



Carrickfergus Grammar School policy on	Anti-Bullying
Date implemented	September 2021
Review date / led by	September 2025 / L Kane
Consulted	Governors, Pastoral Team, Parents, Pupils
Allied School Policies on: Safeguarding and Child Protection , E-Safety , Acceptable Use of Mobile Phones , Relationships and Sexuality Education , Promoting Positive Behaviour ,	

Section 1 – Introduction and Statement

At Carrickfergus Grammar School we believe all forms of bullying behaviour are unacceptable. We believe that all pupils have the right to learn in a safe and supported environment where positive behaviour is promoted and acknowledged and where all members of the school community are valued and treated with respect regardless of individual differences.

Section 2 – Context

This policy has been developed and is in line with the legislative and policy/guidance framework which includes:

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 & 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)

The key points to note are:

- * The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (Northern Ireland) 2016:
 - 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 pupils and parents.
 - Requires schools to record all incidents of bullying behaviour and alleged bullying incidents.
 - Sets out under which circumstances this policy should be applied, namely:
 - ! In school, during the school day
 - ! While travelling to and from school
 - ! When under control of school staff, but away from school (eg. school trip)
 - ! When receiving education organised by school but happening elsewhere (eg. in another school in the ALC)
 - Requires that the policy be updated 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:
 - Be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, maltreatment or exploitation. (A.19)
 - Be protected from discrimination. (A.2)
 - Express their views, in a supported and accessible way, on issues that affect them, and to have their opinions taken seriously. (A.12)
 - Education. (A.28)

Section 3 – Ethos & Principles

Carrickfergus Grammar School provides education within an environment which has regard for the personal well-being of all our pupils, which promotes personal and social development and a feeling of self-worth for every pupil, and it is based upon good relations between staff, pupils and parents.

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 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, we will actively seek these views and we will respect and take them into account. 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.

Section 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. This has included:

- Feedback from Pupil Voice
 - Engagement with parents through focus group work
 - Year group assemblies
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Section 5 – What is Bullying?

In line with the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act, Carrickfergus Grammar uses the legal definition of bullying as outlined below.

Addressing Bullying in Schools Definition of “bullying”:

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 behaviour by one or more pupils that is usually repeated, which is carried out intentionally to cause hurt or harm or to adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others. While bullying is usually repeated behaviour, 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:

- * *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*

*On occasion we will be challenged to differentiate between inappropriate / unacceptable behaviours and those which constitute bullying behaviour. Any incidents which are not considered bullying behaviour will be addressed under the Positive 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 spread false rumours about others
 - try to make other pupils dislike another pupil/s
- * 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 (eg. photographs or videos) online to embarrass someone

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

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

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| * Age | * Political affiliation |
| * Appearance | * Gender identity |
| * Breakdown in peer relationships | * Sexual orientation |
| * Community background | * Pregnancy |
| | * Marital status |

- * Race
- * Religion
- * Disability / SEN
- * Ability
- * Looked After Child status
- * Young Carer status

At Carrickfergus Grammar School we recognise that bullying is an emotive issue, therefore it is essential that we ensure we use supportive, understanding language when discussing 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 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 discussing bullying incidents.

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.

Section 6 – Preventative Measures

Carrickfergus Grammar places great value on educating its young people to have respect for one another with the aim of preventing bullying and creating a safe learning environment. We seek to prevent bullying in the following ways:

- * 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
- * Addressing issues such as the various forms of bullying, including the how and why it can happen, through assemblies and Personal Development classes (eg. sectarian, racist, homophobic, transphobic, disablist, etc.)
- * Through the preventative curriculum actively promote positive emotional health and wellbeing
- * Participation in the NIABF annual Anti-Bullying Week activities
- * Engagement in key national and regional campaigns, eg Safer Internet Day
- * Development of peer-led systems (eg. Peer Mentoring) to support the delivery and promotion of key anti-bullying messaging within the school
- * Development of effective strategies for playground management, eg. training for supervisors and Prefects.
- * Delivering assemblies to raise awareness and promote understanding of key issues related to bullying, including how we treat one another.

- * Development of effective strategies for the management of unstructured times (eg. break time, lunch)
- * Promoting extra- and co-curricular activities, aimed at supporting the development of effective peer support relationships and networks.
- * Liaising with other agencies as appropriate eg. PSNI, NIABF
- * Ensuring pupils and parents are aware of school policy on the acceptable use of mobile phones.

