviour.

At Friends' School we acknowledge the various motivations behind bullying, including those named in the Act. These include, but are not limited to: 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, and Young Carer status.

At Friends' School we recognise that bullying is an emotive issue, and it is therefore essential that we ensure we use supportive, understanding language when discussion these matters. For that reason, we will not refer to a child as 'a bully', nor will we refer to a child as 'a victim'. Instead, we will refer to the child by describing the situation surrounding that child, for example:

- A child displaying bullying behaviours
- A child experiencing bullying behaviours

We encourage all members of the school community to use this language when discussion bullying incidents.

This policy also accepts the definitions of emotional and physical harm as set out in DE Guidance.

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
- Physical harm as intentionally hurting a pupil by causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts

6. Preventative Measures

In Friends' School, we seek to prevent bullying in the following ways:

a) By promoting and maintaining an ethos which encourages consideration and respect for others and which is firmly based on the values of Friends' School;

b) By educating pupils about the boundaries of appropriate behaviour towards others and addressing bullying and related issues through Collect, Assemblies, Personal Development programmes and other parts of the curriculum;

c) 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;

d) 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;

e) By ensuring that non-teaching staff are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them;

f) 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);

g) By utilising Prefects and pupils as Mentors and Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, and emphasising the role all pupils have in caring for others, highlighting that reporting bullying is not telling tales, but is responsible behaviour;

h) Through staff training and ongoing professional development to highlight awareness of anti-bullying strategies;

i) By liaising with other agencies as appropriate, eg the Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum, NSPCC, social services, Translink and the PSNI;

j) Through marking events such as the NIABF Anti-Bullying week and Safer Internet Day in School;

k) By encouraging a strong sense of belonging to School through participation in extra-curricular activities;

l) Through involvement in meaningful and supportive shared education projects, supporting pupils to explore, understand and respond to difference and diversity;

m) By having clear procedures for responding to bullying, which are kept under regular review;

n) Through the preventative curriculum actively promote positive emotional health and wellbeing (eg. mindfulness training).

We further seek to prevent bullying behaviour on the way to and from school through:

a) Development of a culture where pupils take pride in their school and are viewed as ambassadors for their school within the community, including regular reminders of the positive behaviour expectations of pupils whilst travelling to and from school;

b) Regular engagement with transport providers (eg. Translink, EA Transport, etc.) to ensure effective communication and the early identification of any concerns.;

c) Appropriate deployment of staff to support the transition from school day to journey home (eg. staff duty at school gate/bus stops, where appropriate).

Friends' School will also take steps to prevent bullying through the use of electronic communication amongst pupils at any time during term, where that behaviour is likely to have a detrimental effect on the pupil's education at school. This includes:

a) Addressing key themes of online behaviour and risk through PD/LLW, including understanding how to respond to harm and the consequences of inappropriate use;

b) Participation in Anti-Bullying Week activities;

c) Engagement with key statutory and voluntary sector agencies (eg. C2k, PSNI, Public Health Agency, Safeguarding Board for NI e-Safety Forum) to support the promotion of key messages;

d) Participation in annual Safer Internet Day and promotion of key messages throughout the year;

e) Development and implementation of robust and appropriate policies in related areas (e.g. Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy and Mobile Phone Policy).

7. Responsibility

At Friends' School we believe that everyone has responsibility for creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all members of the school communities. Everyone in the Friends' School community, including pupils, parents/carers and staff are expected to respect the rights of others to be safe.

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 school 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, both internal and external
- Resolve difficulties in restorative ways to prevent recurring bullying behaviour and meet the needs of all parties

Friends' 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

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

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

8. Reporting a Bullying Concern

a) Pupils Reporting a Concern

Pupils are encouraged to raise concerns with any member of staff, including teaching and non-teaching staff. Pupils can raise concerns by talking to a member of staff or writing a note (eg. in their homework diary).

