

CROSS AND PASSION COLLEGE ANTI-BULLYING POLICY 2014-2015

Statement of Intent

We at Cross and Passion College are committed to providing a caring, supportive and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a *TELLING* school. This means that *anyone* who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

- To meet its statutory duty under the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying, giving a clear definition of what constitutes bullying behaviour
- To prepare all students for life with citizenship skills
- To build an inclusive environment where every child can fulfil his/her potential

What is Bullying?

The term 'bullying' refers to a range of harmful behaviour, both physical and psychological. All bullying behaviour usually has the following 4 features:

- It is repetitive and persistent
- It is intentionally harmful
- It involves an imbalance of power, leaving someone feeling helpless to prevent it or put a stop to it
- It causes stress

The Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF) defines bullying as the repeated use of power by one or more persons intentionally to hurt harm, or adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others.

Bullying can occur through several types of anti-social behaviour. It is the systematic use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying can be carried out by an individual or a group. It can be:-

- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures

- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic - because of, or focusing on, the issue of sexuality
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Damage to property or theft - Pupils may have their property damaged or stolen.
- Cyber bullying and online safety

Bullying is not:

- A one-off fight or argument
- A friend sometimes being nasty
- An argument with a friend

Where and when it happens

Most bullying takes place in **school** - in the playground, in changing rooms, on corridors, on the way to and from school, during break and lunchtime as well as the beginning and end of class.

Monitoring the occurrence of bullying can indicate where and how intervention might be most successful.

Objectives of this policy

- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All governors and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a school we take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and they should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go on the school/public bus
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)

- begins truanting
- becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions go "missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (money/lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and will be investigated.

AS A PARENT:

- Be a good role model in how you talk about and treat others. Help your child learn that everyone must be treated with respect.
- Talk openly about what bullying is and how it feels. Make it comfortable for your child to talk about bullying.
- Talk to your child about the different types of bullying and the hurtful, humiliating nature of physically harming someone else, name calling, excluding others, spreading rumours, talking about others behind their back etc
- Teach your child to avoid sending text messages or instant messaging which could be seen as bullying

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILD IS BEING BULLIED AND WHAT DO I DO?

- Look for unusual behaviour in your child. For example, they may suddenly not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to their normal standard.
- Look for visible signs - torn clothes, missing belongings, bruises, cuts or other signs of physical harm
- Always take an active role in your child's education. Enquire how their day has gone, who they have spent their time with, how lunch time was spent etc.

- If you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour, try to **keep calm**. Getting angry and threatening to go to the school or visit the parents of the other pupil may make your child ...
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- Inform the school **IMMEDIATELY**. Your complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow.
- It is important that you advise your child not to fight back. It can make matters worse!
- Tell your own son or daughter that there is nothing wrong with him or her. It is not his or her fault that they are being bullied.
- Make sure your child is fully aware of the school's policy concerning bullying, and that they will not be afraid to ask for help.
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WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU ARE BEING BULLIED?

Remember that your silence is the bully's greatest weapon!

- Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied, and that it is **WRONG!**
- Be proud of who you are. It is good to be individual.
- Try not to show that you 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 or member of the Student Council's Anti-Bullying Committee.
- Generally it is best to tell an adult you trust straight away. You will get immediate support.

Teachers will take you seriously and will deal with people accused of bullying in a way which will end the bullying and will not make things worse for you.

IF YOU KNOW SOMEONE IS BEING BULLIED:

- **TAKE ACTION!** Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the person accused of bullying. It makes the victim feel more unhappy and on their own.
- If you feel you cannot get involved, tell an adult **IMMEDIATELY**. Teachers have ways of dealing with the person accused of bullying without getting you into trouble.
- Do not be, or pretend to be, friends with a person accused of bullying.

