

BELFAST HOSPITAL SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY



RATIONALE

Belfast Hospital School is completely opposed to bullying. It is entirely contrary to the values and principles we work and live by. All members of the school community have a right to work in a secure and caring environment. They also have a responsibility to contribute, in whatever way they can, to the protection and maintenance of such an environment.

MISSION STATEMENT

Belfast Hospital School actively promotes positive interpersonal relations between all members of the school community. This policy has been developed through consultation which involved all members of the school community – children/young people, parents/carers and all school staff.

PRINCIPLES

- Pupils have a right to learn free from intimidation and fear.
- The needs of the victim are paramount.
- The School will not tolerate bullying behaviour.
- Bullied pupils will be listened to.
- Reported incidents will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying is an act of aggression, causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to someone. It can take a number of forms; physical, verbal, making gestures, extortion and exclusion. It is an abuse of power. It can be planned and organised, or it may be unintentional. It may be perpetrated by individuals or by groups of pupils.

FORMS OF BULLYING

Bullying can take many different forms and is behaviour that intentionally and persistently causes distress to others.

<p style="text-align: center;">PHYSICAL BULLYING</p> <p>e.g. hitting; pushing; kicking; tripping; spitting; hair pulling; throwing things; interfering with another’s property by stealing / hiding / damaging / intruding upon it; - extortion / threatening demands for money or other items - writing or drawing offensive notes / graffiti about another</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">VERBAL BULLYING</p> <p><i>e.g. name calling; insulting or offensive remarks; accusing; taunting; put downs</i> - <i>ridiculing another’s appearance/way of speaking/disability/personal mannerisms/race/colour/religion;</i> - <i>humiliating another publicly</i> - <i>spreading malicious or nasty rumours; threatening; intimidation; mocking; sarcasm</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">EMOTIONAL BULLYING</p> <p><i>e.g. excluding/shunning others from group activity/social setting or play;</i> - <i>belittling another’s abilities or achievements;</i> - <i>menacing looks/stares;</i> - <i>rude signs or gestures</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CYBER BULLYING</p> <p>Cyber bullying is bullying through use of communication technology e.g. mobile phone text messages, emails or websites. Cyber bullying can take many forms, for example:</p> <p><i>e.g. misuse of e-mails, images, text, blogs, tweets, forums and chat rooms to hurt /embarrass /demean /harass /provoke or humiliate another using perceived anonymity</i> - <i>misuse of mobile phones by text messaging /calls or images – again to hurt /embarrass /demean /harass /provoke or humiliate another using perceived anonymity</i> - <i>unauthorised publication or manipulation of private information; impersonation</i></p>

These categories may be inter-related

HOMOPHOBIC BULLYING

Homophobic bullying is ‘any language, conduct, or behaviour used to exclude, demean or threaten a person based on their actual or ‘perceived sexual orientation’ (The Rainbow Project, 2010). The word ‘gay’ is often used in a negative and belittling way by many young people. This abusive language is often tolerated; however, not only is this wrong, but it can have a devastating impact on young people who may be questioning their sexual orientation or who may have lesbian, gay or bisexual parents or carers/relatives. Belfast Hospital School and TOPS are committed to ensuring that young people are aware that using this kind of language is not acceptable. The school will deal with homophobic bullying as robustly as we would with any other form of bullying.

Signs of stress in pupils which may indicate Bullying

- Child's unwillingness to attend school / lateness /erratic attendance.
- Avoidance, hanging back from others at break/lunch time or staying late at school.
- Deterioration of work or mislaid books, money, equipment or belongings / under achievement.
- Spurious illness / non specific pains, headaches, tummy upsets, withdrawn, loss of appetite.
- Nail biting / flinching / jumpiness / forgetfulness / distractibility.
- Impulsive hitting out / out of character temper, flare up or restlessness / sudden aggressiveness.
- Stresses manifested at home – bed wetting / insomnia / nightmares / restlessness and irritability.
- Reluctance to sit beside or near certain pupils / hesitant to walk home.

(N.B. whilst these behaviours may be symptomatic of other problems – bullying may be one reason)

LINKS WITH OTHER SCHOOL POLICIES

This policy links with the following policies:

- Positive Behaviour
- Acceptable Use of the Internet
- Safeguarding Children
- RSE

SUPPORT FOR PUPILS

Many of the pupils who attend Belfast Hospital School are/have been victims of bullying. The School raises awareness of anti-bullying issues through the Pastoral Care programme (including an online Fronter resource) as well as through workshops delivered by the NIABF (Northern Ireland anti-Bullying Forum). Pupils who have been involved in bullying can access professional help from their key worker in CAMHS.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL STAKEHOLDERS

The Responsibilities of Staff

Our staff will

- Foster in our pupils self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others
- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils.
- Discuss bullying with all pupils, so that every pupil learns about the damage it causes to both the child who is bullied and to the bully and the importance of telling a teacher about bullying when it happens.
- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying.

- Listen to children who have been bullied, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them.
- Report suspected cases of bullying to Chris Kennedy Designated Teacher, Kathy Boyle (Principal/DDT) or Alun McKeever (TOPS Manager/DDT).
- Follow up any complaint by a parent about bullying, and report back promptly and fully on the action which has been taken.
- Deal with observed instances of bullying promptly and effectively, in accordance with agreed procedures.

The Responsibilities of Pupils

We expect our pupils to:

- Refrain from becoming 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, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances.

Anyone who becomes the target of bullies should:

- Not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out, to put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets.

The Responsibilities of Parents

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 evidence of bullying.
- Advising their children to report any bullying to their lead teacher (ward teacher, TOPS manager, ETA teacher) and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other pupils.
- Advising their children not to retaliate violently to any forms of bullying.
- Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken;
- Keep a written record of any reported instances of bullying
- Informing the school of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved;
- Co-operating with the school, if their children are accused of bullying, try to ascertain the truth. And point out the implications of bullying, both for the children who are bullied and for the bullies themselves.

The Responsibilities of All

Everyone should:

- Work together to combat and, hopefully in time, to eradicate bullying.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

The school promotes positive behaviour by:

- Staff acting as positive role models within the school community
- Pastoral provision
- Curriculum
- Classroom management
- Awareness raising measures (competitions, posters)

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH INCIDENTS OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

All staff are asked to be vigilant and to act immediately upon suspected cases of bullying behaviour.

Action which may be taken include:

- Contacting parents/carers of all pupils concerned in the bullying incident
- Investigation
- Feedback to those concerned
- Sanctions
- Contacting relevant professionals eg. CAMHS, Behaviour Support Team, Education Psychology, Pastoral Care Team
- Review and monitor the situation with all stakeholders.

CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF

Staff will be required to renew their own skills and knowledge on anti-bullying strategies. The Designated Teacher will keep staff informed of new developments, especially regarding e-Safety and cyber-bullying.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

USEFUL WEBSITES

Department of Education

www.deni.gov.uk

Northern Ireland Anti Bullying Forum

www.niabf.org.uk

Think you Know

www.thinkuknow.org