Any pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing this behaviour. All pupils are encouraged to get help if they have a concern about bullying that they experience or is experienced by another.

b) Parents/Carers Reporting a Concern

At Friends' School, we ask parents/carers to encourage their children to react appropriately to bullying behaviour and to not do anything to retaliate or to 'hit back'. The process for parents/carers to report bullying concerns is outlined below:

- All bullying concerns should be reported to the Year Teacher
- 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 Head of School or Vice-Principal (Pastoral), as applicable
- Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken by the Head of Year/Vice-Principal to prevent further incidents, or where further incidents have taken place, the concern should be reported to Principal

Where the parent/carer remains unsatisfied that the concern has not been appropriately responded to, the school's Complaints Procedure should be followed.

It should be noted that all reports of bullying concerns received from pupils and/or parents/carers will be responded to in line with this policy, and feedback will be made to the person who made the report. However, it must be further 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.

9. Responding to a Bullying Concern

It must be remembered that the focus of any intervention made by Friends' School staff will be to respond to the bullying concern and restore the wellbeing of those involved. As such, any strategy for responding to bullying concerns will concentrate on the prevention of any further incidents. 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. Using the *NIABF Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour* resource, the member of staff responsible will:

a) Interview pupils directly involved, who may also be asked to give a written account of the incident;

b) Contact parents of all pupils involved promptly to inform them of the matter and to explain the actions being taken;
c) Clarify facts and perceptions;
d) Check records (SIMS);
e) Assess the incident against the criteria for bullying behaviour;
f) Identify any themes or motivating factors;
g) Identify the type of bullying behaviour being displayed;
h) Identify intervention level;
i) 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;
j) Track, monitor and record effectiveness of interventions;
k) Review outcome of interventions;
l) Select and implement further intentions as necessary.

Where appropriate, school staff may implement sanctions for those displaying bullying behaviour. These 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, and may include one or more of the following:

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

It is recognised that the person who has experienced bullying behaviour may be badly affected emotionally. Therefore, this 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 Collect Teacher, Year Teacher, a Mentor, a School Counsellor or 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 displaying bullying behaviour in mentoring, counselling, community service or referral to an outside agency.

10. Recording

Friends' School 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

Records will be kept on the online SIMS Behaviour Management Module, which is part of the C2k system in schools. Access to these records is restricted and only provided to those members of school staff with a legitimate need to have access.

11. Professional Development of Staff

Friends' School recognises the need for appropriate and adequate training for staff, including teaching and non-teaching school staff. The school is committed to ensuring that staff are provided with appropriate opportunities for professional development as part of the school's ongoing CPD/PRSD provisions. CPD records are kept and updated regularly.

12. Monitoring and Review of Policy

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

- 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

The Friends' School Anti-Bullying Policy will be reviewed at an interval of no more than four years. However, the policy will also be reviewed following any incidents which highlight the need for such a review, and through examination of the strategies in place in School both to prevent bullying occurring and to intervene in instances of bullying behaviour. It will also be reviewed when directed to by the Department of Education and in light of new guidance.

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:

- Behaviour Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- E-Safety Policy & Acceptable Use of Internet Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Educational Visits
- Staff Code of Conduct

Policy last reviewed November 2023
Next review November 2025

Appendix

Support Services

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

- **Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum** (www.niabf.org.uk) giving access to information for pupils, parents and teachers regarding the causes, symptoms and how to stop bullying
  c/o NIABF
  The NICVA Building
  63 Duncairn Gardens
  Belfast
  BT15 2GB
  Tel: 028 9087 5006

- **Childline**
  NSPCC
  Weston House
  42 Curtain Road
  London
  EC2A3NH
  Freephone: 0800 1111
  www.childline.org.uk
  A 24-hour helpline for children and young people who wish to discuss their problems. They also welcome calls from young people who are engaged in bullying type behaviour

- **Kidscape**
  2 Grosvenor Gardens
  London
  SW1 WoDH
  Tel: 020 7730 3300
  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
  BT23 4BX
  Tel: 028 9182 1721

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

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

- **Parents' Advice Centre**
  Franklin House
  12 Brunswick Street
  Belfast
  BT2 7GE
  Telephone: 028 90 238800 (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
  0808 808 8000
  www.lifelinehelpline.info
  This organisation offers a counselling service to young people and a telephone counselling service

Cyber bullying

Thinkuknow (www.thinkuknow.co.uk) provides practical information and advice about many aspects of the internet

Chat Danger (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) 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/) 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)