RESPONDING TO A BULLYING CONCERN

When managing a bullying situation, members of staff need to be mindful of the following:

- Be calm. It is important to be clear-thinking and emotionally in control.
- Be positive. It is very important to have a positive relationship with the pupil. A pupil is more likely to modify his/her behaviour if s/he believes that the teacher cares.
- Be assertive. Members of staff should clearly express their thoughts, concerns and expectations concerning the person accused of bullying to ensure that the bullying stops immediately and that s/he makes restitution with the child who has been bullied.
- Be confident. Take issue with the behaviour and not the pupil. It is important to trust that you will be successful in modifying the pupil's future behaviour.
- Ensure that the behaviour conforms to our school's definition of bullying behaviour.
- Assess the situation and its severity level and determine the appropriate level of response.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN WHEN BULLYING IS SUSPECTED

If bullying is suspected, we talk to the suspected target, the person accused of bullying and any witnesses. If any degree of bullying is identified, the following action will be taken:

Help, support and counselling will be given as is appropriate to both the target(s) and the person(s) accused of bullying:

We support the **target** in the following ways:

- by offering him/her an immediate opportunity to talk about the experience with the class teacher, Form Teacher, Year Head, any other teacher or Sixth Form student.
- by informing the target's parents/carers.
- by offering continuing support when s/he feels they need it.
- by arranging peer support by an older pupil or by classmates, or supervision on the bus by Sixth Form student(s).
- by taking one or more of the steps described below to prevent more bullying.

We try to help the person accused of **bullying** in the following ways:

- by talking about what happened, to discover why s/he became involved.

- by informing the pupil's parents/carers and inviting them into school to discuss the issue.
- by continuing to work with the pupil in order to get rid of negative/stereotypical attitudes as far as possible.
- by taking one or more of the steps described below to prevent more bullying.

STEPS

- 1 The pupil accused of bullying will be reprimanded and instructed officially to stop offending.
- 2 The parents/carers of the pupil accused of bullying will be informed and invited into school to discuss the issue.
- 3 The pupil accused of bullying may be required to be under the supervision of a teacher at break and/or lunch times.
- 4 We may arrange for the pupil accused of bullying to be escorted to and from the school premises or to be supervised on the bus by Sixth Form students.
- 5 The Pastoral Committee will meet to determine the consequence for the person accused of bullying - Principal, Vice Principal, a member of the Senior Leadership Team, Year Head and/or Form Teacher
- 6 If the person does not stop bullying, suspension for a fixed period (three days) may ensue.
- 7 If s/he continues to bully, suspension for a major fixed period (up to five days) or an indefinite period may be recommended while professional advice is sought.
- 8 If s/he continues to bully, permanent exclusion (expulsion) may be recommended.

OUTCOMES

- 1 The person(s) accused of bullying will be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences may take place.
- 2 In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion will be considered
- 3 If possible, the pupils will be reconciled
- 4 After the incident(s) have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

What to do in the event of suspected bullying

Class teacher

- Offer the target an opportunity to talk about his/her experiences

- Reassure the target that the issue will be investigated and dealt with
- Record details on Incident/Concern form (Blue Form) - day, date, time, place, observations, child's statements, prevalence, details of others involved
- Pass Incident/Concern Form to relevant Form Teachers

Form Teacher

- Talk to target and record his/her account
- Talk to the pupil accused of bullying and record his/her account
- If the issue involves members of own form class, take initial steps to resolve
- Record action taken on Incident/Concern Form and forward to Year Head
- If the concern involves a pupil from another class/year group, the Form Teacher should record action taken on Incident/Concern Form and forward to the Year Head(s) concerned

Year Head

- Talk to target and the person accused of bullying
- If appropriate, liaise with parents - by telephone and/or by inviting them to come into the school to discuss the issue
- Record action taken on Incident/Concern Form (Blue Form)
- Keep parents informed
- Record follow up action on Incident/Concern Form (Blue Form) and, if necessary, on the triplicate form

PREVENTION - What do we do to proactively prevent bullying?

The most effective way the school deals with bullying is through preventative work and having procedures and systems to proactively prevent, detect, record and deal with bullying.

