North Coast Integrated College Anti-Bullying Policy

Contents

- Introduction
- Policy Rationale
- College Aims
- Definition of Bullying
- Preventative Measures
- Responding to a Bullying Concern
- Our Response to a Bullying Concern
- Understanding the Levels of Intervention
- Cyber-bullying Policy
- Definition of Cyber-bullying
- Legal Issues relating to Cyber-bullying
- Practical Advice for Students and Parents/Guardians Relating to Bullying
- Practical Advice for Students and Parents/Guardians Relating to Cyber-bullying

North Coast Integrated College

North Coast Integrated College Anti Bullying Policy

Introduction

- Bullying affects everyone, not just the pupils who display bullying behaviour or those who experience it. It also affects those other children who watch, or who are drawn in by group pressure.
- Bullying is not an inevitable part of school life nor is it 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. Social media also adds a new dimension to this.
- No one person or group, whether staff or pupil, should have to accept this type of behaviour. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed, will a child best be able to benefit from the opportunities available at the School.

Policy Rationale

North Coast Integrated College believes that its pupils have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of bullying behaviour.

The College recognises that all institutions, both large and small, contain some individuals with the potential for bullying behaviour. The College aims to minimise the occurrence of bullying by following a clear policy based on its integrated ethos. Within these bounds it is clear that bullying does not fit into this ethos and will not be tolerated.

It is important therefore that the College has a clear written policy to promote this belief, where both pupils and parents/guardians and staff are fully aware that any bullying complaints will be dealt with firmly, fairly and promptly with the overall aim of solving both the cause of the problem, whilst supporting those involved.

College Aims

As a College we:

- attempt to minimise opportunities for bullying.
- have an on-going element within the PHSE programme in which bullying is covered. This includes using the opportunity to discuss:
- the College policy regarding bullying behaviour
- aspects of bullying behaviour

- the appropriate way to behave towards each other and to deal with problems as they occur.
- attempt to deal quickly, firmly and fairly with any complaints, involving parents where necessary.
- review situations on an on-going basis to determine the degree of success.
- have a firm but fair discipline procedure.
- attempt to be sensitive with relation to the use of teaching materials or equipment which give a bad or negative view of any group because of their ethnic origin, sex, etc.
- encourage pupils to discuss how they get on with other people and to form positive attitudes towards other people.
- treat bullying as a serious offence and take every possible action to eradicate it from the College.

Defining Bullying

The term bullying refers to a range of harmful behaviour, both physical and psychological. All bullying usually has the following four 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 distress.

Definition of Bullying

At North Coast Integrated College we use the Northern Ireland Anti Bullying Forum definition of bullying which 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.
(NIABF definition of bullying)

Preventative Measures

The Principal and the School Leadership Team will encourage good behaviour in and around the College at all times.

The student charter sets out rules for good behaviour. This information has been given to all students and parents via the homework diary.

North Coast Integrated College

School assemblies are used by the Principal to reinforce acceptable behaviour, college rules, knowing the difference between right and wrong, respecting others, being responsible, having consideration for the feelings of others and knowing who to tell if something is bothering a pupil, or if someone is displaying bullying behaviour towards a pupil.

Heads of Year and Form Teachers similarly reinforce these messages in Head of Year assemblies and form time.

Good behaviour is promoted by classroom assistants, teachers and all members of staff in the College at all times, and in all areas of the College.

Lunch time staff are vigilant in their supervision at lunch and report any concerns about behaviour or attitude to the teacher on lunch duty.

All staff generally observe the children in their care and any change in a child's behaviour is addressed through the correct channels. Appropriate action is then carried out to enact a positive change in the child's behaviour in conjunction with the pastoral team.

The College's Personal and Social Education Programme and the Preventative Curriculum address all the areas in which students are encouraged to develop the ability to identify, understand and express their emotions in an acceptable way.

Responding to a bullying concern

Staff should adopt a positive mind set when responding to bullying concerns.

They should be prepared with options for how to respond to incidents of bullying in a planned, deliberate and positive way. Confronting pupils who have bullied requires a high amount of self-control as well as preparation to know what to say and do.

The following are important factors when managing a bullying situation:

Be calm. It is important to be clear thinking and emotionally in control.
Be positive. Have in mind the importance of maintaining a positive relationship with the pupil. A pupil is much more likely to modify his/her behaviour if he/she perceives that a teacher cares.
Be assertive. Staff should directly and clearly express their thoughts, feelings and expectations concerning the need for the pupil to not only stop bullying, but also make restitution with the child who has been bullied.
Be confident. It is important to trust that you will be successful in implementing practices that can have an impact on the pupil's future behaviour. It is always helpful to focus on the behaviour, not the pupil.

