

# Rathfriland High School

## Anti-Bullying Policy



Date ratified by Board of Governors: 29<sup>th</sup> March 2012

## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

Rathfriland High School believes that its pupils have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied.

All institutions, both large and small, contain some numbers of pupils with the potential for bullying behaviour. If a school is well disciplined and organised, it can minimise the occurrence of bullying. This school has a clear policy on the promotion of good behaviour where it is made clear that bullying is a form of anti-social behaviour. It is wrong and will not be tolerated.

It is important that pupils and parents are fully aware that any bullying complaints will be dealt with firmly, fairly and promptly. Bullying affects everyone, not just the bullies and their victims. It also affects those other children who watch and less aggressive pupils can be drawn in by group pressure. Bullying is not an inevitable part of school life or a necessary part of growing up, and it rarely sorts itself out. It is clear that certain jokes, insults, intimidating/threatening behaviour, written abuse and violence are to be found in our society. No one person or group, whether teacher or pupil, should have to accept this type of behaviour. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed, will a child be able to benefit fully from the opportunities available at Rathfriland High School.

### **What is Bullying?**

Bullying can occur through several types of anti-social behaviour. It can be:

**PHYSICAL** - Physical bullying takes place when a person is pushed, punched, kicked, hit, spat at.

**VERBAL** - Verbal abuse can take the form of name calling. It may be directed towards, for example, gender, family ethnic origin, physical/social disability, or personality.

**WRITTEN** - A child can be bullied by text messaging, e-mails, and other forms of written communication.

**EXCLUSION** - A child can be bullied simply by being excluded from discussions/activities, with those they believe to be their friends.

**DAMAGE TO PROPERTY OR THEFT** - Pupils may have their property damaged or stolen. Physical threats may be used by the bully in order that the pupil hands over property to them.

CYBERBULLYING - The use of the Internet and related technologies to harm other people, in a deliberate, repeated, and hostile manner, for example, through text messaging, calls and video clips from mobile phones, email, chat rooms, instant messaging and social networking sites.

### **What can pupils do if they are being bullied?**

- Remember that their silence is the bully's greatest weapon
- Tell themselves that they do not deserve to be bullied, and that it is wrong!
- Be proud of who they are, it is good to be an individual
- Try not to show that they are upset, it is hard but a bully thrives on someone's fear
- Stay with a group of friends/people, there is safety in numbers
- Be assertive shout "No", walk confidently away, go straight to a teacher/member of staff/Year Tutor
- Do not fight back - it may make things worse
- Always try to tell an adult they trust straight away - they will get immediate support
- Save evidence – text messages, comments of social networking sites etc. to show to a trusted adult

**Teachers will take bullying seriously and will deal with bullies in a way which we hope will end the bullying and will not make things worse**

### **If a pupil knows someone who is being bullied what should they do?**

- **TAKE ACTION!** – watching and doing nothing looks as if they are on the side of the bully and makes the victim feel more unhappy and on their own
- Tell an adult immediately if they feel they cannot get involved
- Do not be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully
- Do not delete abusive texts or e-mails

### **What can parents do?**

- Look for unusual behaviour in their children. They may suddenly not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to their usual standard
- Take an active role in their child's education; enquire how the day has gone, who they have spent their time with, how lunch was spent
- Inform the school immediately if they feel their child may be a victim of bullying; the complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow
- Advise their child not to fight back – it can make matters worse
- Tell their son or daughter that there is nothing wrong with him/her – it is not his or her fault that the bullying is taking place
- Make sure the child is fully aware of the School Policy concerning bullying, and that they should not be afraid to ask for help

### **What can the school do?**

- We treat bullying as a serious offence and take every possible action to eradicate it from our school
- We organise the community in order to minimise opportunities for bullying, for example, we provide supervision at break and lunch times
- We use every opportunity to discuss aspects of bullying, especially through the school's learning for Life and Work programme, Form time and through the Tutor system and School Assembly
- We deal quickly, firmly and fairly with any complaints, involving parents where necessary
- We regularly review the School's Policy for Pastoral Care and Discipline, the Child Protection Policy and the Anti-bullying Policy
- We maintain a firm but fair discipline structure with rules that are simple and easy to understand
- We encourage pupils to discuss how they get on with other people and to form positive attitudes towards others

### **What actions are taken by the school if bullying is suspected?**

When bullying is suspected we use the "no blame approach" and talk to the suspected victim, the suspected bully and any witnesses. If any degree of bullying is identified, the following action will be taken:

- Help, support and counselling will be given to both the targets and the bullies.
- When bullying is identified the incident is recorded in the Bullying Log and Pastoral Records for future reference

### **We support the target of bullying in the following ways:**

- By offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about the experience with their Year Tutor, the Senior Teacher or another teacher if they choose
- By informing the target's parents/guardians, if necessary
- By offering continuing support when the target feels the need for it and it is deemed to be in his/her best interests
- By consulting with the parents/guardian to ensure that the target's journey to and from school is safe and secure
- By taking one or more of the five disciplinary steps described below to prevent more bullying
- By involving external agencies as appropriate e.g. SELB Pupil Personal Development Services and New Life School Counsellor

**We also discipline, yet try to help the bullies in the following ways:**

- By talking about what happened, to discover why they became involved
- Informing the bullies' parents/guardians, as and when necessary
- By continuing to work with the bullies in order to get rid of prejudiced attitudes as far as possible
- By taking one or more of the five disciplinary steps described below to prevent more bullying
- By involving external agencies as appropriate

**Disciplinary Steps**

- Bullies will be warned officially to stop offending and entered into the Bullying Log and Pastoral Records
- Bullies will be subject to the detention system
- The parents/guardians of bullies will be informed
- Should these pupils still continue to bully they may be suspended from school for a period of time
- In very serious cases, if bullies will not end such behaviour, they will be recommended for permanent exclusion (expulsion)

## RESOURCES RELEVANT TO BULLYING

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|--|-------------------------|
| 1. Supporting Schools against Bullying Pack:         | Pub. SCORE              |
| 2. Bullying  | SELB English Team       |
| 3. Let's Stop Bullying Now                           | DENI Advice Leaflet     |
| 4. "Turning Blind Eyes" - Resource Pack              | Cheshire County Council |
| 5. Bullying: A Practical Guide to Coping for Schools | Pub. Pitman             |
| 6. You Know the Fair Rule, B Rogers                  | Pub. Pitman             |
| 7. Bullying: Don't Let them suffer in silence        | Save the Children Pack  |
| 8. A Spoonful of Jam - M Magorian                    | Pub. Mammoth            |
| 9. The Protectors - P Johnston                       | Pub. Mammoth            |
| 10. No Bullying Here                                 | Channel 4 Video         |
| 11. Focus on Bullying                                | Save the Children       |
| 12. Bullying – The Child's View                      | Jean La Fontaine        |
| 13. Bullying – Don't Suffer in Silence               | University of London    |
| 14. Finding Out About Bullying                       | Andrew Mellor           |
| 15. What is expected of schools?                     | Anti-Bullying Network   |
| 16. Bullying – how to beat it                        | Teachernet              |
| 17. Bullying Always Hurts, Always Wrong              | NIABF                   |

Reviewed: January 2012