

Carrickfergus College

Anti Bullying Policy September 2008

At Carrickfergus College we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our staff and pupils so that teaching and learning can take place in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and in the interests of all our school community, must be reported. If bullying does occur any school member should be able to tell and know that the incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

1. What is Bullying?

Bullying is deliberate repeated act/acts of aggression with the intention of causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to someone. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

- **Emotional** being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures, sending notes)
- **Physical** pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- **Racist** racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- **Sexual** unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- **Homophobic** related to perceived or actual sexual orientation
- **Verbal** name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing,
- **Cyber** All areas of internet, such as email & internet chat rooms misuse
Mobile threats by text messaging & calls
Misuse of associated technology i.e. camera facilities

Bullying is not the same as a disagreement between two people. Bullying is

- Ongoing, rather than one-off
- Distressing and hurtful to the victim, rather than good-natured fun
- Always one way rather than an exchange

2. Signs and Symptoms – Things to look out for

Adults should be aware of these possible signs and they should investigate if a young person:

- Regularly feels sick in the mornings
- Reluctant to go to school
- Taking different routes to school
- Money or possessions go missing
- Clothes or school bag are torn
- Wanting extra pocket money for no particular reason
- Unexplained cuts or bruises
- Unexplained behaviour changes, e.g. moody, bad tempered, tearful
- Unhappiness
- Nightmares

3. The Responsibilities of the Board of Governors and Staff

The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for ensuring a safe environment for all the school community. All staff will promote an Anti-Bullying culture in the College. Staff are aware of the signs and symptoms of bullying and will act in response to these. They will be vigilant and ensure that bullying or threatening behaviour is not tolerated in school.

Staff will respond to complaints of bullying in the first instance by:

- listening to the victim
- reassuring the victim
- dealing with the issue or making an appropriate referral

In responding to incidents of bullying staff will:

- respond as quickly as possible
- consider whether action should be public or private

- make it clear to the bully that such behaviour is not acceptable
- establish whether or not the incident is part of a pattern
- encourage the bully to see the victim's point of view
- explain why a punishment (if any) is given
- share information with other members of staff, in particular, Heads of Year and Pastoral Care staff
- Heads of Year to inform parents when appropriate
- Vice Principal/Principal informed if necessary

4. The Responsibilities of Pupils

We expect our pupils to:

- Not get involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity
- Intervene to protect the pupil who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so
- Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying - don't be a 'bystander'
- Bullying can also be reported to a prefect, buddy or member of the school council
- If bullying persists, pupils should report it again
- Anyone who becomes the target of bullies should not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out. This could put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets

5. How to stand up and speak out against bullying

- Be friendly towards people you know are being bullied, include them in your discussions, games, break-times and lunchtimes
- Don't laugh when someone is being bullied
- Speak out. Say you don't like what is going on
- Don't join in bullying others
- Tell an adult what is happening

6. The Responsibilities of Parents

We ask our parents to support their young people at school by:

- Watching for signs and symptoms which could be possible indicators of evidence of bullying in young people
- Advising young people to report any bullying to their Head of Year
- Advising young people not to retaliate to any form of bullying
- Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken
- Keeping a written record of any reported instances of bullying
- Informing the school of any suspected bullying, even if their own young person is not involved
- Work with the school if their young person is accused of bullying, endeavour to find out the truth, point out the implications of bullying, both for the pupils who are bullied and for bullies themselves
- Be aware of the social networking sites their young person uses and monitor carefully

7. Anti-Bullying Measures

- A whole school approach which promotes respect for the individual
- Staff set an example by practicing basic good manners
- School rules which do not permit anti-social behaviour
- Vigilance by all adults and pupils in the school encouraging: 'Don't be a bystander, watch out for others' approach
- An attempt will be made to help the bullies change their behaviour
- Promote positive attitudes to others through PSHE, R.E, Anti-Bullying awareness raising, Pastoral system, Buddy System, Student Council
- Anti-Bullying attitudes promoted through assemblies
- Anti-Bullying week
- Discipline Policy implemented fairly by all staff

8. Discipline

- Within the school, it is made clear that bullying will not be tolerated
- Bullying behaviour will be investigated to ensure the safety of our young people and for the bully to review their actions
- Bullying behaviour of any form, will be dealt with from an official warning to possible suspension
- Cyberbullying will result in: confiscating mobile phones, access to computers/internet removed
- Pupils who persist in bullying, despite guidance given, may be placed in the Support Centre, suspended or ultimately recommended for expulsion

9. Support for Pupils

- The Pastoral system provides pupils with a Form teacher and Head of Year
- Anti-Bullying promoted through PSHE, Religious Education and Citizenship
- Pupils involved in bullying or threatening behaviour, either as a victim or bully, are supported in order to overcome their problems. All incidents are treated seriously by listening to and reassuring the victim
- Action is taken when bullying is reported
- Circle Time
- The Buddy System in the Junior School is another way young people can report bullying
- Staff are on duty to supervise in canteen and playground areas at break and lunchtime
- Pupils can report bullying to any member of staff
- New pupils are made aware of the school's anti-bullying procedures

10. Support for Staff

- Staff have a copy of the school's anti-bullying policy
- SLT and the Pastoral Care Team support staff in ensuring anti-bullying measures are used
- All new members of staff are made aware of the school's anti-bullying policy
- Staff should report to the Principal any form of 'bullying' or 'harassment' they may encounter

11. Links to other policies

- Pastoral Care
- Child Protection
- Discipline/Positive Behaviour
- Health and Safety
- Special Educational Needs
- RSE

These policies share the goal of creating an environment in which pupils feel secure and confident in the knowledge that their concerns will be listened to and dealt with by members of staff in a sympathetic and appropriate manner.