North Coast Integrated College

Ensure that the specific behaviour is in fact bullying behaviour which conforms to the school's agreed definition of bullying as identified in the school's current anti-bullying policy.

Assess the situation and its severity level. Determine the appropriate level of response required to manage the situation effectively.

Once the Incident Level has been determined, select one or more responses from the appropriate column(s) (see Levels 1-4 Responses, p16-19).

To determine level of severity, staff should take account of the following:

The **nature** of the bullying behaviour- for example deliberate teasing, excluding or hitting. There is a tendency among those who have a duty of care to rate some bullying, particularly violence, as more serious than other subtle forms. This can be a dangerous mistake and leave us vulnerable to ignoring 'teasing' or 'exclusion'.

The **frequency** of the bullying behaviour: daily, weekly or less often.

The **duration** of the bullying behaviour: whether over a short or prolonged period of time.

The **perceptions** of the child being bullied – The seriousness of bullying can only be measured by the degree of distress suffered by the target. *"It can be defined as bullying only by measuring the effects the acts have on the vulnerable child*"
(Besag, 1989)2

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Our response to a Bullying Concern

1. Gather and clarify the facts.

2. Check:

- That the behaviour constitutes bullying behaviour as defined in our current policy.
- Records for any previous incidents.

3. Complete the **Bullying Concern Assessment Form.**

4. On the basis of this initial assessment:

- Choose an appropriate intervention(s) from the Intervention Levels
- Ensure effective communication amongst all parties.
- Consider the possible need for:
  - Parental involvement
  - Pastoral Care Team Involvement
  - Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) involvement
  - Risk assessment
  - External agency involvement e.g. the Child Protection Support Service for Schools (CPSS).

5. Monitor and evaluate the on-going effectiveness of your chosen intervention/strategy.

6. Record actions taken and outcomes achieved using our school's recording system (Sims Behaviour Management)

7. Review the outcomes to determine whether further action is required and progress accordingly. (Refer to Part 2 of the Bullying Concern Assessment Form)

*Implementing the above process will provide opportunities for self-reflection, development and learning for all parties concerned, resulting in the effective management of bullying incidents. This reflection should inform and guide the on-going review and development of the school's anti-bullying policy, procedures and practice.

North Coast Integrated College

Referral System

Incidents of bullying are recorded as a record of unacceptable behaviour and intervention is taken by the Pastoral Care Team and the Principal. The Pastoral Care Team consists of the Form Teachers, Heads of Years, Senior Teacher, Vice Principal and Principal.

Help, support and counselling will be given as is appropriate to both those pupils who have experienced bullying and the pupils who display bullying behaviour:

We support the **child who has been bullied** in the following ways:

· by offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about the experience with their form teacher, class teacher or with another teacher if they choose.

· informing their parents/guardians if the situation requires this.

· by offering continuing support when they feel they need it. This may include counselling services with our school counsellor or engaging in some supportive work with our youth worker.

· by assisting with arranging for them to be escorted to and from the School premises.

· by following the course of disciplinary action outline below to help prevent more bullying.

We also sanction, yet try to help the **pupils who have been displaying the bullying behaviour** in the following ways:

· by talking about what happened to discover why they became involved.

· informing their parents/guardians if the situation appears to require this.

· by continuing to work with them in order to assist them in overcoming those issues which may be causing their actions. This may include counselling services with our school counsellor or engaging in some supportive work with our youth worker.

· by following the course of disciplinary action outlined below if necessary, to help prevent more bullying behaviour.

North Coast Integrated College

If bullying is suspected we talk to the child who it is suspected has been bullied, the suspected individual who is bullying and any witnesses. If any degree of bullying is identified, the following action will be taken:

2. The parents/guardians of those pupils displaying bullying behaviour may be informed of the incident.

3. Additional punishment may be organized including College community service and/or detentions.

4. The individual displaying the bullying behaviour may be excluded from the playground areas at break and/or lunch times.

5. If the bullying behaviour does not stop they may be suspended for a minor fixed period (initially one or two days).

6. If the bullying behaviour still continues they may be recommended for suspension for a major fixed period (up to five days) or an indefinite period.

7. If the bullying behaviour still does not end, the Chairperson of the Board of Governors will be informed and Child Protection procedures may be instigated.

*Staff will monitor pupils for signs of bullying reoccurring and the Head of Year will keep a record of all communications.

 *The nature of this disruptive behaviour may require that the SENCO is notified and that the steps pertaining to conduct and behaviour within the Code of Practise for students with special needs, are begun.

 *In some instances the College may be duty bound to inform the police.