The following guidelines provide a framework for changing attitudes towards bullying and helping create an ethos that makes it clear to everyone that bullying is unacceptable, will be confronted and stopped. Opportunities are sought to convey this message to all pupils e.g. assemblies, Form Teacher time etc.

Teachers need to be mindful of the example they set for children so that they themselves are not guilty of the bullying tactics which they are trying to eliminate in some pupils.

It is a basic entitlement of all pupils to receive their education free from humiliation, degradation, oppression and abuse. Therefore, it is the responsibility of all teachers to ensure that it takes place in an atmosphere which is caring and protective.

- Pastoral structure - Form teacher, Year Head, Pastoral VP
- Opportunities to address pupils' concerns - registration, Form Class
- Promoting good behaviour
- Promoting positive relationships throughout the school
- The school curriculum - Pastoral programme
- School-wide supervision - before school, breaktime and lunchtime
- Opportunities for developing positive peer relationships
- Encouraging pupils to tell and suggesting ways to stop bullying as a bystander
- Encouraging young people to have powerful, loyal friends
- Fast and efficient communication
- 'Concern' boxes
- Anti-bullying mentors/peers
- Transition - informed and prepared

- 2 Through the PSHE programme, we help each pupil to recognise and engage in socially acceptable habits and behaviour, thereby displaying self-respect and respect for others. We also seek to develop in pupils a positive self-image, self-discipline, competence in social skills, listening skills, and an ability to empathise with others and to participate in group activities.
- 3 Through the PSHE programme, pupils have the opportunity to discuss bullying so that pupils learn to cope better with bullies. Similarly, bullies need to be placed in situations which make them see things from the target's position.
- 4 Peer group disapproval is one of the most effective ways of combating anti-social behaviour. Through frank and open discussion, all pupils in the class should understand that they have a responsibility to each other. They should be strongly encouraged to think of 'telling' as positive behaviour. In this way, the bully cannot be sure of maintaining a conspiracy of silence and it makes it more difficult for him/her to single out his/her victim without interference from others.

- 5 Bullies need opportunities to carry on bullying. Therefore teachers should never underestimate the effects or dismiss the reality of the victims. If they do so, the victim is further victimised and the message to the bully and to all of the pupils in the school is that we don't mind if they show their aggressions in this kind of way.

A bullied child may already be feeling ashamed, guilty or worthless. By not taking them seriously, we fail to equip them with the skills that they need to avoid further bullying. In effect, we deny them equal access to educational opportunities and we also fail to identify the help that the bullies so obviously need.

Prevention - other methods we use to help prevent bullying:

- We encourage pupils to treat everyone with respect.
- We encourage pupils to discuss how they get on with other people and to form positive attitudes towards other people.
- We treat bullying as a serious offence and we will take every possible action to eradicate it from our school.
- Any complaints are addressed quickly, firmly and fairly, involving parents where necessary.
- It is made clear that bullying is a form of anti-social behaviour. It is **WRONG** and will not be tolerated. We use any opportunity to discuss aspects of bullying, and the appropriate way to behave towards each other.
- Opportunities for bullying are minimised e.g. we provide increased supervision at problem times - before school, break time and lunchtime.
- **Student Council - The Anti Bullying Committee plays a full and active role in highlighting to pupils the need to report cases of bullying.**
- We avoid using teaching materials or equipment which present a bad or negative view of any group because of their ethnic origin, sex, etc.
- **We conduct a Bullying Survey every year.**
- The school's Anti-Bullying Policy and its degree of success are reviewed annually.

CHECKLIST: Is this a bullying case?

These 3 things have to happen together to be called 'bullying'.

1	The bullying has gone on for a while or it is a regular occurrence.
2	The other person is deliberately intending to hurt, harm or humiliate.
3	The other person is bigger, stronger, has more power or have some 'hold' over the target

Remember: Bullying is NOT ...

1	A one-off fight or argument
2	A friend sometimes being nasty
3	An argument with a friend