12. Monitoring and Evaluation

- Heads of Year meet weekly with the Vice Principal to discuss any pupils causing concern, either because of attendance or problems of indiscipline. Issues relating to bullying are discussed at these meetings
- Issues concerning bullying can be discussed at the Heads of Year meetings with their Pastoral Teams
- Bullying incidents and action taken are recorded by Heads of Year as a matter of course
- Bullying is on the agenda of the School Council annually
- Anti-bullying Policy is reviewed on a regular basis
- Use of Child Protection forms as necessary

13. The Responsibilities of all

Everyone should work together to combat and, hopefully in time, eradicate bullying from our school.

APPENDIX 1

Key advice to pupils on cyberbullying:

ANTI-CYBERBULLYING CODE (Taken from the document *CYBERBULLYING SAFE TO LEARN: EMBEDDING ANTI-BULLYING WORK IN SCHOOLS* -Department for Children, Schools and Families)

This code gives you 7 important tips to protect yourself and your friends from getting caught up in cyberbullying and advice on how to report it if it does happen.

1)Always respect others

Remember when you send a message to someone you cannot see the impact that your words may have on the other person. That is why it is important to always show respect to people and be careful what you say online or what images you send. What you think is a joke may really hurt someone else. Always ask permission before you take a photo of someone. If you receive a nasty message or picture about someone else, do not forward it. You could be assisting a bully, and even be accused of cyberbullying yourself. You could be breaking the law.

2)Think before you send

It is important to think before you send any images or text about yourself or someone else by email or mobile phone, or before you post information on a website. Remember that what you send can be made public very quickly and could stay online forever.

3)Treat your password like your toothbrush

Don't let anyone know your passwords. It is a good idea to change them on a regular basis. Remember to only give your mobile phone number or personal website address to trusted friends.

4)Block the bully

Most responsible websites and services allow you to block or report someone who is behaving badly. Make use of these features, they are there for a reason.

5)Don't retaliate or reply

Replying to bullying messages, particularly in anger, is just what the bully wants.

6)Save the evidence

Learn how to keep records of offending messages, pictures or online conversations. This will help you demonstrate to others what is happening, and can be used by your school, internet provider, mobile phone company, or even the police to investigate the cyberbullying.

7)Make sure you tell

- You have a right not to be harassed and bullied online.
- Tell an adult you trust
- Call a helpline like *CHILDLINE* 0800 1111
- Tell the provider of the service (mobile phone operator or social network provider)
- Tell your school

Finally, don't just stand there - if you see cyberbullying going on, support the victim and report the bullying. How would you feel if no-one stood up for you?

APPENDIX 2

Key advice to parents on cyberbullying: (Taken from the document *CYBERBULLYING SAFE TO LEARN: EMBEDDING ANTI-BULLYING WORK IN SCHOOLS* -Department for Children, Schools and Families)

1)Preventing Cyberbullying

Endeavour to prevent it happening. It may be uncomfortable to accept but your child may be as likely to cyberbully as to be a target. It is crucial that you talk to your young person and understand the ways they are using the internet and their mobile phone. Most software services have inbuilt safety features. For example, Instant Messenger services such as MSN Messenger have features which allow users to block others on their contact list and conversations can be saved on most Instant Messenger services. Social networking sites such as Myspace and Bebo also have tools available - young people can keep their profile set to 'private' so that only approved friends can see it.

2)Responding to Cyberbullying

It is vital that you have strategies to help your young person if they come to you saying that they are being cyberbullied.

The anti-cyberbullying code:

Start by teaching your young person the seven key messages in appendix 1. This includes advice on not replying or retaliating to cyberbullying, as well as not assisting a cyberbully by forwarding a message, even as a joke.

Keep the evidence:

This is helpful when reporting an incident and lay help in identifying the bully. This means keeping copies of offending emails, text messages or online conversations.

Reporting cyberbullying:

There are a number of organizations that can help you if you need to report incidents of cyberbullying:

The school: If the incident involves a pupil or pupils at the school then it is important to let the school know. Schools will apply disciplinary measures if this is carried into school.

The provider of the service:

Most service providers have complaints and abuse policies and it is important to report the incident to the provider of the service -i.e. the mobile phone operator (e.g.O2 or Vodafone etc) the instant messenger provider (e.g. Bebo or Piczo etc) Most responsible service providers will have a 'Report Abuse' or a nuisance call bureau, and these can provide information and advice on bow to help your young person.

The police:

If the cyberbullying is serious and potential crime has been committed you should consider contacting the police. Relevant criminal offences here include harassment and stalking, threats of harm or violence to a person or property, any evidence of sexual exploitation, for example grooming, distribution of sexual images or inappropriate sexual contact or behaviour.