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Understanding the Levels of Intervention

Level 1 Intervention - Low Level Bullying Behaviour   Stage 1 Student Support Register
Interventions at Level 1 are to help individuals to recognise/reflect on their unacceptable behaviour and to "get them back on track" while listening to and supporting/strengthening the targeted pupil(s). **NEVER ignore low level bullying behaviour.**

Staff will:
- Explain the inappropriateness of the behaviour in line with the school's values.
- Identify possible consequences if the bullying behaviour continues.
- Point out the level of distress experienced by the targeted pupil.
- Talk with the targeted pupil to explore whether he/she has in any way provoked the bullying behaviour.
- Help the targeted pupil to identify ways in which he/she may be strengthened and supported, e.g. peer support.
- Encourage reparation to be made, if appropriate.
- Monitor the situation carefully.
- Be prepared to intervene with a higher response level if the situation persists or deteriorates.

Level 2 Interventions - Intermediate Level Bullying Behaviour Stage 2 Student Support Register
While interventions at Level 2 involve continuing with the above, there is shift from individual support to group interventions led by the Head of Year. To be effective small group work needs:
- The consent and involvement of the targeted pupil.
- To be planned and timetabled, session length dependent on age and ability.
- Parental / carer consent and agreement from participating pupils.
- Carefully selected group membership.
- To take place in a suitable and comfortable environment; to be uninterrupted.
- To be facilitated in a positive manner, ideally by two adults whose roles may alternate allowing one to participate and one to observe.
- Structured and focused activities using active learning approaches to stimulate discussion and debate amongst members and develop group identity.
- To facilitate the development of empathy amongst pupils.
- A solution focused approach to the situation.
- To provide opportunities for pupils to take responsibility.
- Regular meetings of the group; to ensure regular feedback is given on agreed actions.

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Level 3 Interventions - Complex Bullying Behaviour Stage 3 Student Support Register

Interventions at Level 3 will often involve senior members of the Pastoral Care Team, SENCo, and the Principal, in collaboration with pupil(s) and parents to determine the way forward in affecting change.

The College may use individual Risk Assessment procedures to help determine a plan of intervention and risk management that will be communicated to all.
This planning may occur through a multi-agency discussion, involving external support agencies. The manner in which teachers and others are involved in planning and how they are kept informed about the implementation of the plans will vary.

Bullying at this level often involves complex group dynamics, where a number of roles are evident, such as those displaying bullying behaviour, bystanders and targeted pupils. Consequently interventions may require one-to-one meetings, small group work and whole class involvement. These will often require group interventions along with individual support and strength building programmes.

Level 4 Interventions - High Risk Bullying Behaviour Stage 4 Student Support Register

Bullying behaviours assessed as Level 4 are severe and involve a significant threat to the safety and welfare of any or all of the pupils involved. Such severe bullying concerns may be new or may have proved resistant to earlier school interventions and have now been assessed as high risk. Incidents at this level must be assessed in relation to the risk posed to any/all of the pupils involved. As such, the school's Child Safeguarding Procedures will need to be invoked.

*In addition to safeguarding procedures and practices including referral to external support services, the school's interventions at Level 4 should continue to implement interventions detailed at Level 3 as appropriate.

North Coast Integrated College

<u>**Cyber-bullying Policy**</u>

At North Coast Integrated College we embrace the advantages that modern technology can offer in terms of educational benefits whilst recognising that mobile phones, devices and social media have the potential for bullying to occur.

Most pupils in today's society carry mobile phones to school and many parents prefer their child to have a mobile phone as part of a personal safety plan. If a pupil brings a mobile phone to school it must remain switched off during the school day and it must not be used at break or lunch. The camera and recording capabilities of the mobile device must not be used on the school premises. Occasionally, teachers may request that a mobile device be used in the classroom as part of a lesson, however, this must only be done as part of a planned scheme of work that has been agreed by the Senior Leadership Team.

<u>**Definition of Cyber-bullying**</u>

Cyber-bullying is an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual using electronic forms of contact repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot easily defend himself/herself.