While many of the measures outlined above will support the development of an anti-bullying culture within school there are a number of ways Carrickfergus Grammar School seeks to build upon this related specifically to the journey to and from school. These include:

- * Development of 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.
- * Empowering pupils to challenge inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour of their peers during the journey to and from school.
- * Regular engagement with transport providers (eg. Translink, EA Transport, etc.) to ensure effective communication and the early identification of any concerns.
- * Promotion of key anti-bullying messages and awareness of behaviour expectations of pupils amongst the local community (eg. local shops, cafes, service providers, residents, etc), including information on how to raise any concerns with the school.
- * Appropriate deployment of staff to support the transition from school day to journey home (eg. staff duty at bus stops at the end of the school day)

Carrickfergus Grammar School takes steps to prevent bullying through the use of electronic communication amongst pupils during term time, where that behaviour is likely to have a detrimental effect on the pupil's education at school.

This includes:

- * Addressing key themes of online behaviour and risk through PD 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 sector agencies (eg. C2k, PSNI, Public Health Agency, Safeguarding Board for NI e-Safety Forum) to support the promotion of key messages.
- * Participation in annual Safer Internet Day and promotion of key messages throughout the year.
- * Development and implementation of robust and appropriate policies in related areas (eg. Acceptable Use of Mobile Phones, E-Safety Policy)

Section 7 – Responsibility

Everyone in the school community, including pupils, their parents/carers and the staff of the school are expected to respect the rights of others to be safe.

Everyone has responsibility for creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all members of the school communities.

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 – internal and external
- * resolve difficulties in restorative ways to prevent recurring bullying behaviour and meet the needs of all parties

Section 8 – Reporting a Bullying Concern

Pupils Reporting a Concern

Pupils are encouraged to report a concern about bullying as soon as possible to their Class Tutor, Head of Year or the Head of Pastoral Care, but can speak to any member of staff, including teaching and non-teaching, (or write a note) if they have a concern.

There are several ways that pupils can report bullying concerns, including:

- * Verbally- talking to a member of staff
- * By writing a note to a member of staff (eg. in a homework diary)
- * By speaking with an Anti-Bullying Ambassador
- * By posting a comment in the 'Buddy Box'

ANY pupil can raise a concern about bullying behaviour, not just the pupil who is experiencing this behaviour. The emphasis is on 'getting help' rather than 'telling'. As such, all pupils are encouraged to 'get help' if they have a concern about bullying that they experience or is experienced by another.

Parents/Carers Reporting a Concern

Parents and carers should raise concerns about alleged bullying behaviour with the school at the earliest opportunity. Parents should consider the difference between unacceptable behaviour and bullying. They should encourage their children to react appropriately to bullying behaviour and to not do anything to retaliate or to 'hit back'.

- * In the first instance, all bullying concerns should be reported to the Head of Year
- * 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 Pastoral Care.
- * Where the parent is not satisfied that appropriate action has been taken by the Head of Year/Head of Pastoral Care 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.

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 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.

Section 9 – Responding to a Bullying Concern

The focus of any intervention must be on responding to the bullying concern and restoring the wellbeing of those involved. As such, any strategy for responding to bullying concerns must concentrate on the prevention of any further incidents. The exact action taken will vary depending on the individual incident. Head of Year will work with the Head of Pastoral Care to gather information before a final decision is taken as to whether the behaviour is to be deemed as socially unacceptable or bullying behaviour.

The processes outlined below provide a framework for how the school will respond to any bullying concerns identified. Using the NIABF Effective Responses to Bullying Behaviour resource, the member of staff responsible shall...

- * Interview pupils involved
- * Clarify facts and perceptions
- * Check records (SIMS/Pastoral)
- * 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
- * Track, monitor and record effectiveness of interventions
- * Review outcome of interventions
- * Select and implement further intentions as necessary

The main aim of any intervention in Carrickfergus Grammar School is to:

- * **RESPOND** to the bullying behaviour taking place
- * **RESOLVE** the concern
- * **RESTORE** the well-being of all those involved

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

When responding to a bullying concern, school staff shall implement interventions aimed at responding to the behaviour, resolving the concern and restoring the wellbeing of those involved. Where appropriate, school staff may implement sanctions for those displaying bullying behaviour, this can include a written apology, a formal detention, exclusion from class or possible suspension or expulsion.

Information regarding any action taken regarding a pupil will not be disclosed to anyone other than that pupil and his/her parents/carers.

Section 10 – Recording

Staff will use the Bullying Concern Assessment Form and 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 securely in school and access is restricted and only provided to those members of staff with a legitimate need to have access.

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. 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.

Section 11 – Professional Development of Staff

Carrickfergus Grammar School recognises the need to ensure staff are provided with appropriate and adequate training. Safeguarding training is provided for all school staff annually.

Section 12 – Monitoring and Review of Policy

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

- * maintain an item on the agenda of meetings of the Board on a quarterly basis 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 every four years. It shall also be reviewed following any incidents which highlight the need for a review.

Section 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
- * Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- * Special Educational Needs Policy
- * Health and Safety Policy
- * Relationships and Sexuality Education
- * E-Safety Policy & Acceptable Use of Mobile Phones Policy
- * Educational Visits
- * Staff Code of Conduct