<u>**What's different about cyber-bullying?**</u>

Cyber-bullying is different to other forms of bullying because:

- it can occur anytime, anywhere – the victim can even receive bullying messages or materials at home
- the audience to the bullying can be large and reached very quickly and easily if messages are passed around or things are posted online
- it can be unintentional – people may not think about the consequences of sending messages or images

The most common ways of cyberbullying are through:

- chat rooms, blogs and forums – although many of these are moderated, people involved in discussions can be sent abusive responses
- text messaging – abusive and threatening texts can be sent to mobile phones
- abusive or prank telephone calls – these can be made to your child's mobile phone
- picture and video clip messaging – offensive images can be sent to mobile phones
- email – new addresses can be set up in minutes and used to send offensive messages and images
- social networking and personal websites like Facebook – offensive or humiliating messages and images can be posted on these sites
- identity theft – in many cyber environments fake profiles can be set up pretending to be someone else with the aim of bullying others

- instant message services – quicker than email, these allow users to have 'real time' conversations, and offensive messages or content can be sent in this way
- webcams – usually used to view each other when chatting online, children can also be sent abusive images or encouraged to act in an inappropriate way while being filmed
- video hosting sites (like YouTube) – children may find themselves the subject of films being shown or be accidentally exposed to pornographic images
- gaming sites, consoles and virtual worlds – chatting is possible within many games, and name calling, abusive remarks and picking on particular players can occur

Legal Issues

Cyber-bullying is generally criminal in character. The law applies to cyberspace.

- It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information in any media including internet sites.
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by public means of a public electronic communications network, a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or one of an indecent, obscene or menacing character.
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.

At North Coast Integrated College, we educate our pupils in the proper use of telecommunications and about the serious consequences of cyber-bullying and will, through PSHE and outside speakers, in ICT lessons and assemblies, continue to inform and educate our pupils in these fast-changing areas.

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Practical Advice for Students and Parents/Guardians Regarding Bullying

Advice for Students:

What to do.

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

- Generally it is best to tell an adult you trust straight away. This person could be a parent/guardian, your Form Teacher, Head of Year or anyone from the Pastoral Care Team. You will get immediate support.
- In school, tell a teacher and let them help you with the situation.
- 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 or member of staff.
- Fighting back may make things worse. If you decide to fight back, talk to a teacher or parent/guardian first.

If you know someone is being bullied:

- TAKE ACTION! Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the bully. 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 bully behaviour without getting you into trouble.
- Do not be, or pretend to be, friends with someone who is deliberately displaying bullying behaviour.

Advice for Parents:

- Look for unusual behaviour in your children. For example, they may suddenly not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to their normal standard.
- 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, 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 it is not his or her fault that they are experiencing this.

North Coast Integrated College

- Make sure your child is fully aware of the school policy concerning bullying, and tell them not to be afraid to ask for help.

Practical Advice for Students and Parents/Guardians Regarding Cyber-bullying

Advice For students:

If you believe that you or someone else is the victim of cyber-bullying, you must speak to an adult as soon as possible. This person could be a parent/guardian, your Form Teacher, Head of Year or anyone from the Pastoral Care Team.

Do not answer abusive messages but do take a screen grab and report to a parent/ guardian or a responsible adult.

Do not delete anything until you have shown it to your parent/guardian, or to your Form Teacher if it is related to school in any way.

Do not give our personal IT details like passwords etc.

Never reply to abusive emails. Keep them and show them to an adult.

Never reply to someone you do not know.

Stay in public areas in chat rooms.

Advice for Parents/Guardians

It is vital we work together to ensure that all pupils are aware of the serious consequences of getting involved in anything that might be seen to be cyber-bullying. North Coast Integrated College informs parents/guardians of the Cyber-bullying Policy so that we can work together. Parents/Guardians can help us to work together in the following ways:

- by making sure your child understands the school's policy on cyber-bullying.
- by ensuring your child understands how serious it is to be involved in cyber-bullying.
- by explaining legal issues relating to cyber-bullying to your child, especially those surrounding inappropriate images.
- by saving any offending material relating to cyber-bullying if it is in any way related to school as proof of cyber-bullying having taken place.
- by contacting your child's Form Teacher, Head of Year or any member of the Pastoral Care Team as soon as possible if you have a concern.

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Protecting your child from Cyber-bullying

As with other types of bullying it's important for you to listen to your child and react with sympathy. Your child should know that bullying is always wrong and that seeking help is the right thing to do.

It's important for them to learn to respect and look after their friends online and to think before they post or text. To keep them safe, make sure you:

- encourage them to talk to you or another adult about anything that's upsetting them
- watch out for them seeming upset after using the internet or their mobile phone
- try to understand the ways in which they are using their digital technologies
- ask them to think about how their actions affect other users
- suggest that they only use moderated chat rooms
- encourage them to show you any abusive or offensive emails or messages they've received and keep a record of them
- help them report any abuse to their school, the internet service provider, the website manager/moderator, the mobile phone company or the police
- tell them never to respond to any abusive messages or calls – this is often what the abuser wants
- discuss keeping their passwords safe and avoiding giving their name, email address or mobile phone number to people outside their circle of friends and family
- change email address or telephone number if the abuse continues
- turn on in-built internet safety features and install computer software to make sure that you only receive emails from people you have chosen and to block unwanted images

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